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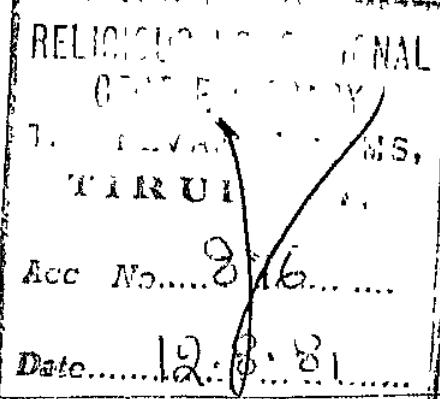
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GITA MAKARANDA

BY

SWAMI VIDYAPRAKASHANANDA



Sri Suka Brahma Ashram

KALAHASTI

Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh - India.

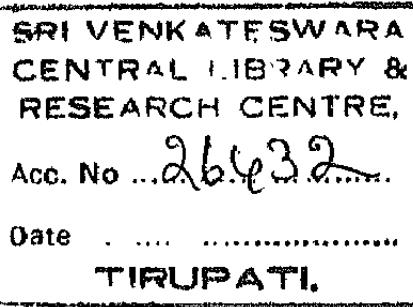
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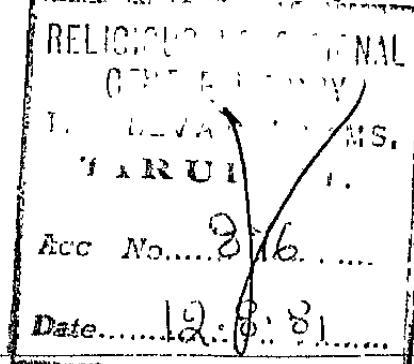
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Om
FOREWORD

Makaranda means honey. The Bhagavad Gita is sweet and relishing like honey. So this work is entitled Gita Makaranda. Honey is a potent antidote to different kinds of bodily diseases. So also the Gita Makaranda is a powerful purifying agent which washes away the accumulated sins and bestows the supreme bliss of liberation on mankind.

The bee collects honey from different flowers. The Upanishads are the most beautiful flowers of Divine Knowledge and Lord Krishna drew the honey of the Gita from the Upanishads. May the seekers of spiritual truth draw their inspiration and illumination from the Gita and fulfil the purpose of human existence.

On the banks of the sacred river Swarnamukhi in Kalahasti (a pilgrim-centre in Andhra Pradesh-India) is situated a peaceful and beautiful hermitage well known as Sri Suka Brahma Ashram. The founder of that Ashram Swami Vidya Prakashananda is a saintly personality working with untiring zeal to spread the message of the Gita through his lectures and publications. He is the author of this illustrious book Gita Makaranda. This book contains the text with explanatory introduction, word to word meaning, substance, elaborate commentary and questions and answers.

This book was first published in Telugu in 1963. Since then it continued increasingly popular among the Telugu-knowing public. A request came to the author from several quarters that his Telugu commentary on the Bhagavad Gita might also be rendered into English for the benefit of the larger non-Telugu knowing public. He has complied with the request and therefore we are enabled to bring out this English version. The meritorious services of Sri Durbha Ramamurtu (Professor of English, Nellore) need special mention here for his fine rendering of the original into English. We express our sincere thanks to him and to all those who have extended co-operation in publishing this eminent work.

—PUBLISHER

PRAYER TO MOTHER-GITA

O Divine Mother Gita! Mother of the Universe! Knowledge Incarnate! You have shown the way to peace through the horrid wilderness of *Samsara* where a thousand difficulties harass our mortal existence.

The darkness of ignorance is vanishing; The shackles of *Samsara* are breaking; The path of action is shining O Mother Divine! a thousand salutations to you !

When Lord Krishna dropped his mortal coil, He sent you to us, as our guide, philosopher, and friend; you are living image of the Lord and in you we take refuge O Mother Gita!

Blessed giver of Knowledge! The elders say never can man forget his creator, as well as the moral law and conduct taught and prescribed by Him. Thus it is our duty to remember you and follow the *Dharma* taught by you.

Bestower of Self-realisation! Your message is universal. No religion, no creed is denounced by you; you have procured to the world the great hope that the worst sinners also attain the purest sainthood, that the weak and feeble also can become strong and valiant by following your law.

You have shown a thousand paths to mankind for purification and celestial joy! Oh! Ganges of Knowledge overflowing and flooding the heart of mankind! Essence of the Upanishads! to us who are drifting aimlessly in the ocean of *Samsara*, you are the ferry boat to take us across the pools of earthly trials and temptations!

O Mother Divine! Bless us with devotion, knowledge, dispassion! Bless us with strength and power to serve you and soul throughout our life !

May your benedictions be always upon us—this prayer to you, O blessed and blissful Mother !



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ଶ୍ରୀ କୃଷ୍ଣ

LORD SRI KRISHNA
TEACHER OF THE CELESTIAL SONG
THE BHAGAVAD GITA

चेतो भूंग भ्रमसि वृथा
भवमरु भूमौ विरसायाम्
पिब पिब गीतामकरंदं
यदुपति मुखकमल भवाद्यम्

*Chetobhringa bhramasi vridha
Bhavamarubhumau virasayam
Piba piba Gitamakarandam
Yadupati mukhakamala bhavadhyam.*

O mind, like the bee seeking honey,
Why do you wander
In the arid sands of *Samsara*,
Which like the mirage
Draws you away into dry deserts ?
Drink, drink,
The honey of Gita,
Flowing from the Lotus-face
Of Lord Sri Krishna !

GITA — A MIRACULOUS REMEDY FOR LIFE'S TRAGEDIES.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to Bhagavad Gita and find a verse to comfort me and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they had not left any visible and indelible effect on me I owe it to the teachings of Bhagavad Gita.

*Blessed is the person who studies the Gita daily.
Twice blessed is he who lives in the spirit of the Gita.
Thrice blessed is he who has realised the Knowledge of the Gita.*



శ్రీ శ్రీ విద్యాప్రకాశానందగిరిజ్ఞమిలఫారు
శ్రీ కృష్ణార్థనుసు-పాత్రికా,

ర చ య త

SWAMI VIDYAPRAKASHANANDA
AUTHOR OF THE COMMENTARY "GITA MAKARANDA"

MESSAGE OF THE GITA

'BE FEARLESS'

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वयुपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोचिष्ठ परन्तप ॥

2 - ३

*Klaibyam ma sma gamah partha nai' tat ivayyupapadyate ।
Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktvo' ttistha Paramtapa ॥*

"O Arjuna ! Do not yield to impotence. It does not befit you. Cast off this wretched weakness of heart. Arise, O scorching of enemies ! "

If one reads this one sloka he gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for, in this one sloka lies imbedded the whole message of the Gita

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

GITA - THE ETERNAL TREASURE OF MANKIN

Swami Vivekananda - In Gita truths are beautifully all together in their proper places like a fine garland bouquet of choicest flowers.

Mahatma Gandhi - Gita contains treasures of knowledge which made me the Gita became an infallible guide of conduct became my dictionary of daily reference. I turned to it for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. The votary of the Gita ever dwells in perennial joy and peace.

Tilak — In the literature of the whole world there is nothing like the Gita. It is a most luminous and priceless gem which takes us to the supreme bliss.

Malayala Swami — To cross the ocean of earthly life is not enough to read the Gita and act according to its teachings.

Swami Sivananda — Bhagavad Gita is a universal scripture. It is the eternal guide of man. It leads him from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from mortality to immortality. Study the Gita. Live in the spirit of the Gita. Become immortal. Enjoy peace and bliss here and now.

Annie Besant — Among the priceless teachings that may be found in the great poem of the Mahabharata there is none so rare and precious as Bhagavad Gita. (The Lord's) Since it fell from the divine lips of Sri Krishna on the field of battle and stilled the surging emotions of his dear friend, how many troubled hearts has it quieted! How many strengthened! How many weary souls has it led to H



COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD IN THE GITA

- 1) Cast off the weakness of heart. Yield not to impotence. Stand up !
- 2) The contacts of the senses with their objects are impermanent. Bear them bravely !
- 3) If you are slain (in the course of your duty) you will obtain heaven. If you are victorious you will enjoy the earth. Therefore rise up resolved to do your duty.
- 4) Thy right is to work only, lay not claim to its fruits !
- 5) Perform action being fixed in Yoga abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure.
- 6) With the mind centred on the self free from egotism perform your duty.
- 7) Control the senses first and kill the sinful desire.
- 8) Knowing the *Atman* as superior to the intellect restraining the mind by the Self slay the enemy of desire.
- 9) With the sword of knowledge cut asunder the doubt about the Self and be established in Yoga ! Stand up !
- 10) At all times remember Me (*Atman*) only and do your duty. With the mind and intellect fixed in Me thou shalt come to Me alone.
- 11) At all times be steadfast in Yoga.
- 12) Whoever offers me with pure-mind and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water that I accept.
- 13) Fix thy mind on Me. Be devoted to Me. Sacrifice to Me. Thou shalt come to Me
- 14) Stand up ! Conquer the enemies (o' desir : etc). Enjoy the unrivalled kingdom *Atma Samrajya*.
- 15) Seek refuge in Him alone with all your heart. By His Grace you shall obtain supreme peace and eternal abode.
- 16) Take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Grieve not.

SIMILES INTRODUCED IN THE GITA

- 1) Just as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and new ones, so also the self throws away its worn-out and takes other fresh bodies.
- 2) To an enlightened person who has known the Self Vedas are of as much use as is a reservoir of water place where there is flood.
- 3) When the Yogi, like the tortoise drawing back its into its own shell, withdraws all the senses from the objects, his wisdom is firmly fixed.
- 4) As the ocean is filled with water flowing into it from sides and remains immovable, so the man into whom desires flow but is not a bit affected attains peace as the man who craves the desires.
- 5) As the ignorant man works with attachment to actions should the wise act without attachment for the welfare of the World.
- 6) As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo by the amnion, so this knowledge of the self is enveloped by lust and anger.
- 7) Just as blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, even so the knowledge destroys all actions.
- 8) He who acts placing all actions in the eternal, giving attachment is unaffected by sin like the lotus leaf by water.
- 9) As the lamp in the windless place does not flicker to and fro, so also the Yogi of controlled mind practising with self through *Dhyana-Yoga*.
- 10) Restless is the mind turbulent and unyielding and it is difficult to control it as the wind.
- 11) There is nothing higher than I (*Atman*). All this is as on Me as clusters of gems on a string.
- 12) Just as the mighty wind moving everywhere is restricted, even so know that all beings are in Me.

SIMILES INTRODUCED IN THE GITA

- 13) If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky that would resemble the glory of that mighty being.
- 14) As the innumerable water-currents of rivers flow verily to the ocean so these warriors of the earth enter thy flaming mouths.
- 15) Just as the moths for destruction rush into the flaming fire with quickened speed so also these worlds rush into thy flaming mouths for destruction with quickened speed.
- 16) This body is called the field. He who knows the field is known as the knower of the field.
- 17) As the all-pervading ether because of its subtlety is not tainted by dust etc., so also *Paramatma* pervading the body everywhere is not tainted by the qualities of the body.
- 18) Just as the one sun illuminates this whole world, so the '*kshetrajna*' (the Lord of the field) illuminates the entire field (*kshetram*).
- 19) The wise speak of the Aswatha-tree of *Samsara* having its roots above and branches below.
- 20) The branches of this tree of *Samsara* are nourished by *Gunas*. The sense-objects are its tender buds. It spreads downwards and upwards, its roots causing bondage by action are stretched forth downwards and upwards also.
- 21) When the *Jiva* obtains a body and when he leaves it he takes these (tendencies) and goes with them, as the wind takes the scents from the flowers.
- 22) The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings causing all beings revolve like puppets by his illusive power (*Maya*).

EFFECTS OF GITA-SLOKA-JAPA

Every Sloka of Bhagavad Gita is a *Mantra*. Just repetition of a *Mantra* bestows beneficial results so also repetition of the verses of Bhagavad Gita produces wonderful effects. The salutary effects of the repetition of certain slokas in the Gita are given below. Those wishing to obtain good results may repeat the slokas with utmost faith and devotion.

(1) For victory over mind :-

Repeat the Sloka—

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थ मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥

Sanaih-sanair uparamed buddhya dhrtigrhitaya ।

Atma samsthā manah kritva na kimchidapi chintayet ॥

(2) For success in meditation :-

Repeat the Sloka—

यतो यतो निश्चिरते मनश्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

Yato yato nischarati manaschanchala masthiram ।

Tatastato niyamyaitadatmanyeva vasham nayet ॥

(3) For removal of obstacles in sadhana :-

Repeat the Sloka -

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥

Bhoktaram yajnata pasam sarvaloka mahaesvaram ।

Suhridam savyabhutanam jnatva mam shanumricchati ॥

(4) For progress in wisdom :-

Repeat the Sloka -

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

*Sarvabhuta sthitam yo mam bhajatyekatvamasthitah ।
Sarvatha vartamanopi sa yogi moyi vartate ॥*

(6-31)

(5) For beholding God everywhere :-

Repeat the Sloka -

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्क्षिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं स्त्रे मणिगणा इव ॥

७-७

*Mattah parataram nanyat kimchidasti Dhananjaya ।
Mayi survamidum protam sutre manigana iva ॥*

(7-7)

(6) For attainment of Yoga-kshema :-

Repeat the Sloka -

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

९-२२

*Ananyas chintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate ।
Tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham ॥* (9-22)

(7) For removal of enemies like desire etc. :-

Repeat the Sloka —

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तम्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

३-४३

*Evam buddheh param buddhva
Samstabya'tmanamatmana ।
Jahi satrum mahabaho
Kamarupam durasadam ॥*

(3-43)

(8) For acquirement of divine-grace :-

Repeat the Sloka -

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

९-२७

*Yat karoshi yad asnasi yajjuhoshi dadasi yat ।
Yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva madarpanam ॥*

(9-27)

9) For becoming yoga - yukta :-

Repeat the Sloka -

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

१०-१०

*Tesham satatayuktanam bhajatam pritipurvakam ।
Dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayanti te ॥*

(10-10)

10) For steadfastness and progress in devotion :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेच्चासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥

११-३८

Tvam adidevah purushah puranas

Tvam asya visvasya param nidhanam ।

Vetta'si vedyam cha param cha dhama

Tvaya tatam visvam ananta rupa ॥

(11-38)

11) For wiping off delusion :-

Repeat the Sloka -

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतर्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
अनन्तवीर्यामित विक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं समाग्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥

११-४०

Namah purastad atha pristhataste

Namostu te sarvata eva sarva ।

Ananta viryamita vikramastvam

Sarvam samapnoshi tato'si sarvah ॥

(11-40)

12) For attainment of the grace of God :-

Repeat the Sloka:-

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यस्य गुरुर्गरीयान् ।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्याधिकः कुतोन्यो
लोकत्रये प्रतिमप्रभाव ॥

११-४३

Pitasi lokasya characharasya

Twamasya poojyasya gururgariyan ।

Natvatsamostyabhyadhikah kutonyo

Lokatraye pyapratinaprabhava ॥

(11-43)

(13) For fitness for God - realisation :-

Repeat the Sloka -

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

१८-६६

*Sarvadharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja ।
Aham itva sarvapapebhyo moksayishyami ma suchah ॥ 18-66*

(14) For purification of the mind :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽश्चिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥

१३-१३

*Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvato 'kshistromukham ।
Sarvatah srutimal loke sarvam avrity tisthati ॥ (13-13)*

(15) For cessation of anger :-

Repeat the Sloka -

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ग्नानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तं कुद्देदविदेव चाहम् ॥

१५-१५

*Sarvasya chaham hridi sannivisto
Mattah smritirgnanamapohanam cha ।
Vedaischa sarvairahameva vedyo
Vedantakrit vedavideva chaham ॥ (15-15)*

16) For attainment of the grace of God .-

Repeat the Sloka -

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीविजयो भूलिघ्नवा नीरिर्भिर्भम ॥

१८-७८

*Yatra yogeswarah krishno yatra partho dhanurdharah ।
Tatra srir vijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama ॥ (18-78)*

(17) For success in undertakings :-

Repeat the Sloka -

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्या संस्तम्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

३-४३

*Evan budheh param buddhya samstabyatmna matmana ।
Jahi satrum mahabaho kamarupam durasadam ॥* (3-43)

(18) For healing diseases :-

Repeat the Sloka -

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।

मयि सर्वभिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे भणिगणा इव ॥

७-७

*Mattah parataram nanyat kinchidasti dhananjaya ।
Mayi sarvamidam protam sutre manigana iva ॥* (7-7)

(19) For eradication of miseries :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सवलोक महेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥

५-२९

*Bhoktaram yajnatapasam sarvaloka mageswaram ।
Suhridam sarvabhutanam jnatva mam santimrichati ॥* (5-29)

(20) For attainment of wealth :-

Repeat the Sloka -

यत्साङ्ख्यैः ग्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति सु पश्यति ॥

५-५

*Yat samkhyaih propyate sthanam tadyogairapi gamyate ।
Ekam samkhyam cha yogam cha yah pasyati su pasyati ॥* (5-5)

(21) For rooting out fear :-

Repeat the Sloka -

श्रद्धया परया तसं तपस्तत्रिविधं नरैः ।

अफलाकाण्डिक्षमिरुक्तैः सान्विकं परिचक्षते ॥

१७-१७

*Sraddhaya paraya taptam tapastat trividham naraih ।
Aphalakanshubhir yuktaih sahyikam parichakshate ॥* (17-17)

(22) For removal of obstacles :-

Repeat the Sloka -

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवं अनन्तं विंशतो मुखम् ॥

११-११

*Divyamalyambaradharam divyagandhanulepanam ।
Sarvascharyamayam devam anantam viswato mukham ॥ (11-11)*

(23) For driving off evil-spirits (Devils) :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या
जगत्प्रहृष्ट्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति
सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसम्भाः ॥

११-३६

*Sthane hrishikesa tava prakirtya
Jagat prahrishyaty anurajyate cha ।
Rakshamsi bhitani diso dravanti
Sarve namasyanti cha siddhasamghah ॥* (11-36)

SALUTATION TO GITA

गीताकल्पतरुं भजे भगवता कृष्णोन संरोपितं
 वेदव्यासविवर्धितं श्रुतिशिरोबीजं प्रबोधाङ्गुरम् ।
 नानाशास्त्रं रहस्यं शाखमरतिक्षान्ति प्रवालाङ्गुतं
 कृष्णांघ्रिद्वयं भक्तिपुष्पमुरभिं मोक्षप्रदं ज्ञानिनाम् ॥

*Gita Kalpatarum bhaje bhagavata Krishnena sami op tam
 Vedavyasa vivardhitam sruti sirobeejam prabodhankuram
 Nanasastram rahasyasakham aratikshanti pravulankitam
 Krishnaghridvaya bhaki pushpa surabhim moksha pradam jnaninam*

I worship the Gita, the wish-yielding plant of Heaven, planted by Lord Krishna. This heavenly plant is nourished by Veda Vyasa ; the Upanishads are its seed ; Knowledge is its sprout ; the secrets of all *Sasiras* are its branches ; renunciation and forbearance are its blossom ; devotion to Lord Krishna is its fragrant flower ; and on the knowers of truth it confers Liberation.

Gita in one verse

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो
 यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः
 तत्र श्रीविजयो भूति
 धृपानीतिर्भतिर्भव ।

*Yatra yogeeswarah krishno yatra partho dhanurdharah
 Tatra srirvijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama*

Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*, wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow, there are prosperity, victory, expansion and sound policy; such is my conviction.

श्री कृष्ण ध्यानम्

MEDITATION ON SRI KRISHNA

प्रपञ्चारिजाताय तोत्रवेलैकपाणये ।
ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥

३

*Prapanna parijataya totravetraika punaye !
Jnana mudraya krishnaya gitamrita duhe namah ॥*

Salutation to Krishna, the milker of Gita nectar, who like the heavenly plant fulfills all the wishes of those who take refuge in Him; who holds the cowherd cane in the hand, and whose hand is poised as the symbol of knowledge.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

४

*Vasudeva sutam devam kamsa chanura mardanam ।
Devakī paramanandam krishnam vande jagad gurum ॥*

I salute Krishna, the world-teacher, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of Kamsa and Chanura, the supreme joy of Devaki.



श्री गीता ध्यानम्

SRI GITA DHYANAM

MEDITATION ON THE GITA

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
 व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।
 अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं
 अंब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

१

*Om parthaya pratibodhitam
 Bhagavata narayanena svayam
 Vyasena grathitam purana muntha
 Madhye Mahabharatam
 advaitamritavarshinim bhagavatim
 Astadasadhyayinim
 Amba tvam anusandadhami Bhagavadgite
 Bhavadveshinim ॥*

O Bhagavad Gita ! with which Lord Narayana Himself enlightened Arjuna, which was incorporated in the middle of Mahabharata by the ancient Muni, Vyasa, the Divine Mother, the showerer of the Nectar of Advaita, elaborated in eighteen chapters, on Thee, I meditate.

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजमधलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कर्तं
 नानारूपानकक्षेसरं हरिकथासंबोधनावोधितम् ।
 लोके सञ्जनपूर्पदैरहरहः पैषीयनानं सुदा
 भूयाङ्गारतपङ्कजं कलिभलप्रध्वसिनः श्रेयसे ॥

७

*Parasarya vachah sarojam amalam
 Gitartha gandhotkatam
 Nanakhyanaka kesaram hari katha
 Sanibodhana bodhitam ॥*

*Loke sajJana shatpadair aharahah
Pepiyamanam muda
Bhuyad bharata pankajam kalimala
Pradhyamsinah sreyase ॥*

May this lotus of the Mahabharata (Bhagavad Gita) born in the lake of the words of Veda Vyasa, sweet with the fragrance of the meaning of the Gita, with many stories as its stamens, fully opened by the discourses on God, the destroyer of the sins of Kali Age and drunk happily by the bees of good men in the world day by day, become the bestower of good to us.

संसार सागरं धोरं
तर्तुमिछति यो नरः
गीतानावं समासाद्य
पारं याति सुखेन सः ।

*Samsarasagaram ghoram tarthumicchat yo narah
Gita navam samasadya param yati sukhena sah. ॥*

He who wishes to cross the horrid ocean of earthly existence, can, with the aid of the boat Gita, easily reach the shore.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीभोक्ता दुर्गं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

*Sarvopanishado gavo dogdha gopala nandanah
Partho vatsah sudhir bhokta dugdham gitamritam mahat ॥*

The Upanishads are the cows; the milker is Krishna; Partha is the calf; men of purified intellect are the drinkers; and the milk is the supreme nectar of Gita.

भीष्मद्रोणतटा जयद्रथजला गान्धारनीलोत्पला
शल्यग्राहवती कृपेण वहनी कर्णेन वेलाकुला ।
अश्वत्थामविकर्णघोरमकरा दुर्योधनावर्तिनी
सोक्तीर्णा खलु पाण्डवै रणनदी कैर्वतका केशवः ॥

*Bhishma drona tata jayadratha jala gandhara nilotpala
Salya grahavati krl pena vahani karnena velakuta* ...

*Asvatthama vikarna ghora makara duryodhanavartini
Sottirna khalu pandavai rana nadi kaivartakah kesi*

The batile river whose banks were Bhishma and whose water was Jayadratha, whose blue lily was the Gandha;a, whose crocodile was Salya, whose current was whose wave was Karna, whose terrible alligators were thama and Vikarna, whose whirlpool was Duryodha; such was crossed over by the Pandavas, with Krishna ferry-man.

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानंदमाधवम् ॥

*Mukam karoti vachalam pangum langhayate girim :
Yatkripa tam aham vande paramananda madhayam ॥*

I salute Krishna, the source of supreme bliss, whose makes the dumb eloquent, and the cripple leap over moi

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेद्रुदसरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवैः
वेदैः साज्ज्ञयदक्रमोपनिषद्गायन्ति यं सामग्राः ।
ध्यानावस्थित तद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनो
यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणा देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥

*Yam brahma varunendra rudra marutah
Stunyanti divyaih stovaih
Vedaih sanga pada kramopanishadair gayanti
Yam samagrah
Dhyanyavasthita tadgatena manasa
Pasyanti yam yogino
Yasyantam na viduh surasuragana
Devaya tasmai namah ॥*

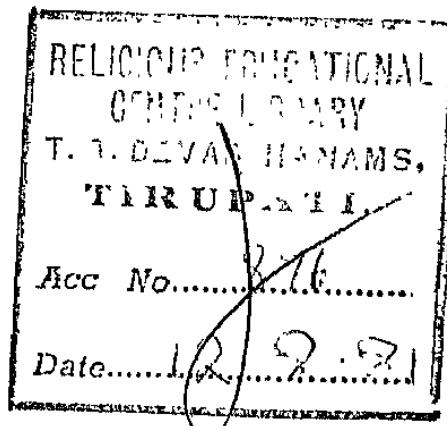
Salutations to that God whom Brahma, Varuna, Rudra and the Maruts praise with divine hymns, wh chanters of Sama Veda sing by Vedas and their *Angas Pada* and *Krama* methods and by the Upanishads, wh Yogis see with their minds absorbed in him through med and whose end the hosts of Devas and Asuras know not

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुलारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारतं लपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥ २

*Namo 'stu te vyasa vishala buddhe
Phullaravindayata patra netra ।
Yena tvaya bharata tailapurnah
Prajvalito jnanamayah pradipah ॥*

Salutations to you, O Vyasa, of wide and profound intellect,
with eyes like the petals of the full-blown Lotus, who lighted
the lamp of knowledge, filled with the oil of Mahabharata.

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श्री गीता माहात्म्यम्

GITA MAHATMYAM

THE GREATNESS OF THE GITA

धरोवाच

भगवन् परमेशानं भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
प्रारब्धं भुज्यमानस्य कथं भवति हे प्रभो ॥

१

Dharo 'vacha :

*Bhagavan paramesana bhaktiravyabhicharini !
Prarabdham bhujyamanasya katham bhavati he prabho ॥*

Dhara (the Earth) said :

O blessed Lord, Ruler Supreme, Adorable One! how may he
who is bound by his past *karma* gain constant devotion ?

विष्णुरुचाच

प्रारब्धं भुज्यमानोऽपि गीताभ्यासरतः सदा ।
स मुक्तः स सुखी लोके कर्मणा नोपलिप्यते ॥

२

Vishnururacha :

*Prarabdham bhujyamano pi gita 'bhyasaratah sada !
Sa muktah sa sukhi loke karmana no 'palipyate ॥*

The Lord Vishnu said :

Even he who is subject to past *karma* can be a liberated
man, happy in this world, if he is devoted to the practice of
Gita. No *karma* can taint him.

महापापादिपापानि गीताध्यानं करोति चेत् ।
क्वचित्स्पर्शं न कुर्वन्ति न लिनीदलमंभसा ॥

३

*Mahapapadi papani gita dhyanam karoti chet !
Kvachit' sparsam na kurvanti nalinidalamambhasa ॥*

No sin however heinous can ever affect him who meditates
on Gita. He lives untainted like the lotus leaf in the water.

गीतायाः पुस्तकं यत्र यत्र पाठः प्रवर्तते ।
तत्र सर्वाणि तीर्थानि प्रयागादीनि तत्र वै ॥

४

*Gitayah pustakam yatra yatra pathah pravartate ।
Tatra sarvani tirthani prayagadini tatra vai ॥*

Where the book Gita is kept, where the Gita is studied, verily there are all the sacred places like Prayaga and other sanctums.

सर्वे देवाश्च ऋषयो योगिनः पन्नागाश्च ये ।
गोपाला गोपिका वापि नारदोद्धवपर्षदैः ।
सहायो जायते शीघ्रं यत्र गीता प्रवर्तते ॥

५

*Sarve devascha rishayo yoginah pannagascha ye ।
Gopala gopika va 'pi naradoddhavaparshadaih ॥
Sahayo jayate sigrham yatra gita pravartate ।*

The Devas, the Rishis, the Yogins, the Pannagas, the Gopalas, the Gopies, Narada, Uddhava and the whole hosts of their comrades, are all present there where the Gita is practised. They come quickly to the aid of the man who practises the teachings of the Gita.

यत्र गीताविचारश्च पठनं पाठनं शृतम् ।
तत्राहं निश्चितं पृथिव निवसामि सदैव हि ॥

६

*Yatra gitavicharascha pathanam paithanam srutam ।
Tatra 'ham nischitam prithvi nivasami sadaiva hi ॥*

O Earth, where the Gita is studied, chanted, and heard, there, unfailingly and undoubtedly am I present.

गीताश्रयोऽहं तिष्ठामि गीता मे चोत्तमं गृहम् ।
गीताज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य त्रीन्लोकान्पालयाम्यहम् ॥

७

*Gita 'srayo 'ham tisthami gita me chottamam griham
Gitajnanamupusritya trin lokan palayamyaham ॥*

I abide in the refuge of the Gita; Gita is my supreme abode; I rule over the three worlds by the wisdom of the Gita

गीता मे परमा विद्या ब्रह्मरूपा न संशयः ।
अर्धमात्राक्षरा नित्या स्वानिर्वच्यपदात्मिका ॥

*Gita me parama vidya brahma rupa na samsayah :
Ardhamatrakshara nitya svanirvachya padatmika ॥*

The Gita is my Knowledge Supreme; it is undoubtedly the embodiment of Brahman; this knowledge is absolute; it is imperishable, eternal, the essence of My indefinable state.

चिदानन्देन कृष्णेन प्रोक्ता स्वमुखतोऽर्जुनम् ।
वेदश्रयी परानन्दा तत्त्वार्थं ज्ञानमंजसा ॥

*Chidanandena krishnena prokta svamukhato 'rjunam ।
Veda trayi parananda tattvartha jnana manjasa ॥*

The Gita comprises all the three Vedas; it is blissful; it brings home to the heart of the aspirant the true nature of the Self immediately; it is declared by the All-knowing and Blessed Krishna Himself to Arjuna.

योऽष्टादशजपेन्नित्यं नरो निश्चलमानसः ।
ज्ञानसिद्धिं स लभते ततो याति परं पदम् ॥

*Yo 'stadasa japennitvam naro nischalamanasah ।
Jnanasiddhim sa labhate tato yati param padam ॥*

That man who recites the eighteen chapters of the Gita with a firm mind, gains perfection in knowledge and thereby reaches the supreme state.

पाठेऽसमर्थस्सम्पूर्णे तद्दर्थं पाठमाचरेत् ।
तदा गोदानं पुण्यं लभते नात्र संशयः ॥

*Pathe 'samarthas sampurne tadardham pathamacharet ।
Tada godanajam punyam labhate na 'tra samsayah ॥*

If the whole of the Gita cannot be recited, half of it may be recited; through that act the reciter acquires the merit equal to the gift of a cow. There is no doubt about it.

THE GREATNESS OF THE GITA

त्रिभागं पठमानस्तु गङ्गास्नानफलं लभेत् ।
षडशं जपमानस्तु सोमयागफलं लभेत् ॥

१

*Tribhagam pathamanastu gangasnanaphalam labhet ।
Shadamsam japamanastu somayagaphalam labhet ॥*

He who recites a third part of the Gita acquires the merit of bathing in the Ganges; he who recites a sixth part, gets the fruit of the *Soma*-sacrifice.

एकाध्यायं तु यो नित्यं पठते भक्तिं सम्युक्तः ।
रुद्रलोकमवाप्नोति गणो भूत्वा वसेचिरम् ॥

२

*Eka 'dhyayam tu vo nityam pa:hate bhakti samyutah ।
Rudralokamavapnotti gano bhutva vasechiram ॥*

Even he who reads only one chapter a day with devotional goes to Rudraloka, and there lives long as a *Gana* (an attendant of Siva).

अध्यायश्लोकपादं वा नित्यं या पठते नरः ।
स याति नरता यावन्मनुकालं वसुन्धरे ॥

३

*Adhyaya slokapadam va nityam yah pathate narah ।
Sa yati naratam avan manukalam vasundhare ॥*

O Earth, he who reads one fourth of a chapter, or a stanza daily, attains human birth throughout the duration of a *Man*

गीतायाः श्लोकदशांकं सप्त पञ्च चतुष्षयम् ।
द्वौ श्रीनेकं तदर्थं वा श्लोकानां या पठेन्नरः ॥

४

चतुर्दशलोकमवाप्नोति वर्णाणामयुतं प्रुवम् ।
गीतापाठसमायुक्तो मृतो भानुषतां ग्रजेत् ॥

५

*Gitayah sloka dasakam sapta pancha chatushayam
 Dvau trinekam tad ordham va slokanam yah pather
 Chandralokamavapnoti varshanamayutam dhruvam !
 Gitapatha samayukto mrito manushatam vrajet ||*

He who recites ten, seven, five, four, three or two or even one half of a sloka of the Gita, certainly *Chandraloka* for ten thousand years. He who leaves the while reading the Gita, obtains the region of Man.

गीताभ्यासं पुनः कृत्वा लभते मुक्तिमुत्तमाम् ।
 गीतेत्युच्चारसंयुक्तो म्रियमाणो गतिं लभेत् ॥

*Gita 'bhyasam punah kritva labhate muktimuttamam !
 Gitetyuchara samyukto mriyamano gatim labhet ||*

Practising the Gita again and again man attains s *Mukti*. The dying man, uttering the word 'Gita' will the Goal.

गीतार्थश्रवणाऽसक्तो महापापयुतोऽपि वा ।
 वकुण्ठं समवाप्नोति विष्णुना सह भोदते ॥

*Gita 'rtha sravana 'sakto mahapapayuto 'pi va !
 Vaikuntham samava 'pnoti vishnuna saha modate ||*

Even a wicked man who has committed heinous sin to *Vaikuntha* and enjoys the bliss of communion with if he loves to hear the meaning of the Gita.

गीतार्थं ध्यायते नित्यं कृत्वा कर्मणि भूरिक्षः ।
 जीवन्मुक्तः स विज्ञेयो देहान्ते परमं पदम् ॥

*Gita 'rtham dhyayate nityam kritva karmani bhurtsah !
 Jivan muktah sa vijneyo dehante paramam padam ||*

While performing his duties in daily life, he who meditates on the meaning of the Gita shall be regarded as a *Jivanmukta*. He attains the supreme state when the body falls.

गीतामाश्रित्य बहवो भूमुजो जनकादयः ।
निर्धूतकल्मषा लोके गीता यातः परं पदम् ॥

२०

*Gitamasritya bahavo bhubhujo janakadayah ।
Nirdhuta kalmasha loke gita yatah param padam ॥*

Many kings like Janaka became free from evil and attained the highest state by following the Gita.

गीतायाः पठनं कृत्वा माहात्म्यं नैव यः पठेत् ।
वृथा पाठो भवेत्स्य श्रम एव हुदाहृतः ॥

२१

*Gitayah pathanam kritva mahatmyam naiva yah pathet ।
Vritha patho bhavet tasya srama eva hyudahritah ॥*

He who does not read the greatness of the Gita after having completed the reading of the Gita, his reading is in vain and his effort is wasted.

एतन्माहात्म्यसम्युक्तं गीताभ्यासं करोति या ।
स तत्फलभवामोति दुर्लभां गतिमाधुयात् ॥

२२

*Etan mahatmya samyuktam
Gita 'bhyasam kuroti yah ।
Sa tat phalam avapnoti durlabham
Gatimapmuyat ॥*

He who studies the Gita together with this discourse on the greatness of the Gita, gets the fruit stated herein and reaches that goal which is difficult to attain.

सूत उच्चाच

महात्म्यपैतरीताया मया ग्रीष्म सनातनम् ।
गीतान्ते च पठेष्यतु यदुक्तं तत्फलं लभेत् ॥

२३

Suta uvacha

*Mahatm;ametad gitaya maya vroktam sanatanam !
Gita 'nte cha pathedyastu yaduk;am sat phalam labhet ||*

Suta Said :

He who after reading the Gita reads this eternal greatness of the Gita, declared by me will attain the fruit stated herein,

इति श्री वराहपुराणे श्री गीतामाहात्म्यं संपूर्णम् ।

Iti sri varaha purane sri Gitamahtmyam sampurnam.

In the Varahapurana this concludes the discourse entitled -

THE GREATNESS OF THE GITA.



INTRODUCTION

There is no book in world-literature so full of meaning and significance for mankind as the Gita. All other literature is man's creation. The Gita is the word of God. What comparison can there be between the work of man deluded by Maya and the work of God who is the ruler of Maya? The speaker of the Gita is divine Incarnation, and the hearer is the very embodiment of all good qualities. The Master is *Paramatma*, and the disciple is a *Mahatma*. The teacher is the Supreme *Purusha* and the taught is the best of men. Thus from the interaction of a master and disciple of wonderful power, the Gita takes its origin. It is the blessed fruit of the *Tapasya* of man and God, of Nara and Narayana. It is the product of the intimate contact of thought between Lord Krishna and warrior Arjuna. The world-famous sage-poet Veda Vyasa, out of infinite compassion for suffering humanity, rendered into rhyme this spiritual conversation between the Lord and his chosen devotee, and offered it to the world. So by the grace of this Trinity—the Lord, his Devotee, and the Sage—the Gita has come into the world for the spiritual benefit of mankind.

Whoever is fortunate could take shelter with the Gita and cross the endless stream of *Samsara*. In fact, it is only when the good done by mankind ripens and comes to fruition that a wonderful book like the Gita comes into the world. The uncommon genius behind the work, its limitless power, and its miraculous character will naturally inspire any reader with devotion and attention to the great book. Therefore it is our duty to know something about its origin, its form and nature and the mystic power that is revealed through every word and phrase of the Divine utterance.

THE TWO MELODIES

Lord Krishna enchanted the world with two divine melodies during his life-time. The first is the magic harmony of his flute, and the second is the celestial song of the Gita

The milk-maids of Brindavan (Gopikas) drank deep the music of his flute, and others, too have had a taste of acquired merit in their lives. But we of this Yuga do not have the possibility of knowing the raptures felt by the simple when they heard the music of his flute. But this need not dishearten us in any way. The loss is more than compensated, for, we today can hear the mighty spiritual harmonies of the Gita. The singer and the song cannot be separated; a Lord Krishna and the Gita are one, they are inseparable. The Gita is the breath of the Lord, nay, it is the very heart of the Lord. Those who are fortunate enough to take a bath in the holy stream of the Gita are immediately freed from all sins and liberation is like a ready fruit in the palm of their hand. What wonderful good fortune it is for millions and millions of people all over the world—past, present, and future—to be able to hear and understand the music of the Gita and feel its ecstasy !

A MIRACLE OF UNIVERSAL BENEFIT

Many were the miracles performed by Lord Krishna during the period of his *Avatara*. Some of his contemporaries witnessed them directly with awe and wonder. We have seen them. But what of it ? The greatest of the Lord's miracles is before us — The Gita. It is not a sudden and temporary miracle limited by time and place. It is not intended to delight any particular set of people. The Gita is the eternal miracle of universal significance for men of all nations and races, of all religions and creeds, of all temperaments and conditions of human existence. Truth, beauty, and peace find their ultimate expression in the Gita — the word of God. So we find in our prayer to Lord Krishna—

“Salutations to Sri Krishna, who, playing the role of a charioteer to Arjuna, gave the nectar of the Gita for the benefit of all beings in all the three worlds”.

GITA—THE ESSENCE OF ALL SASTRAS

The literature of Hindu *Dharma* is vast and extensive. Various are the *Sastras*, the doctrines and creeds,

commentaries expounding them. Baffled by the vastness of this literature, the common man naturally asks the question— “Is there anything that has churned the boundless ocean of the *Sastras* and embodied their very essence ? Can I get a book which presents a synthetic view of all these *Sastras* ? Is there any unique and authentic book which preserves not only the Hindu *Dharma* but also the doctrines, traditions, and conventions of all religions ?” The answer emphatically is—“Yes, there is such a book, and such a book is the Gita.” It is an encyclopaedia of spiritual wisdom and *Dharma*, because in it are brought together the main principles not only of Hindu religion but of all other religions also. It is the mighty tree of *Dharma*, ever expanding with branches and sub-branches of various sects and creeds. It is the central region where all religions are brought into unity. We find in the Gita a convincing harmonisation of *Sankhya*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Mimamsa* and Vedantic doctrines on the one hand, and of Sakta, Saiva, Ganapatya and Vaishnava cults on the other. In brief whatever is thought of by man in any religion and *Dharma* finds its proper place in this wonderful book, which is therefore acclaimed as the universal Scripture, the universal Gospel or the Bible of humanity.

A devotee of Vallabhacharya once asked the master what he considered the greatest *Sastra*. The master replied without any hesitation—

“There is only one *Sastra*, and that is the Gita of Lord Krishna.” Again, replying to a disciple’s question as to what he should sing, Sankaracharya said—

“Sing the Gita and the one thousand names of the Lord.” Thus two giants of intellect and spirituality recommended the Gita, because they realised its invincible power. In the Skanda Purana, it is said—

“The Gita embodies all the *Sastras*” Again in the Mahabharata it is stated—

“One must sing the Gita well; why think of other *Sastras* ?” Thus in one voice the greatness of the Gita is proclaimed ; the sages and the Puranas

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, one thousand years ago the message of the Gita came from the Lord. The lapse of time has not in any way affected its life-force. It flows ever fresh and pure like a mighty river. The sublime thoughts of the Gita, the way it reconciles different religious faiths, the fathomless wisdom embedded in it, the endless interpretations drawn from every word and syllable of its composition, - all these give every reader the feeling that it is not the work of mere human intellect, and understanding. There is no exaggeration if we say that from the beginning of creation no book so beneficial to mankind has appeared. Whenever any great man came into the world, he first paid homage to the Gita, and fulfilled his life's purpose by writing a commentary on it. From all this, we can understand the tremendous influence that the Gita is constantly exerting on the thought of man and his way of life.

THE VARIOUS GITAS-AND THE PLACE OF BHAGAVADGITA AMONG THEM

There are innumerable works in world literature that bear the name Gita as a suffix, like Ashtavakragita, Avadhutagita, Ribhugita, Brahmagita, Vasishtagita, Hanumadgita, Parasara-gita, Sivagita, Hamsagita, Bikshugita, Kapilagita, Devigita, and so on. But it is significant to note that the title of Gita is applied to Bhagavadgita only and to no other work. According to common usage, since Krishna uttered the Gita, it should have been called Krishna Gita. But the title for this wonderfull work is not Krishnagita, but Bhagavadgita. It is not the utterance of a sage or saint, poet or philosopher, or even any divine incarnation, but it is the veritable utterance of God HImself. The title is justified by its universality and its freedom from narrow limits of sects and creeds. Therefore great western thinkers like Maxmuller, Carlyle, Edwin Arnold, Annie Besant and others felt its magnetic power, studied it, reformed their lives according to its teaching, and popularised the work in the world. Edwin Arnold rendered it into English poetry under the beautiful title "The Song Celestial". Such tributes inspire reverence for the work. The Gita is translated into many languages all

over the world, and millions of people are thus enabled to fill their life with peace and bliss by drinking deep the pure waters of spiritual knowledge that flow from the book

GITA - THE MOTHER

In fact, the Gita is not merely a book in the ordinary sense of the word. Gita is the Mother. The living spirit of a mother's heart breathes through it. When Lord Krishna dispensed with his *Avatara*, he left the Gita behind for the benefit of mankind. Ever since, Gita is conferring the blessing of wisdom and removing the sorrows of mankind. In this connection, the words of Mahatma Gandhi are memorable— "I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago, but this eternal mother (Gita) has completely filled her place by my side ever since. When I am in difficulty or distress I seek refuge in her bosom." Like Mahatma Gandhi several others took refuge in her bosom and overcame their difficulties. As the universal Mother, the Gita makes no distinction among her children. She welcomes all to her bosom, — the high-born and the casteless lowly, women and children, animals and birds, nay, the entire creation, — gives them protection, and leads them on the path of liberation. She declares with her majestic voice that liberation is the birthright of all humanity without distinction of race and religion, colour and nationality, age and sex.

THE INCOMPARABLE POWER OF THE GITA

Gita is a Kalpvriksha, but unlike that in Paradise, it does not give temporary worldly goods; its gift is the bliss of liberation when all desires cease. Gita is a Kamadhenu, but unlike that in Heaven, it does not bestow perishable things of pleasure; its gift is the pure and perfect joy of the spirit. Gita is a Chintamani, but unlike that in Heaven, it does not yield earthly prosperity; it removes all troubles and tribulations and leads the bound souls to the ultimate reality where there is no more sorrow or delusion. Gita is nectar, but it is not the insentient liquid that the Gods are supposed to drink. It is the nectar of knowledge that releases man from the cycle of birth and death, and gives him direct realisation of the Supreme Self.

Fearlessness is its principal doctrine, for it instils faith in every man by repeatedly telling him — "You are not the body, you are the imperishable *Atman*". It is the divine voice that teaches the secret of action, free from attachment to results, and thereby declares that all people are qualified for the glory of liberation.

It is a strongly built boat that enables man to cross the ocean of *Samsara* easily. It is the charioteer that drives life's chariot smoothly over the perilous road of the world. It is the thunder peal of knowledge that wakes up man from the sleep of delusion. The cowherd of Brindavan, Sri Krishna, milked the cows, namely the Upanishads, and sage Veda Vyasa, happily for us, preserved the stream of nectar in the magnificent vial of Mahabharata. It is the divine vision that harmonises the highest philosophy with everyday practical life. It falls like gentle rain and cools the heat-oppressed brain, scalded by the threefold sulphurous fire. It frees mankind from the snares of delusion created by atheists and agnostics, and lifts them up like an aeroplane to fly freely in the sky of truth. It is a faithful guide that warns us against the pitfalls of external allurements and temptations, and leads us on the right path. Ignorance causes delusion, and delusion causes an irresistible attraction for the sensual pleasures of the world. The Gita dispels ignorance and delusion all at once, and places the key to liberation directly in our hands. Thus the Gita is essentially the highest *Brahma Vidya*.

THE REASON FOR THE BOUNDLESS POWER OF THE GITA

We shall now understand the reason for the boundless power of the Gita. When Suka taught king Parikshit the path of liberation, the sage had full seven days time to convey his teaching. So he could expound his philosophy with delightful stories, illustrations, and beautiful descriptions. But the position of Lord Krishna when he delivered his message was entirely different. The Lord had only a few minutes time to teach the highest knowledge. Besides, it was a battlefield. Conches

were blown, drums sounded, and in a moment, arrows would issue forth from the assembled heroes and warriors. It was in the midst of this uproar that Lord Krishna had to shoulder the tremendous responsibility of teaching the highest wisdom to Arjuna. Before the seated warrior could rise up, the Lord had to work the miracle of a total spiritual transformation in his devotee's heart. Naturally therefore, in order to meet the crisis, Lord Krishna pulled together and brought into one focal point the mystic powers he possessed as the Supreme *Purusha*. He distilled all the wisdom of the Vedas and Vedanta into his teaching. He taught everything found in the *Sastras* and the different methods of spiritual practice. As a result, the Lord's purpose was completely fulfilled. The same Arjuna who in the beginning wailed in despair, "I will not fight" speaks resolutely at the end, "I will carry out your word." He declares triumphantly, "My delusion is destroyed."

It is the transcendental genius of Lord Krishna that worked the miracle. It is the illumination of knowledge arising out of the intense concentration and ecstasy of the Lord that worked on the devotee's mind, and brought about the change of vision. Even ordinary mortals, when they get into a state of concentration, are able to perform difficult things in literature, politics, science, religion and other worldly activities. This being so, is it any wonder that the all-knowing Bhagavan, by concentrating his powers, could achieve the highest aim in the shortest time and under the most difficult circumstances?

This idea is supported by one incident in the Aswamedha-parva of Mahabharata. Yudhishtira was installed king, and he ruled the kingdom peacefully and prosperously. Lord Krishna wished to return to Dwaraka. At that time, Arjuna approached him and said, "The message you gave me on the battlefield has slipped out of my mind. I am eager to hear it again. Deign to instruct me in the divine knowledge which out of compassion you taught me then." Lord Krishna replied, "I have taught you the most secret knowledge at that time. I am greatly displeased that you have forgotten it out of neglect and indifference. It is beyond me to repeat it fully now. On the

battlefield when I spoke to you I was in a state of ecstatic concentration. It is not possible now."

From this we understand that the Gita was the outcome of the deep meditative ecstasy of the Lord of Yoga. Hence it's infinite power.

GITA - A SACRIFICE

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, a wonderful sacrifice was performed. The face of Arjuna was the consecrated fire. The message of the Gita was the sacred oblation. Lord Krishna was the High-priest, and the fruit of sacrifice was liberation (*Moksha*).

Lord Krishna distilled the very essence of Mahabharata into the Gita and offered it to Arjuna, and the life's purpose of the devotee was thus fulfilled. The Gita is open to all. May generations of people reach the goal of life through it !

GITA - THE ESSENCE OF THE UPANISHADS

The Upanishads are the essence of the Vedas, and the Gita is the essence of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are known as *Vedanta Sastra*, because they reveal the highest truths of Vedic literature. They are also known as the Crown (head) of the Vedas, as they comprise the most important aspect of the Vedas, in the same way as the head is the most important organ of the human body. The Upanishads occupy the central place in spiritual literature. It is natural that earnest seekers should wish to study and understand the Upanishads which are the finest fruits of the mighty Vedic tree. But the language and thought of the Upanishads are not easy for the common man to understand. How can they appreciate their sweet music ? How can they understand and experience the knowledge inculcated through them ? This was a difficult problem. The Lord set himself the task of solving it, and thereby did the greatest service to humanity. The Upanishads are the Cows, Arjuna is the Calf, Lord Krishna himself is the milkman, and thus he milked the supreme knowledge of Self from the Upanishads and distributed it to all seekers after truth. The Gita is the milk drawn from the Upanishads.

Thus the Vedic knowledge is made available to the common man through the easy literature of the Gita. Generally people think that Gita is taught to Arjuna. The fact is that it is taught to all mankind. After all the share of milk that goes to the Calf is very little. The rest is for others. All pure-souls seeking for liberation share the wisdom of Gita alike. The Gita is not the mythical drink of the Gods but the spiritual nectar of absolute *Sachidananda*. Easy in style, sublime in style, sublime in thought, the Gita as the essence of the Upanishads, is offered to us by the Lord Himself. It is therefore the duty of every one to read, understand, and practise the teaching of the Gita and transcend the ills and sorrows of earthly life.

WISDOM OF THE GITA—INFINITE

As we try to estimate the miraculous power of the Gita, we find it infinite. Just as God is infinity, even so His word is infinite in its suggestiveness and significance. Lord Krishna is God Himself, and so his words are God's own utterance. The Gita of Lord Krishna is therefore in a real sense Bhagavadgita. Any reader would be struck with its divine quality. Divinity sparkles through every word and verse. Newer and newer meanings are released as we read it often and often. It is no exaggeration to say that each word contains a whole flood of knowledge and wisdom. The Gita yields its meaning to each man according to his previous thoughts and experiences. As the mind is purified, it progressively reveals its universality. "The suggestiveness of this wonderful book is really infinite." Although several people have drawn out its meaning through notes and commentaries, yet infinite wisdom remains unrevealed in it. When a mighty river is flowing, each man, according to his capacity, draws its water for his use—the vessel to collect the water being large or small, a glass, a bucket or a tank, as the case may be. Inspite of the water thus taken out, the river still flows on as an immeasurable flood. Even so, the best of men in intellect and spiritual wisdom, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, and Srikanta, have collected the spiritual knowledge of the Gita through the large vessels of their purified minds. In modern times, Tilak, Gandhi, Annie Besant, and

others drew their share of knowledge from the book. Several others are engaged in the work, and in future many more will do so. In this way, many have churned the Gita and interpreted its meaning in different ways. Some have spoken of it as the doctrine of *Advaita*, others of dualism, yet others as Karma-yoga, Bhaktiyoga, Rajayoga, and the knowledge of the Supreme Being, and so on. Notwithstanding all these interpretations and commentaries, a whole treasure of knowledge still lies in the unfathomable depths of the work.

This is its uniqueness. No other work has such potentiality. Therefore it is said that there is only one person who could understand its meaning in its entirety, and that person is no other than the Lord Himself. The others could understand only parts of its infinite wisdom.

"Lord Krishna alone knew the complete wisdom of the Gita. Arjuna, Vyasa, Suka and Janaka understood only a bit of it."

However one must understand a simple truth here. Whether a man takes a single drop of nectar or a whole jugful of it, the effect is the same. Immortality is assured for all of them without exception. So, without being disheartened that one is not so intelligent and spiritually evolved as the great masters, each one should try to understand one of its great teachings and practise it in his life. Thus he would attain supreme peace.

GITA—THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF MAHABHARATA

The Bhagavadgita comprises eighteen chapters—(from chapter twenty five to chapter forty two in the Bhishma Parva of Mahabharata.) In the vast ocean of that stupendous epic, the Gita shines like a light-house. It is the cream of the epic Veda. Vyasa composed it after mastering the eighteen *Puranas*, the nine *Vyakaranas*, and the four *Vedas*.

The epic is known as the fifth Veda. The Gita is the essence of that great work. Figuratively, as Lord Krishna

showered the nectar of knowledge, Vyasa collected it in the magnificent vial of the Mahabharata.

"Of the four ends of life—righteousness, wealth, fulfilment of desire, and final liberation—what is found in the Bharata is found elsewhere, and what is not in it is not found anywhere." Again it is said, "That which is not in Mahabharata will not be found in the country of Bharata." From this, one can imagine the greatness of the Gita, as the essence of Mahabharata. Sankara says at the beginning of his commentary that the Gita is the epitomised essence of all Vedic knowledge. Otherwise why should scholars all over the world be drawn to it? Where there is no honey, the bees are not there. The teaching of the Gita is deathless. Changes of time and clime do not affect it. It remains intact and entire. Its *Dharma* applies to all cycles of time. So the teacher of the Gita says in the third chapter that he taught the deathless wisdom to the Sun.

And also it is the deepest and the most secret wisdom. Otherwise why should the Gitacharya say that he is teaching the most secret knowledge? Thus the fundamental philosophy of the Gita is applicable to all times and countries, all religions and creeds. It is a narrow view to think of the Gita as a book of a particular religion. Those who take refuge in it would understand what righteousness is, and quickly attain peace.

Let us hear what Jnaneswara says of the Gita—"The Gita is a garden where plants of discrimination abound; the basis of all enjoyments: the mine of transcendental knowledge; the ocean filled with the nine *Rasas*: open gateway to the highest heaven; the mother of all sciences; the birthplace of different types of knowledge; the treasury of literary jewels; the Ganges flooded with the nectar of knowledge; the Goddess Lakshmi rising from the milky sea of discrimination." Such devoted praise from highly spiritual men declare the greatness of the Gita.

GITA - UPANISHAD

We shall now consider some more striking aspects of the Gita. The *Sastras* say that Brahma rose from the navel-lotus

of Lord Vishnu and that Brahma gave the Vedas to the world. On the other hand, the Gita proceeded directly from the face-lotus of the Lord Himself. Which is nearer—the navel-lotus or the face-lotus? So it is clear that the Gita occupies a place nearer to the Lord than the Vedas. The same idea is expressed in Mahabharata thus—

“One must sing the Gita well. Why bother about other *Sastras*? The Gita proceeded directly from the face-lotus of the Lord Himself.” What more evidence do we need to establish the greatness of the Gita? Some people compare the Gita to *Smriti*. Vallabhacharya rejected the proposition by questioning that if the Vedas are the breath of the Lord, Gita which is the word of God, should be given a higher place. Moreover at the end of every chapter of the Gita, we find the declaration—“in the Upanishad of *Brahmavidya*.” Therefore it is evident that the Gita ranks high among the Upanishads. There is nothing wrong to name it as the Gita—Upanishad. Like the Veda, the Gita is undoubtedly the word of God.

GITA—IN THE PRASTHANATRAYA

The ten Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita, and the Brahmasutras constitute what is known as the *Prasthanatraya*, without an understanding of the *Prasthanatraya*, it is impossible to attain spiritual realisation. So, for those who seek for liberation, the *Prasthanatraya* is the greatest support. As the Gita contains all the subtle principles of *Dharma*, it has acquired an important place for itself in the *Prasthanatraya*. The sublime and subtle thoughts of the Upanishads and the Brahmasutras are expressed in easily understandable style and diction in the Gita, which explains its great popularity among all sections of people. In the *Gitamahatmya*, Lord Vishnu declares,

“The Gita is my shelter and refuge; it is a beautiful home for me; with its knowledge I rule the three worlds.” These words declare emphatically the sublimity of the Gita and its importance for the common man. If the Lord rules the three worlds with its knowledge, will it not help the common man to rule a small household with its powerful wisdom? It can. Kings like Janaka

were able to rule kingdoms in the spirit of the Gita. All those who followed the teaching of the Gita were able to rule kingdoms in the spirit of the Gita. All those who followed the Gita teaching were able to maintain their families free from fear, and direct the ship of life safely through stormy accidents, disasters, and calamities. Therefore the common man who is caught in the world's wilderness, and the fire of difficulties should always take the help of the Gita for his own peace and happiness.

"The Gita protects those who protect it." That is, those who revere the Gita, seek refuge in it, and practise its teaching are rescued from the ocean of *Samsara*. The *Sastras* exhort—"He who desires to cross the terrible ocean of *Samsara* can do so easily with the help of the Gita-ship."

REMEDY TO THE EVILS OF KALIYUGA

Perhaps because *Dharma* in the *Kaliyuga* walks lame with only one of her four feet, or perhaps because *Kali* would exert the greatest evil influence to make all mankind fallen souls, the Supreme Lord incarnated Himself as Krishna and offered the Gita as protection for mankind just before the beginning of the *Kaliyuga*. Otherwise, why did He not think of this in the *Kritayuga*, or in the *Tretayuga*? Why did he wait till the end of *Dwaparayuga*? Evidently, He knew that a strong medicine acts powerfully when the disease is serious. Whatever it is, the people of the *Kaliyuga* have no fear now. Just as for the *Manirik* there is no fear from malefic planets or evil spirits, the man who repeats the *Gita-mantra* has no fear of and is immune from the difficulties and dangers of worldly life. If, for any reason, they do come, they are destroyed at once. In the *Padmapurana*, the greatness of the Gita is described as follows,—

"The mere recitation of the Gita defeats and silences the horried cries of the legions of Death." It is no exaggeration to say that every word of the Gita is like fire that burns all sin. Therefore from the learned pundits to the illiterate from the king to the beggar, all mankind take shelter with the Gita and enjoy the blessings of life. By drinking the holy waters of the

Gita, many attained and are even now attaining perfection and freedom. Sankara asserts,—“A little study of the Gita, a sip of the holy Ganges water, worship of Vishnu even once, is enough to drive away the Lord of Death.” So one should take the pledge to follow the truths of the Gita with faith, and experience supreme bliss even in this life.

THE GITA--AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The Gita is not merely a conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. It is the process of thought in the heart of every individual. Like Arjuna, if anybody listens carefully to the Lord, His divine voice would be audible to him. One should not keep away Gita after reading it once. It is not like a novel to peruse it once and throw it away. The Gita is constantly in contact with life. People should study it regularly, and continue to practise the laws proclaimed in it from day to day. In the disasters and calamities of earthly life, the Gita offers indomitable support. Just as the sick man is fearless when an expert physician is by the side, just as a seeker after truth beset by doubts feels joyful when he has by his side an experienced teacher to guide him, even so, the individual human being tortured by the sorrows of earthly life, acquires courage and power from the Gita.

The following words of Mahatma Gandhi recording his personal experience of adherence to the laws of the Gita, would be highly encouraging to all. “When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to Bhagavadgita and find a verse to comfort me and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they had not left any visible and indelible effect on me I owe it to the teachings of Bhagavadgita.” That is why the elders have instituted the study of the Gita as a daily recitation. By such constant study and meditation of the Gita, mundane life is transformed into divine life. Thus the demon evolves into man and man evolves into a Mahatma. Such is the extraordinary power of the Gita. People are for-ever indebted to Krishna, Arjuna and Vedavyasa for having conferred the blessing of Gita on mankind.

**THE REMOVAL OF SORROW AND THE ATTAINMENT
OF BLISS-THE AIM OF THE GITA**

Gita means that which is sung; and song is generally inspired in times of joy and not in times of sorrow. So the seeker should remember that the ultimate goal of the Gita is bliss. Its purpose is to show the path to a state of unconditioned bliss. Through the eighteen chapters, the Gita reveals to the individual being the different paths leading up to unbroken bliss. So it is that the Gita starts with the word—'Asochyan' (those for whom no sorrow need be) and ends with 'masuchah' (do not grieve). The denial of sorrow and the attainment of joy—these are the two great fruits of the Gita to mankind tormented by the fierce fire of earthly life. The grieving soul is comforted. The troubled man is inspired with courage. The man in despair is instilled with enthusiasm. Thus many people approach the Gita, the mother, and derive a wonderful change of heart.

So far we have touched upon some external aspects of the Gita. We shall now go deeper into the work and examine its beauty. But before we do so we have to consider the circumstances of the birth of the Gita, and its antecedents. The Gita is not fiction. It is a historical fact. Lord Krishna, Arjuna, and others are not imaginary characters, but real men who lived in Bharath (India) in the past. As we realise this fact, our faith in the Gita would be redoubled.

THE BIRTH OF THE GITA

When the Pandavas and the Kauravas were living together in peace and harmony, the germ of jealousy entered the heart of Duryodhana and gradually robbed him of his discrimination. Consequently, with the wrong lead given by Sakuni and others, he defeated the Pandavas in the game of dice and won the whole kingdom for himself. The Pandavas were banished on the condition that they should live in the forest for twelve years, and remain unidentified for one year. The Pandavas fulfilled the conditions of their defeat, and after thirteen years, claimed their share of the kingdom. But Duryodhana refused to give even an inch of territory, much less five small villages for the five princes. The Pandavas were offended by the pride and

greed of their cousins, and had no alternative but to undertake a righteous war to secure their due share of the kingdom. The armies of both sides assembled on the battlefield of Kurukshetra known as *Dharmakshetra*—the field of righteousness. The battle was about to begin. Arjuna, the chief hero of the Pandav hosts, asked his charioteer Lord Krishna to drive forward and stop the chariot in the midst of the two armies. Then Arjun surveyed the enemy formations and saw before him his own grandfathers, teachers, cousins, friends, and other relations. In a moment, he visualised the horror of a terrible war in which he had to defy and destroy so many of his own kith and kin. His mind was confused and perplexed with doubt and he sank into the slough of despondency. "How can I kill my own people? Is it not a sin? Better it is to become a mendicant and live on alms, than to kill my own relations and friends, and become a king." So his mind wandered away from the set purpose with which he came to the battlefield. His resolution deserted him. He became weak and pathetic. He perspired all over the body, his hands trembled, and the great bow *Gandiva* slipped out of his grip. Down he fell on the ground at the feet of the Lord, and implored him to enlighten him as to what is *Dharma* and what his duty is, under those critical circumstances.

"I am your disciple. I surrender to you. Command me as to what my duty is in this crisis—With these words he surrendered to the Lord and implored for his guidance. Then was the message of the Gita delivered by Lord Krishna. With the thoughts of 'I' and 'mine', *Moha* (ignorance) overpowered Arjuna, and deprived him of the power to carry out his duty. The whole teaching of the Gita is a thunderstroke on man's ignorance and delusion, which is nothing but identifying the Self with the body. It is the cause of Arjuna's poverty of spirit at a time when his duty demanded resolute action. The Lord's spiritual illumination shattered his devotee's delusion into fragments, and in the end the disciple triumphantly declares, "Delusion is destroyed, I will do as you command".

The Gita that dispelled the ignorance of Arjuna can dispel the ignorance of any one. The Gita that removed the sorrow of Arjuna can remove the sorrow of any one. The medicine

that cures a particular disease of any one can cure such disease in all people. It is true that, Arjuna as the medium, Lord Krishna was offering his divine message to mankind. So it behoves every one sincerely to examine his own heart and mind, and in the light of the Lord's supreme wisdom, to destroy the delusions of lust and greed accumulated through innumerable births. Supreme Self-realisation is the concept of the Gita. May humanity attain bliss through Self-Knowledge.

WHO IS QUALIFIED FOR GITA-STUDY ?

The question who is qualified to study Gita is often discussed. Who drinks water?—the man who is thirsty. Who eats food?—the man who is hungry. Who takes medicine?—the man who is sick. Therefore all those who are victims of the disease of mortal life are qualified for the study of the Gita; and all those who are born are subject to this disease. Those who suffer pain and grief are victims of the disease of life's bondage. All those who are born and therefore should die are subject to the disease of earthly life. It follows that all mankind without distinction of caste, creed, and age are qualified for the study of the Gita and the acquisition of its knowledge. But the principal point is, that man alone who is aware of his disease seeks for medicine, and the effectiveness of the medicine depends upon his faith in the physician and the medicine prescribed by him. Even so, he who is conscious of his bondage and the infinite ills of earthly life, will undertake the study of great books like the Gita. And also, only those who have undisturbed faith in the *Sastras* and the holy men who teach them, derive benefit from their study. For others, the study is only a pastime and is futile. So Lord Krishna determines the quality of the man competent to study the Gita in the following words—

“O Arjuna! the Gita should not be taught to those who do not seek for liberation from the cycle of birth and death, to those who do not have devotion to God and *Guru*, to those who do not serve the teacher, and to those who speak ill of Me (God).” The Gita is prohibited for such men only.

In another place, the Lord again says— “Those who have faith in the teaching of the Gita, and practice it without evil and

hatred, are soon freed from the effects of *Karma*. On the other hand, those who hate the teaching of the Gita and do not practise it, are doomed to death through their ignorance.” Therefore faith and devotion are the only qualifications for the study of the Gita. It should be noted that Lord Krishna uses the general term “*manavah*” ‘people’ because he wants to emphasise the truth that all people irrespective of their race and religion are competent to undertake the study and understanding of the Gita.

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

The Lord is interested more in emphasising practice than in expounding the principles of philosophy. So he disposes off the object of attainment, *Paramatman*, with a few well-defined principles, and elaborates at length the means and methods for reaching the goal. The determining features of the man of steady-fast wisdom in the second chapter, the method of *yogic* practice in the sixth chapter, the qualities of a devotee in the twelfth chapter, the characteristics of spiritual knowledge in the thirteenth chapter; the attributes of divine nature—these are illustrations of the method of teaching adopted in the Gita. It is made clear to us that the continuous practice of the prescribed methods is more important than the mere exposition of religious doctrines. In every page of the Gita we discover this emphasis on practice. No man whose moral life is blemished by lust and greed can hope to receive spiritual illumination. Knowledge is impossible for one whose mind is impure. Can corn grow on a withered heath? So ethical training for the purification of the mind is the first and the most essential thing in spiritual life. Knowing this, the teacher of the Gita lays special emphasis on character-building.

If the love for the Supreme Being should induce the person to take to some form of spiritual practice, the goal becomes manifest in a short time. But unfortunately, people are constantly talking of the goal without attempting to move forward towards it. Man can attain salvation only when his mind becomes absolutely pure. Otherwise the vast gulf between the individual soul and the Supreme Self remains as it is for ever.

"Mind becoming as pure as *Paratman* is liberation" says Patanjali. Therefore the seeker should undertake the ways and means to purify the mind. People think more of the object of attainment and less of the methods of attaining the object. They are carried away by philosophical doctrines and lose sight of the path leading to their realisation. They glorify the ideal but neglect the attempt to reach it. The tendency to dwell too much and too long on the abstract truths of religion is the greatest obstacle and temptation to the seeker. Therefore the teacher of the Gita concentrates attention on the means and methods leading to the goal. He speaks briefly about what is to be known and enlarges the path of knowledge. He speaks briefly about the object of meditation and explains at length the process of meditation. This is the fundamental teaching which the seeker should understand at the very beginning of his study of the Gita. Let all people remember that the Gita is the practical science of religion.

GITA ELEVATES WORLDLY ACTIVITY TO THE LEVEL OF VEDANTA

"A life of activity is not wrong; It is not an obstacle to spiritual progress; Purify your mind, then your work becomes a holy sacrifice. Purify your feeling, then shall earthly life become an aid to spiritual realisation."— This is the truth the Gita proclaims to the world. Man cannot live without activity even for a second. So it is useless to condemn the activities of man in the world and teach renunciation of action. The common man cannot understand it. If inaction is to be equated with realisation, then walls and stumps of trees would be the greatest philosophers, for they do not act. Ninety per cent of the people are either house-holders or bachelors. The *Sanyasins* who have renounced everything, who lead a solitary life, and who remain in a state of absolute absorption in the divine are very very few. What we need is that type of teaching which is useful for the largest majority of people. Having considered the nature of mankind and worldly life, the teacher of the Gita, instead of condemning worldly activity, has set about to find the way to sublime action and purify it from its worldly taint. And he declares openly that man can gradually progress towards self-realisation through purified action.

"Worshipping me through their prescribed duties, men attain liberation."—So says Lord Krishna. Arjuna is himself the most shining example of this truth. Deluded by *Maya*, he declined to fight. A feeling of false renunciation overpowered him. He said he would beg for his food, and live on alms in some nook or corner, and so spend his life.

Lord Krishna could easily see through the delusion that clouded the mind of his devotee. He dispelled the ignorance with his divine knowledge, and Arjuna sprang into the field of battle with all the power and glory of a warrior, and transformed the battle into a holy sacrifice by declaring "I am not the doer." With the Lord constantly before his eyes he fought the battle. Indeed, the rememberance of the Lord in the midst of all worldly activity is the direct road to final liberation for all people.

"Remember me and fight." This is the open secret of action. To fight is not in itself great. To remember the Lord and fight is indeed great. To surrender the fruit of action, and do the work prescribed by duty is the sublimation of work into worship. Work is transformed into worship by the fruits of action being dedicated to God. Then, the man engaged in a thousand activities of the world will attain the same goal as the *yogi* who remains still and silent in the ecstasy of divine contemplation. Both will attain peace that surpasses understanding. This is the main teaching of the Gita. Some of the *Sastras* emphasise the withdrawl from the world of action, and some other *Sastras* teach exactly the opposite. In both cases there is an over-emphasis on action or the negation of action. But the Gita has discovered a via-media, a middle path that reconciles action and the renunciation of action. All people can follow the path. "Though your hands are in society, keep your mind calm in solitude." This the Gita teaches. Following this principle, king Janaka ruled a kingdom; Lord Vishnu is ruling the three worlds by the same wisdom.

Thus Lord Krishna elevated action as the main path of *yoga* to spiritual realisation. Narrow-minded *Vedantins* condemn wordly activity and consider exclusion and isolation from society as the necessary condition of spiritual life. But

the Lord has given a new interpretation and wider significance to action in the world by pointing out that, if it is done with the proper spirit and attitude, it would lead to the highest goal. No other *Sastra* has enunciated this doctrine. Therefore the Gita stands unique in religious literature.

THE HARMONY OF DIFFERENT PATHS OF YOGA IN THE GITA

Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Raja-yoga and Jnana-yoga—these four paths lead to the Supreme Being. Seekers choose that path which is best suited to their nature and temperament. Among these, not a few proclaim the importance of their own particular path, and try to establish its superiority by producing arguments in its favour. Not only do they glorify their own path but they go to the extent of condemning other paths as worthless and wretched. This has led to bitter controversies, violent denunciations, and mutual hatred among the followers of the different creeds. The Lord was quite aware of the danger of such futile controversies to establish the superiority of one path over another. Therefore he set himself the task of putting down these differences, and proclaiming once for all the equality and harmony of all the four paths of *yoga*. These four paths, as it were, are the four gateways to enter the mansion of liberation, and through whichever gateway one enters, he reaches the inner palace. Just as different rivers flowing through distant regions finally reach the ocean, even so, all the various paths of *yoga* lead man to the ultimate goal of Truth. All paths are good. There is no compulsion to follow this or that path. Each man is perfectly free to choose that path which suits his character and temperament, and move forward towards the goal.

By nature, the mind of some people is inclined to action. Such men inevitably take to Karma-yoga. They find pleasure in activity, and delight in service to society. The Gita teaches them what action is, and how action should be one without attachment to the fruits thereof. The chapter entitled Karma-yoga is intended to guide men of action in the proper way, so that they might not blindly plunge into wordly activity and get themselves caught in the sequence of action and reaction. The

Gita teaches that action, without the feeling of personal doership and without attachment to the fruits thereof, is the secret of Karma-yoga.

Again, some people by nature are emotional. They have strong feelings of love and affection. Such men choose the path of devotion-Bhakti-yoga. They worship, they pray, they sing the name of the Lord in a hundred ways, and find inexpressible joy in the love for their chosen deity. The Gita exhorts them to rise higher and higher in their devotion, and come closer to their object of worship. This Bhakti-yoga is meant for such aspirants. A third category of men are meditative. They do not find pleasure in action, or in the flow of emotion. So they meditate (*Dhyana*) on the highest reality, by withdrawing their minds from the distracting influence of the sense-objects, and by turing it inwards to find out the very source and the ultimate origin of their being. Such inward exploration of the reality gives them great satisfaction. For such men the Gita explains the nature of *Dhyana* (meditation), and control of the senses and mind. This is Atma-Samyama yoga in the Gita.

Apart from these three categories, there is a fourth category of aspirants, and they are *Jnanis*. They are rational in their outlook and attitude. They think, analyse, discriminate, and reject what is not real, and try to grasp the reality by a process of un-compromising reason. They discriminate between the real and the unreal, between matter and spirit, between the mind and that which knows the various transformations of the mind. It requires great will-power to hold on to this rational enquiry into the nature of Truth, without being side tracked or pulled out by the appetites of the body or the impulses of the mind. For these aspirants, the Gita teaches Kshetrakshetrajna-yoga which forms a separate chapter in the book.

In this way the Gita accepts the predispositions of different minds and encourages people to adopt the most suitable path for their progress. The Gita denies the superiority or inferiority of any form of practice and maintains a balance among the various creeds. Bitter controversies among different sects are due to ignorance, and Gita upholds the importance of every

yoga in its own proper place and for suitable aspirants. Swami Vivekananda asserts, "The reconciliation of different paths of *Dharma*, and work without desire are the two special characteristics of the Gita." As the Gita is universal in its message, leaders of different doctrines and creeds have all offered their homage to it. Sankara, the exponent of *Advaita*, Ramanuja of qualified monism, Madhava of dualism, Srikantha of Saiva-cult, have all praised the Gita unanimously. Thus the Gita explains one after another all the paths of union with the Supreme, and finally concludes that all paths leads to the same goal. The ultimate aim of all religions is to root out the ego and merge in the infinite. Contradictions and denunciation of principles other than one's own is detrimental to spiritual enlightenment. The Gita has done the greatest service to mankind by setting at rest all such foolish controversy, and by declaring the balance and harmony of all paths of *yoga*.

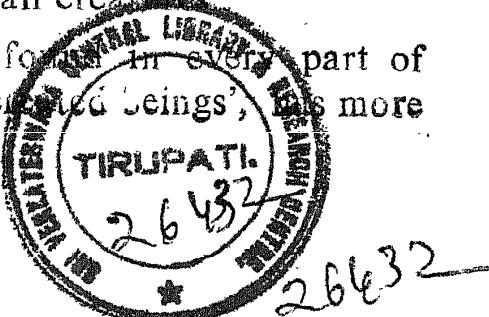
GITA AND UNIVERSAL LOVE

Gita is not mere talk, it is the practice of *Vedanta*. In the smallest details, it points towards the practical side of life. Without the ripening of heart, no realisation is possible. This is the basic creed of the Gita. If the mind is permeated with ignorance and disturbed by selfish desires, and is therefore hard and cruel, no amount of prayer, worship or meditation can bring liberation to the aspirant. It is only when the heart is filled with tenderness and love that devotion, knowledge, and meditation develop, and man makes progress towards the goal. But such devotion has no meaning when man appears to love God but hates his fellow beings. It is not service to God, but an offence to the Lord.

Any harm or offence done to man is an offence to God Himself, because all creatures constitute the limbs of God in his universal form. Any injury done to any limb affects the whole being. Therefore love for all is the essential ingredient of all forms of *yoga*. The Gita continuously from beginning to end emphasizes this truth. Wherever there is an occasion the teacher refers to kindness and love for all creatures.

Thoughts of universal love are found in every part of the Gita. The word—*Sarvabhuta*—'all created beings', has more

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than human application. Love is universalised to include all non-human creatures like animals, birds, and plants, and so on. Why does Lord Krishna give such importance to universal love? Is it not enough to teach meditation, worship, or discrimination, or *yoga*? Evidently it is not enough. These practices of *yoga*, however sincerely and efficiently they are practised cannot bear fruit, in the same way as good medicine alone cannot cure a disease without proper diet. Medicine and proper diet are both equally important. So love for all creatures is essential for realisation, along with the practice of *yoga*.

"He who does my work, who regards me as the supreme, who is devoted to me, who is free from attachment and desire, who has no hatred of any creature, he gains union with me." So says the Lord. Besides this, while describing the characteristic features of a devotee, he first mentions the princely quality of love for all creation—"adveshta sarvabhutanam" (i.e.) he who has no hatred of any creature in the universe. What is the secret behind this teaching of the Lord? It is to say that universal love is the real fruit of all *yogas*, meditation, knowledge, action etc. To know that everything is the manifestation of the Lord, and to love all with that understanding is the highest realisation of the ultimate Truth. And then the practical side of *yoga* is impressed upon all aspirants, that universal love is the test of *Vedanta*. The aspiring soul has to shed all thoughts of ill-will and hatred against any creature. Everyday life affords innumerable opportunities for the practice of this golden virtue.

As man eliminates ill-thoughts and feelings, his practice of *yoga* in any form rapidly becomes perfect and he reaches the supreme state. Universal love alone can remove the mental conflict between the individual and the environment in which he is placed, and unless this conflict is removed, there can be no realisation of God. In the Bhagavata, Sudama prays to Lord Krishna for three virtues (1) worship of his lotus-feet (2) company of holy devotees, (3) overflowing an limitless love for all creatures. Of these three, the last gives vitality and power to the other virtues. Devotion and knowledge are illumined by universal love. When we come across any man of divine realisation, we invariably find in him a disinterested love for all creatures, and

a heart overflowing with love and compassion for suffering humanity. Lord Krishna therefore underlines the need for this basic quality for all aspirants, whatever might be the form of *yoga* they choose to follow.

GITA EQUANIMITY OF MIND

Another great teaching of the Gita is equanimity. It is only when the mind is calm and balanced that *Atman* becomes manifest. Just as the reflection of the Sun's orb is seen clearly when the water is pure and calm, even so, when the mind is calm and pure, *Atman* shines forth in its own splendour, and supreme bliss is then experienced. Therefore the Gita teaches equanimity and the means of attaining it. The aspirant should be constantly vigilant, and ceaselessly strive for calmness and balance of mind. Lord Krishna speaks quite clearly about *yoga*. He says *Samatvam yoga uchyate*. Equanimity of mind is *yoga*. There are several quotations to this effect in the Gita.

"O Arjuna! in pleasure and pain, in fame and shame, in heat and cold, in praise and abuse, in loss or gain, in success or defeat, keep an equal mind. The heroic soul who maintains such equanimity is alone qualified for liberation. He conquers the wiles and trials, the limitations and obstacles of Nature even in this life. He attains supreme bliss." In this way, the teacher of the Gita specially urges aspiring souls to cultivate equanimity, as the very breath of their life. We come across many people who think of liberation, but who do nothing to discipline the mind which is the main obstacle to self-realisation. The mind is like a monkey, unsteady, moody, perverse and foolish. The man with an untrained mind is subject to violent reactions resulting from the ups and downs of worldly life. He is elated by praise, and is depressed by criticism. He becomes cynical when things go wrong. He weeps and wails when pain or loss, or bereavement overtakes him in the usual course of human life. He is like the bucket used to draw water. It goes down into the deep well, and is pulled up to the top alternately. Such modifications of the mind make it impossible to grasp the truth, even if it is thought of a thousand times. The spiritual aim cannot be attained with such a weak and impure instrument,

So Lord Krishna exhorts every one to strive for purity and equanimity of mind in the midst of the most distressing conditions of human existence.

The whole universe is the manifestation of God. Here there is only one and not many. Ignorance creates the illusion of manifoldness. But it is not real. In the chapter on *Viswarupasandarsana*, the truth is made known to us that the Lord pervades the whole universe and is immanent in all that exists. The universal form of God cannot be broken up into fragments, like a piece of cloth. Therefore there should not be any ill-will or hatred against any living creature. We must look at all things with an equal eye. We should be equal minded towards friends and enemies. The Gita teaching goes beyond human love.

"Towards a learned and humble Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a pariah who eats dog's flesh, the man of knowledge has an equal attitude." Here is the greatness of the Gita. The Gita enfolds in its universal embrace of love all living creatures, men and animals together. "Oh, aspiring soul, shower your love not only on man but on the demon also, not only on good-men but the wicked also, not only on human beings but on animals, birds, creeping reptiles, and worms also. As you love yourself, so love others. In joy and sorrow, consider the whole universe as your own, your own self"—This is the injunction of Lord Krishna.

Generally we speak of brother-hood among mankind as a great virtue. The elders say, "love others as your own brothers." But Gita rises a step higher. It transcends the idea of brotherhood and reaches the plane of identification of one's self with all. The Gita expounds this idea. In fact the idea of brotherhood is insufficient as brothers may divide, dispute, and fight. But no one could hate his own self. Therefore identification of others with one's own self is the highest form of love. Few religions expound and preach this universality. It is the Upanishadas and the Gita that proclaim the truth.

Thus the Gita breaks through all barriers and limitations which restrict the scope of universal love. Some people exhort

men to love others, but they do not clearly explain the reason for it. They do not answer the question why one should love others.

Why should man act in a particular way? Why should he practice this or that virtue? What is the basis of universal love? Why should one do good to others—why not do the harm? Lord Krishna the spiritualist teacher answered these questions and doubts raised by the materialist scientists. Love for others is not a virtue imposed a man, but it is the very realisation of one's own self which is one and which is shining through everything in the universe. This is the secret how love struggles with hatred and comes out triumphant in the end. The whole attempt of man knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, is to enlarge and expand to the fullest limit, his real being, which is coextensive with the universe and all that is in it. So universal love is the real nature of man and hatred is a contradiction of his true nature. The Gita explains this secret and exhorts man to be equal-minded towards all creatures without any distinction whatsoever.

NEW LINES OF THOUGHT IN THE GITA

We shall now consider how the Gita gives new interpretation to the old concepts of the *Sastras*, and thereby adds strength and vitality to society as a whole. *Yajna*, *Tyaga*, *Yoga*, *Sanayasa*, and *Tapasya*—these are some of the most important religious concepts which we familiarly come across in the *Sastras*. The Gita interprets them in a new way, and draws an inner meaning and significance which is not found in earlier religious works. We shall take note of what these concepts meant formerly, and how the Gita transforms them by giving a wider and universal import. The common man felt it impossible to practice these concepts of religion like *yagna*, *tapas*, and so on. So people felt disappointed and discouraged in their religious life. Lord Krishna came to the rescue of the common man by interpreting these concepts in a way within the reach of all mankind.

Yajna :- *Yajna* (sacrifice) is one of the prescribed duties of religious life. But the common man finds it far beyond him to perform it. In the past, kings and wealthy lords used to

perform *yajna*, because it required large sums of money, the services of many people, (*Hota*, *Udgata*, *Ritvik* etc.) scholars of *sastric* learning, and a host of others for minor duties. How can the common man secure all these things? So men of wealth and power only undertook the performance of *yajna*. But compared to the vast parapharnalia, labour and expense needed for the *yajna*, the fruit of *yajna* is very small. Because *yajna* is a work of desire, its fruit naturally is of a lower level. It cannot give immortality or liberation which should be the aim of all those who practice religion. Considering all this, Lord Krishna gives a new interpretation to the concept of *yajna*, which is within the reach of the common people, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, man or woman. This new *yajna* does not require money or the services and cooperation of others. Each individual can perform it under all conditions of life. This *Yajna* is *Nishkama-karma*—desireless work. Any work done without the feeling of doership is a *Maha Yajna*—a great sacrifice. Any work done, with the constant remembrance of God, is transformed into a holy sacrifice. This is the universal *yajna* prescribed by Lord Krishna in the Gita. According to this principle, any work of worldly life, can be converted into a sacred sacrifice. Every man can do it. Arjuna himself sublimated a bloody war into a great sacrifice by keeping the Lord constantly before him.

The teacher of the Gita considers repetition of God's name, reading of holy books, control of food habits, and all types of discipline, as various forms of *yajna*, and the fruit, not small and trifling, but—infinite. This *yajna* has the power to cut the bonds of *karma*, and raise man to his original state of knowledge and freedom. All other forms of *yajna*, performed for the fulfilment of desire, only strengthen bondage.

Therefore by following the easy path revealed by Lord Krishna, every man can transform his daily work and worldly activity into a sublime sacrifice, and free himself from the bondage of *Karma*. The fruits of work being surrendered to God, every little act of man becomes a great sacrifice. Otherwise the burden of life becomes unbearable, and the ever increasing load of *Karma* binds man to the wheel of birth and death endlessly. Lord Krishna showed the way out of the vicious

circle. In this manner, the Lord gave a new interpretation to the concept of *Yajna*, made it easy, gave it infinite fruit, and offered it to the common man as the universal path to reach the highest goal.

Tyaga, Sannyasa :- Formerly people used to think that *Tyaga* meant giving away all that belonged to them, and *Sannyasa* leaving wife and children and going into a forest. Thus the common man concluded that *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa* were not intended for him but for some exceptional human beings who could give up everything. But Lord Krishna gave a very wide interpretation to these concepts and pointed out that men in all conditions of life could practice these virtues.

The teacher of the Gita defines *Tyaga* as the surrender of the fruits of work to God. Not giving up work, but giving up the fruits of work to God is *Tyaga*. All men could practice this idea of *Tyaga*. Similarly for the concept of *Sannyasa*, Lord Krishna gives a new interpretation—

“Giving up worship of the sacred fire, or sitting idle without doing any work is no *Sannyasa*. Doing work without attachment to results is *Sannyasa*. To give up the desire for enjoying the fruits of work is *Sannyasa*.” The *Sannyasa* of the Gita is all work and no work. How wonderful! How easy is this *Sannyasa*! One need not leave his home; one need not desert his wife and children; one need not resign his job; one need not wear the ochre robes; one need not carry the bowl and staff; one need not go into solitude and seclusion. Wherever a person finds himself, there he can remain. What he finds necessary and what he is capable of, that work he can do. It is enough simply to give up thinking of the results of his worldly activity, enough to root out the attachment for the fruits of his work. That is *Sannyasa*. Lord Krishna proclaimed this truth to the world. The house holders also can practise this virtue. The path is open to all.

Yoga :- Let us consider the Gita-concept of *yoga*. People generally think of *yoga* as *Hatayoga* or *Ashtangayoga*, both of which are unsuitable to those who are leading a wordly life.

But the teacher of the Gita gives a new interpretation to the concept of *yoga*.

"Whether work yields the expected result or not, to remain equal-minded is *yoga*." "Skill in the performance of work (giving up the desire for the fruits of work) is *yoga*." *Yoga* means that which unites the individual with the universal spirit, and whatever is conducive to this end is *yoga*. Therefore *Karma yoga*, *Bhakti yoga*, *Dhyana yoga*, and *Jnana yoga*, are all mentioned in the Gita as various paths leading to union with the Supreme Being. No one need fear the practice of *yoga*. Those people, while remaining where they are, who could acquire some detachment from the results of their work, are practising *yoga*; those who remain steadfast in gain or loss are practising *yoga*. Such men are *yogis*. In fact all work which is conducive to God-realisation is *yoga*. This is the Gita interpretation of *yoga*, and Lord Krishna gave it to the world out of infinite compassion for humanity.

Tapas :- This is a word familiar to all people. But it is at the same time a terror to the common man. It meant for him dire mortification of flesh by starvation, exposing oneself to the burning heat of the Sun, or standing upside down in the midst of fire or water, and such like feats of physical endurance and bodily suffering. So no one thought of it. It was considered beyond the capacities of the common man. But the 'Sastras' declare that by '*Tapas*' alone all sins could be destroyed "*tapasa kilbisham hanti*." There is no other way. In this predicament, Lord Krishna came out with a new definition of the word, far deeper in meaning and significance than the ancient conception. In the seventeenth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna declares, "Ye Aspirants and seekers of spiritual Truth! *Tapas* is necessary for liberation. But it is not the painful injuring of the flesh and bodily suffering as you imagine it to be. It is an easy practice useful for all people. There are three forms of *Tapas*: *Tapas* for purity of body, for purity of speech, and for purity of mind. Worship of God, reverence and service to wise men and teachers, cleanliness, integrity, celibacy, and non-injury—these are conditions of *tapas* for the physical body. To speak truthfully and without passion, to study holy books,—these are the

conditions of *Tapas* for speech. Purity of thought and feeling, silence, control of the senses,—these are the conditions of *Tapas* for the mind."

This *Tapas*, as enunciated by the Lord, is within the reach of the common man, and can be practised by all with some effort. The *Gita-tapas* aims at cleansing the dirt and filth attached to the senses and the mind. Man has passed through several incarnations in a state of ignorance. Consequently the mind is permeated with lust and greed, sensual appetites and desire and passion. The *Gita-tapas* is intended to control the outward pull of the senses, and the impulses of the mind. Purity of mind (*chittasuddhi*) is the only way to self-realisation. There is no other way. Just as gold is purified by being put in the fire, even so, *Tapas* purifies the mind, so that the self-existent *Atman* could reveal itself in all its glory and splendour.

In this way, the Gita has done the greatest good to mankind. It has reclaimed into the spiritual fold all those who feared religion as a negation of all that hold dear in this world. Today the large field of religion is filled with devotees and aspirants, because the Gita has shown them the easy path of spiritual practice, to each man according to his capacity and mental pre-disposition.

THE FORM OF THE GITA

The Gita consists of eighteen chapters. Like the *Vedas*, it is divided into three parts. The first part of the *Vedas*, the *Samhita*, deals with rituals (*Karma*); the second part deals with worship (*Upasana*); the third part deals with the knowledge of the Supreme (*Jnana*), and constitutes the *Upanishads*. As the Gita is the essence of the *Veda*, its form consists also of three parts, each six-chapters forming one part. The first part deals with *Karma yoga*; the second with *Bhakti yoga*; and the third with *Jnana yoga*. This cannot be a rigid mechanical division. In all the three parts we find references to all the three parts of *yoga*. So we must consider the division of parts only as a convenient external classification. If we understand the Gita clearly, we find in the *Karma yoga* part, implied and explicit references to *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. So it is with the other parts.

also. All the three *yogas* are essential for spiritual life. One should possess the heart of Buddha, the head of Sankara, and the hand of Janaka. All these three qualities are bound up together in the Gita to help mankind to attain the highest goal.

The first chapter of the Gita and the first ten verses of the second chapter are considered as prologue to the main work. The teaching of the Gita actually starts with the eleventh verse of the second chapter (*Asochyananva sochastvam.*) Therefore that verse is called the *Bija*, in the *Anganyasa* (i.e.) touching the different limbs of the body with appropriate *Mantras*. Similarly, the last verses from the seventy third verse of the eighteenth chapter are called the Epilogue. This consists of the speeches of Arjuna and Sanjaya. All that comes in between the Prologue and the Epilogue, is the stream of wisdom flowing from the lips of the divine master. The doubts and questions put forward by Arjuna are just the same as those of the common seeker. As the Gita is in the form of a conversation, all doubts are cleared, and all questions are answered at once directly.

Although the essence of Divinity is taught through out the book, the idea is made manifest in the *Viswarupasandarsana yoga*, in the eleventh chapter. This is the unique feature of the Gita. It is not enough to hear philosophical theory. Direct experience is necessary. The practical side of spiritual life is brought out in the eleventh chapter. In the teaching of material sciences, theory is demonstrated by practical experiments. So in the Gita, almost in the central part of the work, Lord Krishna reveals his universal form, and emphasises the need and importance of practical experience for the aspirants. They should no doubt know the theory, but the aim should be to have direct experience of the Divine.

The Gita teaches all the different paths of *yoga*. But they are mainly classified as *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana*, and *Jnana yogas*. When we read each theory expounded by the Lord, we feel as though he is emphasising only that theory above all the others. For those who are inclined to a life of activity, it appears that the Gita teaches *Karma yoga*. They find ample evidence for it. Similarly for men of devotion and for men of

rational thought, the Gita appears to emphasise *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. But the teacher of the Gita brought into harmony all the paths of *yoga* and taught their essential unity and importance for God-realisation. Therefore the Gita is the *yoga* of synthesis. Whatever path one may follow, the aspirant honours all the creeds, and knows fully well that all paths lead to the same goal. It is this universality which is the unique feature of the Gita.

THE MAIN IMPORT OF THE GITA

The Gita explains all the systems of religion. But what is its main teaching? On what aspect does the teacher of the Gita concentrate? Philosophers have tried to answer this question, but naturally there is no unanimity among them. We shall consider here one or two view points. Generally the main import of a work is determined by applying the six canons of critical interpretation. These six canons are (1) the beginning and end (2) practice (3) originality (4) the result (5) reason (6) argument. Some commentators argue that devotion and self-surrender is the main theme of the Gita. They interpret the work according to the six canons and show evidence in support of their view point

(1) Beginning :-

(sishyaste 'ham shuddhi mam tvam papanam.)

"Oh Lord! I am your disciple; I surrender to you; command me (what my duty is)." The Gita therefore starts with surrender

End :-

(Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja.)

"Oh Arjuna! Give up all things (to me) and surrender to me (the Supreme One)."

So the Gita ends with surrender.

Middle :-

*(Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate
Tesham nityabhyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham)*

"Those who think of me continuously with single-minded devotion, I take care of them." Therefore the beginning, middle and end of the Gita teaches devotion and self-surrender.

(2) Practice :-

1. *mayyeva mana adhaisva*
2. *advesha sarvabhuwanam*
3. *ye yadha main p:ap..d..vive*
4. *maineva ye p:apad..vame*

These verses and some more in chapters 7, 10, 11, and 15 teach the practice of surrender.

(3) Original concept :-

Though *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Jnana* : *yogas* are taught all-through the Gita, its main thesis is *Bhakti* combined with *Jnana* and desireless action. This is the transcendental theory of the Gita.

(4) Result :-

(*karishye vachanam tava*)

“I will carry out your word.” To do the word of God, to act according to the will of God, is an act of surrender to the Supreme. Here again devotion is emphasised.

(5) Reason :-

(*svalp..nicapu sya dharma sya trayate mahato bhayat.*)

That work which is done in a spirit of devotion and surrender, though it is very little, would yield the greatest good, and save man from the fear of death and *Samsara*.

The example of Janaka and others proves it. These great men acted in the world in a spirit of complete surrender to God.

(6) Argument —

1. *mayyave.yu mano ye mam niyyayukta upasate*
2. *teshamakam samuddhas ta mirtyu samsara sagarat.*

Verses like these provide arguments for the practice of devotion and surrender.

In this way, according to the six canons of interpretation and other references, it is held by some aspirants that devotion and self-surrender is the main import of the Gita

Some others declare that *Nishkamakarma* (action without personal desire) is the main import of the Gita. They argue that, what Arjuna did after listening to the Lord's teaching, should be regarded as the main thesis of the Gita. Arjuna declined to do his duty, and collapsed in the chariot in a mood of despair and weakness. The Gita-teaching roused him into righteous action, and he jumped into the field of battle with courage and confidence, and fulfilled his duty. He did not go and sit in a corner and spend his life. He did not become a *Sannyasi* and return into the solitude of a forest. He performed his prescribed duty without being perturbed by the results of it. Therefore the main import of the Gita should be the execution of one's own duty unmindful of the result. Thus *Karma yoga* is regarded by these aspirants as the ultimate aim of the Gita-message. They produce strong evidence from the text to support their view point.

Now, a third type of aspirants consider that *Jnana* (knowledge) is the main import of the Gita. What is the cause of Arjuna's sorrow and despondency?—Ignorance and delusion. How was it removed?—by knowledge. (*nashito mohah*) (*mohoyam vigato mama*) says Arjuna. So, Arjuna's ignorance was removed by *Jnana*, and then he became fit to fight the battle. Ignorance could be removed only by knowledge and by no other means. Darkness could be removed only by light and in no other way. Arjuna was the victim of ignorance and he was saved by *Jnana*. His sorrow was removed by the knowledge of *Atman*. (*turati sokamatmavit*) .

"The knower of Brahman transcends all sorrow" That is what the Upanishads say. Even in the second chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna taught the knowledge of *Atman*. It is the starting point of the Lord's teaching. When the master opened his lips to speak, he did not speak either of *Bhakti* or *Karma*. He spoke of the supreme reality, the immortal *Atman*, the knowledge of the Supreme. He described the Self-state, the all-pervading, the birthless and deathless Self, the *Atman*. "Oh Arjuna! You are not the physical body, composed of the five elements; You are the ancient one, the immortal immovable *Atman*—the sprite immanent in the whole universe"—says the

Lord. It is repeated again and again. Because the knowledge of *Atman* alone could remove the ignorance of man, and free him from the cycle of birth and death, Lord Krishna started his teaching with the basic concept of *Jnana*. In the course of his message, he reveals wonderful truths about *Jnana*.

Having uttered those magnificent truths in the course of his teaching, he concludes with the sublime declaration—

- [adhyesyate cha ya imam dharmyam samvadamarayoh
jnanayajnena tenahamishtasyamiti me matih.]

This is the Lord's conclusion to the Gita. "He who studies the Gita which never swerves from truth, and which is in the form of a dialogue between us two, worships me through *Jnanayajna*." As the Lord speaks of the whole of the Gita as *Jnanayajna*, it should be clear that *Jnana* is the main import of the work.

Besides,—

[*jnanivatmaiva me matam.*]

"The man of knowledge is Myself" This must naturally emphasise that *Jnana* is the supreme truth of the Gita. We should not take into consideration only the immediate effect of the Gita on Arjuna's life. We should consider the whole of Arjuna's life and understand what effect the Gita had on his life's purpose. This is the proper way of understanding the effectiveness of the Gita. Let us trace Arjuna's life after the battle of Kurukshetra. He lived as king and house-holder for some years. He performed all the duties of a king. Later, he relinquished everything, went into solitude, and performed *Tapas* for ultimate union with the Supreme One. This is narrated in the *Swargarohana Parva* of *Mahabharata*. So whatever might be the number of births that a man passes through, and whatever might be his spiritual practice, it is only when he could withdraw the mind from its outward attraction, and direct it inwards to look into the soul, that he could attain perfection which is the highest spiritual goal.

(*Atmasamsitam manah kritva na kinchidapi chintayet.*)

Statements like these explain the same idea. So knowledge is the final refuge of mankind. Knowledge alone could remove sorrow and confer bliss.

(*Sarvam karmakhilam partha jnane parisamapya te.*)

"All rituals and devotional practices culminate in *Jnana*." All forms of devotion and surrender help to purify the mind, by which man realises God. The goal is Self-realisation. In the following verse, the Lord clarifies the position.

(*tesham satatayuktanam bhajatam priti purvakam
daiami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayantite.*)

"On those who are attached to me by love and worship me, I bestow the power of discrimination (*Buddhiyoga*) by which they reach me (God)." The above verse explains how selfless work, devotion, meditation etc., help to rouse knowledge, and how knowledge leads to liberation. To know one's true Self is liberation. That knowing is called *Jnana*. But such power does not come easily for all. By God's grace alone, man attains that knowledge. By doing selfless work, by worship, by repeating and singing God's name and glory, by *Japa* and *Tapas*, by doing good to others, by all these put together and much more, man acquires the Grace of God. Devotion—Grace—Knowledge — this is the natural order of progress towards the Supreme. The elders say—

He who worships God (through good work desireless of enjoying the fruits) receives God's grace, and by grace knowledge dawns, and by knowledge man attains liberation. This is the essence of the Gita.

A great man was once asked what he considered to be the sum and substance of the Gita. He replied 'W' — meaning that 'Work, Worship and Wisdom' ($W \times W \times W$) in their natural order, is the main idea of the Gita. Through work, devotion; through devotion, Knowledge; through Knowledge, liberation.

Therefore, knowledge which removed Arjuna's sorrow and delusion (*shoka* and *Mona*), and which alone dispels ignorance, might be taken as the main import of the Gita. The other Yogas are aids to purify the mind without which knowledge is impossible for Gods or men. With Knowledge man attains the Supreme and reaches the end of all his endeavours.

THE GITA TEACHING

Gita has the miraculous power of elevating man to the plane of Godhead. Otherwise how was it possible that an ordinary mortal like Arjuna was transformed into a Mahatma? The entire prospect of life with all its elevations and depressions, with all its light and darkness, with all its pleasures and pains, was revealed to Arjuna in a moment. What is that Gita-message that lifted him to the peak of divine knowledge in such a short time?

Like the school-master who takes his student step by step through the graded lessons of his subject, Lord Krishna took his disciple by the hand, and lifted him up one step above the other, till he reached the abode of blessedness and divine freedom. Starting from the simple injunction "*mam namaskuru* = 'Bow to me God)', the disciple was taught all the spiritual laws, culminating in the *Maha vakya* '*tattvamasi*'—Thou art That (the Supreme Brahman.)" It was out of love that Lord Krishna taught all the secrets of spiritual life. The heart of Gita is the heart of a mother. No mother could look with unconcern when her children suffer pain and grief. So the Gita-mother, moved with infinite pity at the spectacle of human suffering, has offered every kind of relief and remedy to the innumerable shocks and ills of human life. First the secret of *Karma yoga* is taught; then again the doctrine of *Bhakti*. Not content with it, the method of *Dhyana* was taught. Again, not satisfied with it, the knowledge of the Supreme is revealed. Thus having taught every kind of spiritual practice, and having revealed every source of strength, peace, and blessedness for mankind, the Gita-mother fulfilled her great duty to her beloved children.

KARMA YOGA - IN THE GITA

No one should commit the mistake of consigning the Gita as a study fit only for *Sannyasins* who live in solitary caves and hills. It is the most beneficent contribution towards the peace and happiness of the house-holders also. It is a study most necessary for people who live in crowded cities, and are engaged in the different avocations of worldly life. For the businessman, the statesman and the soldier, the worker in the factories, the labourer in the fields and streets, the ~~and~~ *advocate*,

judge, or teacher, in short, for all people, the study of the Gita is an essential part of life's equipment. It regulates practical life according to the highest laws of spirituality, and *Karma yoga* enunciates the principal and practice of action in the every day life of the common man. The Gita points out that supreme liberation could be attained while taking part in the activities of earthly life. People think that *Vedanta* and practical life are different things, like parallel lines which never meet. It is not so. It is a grievous error to imagine that *Vedanta* is somewhere in the sky, which is sought for by *Sannyasins* who practise renunciation. The Gita says—Religion must rule even worldly pursuits. The Gita stands like a bridge across the vast gulf between worldly life and Godliness. It reveals the secret of peace in the midst of the conflicting spectacle of worldly life; the secret of complete renunciation in the midst of all the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of a house-holder's life. Lord Krishna taught the supreme skill (*karmasu kausalam*) to remain perfectly actionless in the midst of tremendous action.

The man who has mastered this skill is in a state of absolute calmness while performing momentous work in the world. The limbs are active, the senses do their functions, the mind exercises its diverse powers, the whole man is apparently in a state of flux and motion, but at the same time, the real inner man remains unaffected by any of those activities. The real man is just like the axle of a wheel. The wheel might rotate at infinite speed, but the axle is firm and fixed. So is the real man behind the functions of the physical body and mind. This knowledge and this skill is what is termed *Karma yoga*.

(*Yogasthah kuru karmani*)

“With the mind firmly fixed in the *Atman*, do you work.” “Surrender the fruits of action to God, and then perform any work, as much work as you wish. Such work does not bind you.” This is the teaching of Lord Krishna. In Mathematics we have a theory—infinity+anything = infinity. Whatever is added, subtracted, or multiplied by infinity remains infinity. God is infinity. Knowledge of God is infinity. So whatever work is done with the thought and knowledge of God becomes

God. Such work cannot bind man to the wheel of *Karma*. This is the secret of *karma yoga* taught in the Gita.

On the other hand, work that is done for the sake of personal enjoyment, forgetful of the Supreme Lord, binds man eternally to the wheel of birth and death. Man cannot escape it. "Work divorced from spirituality is an artificial flower which has neither life nor fragrance." So, work in itself is not great. The method of work is really great. The Gita does not say what man should do. It does not limit the field of man's activity in the world. It tells us how to work. The 'how' is of the greatest importance for the *Karma yogi*. The spiritual law behind the work should be grasped and held firm in the depths of one's consciousness, so that it throws its divine light on all that he does. Thus the method of work elevates man to the plane of Godhead, or degrades him to the level of a beast. The Gita exhorts all men to pursue their prescribed duties. Men passing through the different phases of life could carry on their duties uninterrupted. Let the trader do his shopkeeping, the public servant continue his job. The farmer in the field, the soldier fight, the Brahmin recite *Mantras* and on. Each man in his proper place, doing his proper work, the inexorable movement of the world goes on unabated. But there is only one condition—*mam anusmara*.

"Remember Me (God)" Remembering God, in the immediate presence of God, with the fruits of work surrendered to Him, man should work. This is the Command of Gita. Then the poison that defiles work and makes it the cause of bondage is neutralised and work is purified into an act of godliness.

The art of work, Vedanta in daily life, is the characteristic feature of the Gita. It is that which has rendered Gita the universal gospel. The Gita teaches that, even after attaining *Jnana*, one need not give up his prescribed duty. Though Arjuna was freed from delusion, he did not give up his worldly duty as Kshatriya and householder.

BHAKTIYOGA IN THE GITA

Though different theories of religious practice are taught in the Gita, it is one continuous stream of enquiry into the divine

It is *yoga*. The practical application of religious theory to life is *yoga*. *Yoga* is the union of the individual-self with the universal. As human nature is diversified by different qualities, it was necessary for the Gita to chalk out different paths for different types of persons. Medical science has different branches to counteract different diseases. So, it is with religion. The purpose of religion is to attain the supreme state of Godhead. But the obstacles which each individual has to encounter are different, and hence different paths of *yoga* are prescribed by wise men.

Jaimini's *Karma* theory, Narada's *Bhakti* cult, Patanjali's *Raja yoga*, and Vyasa's *Jnana* doctrine, all these are well propounded in the Gita. It is something like a large scale general stores, where all things necessary for life are available. Each man gets what he wants. It is the merit of the Gita that all *yogas* are brought into perfect harmony, and each is fitted into the others to make every path a well designed plan of liberation. In proper proportion, an admixture of all ingredients of *yoga* is necessary for man's progress towards perfection. Purification is attained by *Karma yoga*; illumination by *Bhakti* and *Dhyana*; union by *Jnana yoga*. Brick, mortar, and wood are needed to build a house; dough, chee, and heat are needed to prepare bread. Likewise *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are needed for liberation. A three-legged stool cannot stand if one of its legs is cut off. If any ingredient of the three *Yogas* is missing, then it cannot be complete and perfect. So great men achieved perfection by harmonising different creeds and doctrines of spiritual practice. Ofcourse, according to the predisposition of each individual, he chooses a particular *yoga* as the main path, but others are found implicit in it. The chief purpose of all *yogas* is nothing but the elimination of the Ego.

Love of God is *Bhakti*, and when that love glows into ecstasy, the devotee says 'Thou art my sole refuge; I know not else.' He puts himself solely in the hands of God and acts as his servant. "Thou art everything; all is thine; nothing mine; Thou art father and mother; I am your servant"—so speaks the devotee to the Lord. Arjuna appealed to the Lord—

(*sadhimam tvam prapannam,*)

Please teach me who have taken refuge in you. But the Gita is not satisfied with ordinary *Bhakti*. It eagerly awaits the ripening of ordinary *Bhakti* into *ananyabhakti*. That which has no otherness is *Ananyabhakti*. It is to be noted that the word *ananya* is used several times in the Gita. It means that the mind as a whole is to be offered to the Lord, no other thought intruding or no other feeling mingling with that of divine love.

"The devotee who possesses this supreme love undefiled by any worldly taint is most dear to me. Him I save from the ocean of death and *Samsara*"—says Lord Krishna with deep compassion. If the mind is distracted by worldly thoughts, and deviates from its divine object, it should be brought back and fixed on God, by slow and continuous practice. The aim should not be given up, for, there is only one thing in the universe that is real, imperishable, and eternal, and that is the Supreme Self. All other things are ephemeral and transitory. To run after them in the hope of enjoying life is to court sorrow, disaster, and death. Peace and happiness could never be obtained from them at any time. Therefore the individual human being who is deluded by the temptations of *Maya*, should seek shelter and refuge at the feet of God who has *Maya* under his control, who could manifest it or withdraw it at his will.

Without the grace of God and *Guru*, man cannot cross the ocean of *Samsara*. This is a deep secret. Not knowing it, the man who is proud of his own powers and faculties, attempts to achieve the impossible (i.e.) to grasp the infinite with the finite mind. God alone is above *Maya*, and holds it as his instrument—

(*mayinantu maheswaram.*)

All others are subject to *Maya*. Delusions bewilder the mind, obstacles stand insuperable on the way, doubts, fears, temptations, paradoxes, perplexities, and a host of subtle indefinable impediments bar the way to liberation. So man is exhorted to seek for God's protection in the course of his spiritual *Sadhana*. As love of God develops, gathers strength and momentum, man feels the spirit of freedom from the clutches of *Maya*. The Lord himself takes care of such devotees.

(*tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam rahamyaham*)

Thus the Lord pledges his unfailing protection to his devotees.

Discrimination between Self and non-self which directly leads to *Atma jnana* cannot come to man without God's grace. Deep devotion to God should first fill the heart of the devotee, before he could rise above the temptations of worldly life.

(*bhaktya jnanam prajayate.*)

"Out of *Bhakti*, arises *jnana*"—The *Sastras* say so, and the experience of great men is also the same. The flower of *Bhakti* should blossom first, and from it takes shape the fruit of *jnana*. In the *Bhakti yoga* of the Gita, the Lord declares that; Pleased with the love of the devotee, he bestows on him the fruit of *Jnana*, the power to know the Truth by rejecting what is not real. From this we understand what importance is attached to *Bhaktiyoga*.

The teacher of the Gita emphasises *Para-Bhakti* (supreme devotion) and is not satisfied with elementary devotion. To worship with flowers and fruits is ordinary *Bhakti*. To worship the Lord with those objects created by the Lord himself, is afterall insignificant. The Lord is mightily pleased when man worships him with the flowers of divine virtue. (*daivi sampat*) cultivated carefully in the garden plot of his own mind. This is supreme worship, supreme *Bhakti*. Therefore Lord Krishna, when he explains *Bhakti*, refers to divine qualities like love, compassion, friendship etc. It should however be noted that ordinary forms of worship are not decried or precluded in the Gita. Indeed, ordinary external worship will lead to *Para-Bhakti* by gradual process. The aspirant should not stop with external worship as an end in itself. He should cultivate constantly and persistently the divine qualities mentioned by the Lord, so that *Bhakti yoga* may become complete and perfect.

Of all the *Yogas*, *Bhaktiyoga* is the easiest, because it is congenial to human nature. Hard discipline is not prescribed for this path. It is enough that man should develop a feeling of love for his chosen Deity. So *Bhakti* is mentioned in every chapter of the Gita. Even in the fourteenth chapter where Supreme *Jnana* is taught, the last *sloka* dwells on *Bhakti*.

"He who worships me with immovable faith and love, transcends the three *gunas* and becomes one with supreme

Brahman." In the *Viswarupasandarsana yoga* the Lord again states that by supreme *Bhakti* alone any one could aspire to see His universal form.

"By supreme *Bhakti* alone, it is possible to see and know my universal form and to enter Me (God)." Nothing else can achieve this union with the universal.

In the *Akshra parabrahma yoga*, it is declared that the Supreme Purusha is attained only by single-minded devotion to God.

At one place, the Lord says *bhaktyamamabhijanati*—"Man knows me through *Bhakti*." So the Lord insists on *Bhakti* as the key to God-realisation.

RAJAYOGA IN THE GITA

The Sun's rays contain seven colours. When they are merged together, the rays appear white. In the rainbow we see the phenomena of the seven colours separately. Herbs and plants and flowers absorb those colours which they need and flourish in strength and beauty. If the Sun's rays are only of one colour, there could never be such variety of colour and fragrance in nature. Similarly in the Gita, eighteen different *yogas* are presented so that the aspirants might adopt any one congenial to their nature and attain liberation. From the circumference to the centre of a circle, there are innumerable radii, and through any one of them one can reach the centre. Among the various paths revealed in the Gita, *Rajayoga* is one. It is also termed *Dhyanyoga* or *Atma-Samyamayoga*. Patanjali expounded this wonderful science in all its details. *Rajayoga* has eight component parts, and so it is also called *Ashtangayoga*. The component parts are in their order—

1. *Yama*, 2. *Niyama*, 3. *Asana*, 4. *Pranayama*, 5. *Pratayahara*, 6. *Dharana*, 7. *Dhyana*, 8. *Samadhi*. These eight parts are well explained in particular places in the Gita. The Lord has clarified the essential principles of *Rajayoga* in the Gita.

The place, the manner, and the discipline which the aspirant should choose for the practice of *Rajayoga* are clearly stated in the sixth chapter of the Gita. The teacher of the Gita

warns the aspirant to be careful in details relating to food, place, and practice. The Gita refers to minute details and is not content with the explication of general theory. Neglect of the smallest details might lead to disastrous consequences in *Rajayoga*. So, what food to take, how to sit for practice, where to concentrate, and such other matters are clearly stated in the Gita. Following these details with meticulous care, the *Sadhaka* should get firm hold of this Yoga.

What is *Yoga*? Patanjali, the scientific exponent of *Rajayoga*, defines the word as—

(*yogas tattvavittinir sadhah*)

“*Yoga* is restraining the modifications of the mind.” By the very force and momentum of impulses acquired through several births, the senses and the mind rush out and run after the objects of the external world. This out-going momentum should be restrained. Just as the tortoise withdraws all its limbs in its body, even so, the *Sadhaki* should withdraw and withhold the mind from attaching itself to any sense-objects like colour, sound, fragrance etc., and fix it in the *Atman*.

(*tada drashtuh svarupe 'vasthanam*)

When these sense-atattractions are restrained by long practice of discrimination and dispassion, the mind of its own accord comes to a state of rest and settles in its own original source, the *Atman*. This is the very essence of *Rajayoga*. The teacher of the Gita puts it in a nutshell in the following words—

(*atmaramstham manah kritva nacimchidapi chintayet*)

“Fixing the mind in the *Atman*, nothing else should be thought of.” Here we find two aspects of the same position—one, forgetting the sense world, two, memory of the *Atman*. Forgetting the sense-world is not alone enough. People experience this in a state of deep sleep where there is no sense activity and hence no world. But sleep never leads to illumination. So the second aspect, namely the remembrance of the *Atman* is necessary. In the early stages, the mind cannot remain in a state free from thought modifications. So the *Sadhaka* has to satisfy the natural craving of the mind by providing it with healthy work like deep study, discrimination, and devotion to God. By

systematic and continuous practice, the mind becomes finer and finer, till it reaches a non-modified state when the *Atman* is perceived as it is. There is then no modification or fragmentation of the mind. It is all one. So the mind should be first lifted from lower to higher thoughts and from higher thoughts to a thought-free state. The thought-free state is called *Samadhi*.

It is not an easy achievement, because the mind is by nature unsteady and fitful. Arjuna says—“Like the air, it is most difficult to control the mind.” This is due to the mental predispositions acquired through an endless services of past births. So the mind should develop dispassion by constantly understanding the transitoriness and the worthlessness of worldly things. It is then turned inwards to look into the Self from which alone comes all the bliss which man by his ignorance was imagining as arising from external objects. If this practice is continued daily at a particular time, for a particular period, the mind comes under control gradually. So Lord Krishna says—“The mind should be held by practice and dispassion. He made it clear that the mind could not be controlled except by practice and dispassion. *Vedanta* teaches the same truth. When attachments are given up, the mind is destroyed, and when the mind is destroyed, there is direct perception of the Supreme Reality. This is the order of progress towards final liberation. Again, it is by an understanding of the Reality that the mind is purified of its material tendencies. When material tendencies drop off, the mind ceases to exist and that very moment Supreme Realisation dawns on man. The *Rajayoga* has for its basic principle mind-control, and towards this end, the Gita prescribes the practice of mind-control in various ways.

JNANAYOGA IN THE GITA

What is the cause of sorrow for the *Jiva* (Individual man)? —the body. How did the body come?—by *Karma* (action in the world). What is the cause of action?—Desire. What is the cause of desire?—Ignorance. How could ignorance be removed?—by knowledge.

Therefore sorrow is rooted out only by knowledge. The *Jiva*, having forgotten his real nature, is bound by the body and

the world; and when he comes to know his real nature, he is free from the bondage of matter. Such contemplation on one's own real nature is what the elders speak of as *Jnana*. Those who aspire for supreme peace and freedom should acquire Knowledge of their true Self. "By attaining Knowledge, man experiences supreme peace." The Lord glorifies *Jnana* in many ways—

1. *Jnana Tapasya* :— Many have become pure by *Jnana tapasya*.
2. *Jnana yajna* :— This sacrifice is greater than others performed with material riches.
3. *Jnana Nauka* :— The ocean of *samsara* could safely be crossed by the ship of knowledge.
4. *Jnana Agni* :— The fire of Knowledge burns the wilderness of *Karma* (action in the world).
5. *Jnana Khadga* :— Doubt caused by ignorance should be struck down by the sword of Knowledge.

Oh! How many metaphors does the Lord use to glorify *Jnana*! Not satisfied with these, he compares *Jnana* in the fifth chapter to the all—illuminating Sun. Again in the tenth chapter, *Jnana* is compared to a light. Bhagawan communicates the wonderful quality and the unique power of *Jnana* in various ways in the fourth chapter.

"Oh, Ye men deluded by ignorance! Become pure by the penance of *Jnana*; perform *Jnana yajna* and get the reward of liberation; cross the ocean of *Samsara* with the help of the ship of knowledge kindle the fire of *Jnana* and burn up the wilderness of worldly actions; strike down all doubts with the sword of knowledge ; dispel the darkness of ignorance with the Sun of *Jnana*; Light the lamp of knowledge which sheds soft and divine light all around." Thus the Lord exhorts mankind to seek for knowledge.

What is *Jnana*? The material universe is a combination of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. The Self and the non-self, the body and the knower of the body, the seer and the seen, are all intermingled and appear as one to the ignorant man. To separate them, as the mythical Lvar separates water and milk, is *Jnana*.

To separate insentient matter from the intelligence that sees and knows it is *Jnana*. The comprehensive thesis of *Jnana* is elaborated in different chapters of the Gita—*Kshetra Kshetrajna vibhaga yoga*, *Gunatrayavidhaga yoga*, *Daivasura Sampadvibhaga yoga*, and *Sraddhatraya vibhage yoga*. *Vibhaga* means division, (i.e.) dividing things which are intermingled. When good and bad are intermingled, we try to separate them, hold the good, and reject the bad. The outer rind of a plantain is peeled off and the juicy part is eaten. When grain is mixed up with small pebbles, the housewife separates the grain with great care before food is prepared. So it is that the physical body (*upadhi*) which is an intermingling of the Self and the non-self, should be carefully examined, the non-self separated, and the true Self held fast by the seeker. This is *Jnana*. The body should be distinguished from the knower of the body, and man must realise his identity with the knower, and so be indifferent to the modifications of the body. This is *Jnana*. In everything there are five ingredients—existence, light, bliss, name and form. Man should realise that the first three ingredients are real, and the later two (i.e.) name and form, are unreal. This is *Jnana*.

Let us now try to understand what this body is and who the knower of the body. The five elements, the ego, the intellect, the *Avyakta*, the organs of action, the sense-organs, objects of sense-perception like sound and touch, the modifications of the mind, all these together constitute the *Kshetra*. The intelligence which sees and knows the *Kshetra* is termed *Kshetrajna*. “In everything of this material universe, know that I am the One cognising intelligence.” This indomitable utterance of Lord Krishna is indeed the greatest boon to mankind. It is clear from it that the Supreme Lord of the universe is not far from us, but is directly present in the hearts of all, pure and uncontaminated, as the universal witness, he is the nearest to us, and he is shining through the mind. And so, we are filled with confidence that we could attain him with some effort. As it is said (*sarva kshetreshu*), in all beings all mankind without distinction of race, religion and sex are entitled to realise him in their heart of hearts. If, by discrimination, any man can separate the five sheaths enveloping the *Atman-Annamayakosa*, *Pranamayakosa*, *Manomayakosa*, *Vijnanamayakosa*, and *Anandamayakosa*,

he would discover the *Atman* as the residual consciousness in his own heart. The experience of *Atman* is the fruit of *Jnana*. Therefore intellectual enquiry supported by will-power enables man to rise to the highest peak of spirituality, and then by an understanding of his true Self, man is transformed into God. He becomes the living-free (*Jivanmukta*) even in this body.

The work that a man does after he attains *Jnana* is absolutely pure and uncontaminated by desire or attachment, because he now knows the reality and is firmly fixed in the *Atman*, and observes the phenomenal universe as a witness or spectator looking at a wonderfully moving picture. In that state, he knows that he is not the doer. The body and mind are engaged in their own characteristic activities. The realised man is not caught in their meshes. He remains steadfast in the universal Self, absorbed in the contemplation of his true Self. There is no desire or attachment for the world. The *Jnani* may engage himself in work for the good of mankind; but he performs it unattached and is equally indifferent to its success or failure. Then the work he does acquires tremendous power. This is the difference between the *Jnani* and the *Ajnani*, in the performance of work. The *Ajnani* (ignorant man) identifies himself with the body and mind, and does every work with a strong desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. So he is bound to the wheel of *Karma*, and goes through the endless cycle of birth and death. The *Jnani* on the other hand knows directly that he is not the body and mind. He knows that he is verily the Supreme *Sachidananda*, the imperishable *Atman*. He works without any egoistic thought or feeling. He knows that he is not the doer. He has no sense of I and mine. He is free and remains free in the midst of high and noble work. This is the secret of work, and the secret is revealed to man only by *Jnana*.

It is for this reason that the Lord opens his message in the second chapter with the fundamental declaration that the real man is not the body, is not subject to birth and death, has nothing to gain or lose by the vicissitudes of fortune in the world. Having taught this basic truth, the Lord proceeds to

speak of non-attachment, and offers the *Mahamantra* of *Karma-yoga* (*yogasthah kuru karmani*) ‘perform action being steadfast in *yoga*.’ Therefore the work done by the realised soul is infinitely superior to, and yields far greater benefit to mankind than the work done by the ignorant and selfish.

After attaining *Jnana*, some seek for stillness and meditative silence in solitude, and others remain in the world and continue their work. The difference is due to the natural predisposition acquired in past births. But there is no difference between the two. Both belong to the state of the livingfree (*Jivanmukta*). The work done by the realised soul is finally no-work for him, and yields the same fruit as the stillness and non-action of the *Mauni*.

Lord Krishna, King Janaka, King Ikshwaku, Sankaracharya, Vivekananda and others have done wonderful work for the benifit of mankind. But the supreme knowledge of Self which they possessed held them free from bondage to *Karma*. Therefore, either for complete renunciation or for full-scale action in the world, Knowledge is the first and foremost condition. Lord Krishna declares triumphantly — “There is nothing in the universe equal to *Jnana* in purity and perfection.”

But, for the direct perception of reality the aspirant has to acquire the qualities of *Jnana*, like humility, modesty etc., which have been ennumerated in the thirteenth chapter of the Gita. Such mental purification, and acquisition of divine qualities are the absolute pre-condition for the realisation of the supreme Self.

And also in the seventh chapter, the Lord mentions four types of devotees in their proper order—the distressed man, the man who wants to know the Truth, the needy man, and the *Jnani*.

[udarachsarva evaite jnanitvatmaiva me matam]

“All these devotees are great, but among them the *Jnani* is Myself.” Thus the Lord proclaims the sublimity of *Jnana* above everything else. The *Jnani* is God himself. There is no difference. Dualistic practices gradually blossom and ripen the heart

and mind, and the individual man is drawn into the recesses of his own soul where he finds his identity with the Supreme Being. In that state, there is no devotee to worship, and there is no God to be worshipped. Both shine forth as the One Supreme *Sachidananda*. This is the final goal of spiritual attainment. This is living-freedom. There is nothing more for man to seek or aspire for. Let everyone understand the supreme glory of *Jnana* and strive for attaining it even in this life.

PRACTICE IN THE GITA

Thus far we have spoken about the different paths of *Yoga*. Now we come to the practical side of *Sadhana* for attaining the goal. As we said already, the teacher of the *Gita* lays greater emphasis on practice than on theory. What are the basic laws of spiritual practice? What are the difficulties and obstacles which the aspirant has to face and overcome in religious life? What are the problems and perplexities that arise during the period of *Sadhana*? Complete understanding of these details is necessary for the seeker. The *Gita* enlightens us on various matters in the course of its teaching, and the seeker is not left in doubt about any problem vital to his spiritual progress.

I. Be fearless -

The first and foremost obstacle to spiritual progress is fear, doubt, timidity, and weakness both of body and mind. "Can I ever hope to attain the goal? I have not the will-power to resist obstacles and temptations. Only the great *Rishis* and *Mahatmas* have been able to reach the goal. I am after all a house-holder burdened with wife and children. How can I be free from cares and anxieties? How can I give up my attachment for my home and family? Spiritual life is practically impossible for one like me." We find many people talking in this strain when they think of God-realisation. The *Gita* commands them never to indulge in such self-ruinous thoughts and feelings of despair and hopelessness

(kshudram hridayadaurbalyam tyaktotthishta parantapa)

"Oh, chastiser of the enemy, Arjuna; Give up this wretched weakness. Arise, do your duty." Through Arjuna as the

medium, the Supreme Lord exhorts all mankind again and again,—“Be fearless.”

“With courage, steadfastness, and zeal; undaunted by failures or difficulties, do your duty with an equal mind.” That is the first command of the Gita. It is foolish to imagine that only *Sannyasins* are competent to attain liberation. The Gita never says so. The *Sastras* do not say that liberation is the monopoly of men belonging to any particular race, religion, or position. From start to finish, the Gita declares that liberation is the birthright of all mankind. But the aspirant should not be deterred by obstacles and failures on the way. He should continue his spiritual practice with complete faith in God, and his efforts would be crowned with success ultimately. As one overcomes one or two initial obstacles, his faith is redoubled and quicker progress becomes possible. The sincere seeker is never let down by the higher power, although to some there may be delay in the realisation of the cherished objective. So the first command of the Gita is to free the mind from all defeatist thoughts and feelings, never to yield to suggestions of helplessness and despair, in short to be fearless in the face of the most overwhelming obstacles and difficulties, and make steady progress with unwavering faith in God, *Guru*, and one’s own Self.

II. Follow the law of moderation :—

It is good to be eager to reach the goal quickly, but one should not break his limbs in the attempt. One must have a stout heart, and in the period of *Sadhana*, one should have depth and firmness. “Slow and steady wins the race.”

“Avoid extremes in all matters” say the elders. Lord Krishna therefore commands the seekers to follow the law of moderation. “Do not eat too much; do not give up food altogether; do not sleep too much; do not give up sleep altogether; be moderate in food, sleep, and in all other activities. Moderation leads to success in *Yoga* and the elimination of pain and sorrow.” Lord Krishna teaches this golden rule to all aspirants. Every object in the world works longer and more efficiently if we use it carefully.

So also, the human body, the sense-organs, and the mind should be kept fit, and used carefully to cross the ocean of *Samsara*. The human organism is the gift of God. It is the ship that takes us over the stormy sea of earthly life. If the ship is overburdened, it sinks in mid-ocean or it is otherwise damaged, and becomes unfit for further voyage. All diseases of the body result from excess, and excessive strain in *yoga* results in damage to the delicate physical organism. Many seekers are carried away by excessive zeal in the early stages of *Sadhana*, and consequently they either fast too much or practice too hard and long, with the result that they become unfit both for spiritual realisation and efficient worldly life. Knowing this, the teacher of the Gita insists on moderation as the golden rule of spiritual practice. The practice should be slow and gradually progressive—(*sanaiah sanaiah*) slowly and slowly. The bodily mechanism has been accustomed by long usage to a particular mode of behaviour. To change it and give it a new functional mode takes long time. It cannot be done overnight. Slow and steady practice is necessary. Even so, the mind is habituated to run in certain channels, predetermined by past thoughts and experiences. This should be changed slowly and gradually. So Lord Krishna wants every seeker to follow the law of moderation from first to last till the goal is attained finally and firmly.

III. Do not give up practice—cultivate dispassion :—

In the course of several births, the mind has been habituated to a wrong line of activity (i.e.) slavery to the objects of the material world. Now the seeker has to create for it altogether a new line of thought. Sensual pleasures have enslaved the mind through many births. It should now be turned away from matter and centred in the Spirit. Naturally, the mind reacts, rebels, struggles, and refuses to adopt the new discipline. The seeker might feel exhausted by the inner conflict and might be driven to the limits of endurance, and give up the practice altogether as an impossibility. Such is the great danger for the *sadhus*. But if he persists in the practice regularly for a short period and at a prescribed time, the mind is brought under control, and takes to the discipline with greater ease and joy. If, in the initial stages, one or two obstacles are overcome by

effort, the seeker gains faith in God and in his own power to conquer the rest.

In the sixth chapter of the Gita, Arjuna makes the common complaint that the mind is unsteady and wayward and very difficult to control. Lord Krishna said plainly that the obstacle should be met and overcome, and the only remedy to cure the mind of its waywardness is constant practice aided by dispassion. There is no other way. Arjuna was the nearest and the dearest to the Lord, a great friend and a beloved disciple and devotee. In spite of his great love for Arjuna, the Lord had no alternative but to impose the sternest discipline and self-effort as the only means of conquering the vagaries of the mind. If this is true in the case of Arjuna, it should be equally the same in respect of every one else. The seeker should practice mind-control in every way possible for him, by study, meditation, and above all by the company of holy man.

In the *Bhakti yoga*, while expounding some aspects of devotion, Lord Krishna teaches his devotee that he would attain Him (God) by fixing his mind in Him. The teacher knew that his disciple would immediately ask him how he could do this impossible feat. Anticipating the natural question, the Lord at once affirms his answer that by practice alone would he be able to realise the aim.

(abhyasayogena tato mom i chaptum dhanamjaya)

Therefore, for mind-control and God-realisation, there is no other way except practice. The Lord elevates practice to the level of *yoga*, like *Karma*, *Bhakti*, or *Jnana*, by referring to it as *Abhyasa yoga*. We come across this term in the eighth chapter also. There the Lord declares that the practice of unbroken meditation on the supreme is the means of attaining the immortal *Brahman*. So, in all the different paths of *Yoga*, the *Yoga* of practice is the vital and life giving ingredient. Neither *Karma*, nor *Bhakti*, nor *Jnana* could acquire strength and power without practice. Such is the importance of *Abhyasa yoga*.

When and how long should one continue the practice ? The Gita answers—always and for ever. The power of *Maya* is inscrutable. Who can understand that mysterious power ? Who

can say when, in what manner, and how, *Maya* overtakes the *Sadhaka*. Even scholars and great men are subject to *Maya*, not to speak of the ordinary seeker. Hence constant vigilence, unrelaxed practice, and alertness of mind are absolutely necessary from the beginning till the very end. "Therefore think of Me (God) at all times." This is the Lord's command. Lust and greed, indulgence in sensual pleasures, hatred are the eternal enemies of the man who seeks for spiritual realisation. They are ever ready to devour him at any moment when the seeker is off his guard. That is why Lord Krishna insists on ceaseless endeavour to keep off the enemy from whichever quarter the attack might come. With the sword of discrimination, he should cut to pieces any kind of temptations. "Therefore be vigilant—be ever more vigilant." So say the *Sastras*. In the Gita, the word *satatam* (always) is used several times. So the Lord lays down continuous practice as the law. In the early stages, the seeker may prescribe for himself regular intervals of time for practice, but as he proceeds, he should aim at a continuous flow of divine thoughts and feelings. Even at the moment of death, the memory of the Supreme *Brahman* and inherence in that state should be kept up for final liberation. So the Gita-mother exhorts the seeker to be vigilant till the last breath of his life. Otherwise, there is the danger of *Maya* intervening, and throwing the man off the divine ascent.

It is necessary to say something more about the practice of mind-control. The Gita indicates the method. Whenever the mind is unsteady and runs out towards sense-objects, it should be brought back slowly, and fixed in the *Atman*. Every-time the mind goes out and attaches itself to some fond dream of enjoyment, the seeker should persuade and coax it to return to its native home where it could have all the joy and more than it could hope to get anywhere else. The Gita wants the seeker to cultivate a discriminative understanding of the pain, suffering, and death caused by sense-objects. He should penetrate deeper into the reality of sense-objects so that he could see how vulgar, wretched, and short-lived they are. Thus he should develop an aversion for them, based on a clear perception of their worthlessness. *lunk doshanudarsanam*.

When the mind realises the foul and filthy nature of sensual pleasures, it turns away from them naturally, and it is then easily rooted in the *Atman*. On the other hand, if the mind is drawn to sense-enjoyment, it can never be brought under control to remain steadfast in spiritual meditation. The mind is ignorant of the bliss of God-realisation. It should be trained, educated, and taught persistently to see the worthless character of material pleasures. As dispassion develops, its wayward impulses lose their force gradually, and it becomes steady. Therefore the seeker should persevere in his *sadhana*, unmindful of the obstacles and failures. "Perseverence will ultimately conquer." The Lord's command should be carried out, and his promise to support the sincere seeker should inspire every one with courage and self-confidence during the period of *Sadhana*. The Gita enjoins dispassion as the most important aspect of *sadhana*.

IV Have faith; be free from doubt :—

The seeker should not have the least doubt about the reality of God and the unreality of the world. The *Sastras* have argued and reasoned out the issue in a hundred ways; and they have stated this final conclusion in unmistakable terms. They have made a thorough rational enquiry into the nature of things, and scientifically they have arrived at the truth that the Supreme alone is real, and everything else illusory. All great men have confirmed the truth of the *Sastras* through their personal experience "Therefore *Sastra* should be the law for you." If one rejects the *Sastras*, he would be lost in a wilderness of individual views, personal opinions, and a host of illusions, and delusions which one comes across endlessly in the present-day world. So it is perfectly safe for the aspirant to have faith in the *Sastras* and in the experience of holy men. "The man of doubt perishes"—Thus the Gita warns against doubt in the Truth of the eternal One. Besides this, the Gita says, *svaddhavan labhate Jnanam*. "The man of faith gains Knowledge." The above statement should be regarded as the *Ashtakshara Mahamantra* of the Gita. So with full faith in the Divine, transcending fear and doubt, man should strive to attain the highest spiritual goal.

The word *Sraddha* (faith) is used several times in the Gita. It shall be unto you as you think. The measure of reward is just equal to the measure of faith; no more, no less.

One's attitude to the Deity, the *Guru*, the *Mantra*, the Astrologer, the physician, and sacred places, will determine the resulting benefit from each of them. Therefore the real seeker should not allow any doubt to creep into his mind about the existence of the Divine. He should cultivate immovable faith in God. He should not be discouraged by obstacles or deterred by difficulties in his onward march to spiritual realisation.

CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES PROHIBITED BY THE GITA

The aspirant should follow the well-established paths for God realisation. Undesirable customs and practices not only fail to achieve the expected aim, but positively harm the seeker by causing mental disturbance and physical injury. Hence the teacher of the Gita ennumerates some of the erroneous and harmful practices and warns the devotee to avoid them carefully.

1. Performing Yajna to satisfy desires — Spiritual life and sense-pleasures do not agree. One is antagonistic to the other, like fire and snow. He who desires sense-pleasures cannot attain liberation. Pleasures in this world or upper and lower worlds are the same in effect. They cause the downfall of man from spiritual ascent. Perhaps the pleasures of heaven may be more subtle and refined, but they are of no use for the spiritual aspirant.

The good acquired by *Yajna* is soon exhausted by enjoyment in Heaven, and down he falls into this world to start again his spiritual life from the very beginning. Tempted by sense-pleasure, men ascend to Heaven and descend to earth, and in this way countless number of births are wasted without permanent joy or peace. Therefore Lord Krishna prohibits all practices which whet the appetite for sense-pleasures. All those practices which deviate from the aim of spiritual bliss and freedom should be considered worthless and dangerous by the real aspirant, whether such practices lead to enjoyments here or in other worlds. So long as the mind runs out for sensual pleasures, it cannot acquire one-pointed concentration, without which

there is no hope of liberation at any time. That is why the teacher of the Gita dismisses such pleasure-seekers as unlearned and thoughtless people. The same idea is expressed in the second chapter of the Gita also.

Therefore instead of wasting precious life in the performance of *Yajnas* which unhinge the mind and rouse passions of pride and pleasure, it is imperative for the real aspirant to practice desireless disciplines such as *Japayajna*, *Swadhyaya jnanayajna* and the like, which directly lead to the bliss of liberation.

2. State of inaction (Akarma) :- Some people think that it is a high state of spiritual evolution to avoid action and do nothing. Some people consider it a sign of renunciation and dispassion. It is not so. So long as there are desires and predispositions in the mind, even though the body is kept back from action, man remains in bondage. Hopes and expectations, desires and enjoyments, continue to harass the mind. Those who are still and actionless should be either perfectly purified souls or lumps of dead earth, sunk in dark ignorance. For all outward appearances, both of them look alike. But there is all the difference of pole to pole between the two categories of men. The first type of men who have realised the vanity of the world and therefore remain still in spiritual contemplation, are very very rare. They are men to be worshipped. Their heart is thoroughly purified of all worldly taint. Whether they work or refrain from work, it is all the same for them. They are free. But the rest of mankind should engage themselves in work. From the state of dark inactivity (*tamas*), they should rise to the active state (*Rajas*), and from that state, they should rise to the state of calm contemplation (*satva*). Purified (*suddha*) *satva* is a state of perfect stillness born of intense dispassion. The transcendental state is above all *gunas* (*gunatita*).

Therefore to be idle and do nothing is foolishness, and not philosophy or religion. Man falls to the level of the brute by such idleness and inaction. Lord Krishna says that action is far superior to inaction.

[*karma jyayo hyakarmanah*]

"The *Yoga* of *Karma* is superior to the renunciation of *Karma*." Thus Lord Krishna condemns the non-performance of

prescribed duties. *Rajas* is better than *Tamas*. *Sattva* is better than *Rajas*. So instead of wasting time without doing anything, it is better to engage oneself in some work. Gradually work is purified and becomes selfless action. Through it, the impurities of the mind are cleared and man attains liberation. In this way, *Karma* finally leads to freedom from the bondage of *Karma*. The aspirant should be extremely cautious not to mistake dullness and lethargy for *sattvic* purity and calmness. The teacher of the Gita exhorts men to be strong and active in doing all work conducive to spiritual realisation.

3. The Charvaka Creed :— “What we see is real; there is no rebirth; so, during the short period of time, eat, drink, and enjoy life as much as you can. There is nothing more to do than to satisfy all material desires in this world.” This is the line of thought of the *Charvaka* creed. The teacher of the Gita denounces this self-ruinous and anti-spiritual doctrine in the strongest terms. In the sixteenth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna delivers a scathing denunciation of materialism, and the advocates of the *Charvaka* creed. “They are men of demonic qualities. They have no purity, no tradition, no truth. They explain creation as merely the outcome of the sex-act, and glorify the sex-instinct as the ultimate truth of creation. They deny the Supreme Lord. Such men are born to harm the world. They are obstinate and perverse and hold on to their foul and filthy ways of life. They indulge in sense-pleasures endlessly. They amass wealth by dishonest means, and feel proud of their power to injure the world, for their own selfish purposes. Such are the demonic creatures. I throw them down into heinous births, they have no grace or salvation.” The Lord’s impassioned utterance should be a warning to all aspirants to keep away from the destructive creed of the *Charvakas*. The seeker should cultivate faith in the Divine and spiritual laws. They should transcend the physical appetites and sense-pleasures, and regard the body no more than a useful instrument for the realisation of God.

4. Materialism :- “Nature (*Prakriti*) works every thing. There is no need of God (*Purusha*). The universe functions by the law of cause and effect. Nature is omnipotent.”—This is materialism. The Gita denies it. Although the Gita admits the

practical reality of Nature and its workings, it asserts that Nature is subservient to God and borrows its light and life-force from that source. Nature has no existence outside the power of the Supreme Lord of the universe. Nature brings forth the whole universe in the immediate presence and by the supreme power of God. So says the Gita. If the universe is a mighty convocation, God is the chairman and Nature is the convener. Without the chairman, there is no convocation. God sustains Nature and reveals his power through Nature. (*utre maniganiva.*)

As the golden thread runs through a necklace of diamonds, even so God is the connecting link between all that exists in the universe. Without the string, the precious stones are scattered at random. Without God, the universe falls to pieces and ceases to exist. "Oh, Arjuna! God (*Kshetri*) illuminates the whole universe (*Kshetram*)" From this we understand that the universe is insentient matter (*Jada*) and it is not self-luminous. It appears to shine, but the light is that of God. It appears to move, to create, and to destroy, but all these powers belong to the Supreme Lord. Thus the Gita contradicts the doctrine of the materialists.

Moreover, the five elements that compose the universe are impermanent. To depend on them is to be destroyed along with them. If anybody holds on to a rotating pillar, he turns and tumbles down along with it. There is only One in the universe that is constant and firmly fixed, and that One is *Atman*. (*achaloyam sanatanah*). "The *Atman* alone does not move. It is the immovable, and the universal." It is the seer and the knower of the whole phenomena of Nature. One who has faith in the *Atman* has no fear of a fall. One who clings to Nature shall go to destruction with it. Who can quench his thirst by running after a mirage? Who can satisfy his hunger by hunting after the fruits of a tree reflected in water? So, the Gita prescribes that the aspirant should hold on to the *Atman* and fulfil the ultimate goal of life. "All things take place in Me (God). It is by Me (God) that everything works."

"I (God) am the father, mother, grandsire, and the controller of the Universe."—says the Lord. Therefore without

depending on anything else, one should take refuge in Him alone. [*mamekam saranam vraja*] "Surrender to me alone." The teacher of the Gita exhorts mankind again and again to give up everything else and surrender to him. So the spiritual aspirant should not entertain materialistic thoughts about the reality of the world, but should turn his mind to the One light and One power that is illuminating and moving everything. Thus shall one acquire eternal peace and bliss.

5. Mortification of the body as a form of 'tapasya' :—
 The body is not our enemy. The real enemies to spiritual realisation are the evil tendencies and predispositions which have taken root in the mind through innumerable births. The body is guiltless. To torture it for realising the spirit is sheer foolishness. Such torture of the body will not remove the bad tendencies. That is why great men practice purification of the mind and sense-organs which are just the instruments of the mind to contact the material world and enjoy its pleasures. If the mind is purified of its evil tendencies, the body becomes an aid to self-realisation. This is real '*tapasya*' and not the torturing of the body. In the seventeenth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna warns the aspirant against it. He says that it is a demonic practice, hostile to the spirit of the *Sastras*, and those who practice it do so for their own pride and glorification.

The teacher of the Gita prescribes three types of *Tapasya* for the body, speech and mind. They should be practised. Occasional fasting and control of the limbs, and such other simple and mild methods to keep the body in a state of health, harmony, and steadiness, are not prohibited by the Gita. So, according to the teaching of the Gita, the seeker should undertake mild and harmless practices to make the body cooperate with his effort to realise the Self.

6. *Mishyachara* (false practice) :—Some people suppress bodily activity, but their mind wanders all over the three worlds, indulging in fantastic thoughts of pleasure and enjoyment. Such uncontrolled activity of the mind is real bondage for mankind.

"Those who suppress the physical organs, but mentally contemplate sense-pleasures, are guilty of false discipline. They

are ignorant and stupid." This is an important directive for the spiritual aspirant. What is needed is to repair and purify the mind-stuff so that it is freed from slavery to worldly temptations and pleasures. When the mind is free, work in the world does not bind man. So, the crucial point is to strive for mental purity, and freedom from lust, greed and hatred. If this is achieved Self realisation becomes possible immediately. But mere suppression of bodily organs does not lead to the goal. The seeker should bear this in mind in the course of his *Sadhana*, and he should not imagine that he is progressing on the spiritual path, simply because the body is restrained from action. The mind should be filled to the brim with divine thoughts and feelings. This may not be easy in the early stages. But perseverance will ultimately conquer all mental distractions, and the mind comes to rest in the *Atman*. This is the way, and there is no other way.

SOME QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE FOR THE READER OF THE GITA

I. Q : How could Lord Krishna teach the entire Gita in such a short time ?

A : 1. Lord Krishna is God Himself. There is nothing impossible for Him. He has power to do and undo things. He is the ruler of *Maya*. He worked several miracles to the great wonder of the world. The teaching of the Gita is therefore not an impossibility to the Lord.

2. The battle did not commence immediately after the formation of the two armies. One or two incidents happened. Dharmaraja walked bare-footed towards the enemy army. His brothers followed him. He met Bhishma, Drona, and other elders, and received their blessings and returned. Afterwards, Dharmaraja announced that if there was any one who would wish to surrender to him, he would protect his life. Yuyutsu then came over to the side of the Pandavas. These incidents show that there was some time before the commencement of the battle. It was the first day of the battle, and so certain formalities might have to be gone through, during which time the Lord taught the Gita to Arjuna. There is nothing unnatural in this.

3. It is possible that Lord Krishna might have taught the essential principles of spiritual life, and Veda Vyasa elaborated them in the form of the Gita.

4. According to the moral code of war, no warrior would attack an enemy when the latter drops the weapons, and when he is sunk in sorrow and tears. On both sides, the warriors were high-born heroes, who had a sense of chivalry and fair play. Arjuna dropped the Gandiva (bow) and fell down in the chariot in a mood of despair and sorrow. Would the Kaurava heroes start the attack just then? They might have paused till Arjuna, inspired by the message of the Lord, stood up with his bow in his hand ready for the fight. So there is nothing improbable about the teaching of the Gita on the battle-field.

II. Q: Lord Krishna and Arjuna were intimately associated with each other for a long time. Instead of choosing a peaceful time for his instruction, why did Lord Krishna choose this crisis as the proper moment to communicate his message?

A: 1. Time is an important factor for success in any attempt. This truth holds good in spiritual life. The blacksmith bends the iron rod when it is redhot. The builder constructs the super-structure when the foundation is strongly laid. The physician administers medicine, when there is disease. The peasant sows the seeds when the field is tilled and watered. Similarly, on the battle-field, Arjuna's mind was deeply moved and agitated. He was directly faced with the grand question of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, of life and death. He needed an immediate answer, straight, direct, and convincing, from the Lord. So Lord Krishna chose that moment to enlighten him as to what he should do, and how he should think. Such a situation never occurred in the life of Arjuna at any time previously. Not knowing what he should do, Arjuna was perplexed with doubt and appealed to the Lord to teach him wisdom. Such intense emotion, such deep desire for wisdom, such thirst for knowledge, never occurred to Arjuna at any time formerly. Lord Krishna knew that it was the most appropriate time to shower spiritual knowledge on his friend and disciple.

2. Life itself is a battle-field. Everyday a battle between good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong, is taking place in the heart of every human being. This inner conflict in the heart of man is symbolised by the external conflict between the Kauravas and Pandavas. Lord Krishna sides with justice and goodness, and helps to conquer demonic evil and injustice. So, just as Arjuna sought the help of Lord Krishna to know the truth, mankind is constantly searching for truth in the midst of the doubts and troubles of worldly life. The war of the Mahabharata, is symbolic of the conflict between good and evil in the heart of man. The Gita offers the necessary light for mankind to know the truth and realise it.

III. Q: When there are elders like Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Salya, Dharmaraja, Bhima, and others, why did Lord Krishna select only Arjuna to teach the Gita ?

A : Arjuna was exceptionally qualified to receive the message of the Gita. He was the sage 'Nara' in his former birth. Lord Narayana reincarned himself as Krishna, and Nara as Arjuna.

[pandavanam dhananjayah]

"I am Arjuna among the Pandavas", says the Lord. While the Pandavas were in exile, Arjuna performed great *Tapasya*, pleased Siva, and received the *Pasupatastra*. He could defeat all the Kauravas single-handed in the episode of *Uttaragograhamanam*. He is pure. We find him firm and unmoved by the beauty and blandishments of the heavenly damsel Urvashi. Moreover, he is the bosom friend of Lord Krishna from childhood. On the battle-field Arjuna appears as a devotee and disciple of the Lord.

"I am your disciple; command me (what I should do)" says Arjuna.

(bhakto'si me sakha cheti)

"You are a devotee and a friend", says Lord Krishna to Arjuna. Since Arjuna was intimately related to the Lord both as a friend and devotee, he was selected as the fittest person to receive the divine message, which contains the most secret *Brahmayidya*.

In several other places also, Lord Krishna refers to Arjuna as a devotee and friend. His love for Arjuna was just the response to the deep faith and devotion that Arjuna had for the Lord. The Lord knows the heart of his devotees. Both physically and mentally, Arjuna was strong and pure, and gifted with exceptional talents and powers, and so Lord Krishna chose him as the medium to convey the Gita to all mankind.

IV. Q: The Gita commands Arjuna to fight. Is it not teaching violence?

A: No. The Gita does not teach violence. On the other hand, non-injury (*Ahimsa*) is strongly recommended as one of the first virtues of the spiritual aspirant.

The spirit of the Gita should be properly understood and interpreted. We should consider, under what circumstances, for what purpose, with what aim, Lord Krishna commanded Arjuna to fight. If we do so, the doubt would not arise. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* has very subtle meaning and application to the practical affairs of life. Arjuna was a Kshatriya, a King. To maintain peace and order in the kingdom is his duty. For this purpose, he should suppress the wicked and defend the good. By doing so, he would establish peace and security in the country. Lord Krishna came down to the earth as an *Avatar* for the same purpose.

Those who indulge in wicked anti-social activities, who are traitors to the nation should be punished. Otherwise the land would be plunged in chaos and disorder, and the law of the jungle would prevail. Might would be right, and no man's life would be safe. If the canker worm is not destroyed in time, it would destroy the whole tree. The cancerous growth should be operated and the poison removed from the body, so that the entire organism might not decay and die. To operate the cancer is not violence. Anti-social elements who try to subvert peace and order should be eliminated. This is not violence. Dacoits and murderers should be caught and punished. That is the work of the police. This is not violence.

The wicked behaviour of the Kauravas deserved punishment and punishment overtook them through the war. They

tried all the evil methods to destroy the Pandavas. They used poison and incendiarism. They violated the modesty and honour of their wife Draupadi. They deprived them of their share of the kingdom. They declined all offers of peace and goodwill. There was no alternative left for the Pandavas except to punish them on the battle-field. So the war was not act of violence, but a righteous struggle for establishing justice in the world.

In this way, war became an inevitable sequence to the innumerable acts of evil committed by the Kauravas. The Pandavas had to face it, in accordance with the moral code of the Kshatriyas. Lord Krishna commanded what was *Dharma* under these special circumstances. Violence and non-violence should be understood and interpreted very correctly. One should go deep into the heart of things to know and decide what is violence and what is non-violence. He should not be deceived by slogans and cheap propaganda about *Ahimsa*. The Gita does not teach hatred. It does not teach violence. On the other hand, it emphasises kindness and compassion, friendship and love. Hatred is condemned as the worst enemy of man. The Gita teaches universal love and benevolence.

But the Gita never admits weakness and surrender to the forces of evil, however mighty they might be. The Gita exhorts every one to stand up and fight injustice. The man who engages himself in the task of defending a righteous cause should do so by surrendering the fruits of his action to God, and work as an instrument in the hands of God. The sentence of death passed on a criminal by a judge is not an act of violence. Even so, the righteous war undertaken by the Pandavas could by no means be described as violence, although blood was shed profusely and lives were lost in great numbers. The spirit of the great book is to lead man to a realisation of the Supreme Self through the process of righteous action with complete faith in God, and perfect surrender to His will.

GITA AND YOGAVASISHTA

We shall now consider some points of similarity between the Gita and Yogavasishta. The latter is an authoritative work of religious philosophy, highly popular like the Gita. It is of

very ancient origin. In the Treta yuga, Maharshi Valmiki wrote the mighty work which contains thirty two thousand verses. Here are some points of comparision.

1. As Lord Krishna taught the Gita to Arjuna, Maharshi Vasishta explained the secret of religion and philosophy to Sri Rama. Therefore the dialogue form is adopted in both the works.

2. Arjuna was filled with a feeling of disillusionment about the greatness and grandeur of worldly life. He was beset with doubt as to his duty on the battle-field. Lord Krishna teaches him the way of righteousness and *Dharma*, and commands him to fight the battle. In the same way, Sri Rama, when he was a boy of only sixteen years, saw the impermanence of human life, and had a feeling of renunciation, resulting in inaction. Vasishta, the *Guru* of the royal family, taught Sri Rama the secret of *yoga* and the way of righteous life and work in the world.

3. Just as Arjuna was awakened from the delusion of ignorance by the divine call of Krishna, even so Sri Rama was inspired by the sublime spiritual teaching of his *Guru* and carried out his prescribed duties as a king and house-holder.

4. Yogavasishta belongs to the Treta yuga; the Gita to the closing period of Dwapara yuga. About two yugas intervened between the two great works. But astonishingly, in the Yogavasishta there are references to the Gita. In the Nirvanaprakaranam of the book, the episode of Arjuna is included, and the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna is presented comprehensively. Some verses of the Gita are recorded verbatim in the Yogavasishta. How wonderful! How can we describe the vision of Vasishta for whom time as a whole reveals the past, present, and future as one complete whole! It is a proof of the importance of the Gita that it found its proper place in that great work.

HOW THE GITA HELPS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Hundreds of books are coming out everyday--novels, stories, plays, critical and research works in literature and science and other subjects. People read them once or twice and put them away. But there is one book which they usually consult

everyday and that is the dictionary. The Bhagawadgita is like a dictionary of life, as it explains the meaning of life, its purpose, and method of work in the world. The physician consults the 'materia-medic' everyday as he comes across problematic diseases and finds new remedies for them. Likewise, it is necessary for man who is subject to the disease of earthly life to consult the Gita at every turn. All the problems of the human personality are mentioned in it, and the cure suggested in clear terms. The Gita is not ethereal philosophy, but a direct interpretation of life in all its aspects. Man is confronted with doubts and difficulties, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. All such doubts and difficulties are stated in the Gita, and they are all cleared finally. The reader is not left in doubt about any problem of life. We shall see how the Gita helps people in everyday life.

1. When people are angry — Anger is a wave of the mind. It starts like a ripple at first, gathers force and becomes a whirlwind, and then develops into a storm. It is then uncontrollable, and man is plunged into darkness and death.

"By anger man is deluded; by delusion he loses memory of what he really is; by the loss of memory, the power of discrimination is lost; when *Buddhi* is lost, man is destroyed." Thus the teacher of the Gita warns mankind against anger and hatred. Man degrades himself to the level of a demon by yielding to anger and hatred. Anger is like alcohol and there is practically no difference between the drunkard and the wrathful man. They forget themselves, and lose the power to distinguish between the right and wrong. Great harm is done to society by this dangerous passion. Hatred is born of *Rajas*. The man who is overcome by it can never enjoy rest or peace.

(rajasastu phalam dukham)

"The fruit of *Rajas* is pain and suffering." So says Lord Krishna; "Hatred and harshness are demonic qualities." They ruin not only those who entertain them but all those against whom they are directed. Like a bad guest who should be turned out before he could do any harm to our home, such passions should not be allowed to enter the heart. The Gita-teaching should be remembered and thought of at all times, particularly at the time when

people foresees the rising of this passion, and their faith in the Lord would certainly help them to destroy it even at the source.

2. When people are tempted by worldly pleasures :—
Vasishta says in the Yogavasista— (*bhogah bhavamaharogah*)
“Enjoyments are great disease of life.”

Lord Krishna repeats in the Gita—

(*bhogah duhhayonaya evate*)

“Enjoyments are the cause and source of pain and sorrow.” Men of experience have expressed the same view. The *Sastras*, *Upanishads* have declared the same truth. Inspite of it, by the compelling force of past tendencies, men run after sensual pleasures which have no more substance in them than water in a mirage. Men do not think and so these enjoyments appear to have a relish and taste for the vast majority of people. Their attraction is false, and they do not have real beauty or truth in them. If they have, they should give complete satisfaction, and everlasting joy, and peace. But no man, however abundant and plentiful his enjoyments might be, has ever declared that he is peaceful or happy. “Sense enjoyments contain a drop of happiness accompanied by Himalayam pain and sorrow.” Therefore the Gita warns the aspirant to give up temptation for worldly enjoyment, and to seek for that peace and joy of the spirit which is untainted by sense-objects and which is therefore pure and eternal. Those who desire enjoyments are mentally distracted and so they cannot reach the state of ecstatic concentration. Moreover—“These enjoyments which result from the union of the senses with the sense-objects are themselves the source of pain and sorrow. They begin and end, and are short-lived. Wise men do not relish them.” Not only this, Lord Krishna makes it clear that real joy comes from within, and not from external objects; and that joy is eternal. The rejection of sense-pleasures is further evidenced by the following statements in the Gita.

“The aspirant should have dispassion towards the objects of sence-enjoyment.”

“Sense objects should be given up—” “Men of demonic nature consider sence-enjoyment as the ultimate goal of life.

Such men are cast into Hell." "Man freed from the desire of sensual pleasures, attains liberation."

Thus the Gita teaches renunciation of bodily pleasures in a hundred ways. Whenever the seeker feels tempted by sense-enjoyment, he should recall the teaching of the Gita again and again, and courageously turn away from them. There is no other way. It would be inspiring to feel that Lord Krishna is himself before us, guiding and helping us to overcome all temptations of earthly life.

3. When there is fear of death :— The fear of death is common to all living-beings. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high-born and the low, are all equally struck with the fear of death. The Gita explains what death is, and why it is ridiculous to fear it. Death means separation from the body. If man is the body, fear of losing it may be explicable. But in reality, man is not and cannot be the body. The real man is not a composition of the five elements. He is truly the eternal *Sachithananda*. No one grieves when torn clothes are removed and thrown off. Even so when the body deteriorates and falls, the thoughtful man does not grieve, because he knows well that he is the witness to the modifications of the body.

Oh Arjuna! You and I and these kings here are the One eternal reality. We existed formerly and we shall exist in future." So says the Lord and thus teaches the *Mahavakya* 'Thou art That' to Arjuna, and inspires tremendous courage in them. Whenever there is the fear of death, let every man remember the magnificent and powerful exhortation of the Lord, and there is absolutely no doubt the fear is dispelled immediately. "The *Atman* (the real man) is indestructable. It cannot be cut or burnt or dried up or dissolved. It is immortal and universal. It exists for ever." "Oh, Arjuna! the *Atman*, the dweller in the body, cannot be destroyed, when the body falls. This is true of every individual. Therefore thou shalt not grieve for anyone." "The *Atman* is never born. It never dies. It is not one who did not exist in the past, present, or future. It is the unborn, the everlasting, and the ancient. Though the body dies, it is free from death."

Thus the immortality of the real man is affirmed through innumerable declarations in the Gita. As one reads them, thinks of them, understands them again and again, the fear of death is gone for ever. One should persistently assert—"I am not the body; I am the spirit dwelling in the body; I am not the *kshetra*; I am the *kshetrajna*; I am not the three *Gunas*; I am the transcendental Being." Continuous adherence to this truth is the way to overcome the fear of death. From time immemorial, man has so identified himself with the body, that he is unable to think that he is anything other than the body. Now he has to dehypnotise himself from this delusion and know that he is, and he was, nothing else but the *Atman*. This is the command of the Gita. There is no death for the real man.

4. When people are troubled by sensual desires — *Kama* (lust) is the foremost opposing force to the seeker. *Kama* is the leader of the opposition. It is he who first breaks into the heart of man to rob the jewel of *Jnana*. With him enter his aids—hatred, greed and the whole battalion of evil forces. This *kama* is described as (*jnanino nityavairina*) 'the eternal enemy of the *Jnani*'— Again, *kama* is like fire which is never subdued by offerings poured into it. The teacher of the Gita constantly warns the aspirant against it. If man is weak and careless about it, he can never hope to scale the heights of spirituality. Therefore he should keep the Lord's teachings as a permanent sentinel guarding the gateway of his heart against this most wile and dangerous enemy.

As man contemplates worldly objects, desire for them is born. And this desire leads to all consequential evils which end in man's destruction. Therefore one should try to examine and discriminate and understand how worthless and short-lived these material pleasures are, and never allow them to enter the heart. Even when they creep into the mind secretly; the seeker should throw the enemy out at once before he could again a foothold in his territory.

"He who, even before the body falls, is able to check the force of *kama* (lust) and *krodha* (anger), is the man free and happy. So, as soon as the seeker feels the touch of *kama*, he should become alert, and realising full-well that it is the

most dangerous enemy, he should detach himself from its grip in every possible way. "Lust, hatred and greed are the open gateways to Hell. They destroy man. Give them up." What a clear warning ! Let people hear the warning of the Lord at all times.

The terrible enemy *kama* should be conquered. The seeker should not in any way underestimate the strength of the enemy. Through many births, he has acquired power and resources, and fortified his position in the heart of man. To destroy this fortification, and pull out the enemy, and destroy him, one would require the most determined effort. Half-hearted measures would not be of any avail. Powerful weapons should be used. The declarations of the Lord in the Gita, the truths enunciated in the Upanishads and the *Sastras* are the arsenal from which the seeker could draw weapons of atomic power to erase the fortifications of the enemy and destroy him. It is not enough to defeat the enemy once. He would knock at the gate again at an opportune moment. He should be destroyed, burnt to ashes, so that he might never sneak into the heart at any time, under any guise, and in any form. Thus the Gita helps the seeker to overcome the greatest obstacle to Self-realisation.

5. How to overcome envy and hatred of others :- Though the world appears to be diversified by separate individuals and objects, in reality it is One. In the wave, the bubble, and the foam, there is the same water as the substratum. Even so, through all the diversities of creation, the same unbroken consciousness pervades. Where then is envy? Where is hatred of others? Who are the others, different from the Self ? "Where is delusion, where is sorrow for the man who sees the One every where ?" The Gita emphasises this Oneness in many places. "He is the best of men who is equal to friend and foe, to the good and bad." Moreover the Gita insists on love and kindness towards all creatures.

(adveshta sarvabhuwanam)

Higher than this, the Gita wants that one should see others as his own Self. The *Atman*, the all-pervading substratum is the same in all. The difference is only in the name and form.

So when one hates others, he is hating his own self. Harming others is injury to one's own self. This is the truth. To have faith in the declarations of Lord Krishna is the surest way to keep away all uncharitable thoughts, feelings and actions.

6. How to overcome the pride of power and property :—

In the vastness of this mighty and infinite universe, what after all is the place of the earth? A mere dot or less than that. What then is the position of a country, and in that, the place of man's so called prosperity—his lands and houses, his estates and empires? Practically nothing. Let us contemplate for once the unlimited glory of God Almighty. Even the most powerful imagination of the greatest poet would stagger and fail to think of the endless universe and the mysterious power that pervades it. Could any man rational and thoughtful feel proud of his place and possessions in the face of this stupendous universe and the power behind it?

"I pervade the whole universe with only one of my aspects," declares the Lord in the Vibhuti yoga of the Gita. How mighty and unfathomable is the Lord's power! The whole universe forms only a part of him! Before this all-pervading glory and power of the Lord, what is man's position and possessions? What are his enjoyments? When we think of this, we are struck with the littleness of man, and his hollow pretensions and protestations of pride and egotism. When Arjuna appealed to the Lord to see his universal form, the Lord told him that he could not see it with the mortal eyes. So the Lord offered Divine Vision to Arjuna. He saw. The Vision was tremendous. Arjuna bows to the Lord, but how, for the Lord is everywhere? "I bow to you, before and behind, and all around." But Arjuna could not see the mighty form for long. He trembled with dismay and amazement, and wished to see the normal figure of Lord Krishna. How wonderful! Let the proud and egoistic people turn over these pages of the eleventh chapter of the Gita often and often, and they shall be rid of the demon of egotism. They shall then be humble. True humility would come to them. The Lord does everything. Arjuna is only an instrument.

If we examine things carefully, we find that whatever is seen is subject to destruction. What is born, dies. That is what the Gita says. All the worlds up to Brahmaloka come and go in a cycle. That is, they take birth, and so they end, in time. Only the Supreme is eternal. And that state alone is everlasting. When the glories of all the worlds are after all short-lived and useless, why should man feel proud of his worthless possessions of this earth? When greater beings in the higher worlds are themselves subject to death and disappear into nothingness, why should man alone have a bloated and inflated ego? Let man see clearly what he is in the vastness of the universe. Then he would know his littleness as a separate individual. He would then enquire into his real nature. Through enquiry he would acquire knowledge of his real self. Such knowledge would unite him with the Supreme Reality.

In this manner, the Gita offers strong remedy to the many weaknesses of human nature. It is certainly best to foresee and prevent disease. In spiritual *sadhana*, this is far more important. To eliminate desires even at the source is far easier than to remove them after they take root in the heart. However, if that were not possible, it is good to discover the disease as soon as it appears, and apply the strongest cure to root it out immediately. Otherwise the disease becomes chronic and incurable. The spiritual aspirant should be extremely vigilant and watchful. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. This is absolutely true in the spiritual realm. The Gita not only purifies the mental atmosphere, but acts like an invigorating and life-giving tonic to reinforce the resistance-power of the seeker, and thus enables him to transcend all the difficulties in his way. May the whole of mankind benefit by its study, and experience untainted peace and bliss.

OUR DUTY

Thus far we have considered some of the prominent features of the Gita. In fact there can be no end as we proceed in this line. It is impossible even for the thousand-hooded Adisesha to exhaust all the merits of the Gita. So for the present, let us be content with these few aspects which we have touched. It is said that the simple daily recitation of the Gita confers religious merit, and the daily practice of the Gita gives

Moksha. So, let one move forward from study to practice. One should aim at freeing himself from the bondage of earthly life, with its endless chain of birth and death, with all its innumerable causes of pain and sorrow and suffering. This is one's duty. The aspirant should feel grateful that he has such great books like the Gita to inspire and guide him. Sri Sankaracharya says that there are three things which God's grace alone could confer on mankind—firstly, the human birth; secondly, the desire for liberation; and thirdly, the protection and guidance of a realised soul. The aspirants have all these benefits now. They are rational human beings. They aspire to know the truth. They have the word of God (Gita) to protect and guide them. Blessed are those who could serve the Lord and practise his teaching, before the body falls. Let not this wonderful opportunity be lost through ignorance and neglect. The human body is a rare gift. It may not come to man again till after many births. Sankara says that the human birth is the reward for the good done through countless number of births. Otherwise it is impossible to attain it.

Hence there is the immediate urgency to work for the highest goal here and now. When one has good health, when there are good opportunities, when he is young and energetic, in the spring time of life, let him take refuge with the Gita and such other great works, and rise higher and higher towards the goal. Let him cultivate devotion, practise dispassion, acquire knowledge, and break up the shackles of delusion and sorrow which keeps him bound on the rack of earthly life. "Here (i.e.) in this very life, man should realise his Self" is the injunction of the Lord. The Lord knows that if this opportunity is lost, it may not come to him till after many births. Out of compassion, the Lord exhorts mankind to realise the extraordinary importance of this life, and to complete the work for which he has come.

Do people not satisfy the demands of the body with regular food and sleep every day? Similarly, let them undertake the study of the Gita as a daily duty—the Gita which is the very essence of the *Sastras* and the *Upanishadas*. Let them find delight in the contemplation of these truths enunciated by the

Lord for the benefit of mankind. Let them begin here and now. Whatever might have been the past, whatever the future might hold in store, let them make a fresh start on this beautiful path illumined by the love and compassion of the Supreme Lord. Arjuna gave up the reins of his chariot into the hands of the Lord and fought the battle free from all cares and anxieties. So let one hand-over the reins of his life's chariot to the Lord, and work without the feeling of doership, and in the spirit that he is but the instrument of the Lord in this great mundane drama. For such a man, there is no bondage. There is no pain and grief. The Lord himself would guide the chariot to its proper destination.

Let us imagine ourselves to be Arjuna, and feel the Lord's presence as our guide, philosopher, and friend. To picture ourselves as Arjuna receiving the divine message directly from the lips of the Lord would be the surest way to realise its meaning and significance fully, and transcend all the difficulties and temptations that arise in this life. It leads to the highest spiritual experience.

PROPAGATING THE GITA

Man's work is not over by his own realisation. It is the universal *Dharma* for such a man to help others to realise the Self. Having crossed the ocean of *samsara*, he should help others to do so. He should share his divine bliss with others. He has taken refuge in the Gita, has purified his mind, and has realised the bliss of *Atma Jnana*, and all this he should communicate to others. Many are sunk in the pit of *Samsara*, and are suffering by pain and sorrow. They know not the way out. Distracted by the temptations of life, they wander about without rest or peace. The realised man has a duty to discharge towards them. Who else can save them? The *Jnani* alone could do it. By his own effort, he has lighted up his heart with the lamp of the Gita. He alone has the power to enlighten others. He has practised the Gita-teaching, and he should help others to practise it. This is *Jnana Dana*. It is far greater than any other *Dana* ('charity'). This is *Jnanayajna*, and it is far higher than any other *Yajna*. So besides studying the Gita, he should propagate its study as best as he could. At the end of the Gita, Lord Krishna says that he, who, having learnt the Gita, teaches it to others, is

the most dear to him— So it follows that the Lord not only approves but values the propagation of the Gita in the world as a precious act of devotion to him Why not then do the work which is dear to the Lord ? It is certainly good to reform oneself and then to reform others. It is better to form Gita-Sanghams in every village and town and city and disseminate the Gita-message to the people at large. Young students in schools and colleges should be initiated into the powerful teaching of the Gita. May the sounds of the Gita reverberate in every household. May the divine melody of the Gita ravish the heart of mankind and draw them on to the bliss of God-realisation. Where the Gita is, there the Lord dwells, undoubtedly. Where the Lord is, there is Victory, prosperity, and *Dharma*. So every one should study and practice the Gita. Every one should try to widen the field of its influence to the extent that is possible for him. The heart shall yield the richest harvest when watered and sown by the sacred waters of the Gita and its immortal message.

CONCLUSION

The Gita is directly the manifestation of the Lord. Service to the Gita is service to the Lord. The study of the Gita is the sacred *Japa* of the Lord. Each verse of the Gita is *Narayana-Mahamantra*. A parrot made of sugar tastes sweet in every part of it. So the Gita is filled with divine bliss in every verse, word and phrase. The Gita embodies the highest *Dharma*. It is the finest fruit of the tree of *Dharma*. What is the cause of its wonderful power? Evidently, the teacher of the Gita is God himself, endowed with all the sixteen aspects of illumination. The propounders of other religions have claimed different relationships with God. One has declared himself as the son of God; another as the prophet of God; another as the messenger of God; yet another, as the servant of God. But the teacher of the Gita proclaims that he is God himself So the Gita is directly the word of God. It is not something communicated through an intermediary. This explains its tremendous power. Arjuna's ignorance is removed even before half the teaching is over

The name Gita has a wonderful meaning. 'Gi' means that which is sung; 'ta' means that which helps to cross (the

ocean of *Samsara*). Like the *Kalpavriksha*, it helps those who seek for its protection. It is the eye for the blind; the feet for the lame; strength for the weak; shower of rain to quench the fire of pain and sorrow. It transforms the ignorant into the wise; the timid man into a hero; the dying man into an immortal. It is the highest form of wealth for mankind. It leads every man gently step by step till he reaches the summit of God-realisation. It purifies the heart. It sets right all crookedness. It awakens the dormant powers in man. It brings out the inherent divine light in the heart of man.

The Gita is the holy Triveni where the three streams of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, and *Jnana* meet. Blessed are those who take a bath in this holy Triveni. *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana*, and *Jnana* cannot be separated from one another. They are interrelated. According to previous tendencies, the seeker may follow one of them as the main path, but the others have their part to play. Those who are not conscious of this union, are likely to urge the superiority of their own path over the others. The Gita harmonised all the divergent elements by declaring that transcending the ego, and renunciation of individual self are the main objectives of spiritual life.

Though the Gita has several commentaries, the life of Lord Krishna is itself the great commentary on the Gita. *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana*, and *Jnana* find their proper place in his life. He is an adept in *Nishkamakarma*. He rules the three worlds with the knowledge of the Gita. He is intensely active and at the same time in a state of perfect rest and peace. This is the greatest teaching of the Gita. He is also a *Bhakta*. To his *Guru* Sandipa and other elders, he is devoted and respectful. In the *Rajasuyayaga* performed by Dharmaraja, he washed the feet of the elders and showed his humility and devotion to them. He is the Lord of *Yoga*. He is the very embodiment of *Jnana*. He taught *Yoga* to the Sun God in the past. So the life of Lord Krishna is a direct example for the aspirants who follow the teaching of the Gita. Let everyone absorb and assimilate the teaching of the Gita in his everyday life, and transform his earthly life, into divine life, full to the brim with *Sachithananda*. This is the goal of life. This is the message of the Gita.

One important principle of the Gita is that no one should be forced to accept its teaching. After delivering the whole teaching, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna,—

“Having considered the Gita Sastra, do as you like.” The disciple is not compelled to accept the teaching. He is free to choose his line of thought and action. Only, Lord Krishna wants Arjuna to consider the teaching deeply and critically. But the final decision is to be taken by the devotee. “I have told you what is *Dharma*. I have shown you the pitfalls and elevations of life. I have pointed out the distinction between good and bad, between bondage and freedom, between life and death, between ignorance and knowledge. You may think well and act in your own way.” This is what the Lord says to Arjuna. Great men teach the highest wisdom, but the responsibility for accepting or rejecting it rests on the disciple, and not on the *Guru*. Of course the thoughtful disciple would certainly accept the higher teaching and follow it. Arjuna did likewise. His ignorance was removed in a trice.

Each soul is potentially divine. But as the mind is impure, man is unable to see that truth as it is. For mental purification, one should engage himself in selfless action (*Nishkamakarma*). If one does his prescribed duty without a feeling of doership, if he gives up the fruits of work to God, the mind becomes pure. The light of *Atman* then reflects clearly in the pure mind, like the reflection in a pure mirror. If the mirror is impure and stained, the reflection is distorted and broken up. This is not the fault of the man standing before the mirror. The reflector is imperfect. Even so, the *Atman* is always the same. But the reflecting mind being impure (i.e.: tainted with desires, likes and dislikes, people are unable to visualise the reality as it is. The individual *Jiva* cannot overcome *Maya* by his own effort. He should seek for the Grace of God who is the ruler of *Maya*. He should therefore take refuge at the feet of the Lord and *Guru*. Thus *Bhakti* plays its part in spiritual life. *Japa*, Worship, singing the name of the Lord, and such other practices of devotion should be followed by the aspirant.

Whoever worships the Supreme Lord, he receives the grace by which he becomes one with God. God himself confers

on the devotee the *Buddhiyoga* which enables him to realise the truth. In this manner, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, and *Jnana* follow one another in a natural order. But the aspirant should be watchful always. One may light the lamp in the house. But if he keeps the windows open, gusts of wind might put out the light. Even so, the lamp of knowledge may be disturbed and puffed out by sensual impulses from within and sense-objects from without, coming in through the open windows of the five senses. Therefore the control of the senses and dispassion towards worldly objects should be cultivated. Otherwise all the efforts to acquire *Jnana* would be futile.

The Lord reminds the *sadhaka* (aspirant) about self-control time and again in the course of his teaching. Even from the starting point of spiritual life, control of the senses is prescribed as an essential condition, and it is to be continued till the goal is reached and one becomes firmly rooted in the Self. To control the mind and senses is *Raja yoga*. The impurity of the mind (*Mala*) and the outgoing tendency of the mind (*Vikshepa*) should be controlled first, and then enquiry into the Self becomes spontaneous and unbroken. Having put to himself the basic question 'Who am I?', the seeker should carry on the enquiry by rejecting the five sheaths (*Annamayakosa*, *Pranamayakosa*, *Manomayakosa*, *Vijnanamayakosa*, and *Anandamayakosa*) one after another, till he arrives at the very source of his being, and then the veil covering the Reality (*avarana*) is thrown off and the *kshetrajna* manifests in one's heart as the supreme universal consciousness. Just as the Sun shines directly when the covering cloud moves off, even so, when the veil of ignorance drops off, the inner Light shines forth in all its purity and glory. This is the essence of the Gita. To attain this goal even in this birth should be the aim of every student of the Gita.

Of course there is no prescribed time for the study of the Gita. But to purify the body early in the morning, and sit down calmly in a clean spot for the study is the traditional method. Internal purity should be sustained by external purity of body and the environment. In a peaceful and pure spot meditation on the Gita would be easy and the mind gets into tune with its sublime teaching. Hence the seeker should select some undisturbed

place in the house or elsewhere for spiritual practice. One chapter or more of Gita as the seeker feels inclined, may be taken up for the purpose of *Gita-parayana*. After completing the *Parayana*, one or two verses of Gita Mahatmya should be read without fail.

Mere recitation of the Gita does confer religious merit. But that is not enough. The seeker should try to understand the meaning and significance of the text by a sure and slow process. As he contemplates the meaning the mind is gradually purified. There are likely to occur some doubts or apparent contradictions. These should be cleared by a closer scrutiny of the context in which they occur. Here is an illustration. "Men think, feel, and act according to their previous tendencies (*Prakriti*). How can there be control ?" A statement like this is likely to mislead the unwary reader into thinking that the Lord is discouraging the practice of self-control as useless and impossible. It is not so. It is intended only to emphasise the strength of the tendencies which each man has to encounter in his struggle for spiritual freedom, and not to disparage the practice of self-control. For, in the very next verse, he asserts—

"The senses have developed attraction and repulsion towards the objects of the world. They are the enemies of man. He should not yield to them." Here the Lord commands self-control. So the reader has to pause at every verse and try to understand its meaning in relation to other ideas expressed elsewhere in the text. Then he would get a synthetic and harmonised view of the entire teaching.

There is the greatest need for the propagation of the Gita in modern times. Great are the temptations of modern life, and the emphasis on material comforts. People are under the illusion that the acquisition of worldly comforts is the *summum bonum* of man's aspirations. Few men think rationally.

on the real meaning of human life, and man's ultimate destiny. The Gita has the special merit of arguing out the whole case of man's existence and duty in this life, and his ultimate position in the scheme of things. The Gita does not evidently deny the world of action. Arjuna was commanded to act. The Gita shows how to act in this world (i.e.), the method of action, the motive and spirit behind action. On the other side, the Gita reveals the essential oneness of man with the Supreme Being. This harmonisation of the world of action, the so-called practical world, and the spiritual ideal, is the merit of the Gita. The pleasures of earthly life are shortlived. The thoughtful man naturally seeks for purer and everlasting bliss, which can only be obtained by Self-realisation. The Gita, like a mother, exhorts all her children to know where and how they could obtain real and permanent joy. Let people listen to her words with love and reverence, and let them crown themselves on the throne of *Atmasamrajya*.

The question may arise as to what may be done by the vast masses of illiterate men who do not know how to read or write. They cannot be left out of their share of the universal benevolence of the Lord. The Lord speaks of them also! Out of his compassion, he shows the way to overcome the handicap. No one should be excluded from the universal blessing of the Gita. Those who are illiterate and who do not know anything of religion or philosophy, but who try to learn the teaching of the Gita from others, they too transcend death by their faith and devotion. Of course, to be able to read and understand is good. But he who has not this advantage need not feel frustrated. He can listen to the teaching of the Gita, gradually understand it, and get a firm grip over it. 'Free from evil, he who hears the Gita becomes free; and as a reward for the merit acquired, obtains enjoyment in the higher Worlds.' In this connection, one recalls to his mind how Mahatma Gandhi advised every one to learn Sanskrit so that he might study and understand the

Gita. The trouble taken to learn the language is nothing compared to the reward of wisdom and bliss that one gets from a study of the Gita.

The physician administers medicine to the patient. But his duty does not end there. He meets the patient from time to time and enquires if the medicine is efficacious and the disease cured. Lord Krishna, the great physician of life's disease, after teaching Arjuna, asks him how he thinks and feels. With strength and courage, Arjuna replies—"My delusion is destroyed". He bows to the Lord with profound reverence. The Lord's medicine worked wonderfully on Arjuna. In the same way, we find Sanjaya who, having heard the Gita, is beside himself with ecstatic joy—

"Again and again, and once again, I (Sanjaya) feel delighted." The absence of sorrow and a positive experience of pure joy are the effects of *Brahma-Jnana*. Both Arjuna and Sanjaya experienced that state one after another. Why then should one doubt the efficacy of the Gita to give him the same peace and joy? Undoubtedly, all those who follow the Gita teaching would attain liberation. Only faith and diligence are necessary.

Thus the Gita offers the blessing of peace not only to Arjuna and Sanjaya, but also to all human beings. When the magnificent tree of the Gita is affording delightful shelter, and offering fruits of the sweetest taste, why should one wander about in the burning desert sands of earthly life, suffering horrible torments of mind and body? Why should he not move at once into the sheltering shade of the Gita and taste the fruits of peace and joy? Why should he not drink deep the 'Gita-Makaranda' and experience the highest bliss? Why should he not perform *Jnanayajna* by a study of the Gita and attain liberation? The wind of God's grace is constantly blowing. People should not be lazy sailors on the sea of life. Let them unfurl the sails of their boat to the friendly breeze and reach

the heaven of peace quickly. The mighty thought currents of the great *Rishis* of yore are always circulating in the world. Let people attune themselves to those vital forces, and strengthen and purify their minds to know the truth and be firmly fixed in it. May Gita become the worthy possession of every man. May the shackles of sorrow and delusion be broken up by the knowledge of the Gita. Watered by the shower of nectar from the Gita, may the wide field of man's heart produce the richest harvest of *Nirvana*. May the trumpet-call of the Gita rouse slumbering humanity from the sleep of ignorance. May mankind purify themselves from the evils of *Samsara* by a bath in the sacred stream of the Gita. By the Grace of God, and by the experience of the Gita-teaching, may all people fulfil their life's purpose and attain the supreme peace and bliss of *Brahma-Jnana*.

Om

Sri Krishnarpanamastu

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ प्रथमोऽध्यायः

Atha Prathamodhyayah

FIRST DISCOURSE

अर्जुनविशद्योगः

ARJUNA VISHADA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

The Title of the Discourse :

The title Arjuna Vishada Yoga may appear peculiar. *Yoga* means union of the *Jiva* with *Paramatma*. The path leading to the union is also called *Yoga*. Since different paths are followed by different aspirants to attain that goal, each path is also called *Yoga* — like *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *Dhyana Yoga* (*Atma Samyama Yoga*), and *Jnana Yoga*. But one may ask, "is the grief of Arjuna also a *Yoga*? How can despondency be *Yoga*?" Evidently, sorrow for losses and bereavements in worldly life, for not acquiring material wealth, prosperity or position, cannot be called *Yoga*. But sorrow for wordly objects should be distinguished from the intense grief and despondency felt by an aspirant for his ignorance of Truth and *Dharma*. Such divine discontent with the mundane world is the starting point of the effort to know the Truth and throw off the burden of earthly existence. The true seeker cries out in utter agony of spirit — "Let me have light; let me know the truth; life is not worth-living without knowing what is *Dharma*; the world is awful and perplexing; What is the will of God? How should I act?" Thus was the mind of Arjuna unsettled and frustrated with doubt, and he yearned incusely to know the truth, and transcend the evils of life as he saw them in the crisis in which he

was placed. Therefore the grief of Arjuna is *Yoga*. He was prepared to give up everything, the kingdom and all royal pleasures, and his heart yearned to know what is *Dharma* and live up to it. This state of mind is necessary for all seekers. Out of such intense yearning of heart comes knowledge, slowly but surely. Arjuna realised his *Dharma* and attained true knowledge at the end. So this Discourse is entitled Arjuna Vishada Yoga.

Important points of the Discourse

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. Description of the warriors of the two armies. | 1 to 11 verses. |
| 2. Conch sounds of the two armies. | 12 to 19 ,, |
| 3. Arjuna surveys the armies. | 20 to 27 ,, |
| 4. The despondency of Arjuna. | 28 to 47 ,, |

How this Discourse is related to the preceeding story:—

Ten days elapsed after the battle began. Bhishma fell. Sanjaya communicated that incident to Dhritarashtra. Then the blind king asks Sanjaya to tell him the whole story of the battle from the beginning. Sanjaya gives a vivid account of all the incidents, how the two armies met on the holy plain of Kurukshetra, and how Lord Krishna gave the divine message to Arjuna. This is the Gita Sastra.

1. Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya about the battle:

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युद्धत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाधैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥

६

Dhritarashtra uvacha

Dharmakshetre kurukshetre samaveta yuyutsavah ।
Mamakah pandavaschaiya kimakurvata sanjaya ॥

Meaning : धृतराष्ट्र उवाच *dhritarashtra uvacha* : Dhritarashtra said, संजय Sanjaya : O Sanjaya ! धर्मक्षेत्रे *dharma kshetre* : on the holy plain, कुरुक्षेत्रे *kurukshetre* : in kurukshetra, युद्धत्सवः *yuyutsavah* : desirous to fight, समवेता *samavetah* : assembled,

मामकः *mamakah* : my people, पाण्डवाश्चत्वं *pandavaschatva* : and also the sons of pandu, किम् *kim* : what, अकुर्वत *akurvata* : did do ?

Substance : Dhritarashtra said — Having assembled on the holy plain in Kurukshetra desirous of fighting the battle, what did my people and the Pandavas do? O Sanjaya!

Commentary : The Gita begins with the word *Dharma*. It is an auspicious word. By using it first, Veda Vyasa gives an auspicious opening to his great work. The Lord is the embodiment of *Dharma*. Reverence for *Dharma* is worship of the Lord himself, by the utterance of his name. The aim of the Gita and its main teaching are determined by the very first word. It is *Dharma*. The lord incarnates himself from time to time to establish *Dharma*.

Dhritarashtra : The word means one who holds a kingdom. He who appropriates to himself a kingdom which is not his, is Dhritarashtra. The word has an inner meaning. The real man has nothing to do with the kingdom of the body, senses and mind. These are all objects perceived by the real man who is the seer. The body and the world are objects seen. But the ignorant man considers the body to be himself, and develops attachment and egotism in relation to the world. Therefore every ignorant man is a Dhritarashtra. To remove the blindness of ignorance by the light of the Gita is the duty of every individual.

Kurukshetra : It is a holy plain which lies in Punjab, South of Ambala and North of Delhi. In the 87th Chapter of *Vana-parva* and the 56th Chapter of *Salyaparva*, the greatness of Kurukshetra is vividly described. In former *yugas* Brahma, Indra, and Agni performed *tapas* in that sacred place. Emperor Kuru, the ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, ploughed the holy plain, and so it is called Kurukshetra. Indra offered a boon to Kuru that anyone who performed *tapas* or left his mortal body there would ascend to higher realms of existence. Parasurama offered oblations to his ancestors there. Many great and holy men performed meritorious acts of *Dharma* in that place, and so it is called *Dharma Kshetra*.

It is quite possible that Dhritarashtra might have expected some change of heart and mental conversion on the part of his sons and the Pandavas, under the influence of that holy place, and both sides might desist from the fratricidal war. Hence Dhritarashtra might have put the question in that form.

My people : Dhritarashtra refers to his sons - "my people" - excluding the Pandavas, and so it is evident that the blind King is partial to his own children.

Sanjaya : Samyak Jaya - Sanjaya. One whose victory is perfect is Sanjaya. It means one who has conquered his body, senses and mind. Sanjaya is the official war-reporter of the Gita. It shows that only a man of self control and purity of heart was qualified to hear, understand, and communicate the teaching of the Gita. Moreover Sanjaya by his personal merit, purity, and the grace of Vyasa and other sages, rendered himself fit to hear Lord Krishna's message directly, and see the *Viswarupa* of the Lord. Such good fortune befell Sanjaya. Caste, race, and colour are no bar to religious merit and spiritual advancement.

To the first question of Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya gives a direct answer in the last (78th) verse of the 18th discourse.

"Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of *yoga*, wherever is Arjuna the wielder of the bow there are prosperity, victory, happiness and sound policy--such is my conviction."

2. *Sanjaya's reply to Dhritarashtra's question.*

संजय उवाच

द्रित्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्युद्धं हुयोधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमपुष्पराज्ञय राजा वचानुभवति॒ ॥

२

Sanjaya uvacha

Dristva tu pondavanikam vyudham duryodhanastada ।

Acharyamu:pasangamya raja vachanumabrvit ॥

2

Meaning : संजय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said, तदा *tada* : then, राजा *raja* : King, हुयोधनः *duryodhanah* : Duryodhana, व्युद्धः *vyudham* : marshalled in battle order, पाण्डवानीकम्

pandavanikam : the pandava army, दृश्यत् *drishtwatu* : having seen well, अचार्यम् *acharyam* : teacher (Dronacharya), उपसंगम्य *upasangamya* : approaching, वचनम् *vachanam* : words (speech), अब्रवीत् *abrat* : spoke.

Substance : Sanjaya said -- King Duryodhana saw the Pandava-army arrayed in battle-order, and then, approaching the teacher Dronacharya, spoke these words.

Commentary : Dhrishtadyumna, the son of King Drupada was the commander of the Pandava-army. He arranged the army in a special formation known as *Vajra Vyuh* in the science of war. Duryodhana might have approached Dronacharya for the purpose of asking him to arrange his own army in a more powerful formation.

Duryodhana was a king possessing overall command of the entire army. Drona was one of the commanders. How does it happen that the king, instead of asking the commander to meet him, should himself approach him personally? This doubt may be cleared by considering the following points.

1. Duryodhana might have been struck with fear when he saw the enemy-army and heroes like Bhima and Arjuna. Fear, of course, is not an auspicious sign.
2. Drona was a commander and should have been at the post of duty from whence he should not be disturbed at that time.
3. Drona was a teacher, learned and old, and it was the duty of Duryodhana to show him respect.
4. The purpose of Duryodhana was to win the favour of Drona for achieving his own selfish object of winning the war against his cousins, who were also the disciples of Drona.

It should be noted that Duryodhana, like Arjuna, later saw the armies on both sides. But what a difference in attitude! Duryodhana never had any qualms of conscience, nor any feeling of pity for those who would be destroyed on both sides,

nor the supreme question of what is *Dharma* under these circumstances, nor any reconsideration of his attitude which would naturally arise in the heart of an evolved being. Arjuna was far superior to Duryodhana as a man, and so his reaction was entirely different, and the divine message of the Gita was offered to him.

3. *Duryodhana speaks to Dronacharya* :—

पश्यतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्यं महतीं चमूम् ।
व्युद्धं द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥

३

Pasyaitam pandupu ranam acharya mahatim chamum !

Vyudham drupadaputrena tava sishyena dhimata ॥

3

Meaning : आचार्य acharya : O Master! तव शिष्येण tava sishyena : by your disciple, धीमता dhimata : wise (in the art of war, द्रुपदपुत्रेण drup daputrena : by the son of Drupada, व्युद्धम् vyudham : arranged in battle order, पाण्डुपुत्राणाम् panduputranam : of the sons of Pandu, एताम् etham : this, महतीम् mahatim : great, चमूम् chamum : army, पश्य pasya : behold.

Substance : O Master! Behold the great Pandava-Army, formed in battle order by your wise disciple, the son of Drupada.

Commentary : This and the following verses are spoken by Duryodhana. According to common usage, it should be mentioned here as 'Duryodhana Uvacha.' But Veda Vyasa does not give him the privilege of naming him as the speaker because he is evil-minded.

Duryodhana is deeply skilled in diplomacy. He tries to curry the favour of Drona by personally approaching him. Not only that, he tries to rouse Drona's passions of anger and hatred by referring to Drishtadyumna as the son of King Drupada. Duryodhana knows how Drupada insulted Drona and how Drona avenged the insult by humiliating the king with the help of Arjuna, and how later, Drupada, in a vengeful spirit, obtained through holy sacrifice a son who would cause the death of Drona, and that son was no other than the present

commander of the Pandava Army. Duryodhana tries to fan into flame the ancient hatred between Drona and Drupada. His purpose is evidently to rouse the combative spirit of his Master by speaking highly about the enemy-formation under the leadership of his disciple. Drishtadyumna is spoken of as 'dhimata' - well-versed in the art of war. So it is that the Pandavas chose him as the Commander of their army.

4, 5, 6. *Duryodhana mentions the names of the chief heroes of the Pandava army --.*

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।

युयुधानो विराटश्च द्वपदश्च महारथः ॥

४

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशीराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।

पुरुजित् कुन्तिभोजश्च सैव्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥

५

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।

सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथः ॥

६

Atra sura mahesvasa bhimarjunasamayudhi ।

Yuyudhano viratascha drupadascha maharathah ॥

४

Dhristaketuschekitanah kasirajascha viryavan ।

Purujit kuntibhojascha saibyascha narapungavah ॥

५

Yudhamanyuscha vikranta uttamaujascha viryavan ।

Saubhadro draupadeyascha sarva-eva maharathah ॥

६

Meaning : अत्र *atra* : here (in the Pandava army), महेष्वासाः *maheshvasah* : mighty archers, युधि *yudhi* : in battle, भीमार्जुनसमाः *bhimarjunasamah* : equal to Bhima and Arjuna, शूराः *surah* : heroes, युयुधानः *yuyudhanah* : Yuyudhana, विराटश्च *viratascha* : and Virata, महारथः *maharathah* : warriors of first order, द्वपदश्च *drupadascha* : and Drupada, धृष्टकेतुः *drishtaketuh* : Drishtaketu, चेकितानः *chekitanah* : Chekitana, वीर्यवान् *viryavan* : the valiant, काशीराजश्च *kasirajascha* : and the King of Kasi, पुरुजित् *purujiit* : Purujit : कुन्तिभोजश्च *kuntibhojascha* : and Kuntibhoja, नरपुङ्गवः *narpungavah*:

narapungayah : best of men, सैव्यश्च *saibyascha* : and Saibya, विक्रान्तः *vikrantah* : the bold, युधामन्युश्च *yudhamanyuscha* : and Yudhamanyu, वीर्यवान् *viryavan* : the valiant, उत्तमौजा च *uttamaujascha* : and Uttamauja, सौभद्रः *saubhadrah* : Abhimanyu (son of Subhadra), द्रौपदेयश्च *draupadeyascha* : and the sons of Draupadi, सर्वे एव *sarva eva* : all even, महारथाः *maharathah* : warriors of the first rank.

Substance : Here in the Pandava army there are heroes and mighty archers equal to Bhima and Arjuna in battle (they are Yuyudhana, Virata, Drupada of the first order of warriors. Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana, the valiant King of Kasi, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Saibya, the best of men, the strong Yudhamanyu, the valiant Uttamauja, Abhimanya, the son of Subhadra and Arjuna, and the sons of Draupadi, all indeed heroes of the first rank among warriors.

Commentary : Duryodhana refers to the heroes and mighty archers of the Pandava army as warriors equal to Bhima and Arjuna. Evidently these two Pandava Princes strike terror into his mind.

There may be two reasons why Duryodhana mentions first the warriors of the enemy-forces, instead of those on his side. 1. He wants to rouse the combative spirit of Drona, 2. He feels somewhat discouraged by contrasting the power of his own army with that of the enemy.

Maharathah : One who can fight single-handed with ten thousand archers, and who has mastered the use of all weapons of offence and defence is called a Maharatha.

Yuyudhana : He is also known by the name Satyaki.

Drishtaketu : The son of Sisupala, King of Chedi.

Purjuit, Kuntibhoja : The brothers of Kunti.

Draupadeyah : The five sons of the five Pandava Princes through Draupadi (1) Prativindya (2) Sritisoma (3) Sritakirti (4) Satanika (5) Sriṣṭasena.

7. Having named some of the foremost heroes of the Pandava Army, Duryodhana mentions the names of warriors on his side -

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये सम्भिरेण द्विजोरता ।

नायका मम सैन्य ए अंशर्थ लाभू धरीमि ए ॥

६

Asmakam tu visista ye tan nibodha dvijottama!

Nayaka mama sainyasya samjnaraham tan bravimi te !!

Meaning :- द्विजोरता *dvijottama* : O best among the twice-born, अस्माकम् *tu asmakam tu* : ours also, विशिष्टा *ye visistha ye* : those who are distinguished, मम *mama* : my, अंशर्थ *sainyasya* : of (my) army, नायका *nayakah* : leaders, ए *te* : to you, संज्ञर्थम् *Samjnaraham* : for information, लाभू धरीमि *tan bravimi* : I speak of them.

Substance : O best of the twice born! Now I recall to your mind the names of the distinguished warriors on our side, the leaders of my army.

Commentary : Duryodhana now tries to infuse fresh courage into himself by recalling the names of the eminent warriors and commanders of his own.

8, 9. भवान् भीष्मध कर्णध कुषध समिन्जयः ।

अस्वथामा विकर्णध सौमदत्तस्तथैव च ॥

८

अन्येच बहवः शूरा भूर्येत्यक्षयीविदाः ।

नना प्राहरुण्याः सर्वे युद्धीश्वराः ॥

९

Bhavan bhismascha karnascha kripascha samitinjayah !

Asvathama vikarunascha saumadatus taithaiyacha !!

८

Anyechabahavah sura madarthe pракта jivitah

Nana sasira praharunah sarve yud्धीश्वराः

९

Meaning : भवान् *bhavan* : yourself, भीष्मध *bhisma* : and Bhishma, कर्णध *karnascha* : and Karna, कुषध *kuṣadāḥ* : and Karna, अन्येच *anyech* : victorious in battle, बहवः *bahavah* : and Kripa, शूराः *śūrāḥ* : and Kripa, भूर्येत्य *bhūrye* : and Kripa, अस्वथामा *asvathama* : and Kripa, विकर्णध *vikarunascha* : and Kripa, सौमदत्तस्तथैव च *saumadatus taithaiyacha* : and Kripa, नना *nana* : and Kripa, प्राहरुण्याः *praharunah* : and Kripa, सर्वे *sarve* : and Kripa, युद्धीश्वराः *yudhīśvarāḥ* : and Kripa,

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अश्वत्थामा *asvatthama* : Asvatthama, विकर्णश्च *vikarnascha* : and Vikarna, तथैवच *tathaiyacha* : and thus even, सौमदत्तिः *saumadattih* : the son of Somadatta, मदर्थे *madarthe* : for my sake, त्यक्तजीविताः *tyaktajivitah* : who have given up their lives, बहवः *bahavah* : many, अन्येच *anyechha* : and others, शूराः *surah* : heroes, नानाशस्त्रं प्रहरणाः *nanastra praharanah* : armed with various weapons of war, सर्वे *sarve* : all, युद्धविशारदाः *yuddhavisaradah* : well skilled in battle.

Substance : Yourself and Bhishma and Karna and also Kripa, the victorious in war, Asvatthama, Vikarna, and also the son of Somadatta, and many other heroes also who have given up their lives for my sake, armed with various weapons and missiles, all well-skilled in battle.

Commentary : While mentioning the heroes on his side, Duryodhana first refers to Drona, and next to Bhishma, though the latter was the first supreme commander of the army. Duryodhana might have referred thus just because he was directly speaking to Drona or because it should be proper to refer to his teacher first, or because it would inspire Drona to do his best in the battle.

Though Drona knew the chief heroes on either side, Duryodhana, on the pretext of reminding him, enumerates them again, and calculated the difference in strength between the two armies. He means of course that all the warriors on his side are determined to fight to the last, to lay down their lives for his sake. But by a stroke of tragic irony, it is indicative of their destruction in battle. Some commentators hold the view that it is an ill-omen for Duryodhana.

10. Having named the various warriors on both sides Duryodhana now declares that his own army is superior.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम्

पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ॥

१०

Aparyaptam tadasmakam balam bhismabhi rakshitam !

Paryaptam tvidametesham balam bhimabhi rakshitam !

10

Meaning : तत् *tat* : that, अस्माकं *asmakam* : our, बलम् *balam* : army, भीष्मभिरक्षितम् *bhishmabhirakshitam* : well-protected by Bhishma, अपर्योप्तम् *aparyoptam* : (is) limitless, एतेषाम् *etesham* : of the Pandavas, इदम् *idam* : this, बलम् *balam* : army, भीमभिरक्षितम् *bhimabhirakshitam* : well-protected by Bhima, पर्याप्तं तु *paryaptam tu* : (is) indeed limited.

Commentary : There is difference of view among the commentators about the meaning of the words *aparyaptam* and *paryaptam*. Anandagiri, Sankarananda and others give the meaning 'limitless' to the word *aparyaptam* Sridhara and others give the opposite meaning 'limited'. But it appears that the first meaning is more appropriate to the context, and is consistent with the earlier estimate given by Duryodhana. In the Udyoga Parva (54, 60, 70) and in the Bhishma Parva (51-4-6) Duryodhana, speaking to his father and Drona respectively glorifies the strength of his own army. There is every reason why he should speak well of his own army in the present situation, when they are about to fight the battle. It should also be remembered that in the Bhishma Parva speaking to Drona, Duryodhana utters exactly the same verse while estimating the superior power of his own army.

Well - protected by Bhima — Why should Duryodhana refer to the Pandava army as well-protected by Bhima, when Dhristadyumna is the actual commander? The following reasons may be considered.

1. Duryodhana naturally thinks of Bhima as the most deadly enemy to himself and to his brothers.
2. Though Dhristadyumna is the commander, Bhima was entrusted with the task of protecting the army.
3. On the first day, Bhima was posted at the foremost point of the *Vajra Vyuha*. So it is quite probable that Duryodhana should see Bhima first at the head of the Pandava army.

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागभवस्थिताः ।

भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्वं एव हि ॥

११

Ayanesucha sarveshu yathabhagamavasthitah ।

Bhishmameva 'bhirkshantu bhavantah sarya eva hi ॥ 11

Meaning : भवन्तः *bhavantah* : you, सर्वैः *sarvai* : all over, सर्वेषु *sarveshu* in all, अयनेषुच *ayaneshucha* : and the divisions of the army, यथाभागं *yathabhagam* : at the appointed posts, अवस्थिताः *avasthitah* : being stationed, भीष्ममेव *bhishmameva* : Bhishma alone, अभिरक्षन्तु हि *abhirakshantu hi* : protect indeed.

Substance : Therefore, in the rank and file let all generals standing firmly in their respective divisions, guard Bhishma alone.

Commentary : Bhishma was the most powerful hero well capable of protecting himself. Why should Duryodhana caution others to keep him safe and well-protected? There is a reason for it. The son of Drupada, Sikhandi, was first a eunach. Bhishma has pledged that he would never face eunach in battle. So, if the Pandavas should place Sikhandi at the foremost point of their army, Bhishma would not face it, and so his power would be partially neutralised. Taking advantage of it, the enemies might injure and kill him. Duryodhana knew the secret. So he directs all the leaders of his army to see that Sikhandi is kept out of the way, so that Bhishma would be free to fight at his best. If Bhishma was safe, he would be able to make the most powerful onslaught on the enemy, and be the bulwark of defence for the entire Kaurava army. Knowing this he directed all to protect Bhishma in all possible ways.

तस्य राजनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनायोच्छः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥

१२

*Tasya sanjanayan harsam kuruvriddhah pitamahah ।
Simhunadam vinadyocchath sankam dadhmau*

pratapavan || 12

Meaning प्रतापवान् *pratapavan* : the glorious, कुरुवृद्धः *kuru-vriddhah* : oldest of the kauravas, पितामहः *pitamahah* : grandsire Bhishma, तस्य *tasya* : to Duryodhana, हर्षं *harsham* : joy,

संजनयन् *sanjanayan* : causing, उच्चौः *ucchaiah* : loudly, सिंहनादं
simhanadam : lion's roar, war cry, विनाद्य *vinadya* : having
 sounded, संक्षम् *sankham* : the conch, दध्मो *dadhmau* : blew.

Substance : Then the glorious Bhishma, grandsire and oldest of the Kauravas, raised his war-cry and blew the conch to the great joy of Duryodhana.

Commentary : *The glorious* :— Bhishma is spoken of as the 'glorious'. He defeated mighty warriors like Parasurama and others.

Eldest of the Kauravas :— Bhishma with the exception of Bahlika was the eldest of the Kauravas. He was also the grandsire.

Finding that Duryodhana was somewhat agitated by surveying the powerful Pandava army, Bhishma raised his war cry and sounded the conch at the highest pitch to infuse courage into the King and his army. The blowing of the conch indicates that the battle is about to start.

13 *Following the example of Bhishma, other heroes blew the conches, and drums and trumpets were sounded.*

ततः सङ्क्षम भेर्यश पाणवानकगोमुखः ।

सहस्रैवाभ्यहन्यन्ते स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽप्यत् ॥

१३

Tatah sankhascha bheryascha panavanaka gomukhah ।

Sahasra 'bhyahanyanta sa sabdastumulo 'bhavat ॥

13

Meaning : ततः *tatah* : then, सङ्क्षम् *sankhascha* : conches and, भेर्यश *bheryascha* : kettle drums and, पाणवानकगोमुखः *panavanakagomukhah* : tabo., drums and cow-horns, सहस्रैव *saha saiva* : quite suddenly, अभ्यहन्यन्ते *abhyahanyanta* : blared forth, सशब्दः *sa sabdah* : that sound, तुमुलः *tumulah* : filled all sides, tremondous, अभयः *abhaya* : was.

Substance : When Bhishma blew the conch all the other warriors quite suddenly blew the conches, and trumpets, drums and horns, were sounded at once. The sound filled all sides and was temendous.

Commentary : The Kaurava army was roused into action by the war-cry of Bhishma. Having described what happened in the Kaurava army, Sanjaya now narrates the incidents of the Pandava army.

14. *Krishna and Arjuna blew their conches.*

ततः थैतर्हयैर्युके महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवस्थैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४

*Tatah svetair hayatr yukte mahati syandane sthitau ।
Madhayah pandavaschaiva divyau sankhau pradadh-*
matuh ॥ 14

Meaning : ततः *tatah* : then, थैतैः *svetaiah* : with white, हयैः *hayaiah* horses, युक्ते *yukte* : yoked, महति *mahati* : magni-
ficient, स्यन्दने *syandane* : in the chariot, स्थितौ *sthitau* : seated, माधवः *madhavah* : Krishna, पाण्डवस्थैव *Pandavas chaiva* : and also Arjuna, दिव्यौ *divyam* : celestial, शङ्खौ *sankhau* : conches, प्रदध्मतुः *pradadhmatuh* : blew.

Substance : Then seated in the magnificent chariot yoked with white horses, Krishna and Arjuna also blow their celestial conches.

Commentary : It is here that Lord Krishna and Arjuna first appear in the Gita, seated in the wonderful chariot drawn by milk-white horses; Nara and Narayana appear before us in their beautiful manifestation as Arjuna and Krishna. White indicates *Sattva* and reflects *Dharma*, and where *Dharma* is there is victory.

The magnificent chariot and the great bow Gandiva were given to Arjuna by the God of Fire, after the burning of the Khandava Forest. They were of exceptional power. The four white horses were among the hundred presented to Arjuna by Chitraradha, King of the Gandharvas. They could move anywhere on the earth and sky. It is said that the four horses are the four Vedas, and Arjuna and Krishna are *jivatma* and *Paramatma*.

Madhavah : 'Ma' means Lakshmi and 'dhava' means husband. Sanjaya suggests the Lord of Victory blew the conch on the side of the Pandavas and secured for them a mighty kingdom.

Bhishma was the principal hero of the Kauravas, and so he blew the conch first. Lord Krishna blew the conch first on the side of the Pandavas, and so it is clear that the Lord is himself the main force, and the rest are only instruments of action in his hands.

Pandavah : As it is declared later in 'Pandavanam Dhanamjayah', the name applies to Arjuna here.

15, 16, 17, 18. The following four verses describe the conch sounds of the various warriors of the Pandava Army.

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्कं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोपमणिपुष्पकः ॥ १६

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७

दूषदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीयते ।
सौभद्रश्च महावाहुः शङ्खान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥ १८

*Panchajanyam hrishikeso devadattam dhanamjayak
Peundram dadhmau maha sankham bhima karma
vrikodarah 15*

*Anantavijayam raja kuntu putro yudhisthirah
Nakulam sahadivascha sughosha manipushpakau 16*

*Kasyascha paramesvasah sikhandicha maha rathah
Dhrishtadyumno viratascha satyakischa parajitah 17*

*Drupado draupadeyascha sarvasah prithivipate ।
Saubhadrascha mahabahuh sankhan dadhmuh prithak-*

priihak ॥ 18

Meaning : युधिष्ठिरः Prithivipate : O King Dhritarashtra!, ह्रीकेशः hrishikesah : Kriṣṇa, पञ्चजन्यं parchajanyam : (the conch named) Pancha Janyam, अर्जुनः dhananjayah : Arjuna, देवदत्तम् devadattam : (the conch named) Devadatta, बीमकर्मा bheema karma : doer of terrible deeds, वृकोदरः vrikodarah : Bhima, पौन्ड्रम् paundram : (the conch named) Paundram, महासंक्खं mahasankham : great conch, दध्मम् dadhmam : blew, कुनीषुभः Kuntiputraḥ : the son of Kunti, राजा raja : King, युधिष्ठिरः Yudhiṣṭharah : Dharmaraja, आनन्दविजयं anantavijayam : (the conch named) Anantavijayam, नकुलः nakulah : Nakula, सहदेवः saha-devah : Sahadeva, सुघोषमणिपुष्पकां sughosha manipushpakau : (the conches named) Sughosha and Manipushpaka, परमेष्वासः paramesvasah : an excellent archer, कस्यस्तच्च kasyas cha : and Kasya, the King of Kasi, महारथः maha Rathah : mighty leader, सिखण्डीच्च sikhandi cha : and Sikhandi, द्रिष्टद्युम्नः driṣṭadyumnah : Drishṭadyumna, विराटः Viratas cha : and Virata, अपराजितः aparajitah : the unconquered, सत्यकिच्च Satyakis cha : and Satyaki, द्रुपदः drupadah : Draupada, द्रौपदेयस्तच्च draupadeyas cha : and the sons of Draupadi महाभृगः mahabahuḥ : mighty armed, सौभद्रस्तच्च Saubhedras cha : and Abhimanyu, सर्वसः sarvasah : all, पृथक्पृथक् pridhak pridhak : separately, संखनैः sankhani conches, दध्मौः dadhmau : blew.

Substance : O King Dhritarashtra! Krishna blew the conch Pancha Janyam, Arjuna blew Devadatta, and Bhima the doer of terrible deeds, blew the great conch named Paundra. King Yudhiṣṭhīra, son of Kunti, blew Anantavijayam, Nakula and Sahadeva blew the conches named Sughosha and Manipushpaka. The King of Kasi, an excellent archer, Sikhandi,

the mighty commander Dhristadyumna, Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered, Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, Abhimanya, the mighty armed, all blew the conches separately.

Commentary : It is already said that the conches blown by Krishna and Arjuna are of celestial quality.

Panchajanyam : The conch of Krishna was made from the bones of a demon called Panchajan, and so it is called Panchajanyam.

Hrishikesa : Krishna. 'Hrishika' means sense organs. 'Esa' means ruler. So the name means the ruler of the sense-organs (i. e) *Paramatma*, the eternal witness who commands the senses. The word has another meaning (i. e) the source of all bliss.

Dhananjayah : Arjuna. He acquired this name because he won wealth from all kings by performing the Rajasuya Yaga.

Vrikodarah : Bhima. Vrika means wolf. So the word means wolf-bellied. The name may also mean one who has the fire called 'Vrika' in his stomach, and so capable of consuming anything.

19. *Sanjaya describes the effect of the martial sounds of the Pandava army on the Kauravas.*

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

१९

Sa ghosho dhartarastranam hridayani vyadarayat ।

Nabhascha prithivim chaiva tumulo vyanunadayan ॥

19

Meaning : तुमुलः *tumulah* : tumultuous, सः *sah* : that, घोषः *ghoshah* : sound, uproar, नभश्च *nabhas cha* : the sky and, पृथिवीम् *prithivim* : earth, चैव *chaiva* : and also, व्यनुनादयन् *vyanunadayan* : made to reverberate, धार्तराष्ट्राणां *dhartarashtranam* : of the Kauravas, हृदयानि *hridayani* : hearts, व्यदारयत् *vyadarayat* : rent.

Substance : The tumultuous sounds of the Pandava army filling all sides reverberated through the earth and sky and rent the hearts of the Kauravas.

Commentary : Hearing the tremendous uproar caused by the blowing of conches by Krishna, Arjuna, and others, the Kauravas trembled with fear, and felt shocked and stunned by the uproar. It indicates the final defeat and destruction of the Kauravas at the hands of the Pandavas.

20, 21 :

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्टा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥

२०

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

Atha vyavasthitam dristva dhartarastram kapidhvajah ।

Pravrittee sastrasampate dhanur udyamya pandavah ॥

20

Hrishikesam tada vakyam idam aha mahipate ।

Meaning : महीपते *Mahipate* : O King Dhritarashtra !, अथ *atha* : now, शस्त्रसंपाते *sashtra sampate* : discharge of weapons, प्रवृत्ते *pravritte* : about to begin, कपिध्वजः *Kapidhvajah* : monkey-ensigned, पाण्डवः *Pandavah* : Arjuna, व्यवस्थितान् *vyavasthitam* : standing arrayed, धार्तराष्ट्रान् *dhartarashtram* : Kauravas, दृष्टि *drishtva* : seeing, धनुः *dhanuh* : bow, उद्यम्य *udyamya* : took into his hands, तदा *tada* : then, हृषीकेशम् *hrishikesam* : to Krishna, इदम् *idam* : this, वाक्यम् *vakyam* : speech, आह *aha* : spoke.

Substance : O King ! Now seeing the Kauravas arrayed in battle-order and the discharge of weapons about to begin, Arjuna took up his bow and spoke these words to Lord Krishna.

Commentary : *Kapidhvajah* : Arjuna. The banner of Arjuna had the emblem of Hanuman, and he is called Kapi-dhvajah. In the Aranya Parva of Mahabharata, Bhiria meets Hanuman and appeals to him to help them in the impending war against the Kauravas. Hanuman gave him the boon that he would be present on the banner of Arjuna and in that way help them to win the war.

21, 22:

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मैऽन्त्युत ॥

२१

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥

२२

Arjuna uvacha

Senayor ubhayaḥ madhye ratham sthapayame 'chyuta 21

Yavad etan nirikṣhe 'ham yoddhu kaman avasthitān ।

Kair maya saha yoddhavyam asmin ranasamudyame ॥ 22

अर्जुन उवाच — *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : अन्त्युत *achyuta* : O Krishna!, अस्मिन् *asmin* : in this, रणसमुद्यमे *ranasamudyame* : commencement of battle, मया *maya* : by me, कैः सह *kaiḥ* : with them, योद्धुव्यम् *yodhavyam* : the battle is to be fought, योद्धुकामान् *yoddhukaman* : desirous to fight, अवस्थिताम् *avasthitam* : standing here, एताम् *etam* : them, यावत् *yavat* : from whence, अहम् *aham* : I, निरीक्षे *nirikṣhe* : behold, (तावत्) (*tavat* : there), सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये *senayor ubhayaḥ madhye* : in the middle of the two armies, मे *me* : my, रथम् *ratham* : chariot, स्थापय *sthapaya* : place.

Substance : O Krishna! Place my chariot in the middle of the two armies at a spot from whence I could see those who stand here eager to fight, and know those with whom I should fight on the eve of this battle.

Commentary : It is the practice of a first-rate warrior to know and observe the positions and postures of the enemies with whom he has to fight. So Arjuna wanted Krishna to drive the chariot forward and stop it in the middle of the two armies.

Achyuta : The word means one who has no fall or one who never slips down from the state of the Supreme Self. It

might also mean one who protects those who take refuge in Him, from sinking in the ocean of *samsara*. Those who do not fall from their spiritual practices reach Achyuta. So it is the duty of every spiritual aspirant to be cautious and careful in keeping up their devoted search for the Supreme Being.

23 :

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥

२३

Yotsyamanan avekse'ham ya ete'tra samagatah ।

Dhartarastrasya durbuddher yuddhe priyachikirshavah ॥ 23

Meaning : दुर्बुद्धे: *durbuddheh* : of the evil-minded, धार्तराष्ट्रस्य *dhartarashtrasya* : of Duryodhana, युद्धे *yuddhe* : in the battle, प्रियचिकीर्षवः *priyachikirshavah* : wishing to please, एते *ete* : those warriors, अत्र *atra* : here, समागताः *samagatah* : assembled, योत्स्यमानान् *yotsyamanan* : ready to fight, अहम् *aham* : I, अवेक्षे *avekshe* : will see.

Substance : I will see these warriors assembled here for the battle wishing to please the evil-minded Duryodhana.

Commentary : *Of the evil-minded* :- Duryodhana is described as evil-minded. He has tried to injure and destroy the Pandavas in many ways. So Arjuna refers to him as a wicked man. ‘Buddhi nasat pranasyati’. The Lord declares that man perishes when he loses the power of discrimination. Therefore the epithet ‘durbuddhi’ is indicative of the impending destruction of Duryodhana. It is a warning to all those whose mental disposition is darkened by evil propensities, that, like Duryodhana, they would ruin themselves by defeat, disgrace and death. Let everybody therefore strive for purity of mind and heart for spiritual progress.

Wishing to please: All those who sided Duryodhana perished. To support and encourage evil is also evil, and such a man suffers the same fate as the evil-doer. It should by all means be avoided by the spiritual seeker.

Sanjaya describes what Lord Krishna did afterwards.

संजय उवाच

- | | |
|---|----|
| 24. एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ | २४ |
| 25. भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थं पश्यैतान् समवेतान्कुरुनिति ॥ | २५ |

Samjaya uvacha

- | | |
|---|----|
| <i>Evaṁukto hrishikeso gudakesena bharata ।
Senayor ubhayor madhye sthapayitva rathottamam ॥</i> | 24 |
| <i>Bhishma drona pramukhataḥ sarveshamcha mahikshitam ।
Uvacha partha pasyitan samavetan kuruniti ॥</i> | 25 |

संजय उवाच *Samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O descendent of Bharata! (King Dhritarashtra) एवम् *evam* : in this manner, गुडाकेशेन *gudakesena* : by Arjuna, उक्तः *uktah* : addressed, हृषीकेशः *hrishikesah* : Lord Krishna, सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये *senayor ubhayor madhye* : in the middle of the two armies, भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः *bhishma drona pramukhatah* : in front of Bhishma and Drona, सर्वेषांच *sarvesham cha* : and all, महीक्षिताम् *mahikshitam* : Kings, रथोत्तमम् *rathothamam* : the best of chariots, स्थापयित्वा *sthapayitva* : having placed, पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna !, समवेतान् *samavetan* : assembled, एतान् *etan* : those, कुरुन् *kurun* : Kauravas, पश्य *pasya* : behold, इति *iti* : thus, उवाच *uvacha* : (Krishna) said.

Substance : Sanjaya said : Advised thus by Arjuna Lord Krishna placed the noble chariot in the middle of the two armies, and in front of Bhishma and Drona, and all the Kings, and said : 'O Arjuna ! Behold those Kauravas gathered here.'

Commentary : *Gudakesah* : One who has conquered sleep (i. e.), one who has conquered 'tamas' and is constantly wakeful and alert. Concentration of mind and avoiding mistakes

and errors are essential while listening to spiritual teaching. The epithet Gudakesah shows that Arjuna possessed these qualities when he listened to the highest spiritual teaching in the form of the Gita. The Lord said : "Behold these Kauravas." The Kauravas were closely related and Arjuna was naturally moved by feelings of sorrow and despair when he saw them. The situation is thus most congenial for the spiritual teaching of the Lord, and the birth of the Gita is indeed the highest blessing for all mankind.

Sanjaya narrates what happened afterwards.

26. तत्रापश्यत् स्थितान् पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।

आचार्यान्मातुलान्प्रातृन् पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखीस्तथा ॥

२६

27. शशुरान् सुहृदस्त्वैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

Tatra pasyat sthitian parthah pitrun atha pitamahan ।

Acharyan matulan bhratrun putran pautran sakhimstatha ॥ 26

Svasuran suhrudaschaiva senayor ubhoyor api ।

Meaning : तत्र *tatra* : there, पार्थः *parthah* : Arjuna, सेनयोरुभयोरपि *senayor ubhoyorapi* : in both the armies also, स्थितान् *sthitan* : stationed, पितृन् *pitrun* : fathers, अथ *atha* : and, पितामहान् *pitamahan* : grandfathers, आचार्यान् *acharyan* : teachers, मातुलान् *matulan* : maternal uncles, प्रातृन् *bhratrun* : brothers, पुत्रान् *putran* : sons, पौत्रान् *pautran* : grandsons, सखीन् *sakhin* : comrades, तथा *tatha* : also, शशुरान् *svasuran* : fathers-in-law, सुहृदः *suhrudah* : friends, चैव *chaiya* : and also, अपश्यत् *apasyat* : saw.

Substance : There Arjuna saw fathers, grand-fathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, companions, fathers-in-law, and friends in both the armies.

Commentary : *Fathers* - Bhurisravas and others,

grand-fathers - Bhishma and others,

teachers - Drona and others,

uncles - Saibya and others,

brothers - Duryodhana and others,
sons - Lakshmana and others,
grandsons - The sons of Lakshmana and
 others,

friends - Aswathama and others,
fathers-in-law - Drupada and others,
well-wishers - Kritavarma and others.

Sanjaya describes the feelings of Arjuna as he beholds his relations and friends.

तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्वन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥

१७

28. कृपया परयाऽविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

Tan samikshya sa kaunteyah sarvan bandhun avasthitam !

*Kripaya parayavisto visidannidam abravit **

27

Meaning : सः *sah* : he, कौन्तेयः *kaunteyah* : Arjuna (son of Kunti), अवस्थितान् *avasthitam* : standing (arrayed), तान् *tan* : these, सर्वान् *sarvan* : all, बन्धून् *bandhun* : relations, समीक्ष्य *samikshya* : having seen, परया *paraya* : deep, कृपया *kripaya* : by pity, आविष्टः *avishtuh* : filled, विषीदन् *vishidan* : sorrowfully, इदम् *idam* : this, अब्रवीत् *abravit* : said.

Substance : Seeing all those relations standing arrayed for the impending battle, Arjuna was moved with deep pity and spoke thus sorrowfully.

Commentary : *Kripa* : It means pity, compassion and kindness. It is no doubt a noble quality. But it loses its divine virtue in a situation when man is called upon by *Dharma* to fight for a righteous cause. Arjuna was overtaken by *Maya* with the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine'. "How can I kill my own people?" This was the cause of Arjuna's sorrow. He lost the spirit of righteous action. Arjuna, being a Kshatriya, his pity under those circumstances, was a mental weakness, a negation of *Dharma*. It is this weakness which Lord Krishna removes by his spiritual teaching.

"*Sorrowfully* : Whatever material and physical powers and prowess a man may possess, if he is not free from igno-

rance, he sinks into despondency in any critical situation. Arjuna was a warrior of the first rank. He possessed miraculous powers and weapons. But covered by ignorance, he began to weep and wail like a helpless child. It is a disease of the mind which should be thoroughly cured. This could be done only by the knowledge of *Atma* which brings supreme freedom from all the undesirable modifications of the mind, from all painful feelings and passions. If a hero like Arjuna should be over-powered by grief, what of ordinary mortals? Therefore the conquest of the mind by spiritual knowledge, and through it the attainment of peace - this is the duty of every individual. Lord Krishna teaches the spiritual path to reach the goal for all human beings.

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्टेम् स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥

२८

29 सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वैपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥

२९

30 गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्त्वकचेव परिदृश्यते ।
न च शक्रोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥

३०

Arjuna uvacha

Dristyemam svajanam krishna yuyutsum samupasthitam 28

*Sidanti mama gatrani mukhamcha partsusyati ।
Vepathuscha sarire me romaharshascha jayate ॥*

29

*Gandivam sramsate hastat tvak chatya paridahyate ।
Nacha saknomiyavasthatum bhramativacha me manah ॥*

30

Meaning : अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said, कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! युयुत्सुम् *yuyutsum* : eager to fight, समुपस्थितम् *samupasthitam* : arrayed, इमम् *imam* : these, स्वजनम् *svajanam* : kinsmen, दृष्टि *drishtva* : having seen, मम *mama* : my, गात्राणि *gatrani* : limbs, सीदन्ति *sidanti* : fail, मुखं च *mukham cha* : and

mouth, परिशुष्यति *parisushyati* : is parching, मे *me* : my, शरीरेच *sarire cha* : and in (my) body, वैपथुः *vepathuh* : trembling, रोमहर्षः *romaharshah* : horrification, जायते *jayate* : arise, गांडीवम् *gandivam* : the Gandiva, हस्तात् *hastat* : from my hand, संसते *sramsate* : slips, त्वक्चैव *tvak chaitva* : and also (my) skin, परिदृश्यते *paridṛhyate* : burns all over, अवस्थातुं *avasthatum* : to stand, नचशक्रोमि *nacha saknomi* : and I am not able, मे *me* : my, मनः *manah* : mind, भ्रमतीवच्च *bhramativa cha* : seems whirling also.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! Seeing these my own kinsmen gathered here for battle, my limbs lose their hold, my tongue is dried up, my body trembles, my skin is burning all over, my hair stands on end, my Gandiva slips from my hand, and I am not able to stand even, and my mind is whirling.

Commentary : In these verses, Arjuna describes the bodily and mental changes which overwhelmed him on that occasion. Those are all signs of sorrow, weakness and despair. How does it happen that Arjuna who fought many battles and who won miraculous victories single-handed, should lose his courage and strength in this particular situation ? His material and physical powers are just the same as before. But mentally he suffered a tremendous shock. Why? – by the thought born of *Avidya* – these are my men, how can I kill them? The egotistic feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ engulfed his mind. So he cries ‘svajanam’ ‘svajanam’ (our people) repeatedly.

This is ignorance, and *Jnana*, knowledge, is the only remedy for it. Lord Krishna offers this *Atma-Jnana* to Arjuna and enables him to see things clearly, to free himself from thoughts of weakness, and to carry out his *Dharma*.

Arjuna enumerates the causes and reasons why he is unwilling to fight.

81. निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥

*Nimittanicha pasyami viparitani keshava !
Na cha sreyo 'nupasyami hatva svajanam ahaye !!*

31

Meaning : केशव Kesava : Krishna, विपरीतानि *viparitani* : adverse, निमित्तानिच्च *nimittani cha* : and omens, पश्यामि *pasyami* : I see, आहवे *ahave* : in battle, स्वजनम् *svajanam* : our people, हत्वा *hatva* : killing, अनुपश्यामि *anupasyami* : I see, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good.

Substance : O Krishna ! I see many ill-omens and I do not understand what good could come by killing my own people in battle.

३२. न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥

३२

Na kankshe vijayam krishna na cha rajyam sukhanichai

Kim no rajyena govinda kim bhogair jivitena va !!

32

Meaning : कृष्ण Krishna : O Krishna ! विजयम् *vijayam* : victory, न काङ्क्षे *na kankshe* : I do not desire, राज्यम् च *rajyam cha* : also kingdom, सुखानिच्च *sukhani cha* : and pleasures, न *na* : not, गोविन्द *Govinda* : O Krishna !, नः *nah* : to us, राज्येन *rajyena* : by kingdom, किम् *kim* : what (use), भोगैः *bhogaih* : by enjoyments, जीवितेनवा *jivitenava* : or life itself, किम् *kim* : what (use).

Substance : O Krishna ! I do not desire victory or kingdom or pleasures. Of what avail are these—kingdom, enjoyment, or even life itself to us.

Commentary : The *Sastras* say that the knowledge of *Atma* should be taught only to those who possess this quality of renunciation. Does Arjuna possess this quality ? Is he fit to receive the supreme knowledge ? This doubt is cleared by this verse. For some reason or other, he now feels the futility of all earthly glory and the wretchedness of all earthly pleasures and enjoyments. Life itself appears as a useless waste. He has no relish for it. He feels that even if he is offered dominion over the three worlds, it is of no avail to him.

This is the auspicious moment for the revelation of the supreme wisdom. Therefore, Lord Krishna chooses this particular moment, when the fire of renunciation burns brightest in the heart of Arjuna to teach the highest spiritual knowledge.

33. येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भौगाः सुखानि च ।

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणास्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥

३३

34. आचार्याः पितरः पुत्राः तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः शशुराः पौत्राः इयालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥

३४

Yeshamarthe kankshitam no rajyam bhogah sukhanicha ।

Ta ime'vasthita yuddhe pranams tyaktva dhananicha ॥

33

Acharyah pitarah putrah tathaiyacha pitamahah ।

Matulah svasurah pautrah syalah sambandhinastatha ॥

34

Meaning : नः *nah* : by us, राज्यम् *rajyam* : kingdom, भौगाः *bhogah* : enjoyments, सुखानि च *sukhanicha* : and pleasures, येषामर्थे *yeshamarthe* : for whose sake, काङ्क्षितम् *kankshitam* : is desired, ते *te* : they, आचार्याः *acharyah* : teachers, पितरः *pitarah* : fathers, पुत्राः *pautrah* : sons, तथैव च *tathatva cha* : and others also, पितामहाः *pitamah* : grandfathers, मातुलाः *matulah* : maternal uncles, शशुराः *svasurah* : fathers-in-law, पौत्राः *pautrah* : grandsons, इयालाः *syalah* : brothers-in-law, तथा *tatha* : thus, सम्बन्धिनः *sambandhinah* : relatives, त इमे *te ime* : these people, प्राणान् *pranam* : life, धनानि च *dhanani cha* : and wealth, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having abandoned, युद्धे *yuddhe* : in battle, अवस्थिताः *avasthitah* : are standing.

Substance : Those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures—teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, brothers in-law, grandsons and other relations — are all standing here ready for battle, having abandoned their wealth and very life even.

35. एतान् हन्तुमिच्छामि भतोऽपि मधुसूदनं ।
अपि ब्रलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं तु महीकृते ॥

३५

*Etan na hantum icchami ghnato'pi madhusudana
Api trailokya rajyasya hetoh kim nu mahikrite*

35

Meaning : मधुसूदन *Madhusudana* : O Krishna!, भतोऽपि *ghnatoipi* : even if killed by them, एतान् *etan* : these, ब्रलोक्यराज्यस्य *hetoh* : *trailokya rajyasya hetoh* : for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, नहन्तुम् *nahantum* : not to kill, इच्छामि *ichchami* : I wish, महीकृते *mahikrite* : for sake of the earth, किंतु *kim nu* : how then.

Substance : O Krishna! I do not wish to kill those, though they may kill me, even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, much less for a fragment of this earth.

Commentary : *Madhusudana* : Krishna—the slayer of the wicked demon Madhu.

36. निहत्य धर्तराष्ट्रान् नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दनं ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥

३६

*Nihatya dhartarastrannah ka pritihsyajjanardana
Papameva 'srayed asman hatvaitan atatayinah*

36

Meaning : जनार्दन *Janardana*! : O Krishna, धर्तराष्ट्रान् *dhartarashtran* : the Kauravas, निहत्य *nihatya* : having slain, नः *nah* : to us, का प्रीतिः *syat* : what pleasure may be, आततयिनः *atatayinah* : felons, एतान् *etan* : these, हत्वा *hatva* : having slain, अस्मान् *asman* : to us, पापमेव *papam eva* : sin only, आश्रयेत् *asrayet* : would come.

Substance : What delight may be to us killing these Kauravas? Only sin would take hold of us having slain these felons.

Commentary : *Felons* : Those who commit six kinds of crimes towards others are felons. They are, one who (1) sets fire to the house of another person, (2) poisons him, (3) falls on him with sword in hand to kill and murder, (4) or steals his wealth, (5) or land, (6) or wife. Such sinners are called 'atayinah'. Duryodhana and his henchmen have committed all these crimes, and so they are felons.

37. तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्ववान्धवान् ।

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥

३७

Tasman narha vayam hantum dhartarastran svabandhavan ।

Svajanam hi katham hatva sukhinah syama madhava ॥ 37

Meaning : माधव *madhava* : Krishna, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, स्व वान्धवान् *sva bandhavan* : our relations, धार्तराष्ट्रान् *dharta-rashtran* : the Kauravas, हन्तुम् *hantum* : to kill, वयम् *vayam* : we, नार्हा : *narha* : are not justified, स्वजनम् हि *svajanam hi* : kinsmen indeed, हत्वा *hatva* : having killed, सुखिनः *sukhinah* : happy, कथम् *katham* : how, स्याम *syama* : may (we) be.

Substance : O Krishna ! Therefore we should not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra who are our relations. Having killed our own people, how can we be happy ?

Commentary : Arjuna's mind is completely obsessed with the thought of 'I' and 'Mine'. He cries out 'our relations', 'our kinsmen', 'svabandhavah', 'svajanam'. Indeed the greatest obstacle on the path of self-realisation is the deep rooted thought of 'I' and 'Mine', pertaining to the body. So long as man imagines himself to be the body, all these thoughts of relations, friends, teachers, continue to harass the mind. Therefore the teaching of Lord Krishna is intended to remove the deep-seated identification with the body and to reveal the truth that he is not the body but the immortal ever free *Atma*.

38. यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥

३८

39. कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्विवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्विर्जनार्दन ॥

३९

*Yadyapyete na pasyanti lobhopahata chetasah ।
Kulakshayakritam dosham mitradrohecha patakam ॥*

38

*Katham na jneyamasmabhih papadasman nivartitum ।
Kulakshaya kritam dosham prapasyadbhir janardana ॥*

39

Meaning : जनार्दन Janardana : O Krishna ! लोभोपहतचेतसः lobhopahatachetasah : with minds over-powered by greed, एते ete : these, कुलक्षयकृतम् kulakshayakritam : in the destruction of the race, दोषम् dosham : evil, मित्रद्रोहे mitra drohe : in hostility to friends, पातकम् च patakam cha : and sin, यद्यपि yadyapi : even though, न पश्यन्ति na pasyanti : do not see, कुलक्षयकृतम् kulakshayakritam : in the destruction of the family, दोषम् dosham : the evil, प्रपश्यद्वि; prapasyadbhih : by us clearly seeing, अस्माभिः asmatbhih : by us, पापात् अस्मात् papad asmat : from this sin, निवर्तितुम् nivartitum : to turn away, कथम् katham : why, न ज्ञेयम् na jneyam : should not be learnt.

Substance : O Krishna ! Though these men whose minds are overpowered by greed 'o not see the evil in the destruction of families and the sin in hostility to friends, why not we realise the evil of race-destruction and turn away from the path of sin ?

Commentary : The Kauravas are described as men whose minds are completely overwhelmed by *kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha*— Desire, hatred, and greed which form the triple gateway to Hell.

The mind is vitiated by these evil tendencies, and Duryodhana and his henchmen were victims of this triple evil, and

suffered awful destruction. Those who are on the auspicious path of spiritual progress should resolutely guard themselves against these evils.

40. कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः । धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नम् अधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥	४०
41. अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः । स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥	४१
42. सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघानां कुलस्य च । पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥	४२
<i>Kulakshaye pranasyanti kuladharmaḥ sanatanah Dharme naste kulam kritsnam adharmaḥ abhibhavatyuta ॥</i>	40
<i>Adharmabhibhavat Krishna pradusyanti kula striyah । Strishu dustasu varshneya jayate varnasamkarah ॥</i>	41
<i>Samkaro narakayaiva kulaghnanam kulasya cha । Patanti pitaro hyesham lupta pindodaka kriyāḥ ॥</i>	42

Meaning : कुलक्षये *kulakshaye* : in the destruction of family, सनातना : *sanatanah* : immemorial, कुलधर्माः *kuladharmaḥ* : family religious rites, प्रणश्यन्ति *pranasyanti* : perish, धर्मेनष्टे *dharme nashte* : dharma being destroyed, कुलम् कृत्स्नम् *kulam kritsnam* : the whole family, अधर्मः *adharmaḥ* : impiety, अभिभवत्युत *abhibhavatyuta* : overcomes indeed, कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! अधर्माभिभवात् *adharmabhibhavat* : from the dominance of impiety, कुलस्त्रियः *kulasriyah* : women of the family, प्रदुष्यन्ति *pradushyanti* : become corrupt, वार्ष्णेय *varshneya* : O Krishna ! स्त्रीषुदुष्टासु *strishu dustasu* : in women becoming corrupt, वर्णसंकरः *varnasankarah* : admixture of castes, जायते *jayate* : arises, संकरः *sankarah* : confusion, कुलघानाम् च *kulaghnanam cha* : and of the destroyers of the family, कुलस्य *kulasya* : of the family, नरकायैव *narakayaiva* : is for hell.

only, एषाम् *esham* : of these, पितरहि *pitarah* : the dead fathers, लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः *lupta pindodaka kriyah* : deprived of the offerings of food and water, 'Sraddha' and 'Tarpana', पतन्ति *patanti* : fall.

Substance : O Krishna ! When the family is destroyed, the immemorial religious rites and rituals perish; and when these perish, they fall into a state of impiety; and by impiety the women of the family become corrupt; and when women become corrupt the purity of caste is polluted by confusion and admixture; and caste pollution leads to hell for both the family and the slayers of the family; and the dead fore-fathers fall from the higher realms of existence, being deprived of the rites of *Sraddha* and *Tarpana*.

43. दोषैरेतैः कुलग्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।

उत्साधन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥

४३

44. उत्सन्नकुलधर्मणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।

नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥

४४

Dosairetaih kulaghnanam varna samkarakarakaih ।

Utsadyante jatidharmah kuladharma cha sasvatah ॥

43

Utsanna kuladharmanam manusyanam janardana ।

Narake niyatam vaso bhavatityanususruma ॥

44

Meaning : कुलग्नानाम् *kulaghnanam* : of the slayers of families, वर्णसंकरकारकैः *varnasankarakarakaih* : causing pollution of castes, एतैः *etaih* : by those, दोषः *doshah* : evil deeds, शाश्वताः *sasvatah* : ever-lasting, जातिधर्माः *jati dharmah* : the laws of the race, कुलधर्माश्च *kuladharma cha* : and the laws of the family, उत्साधन्ते *utsadyante* : are destroyed, जनार्दन *Janardana* : O Krishna ! उत्सन्नकुलधर्मणाम् *utsanna kuladharmanam* : with their family laws destroyed, मनुष्याणाम् *manushyanam* : of men, नरके *narake* : in Hell, अनियतम् *aniyatam vasah* : dwelling for unknown period,

भवति *bhavathi* : is, ति *iti* : thus, अनुश्रुम् *anususruma* : we have heard.

Substance : O Krishna ! By the evil deeds of these slayers of families, who cause caste-pollution, the eternal laws of race and family perish. And men whose sacred rites and rituals are destroyed, are compelled to inherit hell for an unknown period. Thus have we heard.

45. अहो बत महत् पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥

४५

*Aho bata mahat papam kartum vyayasita vayam ।
Yad rajya sukha lobhena hantum svajanam udyatah ॥*

45

Meaning : अहो *aho* : lo ! बत *bata* : alas, यत् *yat* : that, वयम् *vayam* : we, राज्यसुखलोभेन *rajyasukha lobhena* : with desire to enjoy the kingdom, स्वजनम् *svajanam* : kinsmen, हन्तुम् *hantum* : to kill, उद्यताः *udyatah* : prepared, महत्पापम् *mahat papam* great sin, कर्तुम् *kartum* : to do, व्यवसिताः *vyayasitah* : prepared.

Substance : Alas ! What great sin are we prepared to commit by killing our own kinsmen for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of a kingdom !

46. यदि मामप्रतीकारम् अशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युः तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥

४६

*Yadi mam apratikaram asastram sastrapanayah
Dhartarastra rane hanyuh tan me kshemataram bhavet ॥*

46

Meaning : अशस्त्रम् *asastram* : unarmed, अप्रतीकारम् *aprati-karam* : unresisting, माम् *mam* : me, रणे *rane* : in battle, शस्त्रपाणयः *sastrapanayah* : weapons in hand, धार्तराष्ट्रः *dhartarashtrah* : Kauravas, हन्युः *hanyuh* should slay, यदि *yadi* : if, तत् *tar* : that, मे *me* : to me, क्षेमतरम् *kshemataram* : better, भवेत् *bhavet* would be.

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

Commentary : Better : Arjuna says that if his enemies should kill him without any resistance on his part, it would be for his own well-being and welfare. He may have the following reasons to come to such a conclusion – (1) By refusing to fight he would escape the sin of slaying the family with all its evil effects, and thus retain the former good that he has already done. (2) He would escape the sin of killing his own kinsmen. (3) His relatives, friends and teachers would live. (4) To spare the lives of relations and teachers is in itself a good act which ultimately would help him to rise higher and higher in spirituality.

Having described the mental conflict of Arjuna Sanjaya now proceeds to narrate what he did afterwards.

47. एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥

४७

Samjaya uvacha

Evam uktva 'rjunah samkhye rathopastha upavisat ।

Visrijyu sasaram chapam sokasamvignamanasah ॥

47

संजय उवाच *samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : संख्ये *sankhye* : in battle, अर्जुनः *Arjunah* : Arjuna, एवम् *evam* : in this manner, उक्त्वा *uktva* : having spoken, शोकसंविग्नमानसः *sokasamvignamanasah* : with mind distressed by sorrow, सशरम् *sasaram* : with arrows, चापम् *chapam* : bow, विसृज्य *visrijya* : dropping, रथोपस्थे *rathopastah* : on the seat of the chariot, उपाविशत् *upavisat* : sat down.

Substance : Sanjaya said : Having spoken in this manner, Arjuna, distressed with sorrow, dropped bow and arrows and sat down on the seat of the chariot.

Commentary : *With the mind distressed by sorrow :* Arjuna dropped the great bow Gandiva and sat down in a mood of doubt, despair and helplessness. Never before in his life did he do so on any battle-field in any situation. So there should be a powerful cause for the present problem of Arjuna. This cause is easily discernable from his own words. It is nothing but the deeply planted feeling of attachment for his relations and friends, and the awful contemplation of slaying them in the battle. He speaks repeatedly of 'svajanam' (our people). His distress for the destruction of his own people touches his very heart and throws the whole man off his balance. As a result, he decides to give up every thing—kingdom, pleasures, and enjoyments, even dominion over the three worlds. Lord Krishna seizes this opportune moment when Arjuna's mind was filled with the thought of absolute renunciation and teaches the highest Brahmavidya. Hence Arjuna's despondency is transformed into a *Yoga*.

Arjuna yearned to know what was *Dharma*, having given up all dominion, pleasures and enjoyment. Hence it is *Yoga*. Such deep renunciation is essential for all seekers after truth. It ultimately leads to righteousness and union with God. Dispassion for earthly enjoyments and burning passion for truth are the 'sine quanon' of spiritual life. It is this passion for truth that drives the aspirant forward on the path of spiritual realisation. Arjuna experienced the two feelings in the present situation. So he is fully qualified to realise the teaching of the Lord. If any man, for any reason, is prompted by feelings of dispassion for earthly objects, and a yearning for truth, he receives the Grace of God by which he comes to know the Truth and attains peace and blessedness.

इति धीमद्भगवद्रीतास्पनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम
प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu Brahmavidyayam
yoga sasire Sri Krishna-juna Samyade Arjuna
Vishadayogo nama prathamodhyayah.*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita,
the Science of the Eternal, the scripture of yoga, the
dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends
the First Discourse, entitled - Arjuna Vishada
yoga - The Yoga of the Despondency
of Arjuna

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

Atha Dvitiyyodhyayah

THE SECOND DISCOURSE

सांख्य योगः

S A M K H Y A Y O G A

THE YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

The title of the Discourse :

Samkhya Yoga. That which is connected with samkhya (number) is Samkhya. In the investigation of the Eternal, it is necessary to enumerate the number of all the ephemeral and impermanent elements, and so it is called Samkhya. To know the twenty four or ninety six phenomenal modifications, and reject them all as non-eternal, and find out the Eternal witness of all Nature is what is called *Samkhya Vidya*. As, in this chapter, the nature of *Atma* is fully described, as the impermanence of the body composed of the five elements is enunciated, as many aspects of supreme knowledge are referred to, it is entitled Samkhya Yoga.

Important points of the Discourse :

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 1) | Arjuna explains his mental distress and confusion and surrenders to Lord Krishna for guidance. | (1-10) |
| 2) | Description of <i>Atma</i> . | (11-30) |
| 3) | The necessity to fight the battle according to <i>Kshatriya Dharma</i> . | (31-38) |
| 4) | The doctrine of <i>Nishkama Karma</i> . | (39-53) |
| 5) | The man of steadfast wisdom. | (54-72) |

How this chapter is connected with the previous chapter :—
The first chapter describes how Lord Krishna drove the chariot forward and stopped it in the middle of the two armies, how Arjuna was perplexed and filled with grief at the sight of his kinsmen, friends, and teachers with whom he had to fight, and how, in a mood of confusion and despair, he cast away his great bow and sat down in the chariot refusing to fight the battle. Lord Krishna observes the mental condition of his disciple, and in order to inspire him with courage and firmness of mind to carry out his duty, teaches him the Eternal Reality of *Atma*, and the secret of work. This is the subject matter of the Second Discourse.

Sanjaya continues the description of Arjuna's mental distress, and what Lord Krishna said to him afterwards.

संजय उवाच

१. तं तथा कृपयाऽस्विष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम्
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसुदनः ॥

Samjaya uvacha

*Tam tatha kripayavishtam asrupurnakulekshanam ।
Vishidantam idam vakyam uvacha madhusudanah ॥*

1

संजय उवाच samjaya uvacha : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : तथा *tatha* : thus, कृपया *kripaya* : by pity, आविष्टम् *avishtam* : filled, अश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् *asrupurnakulekshanam* : with eyes blurred with tears, विषीदन्तम् *vishidantam* : sorrowing, तम् *tam* : Arjuna, मधुसुदनः *madhusudanah* : Krishna, इदम् वाक्यम् *idam vakyam* : this speech, उवाच *uvacha* : said, spoke.

Substance : In this manner, when Arjuna was plunged in a state of despondency, with eyes blurred with tears, Lord Krishna addressed this speech to him.

Commentary : *With eyes blurred with tears* : This is the sign of intense dispassion. All earthly attachments and family pleasures and the glories and enjoyments of dominion, appear worthless trash, and Arjuna yearns to escape from the bondage which keeps him like a prisoner in a dark cell. There is only one thought for the prisoner, and that is to regain his freedom and to see the light. So feels the ignorant man, when he is burdened with the weight of sorrow. Such is the experience of Arjuna. It is the first and the foremost qualification for receiving the highest knowledge. One who does not possess this intense dispassion cannot receive the supreme knowledge. Even if it is taught to him, he cannot understand it. It is wasted in the same way as one attempts to dye a dirty piece of cloth. Thus we come to know that Arjuna qualified himself for supreme wisdom by his intense dispassion in the present situation.

Filled with pity : Kindness is no doubt a great quality. But there are situations when kindness becomes a mental weakness. To be moved with pity after deciding to fight a righteous war for establishing *Dharma*, is not nobility of human nature, but a weak state of mind that is not capable of standing up to the strain of duty and righteous action. For the Kshatriya a righteous war for the sake of justice is a duty. Arjuna was moved by a feeling which amounts to a weak wavering state of mind and it is against this weakness that Lord Krishna's exhortation is directed. The blessed Lord makes it clear to Arjuna that this is not the occasion and these are not the people for whom he should feel this kind of pity. As a Kshatriya, it is Arjuna's duty to fight the battle.

Madhusudanah : Lord Krishna acquired this name by killing the demon called 'Madhu'. Madhu also means honey. Man's ego, the pleasures of the body and the senses are like honey when they are first enjoyed, and afterwards they torment him like poison. So one should renounce them. Then man becomes Madhusudana.

Lord Krishna inspires strength and courage to Arjuna in his present state of weakness and sorrow.

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपरिथतम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्गम् अकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥

२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Kutastva kasmalam idam visame samupasthitam ।

Anaryajushtam asvargyam akirtikaram arjuna ॥

२

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna ! O Arjuna !, अनार्यजुष्टम् *anaryajush-tam* : unworthy, अस्वर्गम् *asvargyam* heaven-excluding, अकीर्तिकरम् *akirtikaram* : shameful, इदम् *idam* : this, कश्मलम् *kasmalam* : dejection, विषमे *vishame* : in perilous straits, त्वा *tva* : upon thee, कुतः *kutah* : whence, समुपस्थितम् *samupasthitam* : taken hold.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! Whence, in this critical situation, has this mental dejection taken hold of you, unworthy, shameful and Heaven-excluding ?

Commentary : *Dejection* : Lord Krishna describes the mental weakness of Arjuna as dirty and wretched. In the same way as dirt covers the physical body the mind becomes impure by sorrow, fear, distress, and hatred. And even as one washes the body by cleansing material, one should clean the mind by the knowledge of *Atma*. Arjuna's mental filth was washed off by the Lord's teaching. It is the duty of every individual to purify the mind-stuff of its ignorance and passion by a study of the Gita.

Unworthy : There are two types of men in the world—the wise and the ignorant. Those who follow the righteous path, who seek for light and purity, who are bold and active, are the wise. This is the Aryan way of life. The other category of men live in ignorance, are subject to dark passions, follow the demonic way, and fall into sorrow and despair. This is the

un Aryan way of life. It behoves every one to question himself whether he belongs to the former or later class of men, and strive to attain to the level of the wise by determined effort.

Question : *What are weakness, sorrow, and fear?*

Answer : They are the dirt of the mind. The ignorant fall a prey to them. They pull down man from ascending to higher levels of existence. They bring shame and disgrace.

3. क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वव्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥

३

*Klaibyam ma smagamah partha nai 'tat tvayy upapadyate !
Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktvo 'titisha paramtapa ॥ 3*

Meaning : पार्थ Partha: Oh Arjuna ! क्लैब्यम् *klaibyam* : impotence, मास्मगमः *ma smagamah*: do not yield to, एतत् *etat* : this, स्वयि *tvayi*: in you, न उपपद्यते *na upapadyate*: is not fit, परन्तप *Parantapa*: Oh scorcher of enemies, क्षुद्रम् *kshudram*: mean, हृदयदौर्बल्यम् *hridaya daurbalyam* weak-heartedness, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva*: giving up, उत्तिष्ठ *uttishtha*: arise.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Do not yield to impotence. It does not befit you. Cast off this wretched weakness of heart. Arise, O scorcher of enemies !

Commentary : *Impotence* : Impotence and weakness are characteristics of a eunach. It is the meanest quality in man. So the Lord ridicules Arjuna for such weakness, and exhorts him not to yield to it.

Courage and fearlessness are the first virtues in man. All other good qualities are acquired through them. Therefore in the 16th Chapter, the Lord mentions fearlessness (abhayam) as the first of the twenty six virtues which constitute the 'daivasampada'.

Enthusiasm, daring, courage, right decision, power and heroism - wherever these six qualities exist, there the Gods dwell. Otherwise, why should the Lord, when he opens his lips to speak, enunciate fearlessness as the first of all virtues on

the spiritual path? It is this great 'mantra' of fearlessness that came out as the first utterance of the Lord. Though the teacher of the Gita presents various creeds in the course of his message, he insists upon fearlessness as the basic virtue common to all paths of religion. Arjuna's mental disease has assumed a dangerous form, and the great physician, the blessed Lord, takes out of the medicine-case this powerful medicine 'fearlessness' and administers it to Arjuna at the very outset. Arjuna's disease is weakness caused by sorrow and delusion and the Lord's antidote is absolute strength and courage born out of the knowledge of *Atma*.

Arise : "Uttishtata, Jagrata, Prapya varan nibhodhata !!!" Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. So the Upanishads exhort mankind. Likewise the Lord exhorts Arjuna : "Stand up, be a man of action, do your duty."

Scorcher of enemies : This epithet is significant. Arjuna has defeated several external enemies on the battle-field. He is now confronted with unseen internal enemies, sorrow and delusion. The Lord inspires Arjuna to conquer them, as he conquered other enemies.

Arjuna continues his lamentation.

अर्जुन उवाच

4. कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हवरिसूदन ॥

8

Arjuna uvacha

*Katham bhismam aham samkhye dronam cha madhusudana ।
Ishubhih pratiyotsyami pujarhav arisudana ॥*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : अरिसूदन *arisudana* : O Krishna, slayer of enemies, मधुसूदन *madhusudana* O Krishna!, पूजार्हे *pujarhav* : fit to be worshipped, भीष्मम् *bhishma* : Bhishma, द्रोणच् *dronam cha* : and Drona, संख्ये *sankhye* : in the battle, अहम् *aham* : I, इषुभिः *ishubhih* : with arrows, कथम् *katham* : how, प्रतियोत्स्यामि *pratiyotsyami* : attack.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! Bhishma and Drona are my teachers fit to be worshipped. How can I attack them with arrows in the battle ?

Commentary : We can understand from this how much reverence Arjuna had for his teachers though they happened to fight on the side of his enemies.

5. गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वाऽर्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव भुज्जीय भोगान्नुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ ५

*Guṇan ahatva hi mahanubhavan
Sreyo bhoktum bhaiksyam api 'ha loke ।
Hatva 'rthakamams tu gurun ihai'va
Bhunjija bhogan rudhirapradigdhan ॥*

5

Meaning : माहानुभावान् *mahanubhayan* : most noble, गुरुन् *gurun* : teachers, अहत्वा *ahatva hi* : without killing indeed, इहलोके *iha loke* : in this world, भैक्षम् *bhaiksham* : alms, अपि *api* even, भोक्तुम् *bhoktum* : to eat, श्रेयः *sreyoh hi* : better, गुरुन् *gurun* : teachers, हत्वातु *hatva tu* : (then) having slain, इहैव *ihativa* : even here, रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् *rudhirapradigdhan* : stained with blood, अर्थकामान् *arthakamam* : desires and pleasures, भोगान् *bhogan* : enjoyments, भुज्जीय *bhunjina* : enjoy.

Substance : Better it is in this world to live on the food of beggary than to kill my most noble teachers. But if I kill them here I could enjoy only such pleasures as are stained with blood.

6. न चैतद्विद्वः कतरन्नो गरीयो यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामस्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६

*Na chai 'tad vidmah kataranno garityo
yad va jayema yadi va no jayeyuh ।
Yan eva hatva na jijivisamas
te 'vasthitah pramukhe dhartarastrah ॥*

6

Meaning : नः *nah* : for us, कतरत् *katarat* : which, गरीयः *gariyah* : better, एतत् च *Etat cha* : this, नच् *na cha* : and not, विद्मः *vidmah* (we) know, जयेम् *jayema va* : we should conquer, यदा *yad va* : or if, नः *nah* : us, जयेयुः *jayeyah* : they should conquer, यान् *yaneva* : whom, हत्वा *hatva* : having slain, नजिजीविषामः *na jijivishamah* : (we) do not wish to live, ते धार्तराष्ट्राः *te dhartarashtrah* : even those Kauravas, प्रमुखे *pramukhe* : in front, अवस्थिताः *ayastitah* : are standing.

Substance : And further I can hardly say whether it is better for us that we should conquer them, or that they should conquer us. Those very people killing whom we do not wish to live, the sons of Dhritarashtra, are standing in front of us.

Not knowing what to decide and how to act Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krishna.

7. कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसमूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ ७

*Karparyadoso pahatasvabhayah
pricchami tvam dharmasammudhachetah ।
yacchreyah syannischitam bruhi tan me
sisyas te 'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam ॥ 7*

Meaning : कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः *karparyadosopahatasvabhayah* : with mind distracted by pity, धर्मसमूढचेताः *dharmasammudhachetah* : ignorant of (my) righteous duty, त्वाम् *tvam* : to thee, पृच्छामि *pricchami* : I ask, यत् *yat* : what, निश्चितम् *nischitam* : decisively, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good, स्यात् *syat* : may be, तत् *tat* : that, मे *me* : to me, ब्रूहि *bruhi* : say, अहम् *aham* : I, ते *te* : to you, शिष्यः *shishyah* : am disciple, त्वाम् *tvam* : to thee, प्रपन्नम् *prapannam* : take refuge, माम् *mam* : me, शाधि *sadhi* : teach.

Substance : (O Krishna!) My mind is distracted by the taint of pity and I am ignorant of what my duty is, and so, I ask you to teach me what is good for me. I am your disciple. I take refuge in you.

Commentary : *Karparyadoshah* : 'Kripanah' commonly means a greedy man, a beggar. It means also a man ignorant of the knowledge of *Atma*.

The first meaning does not apply to Arjuna, for he was never known to be greedy or a beggarly spirit. Therefore the word should here mean ignorance according to the meaning given in the Upanishadas.

In the first discourse Arjuna speaks. Krishna listens and remains silent. Arjuna speaks of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, as if he knew the secret laws of righteousness and action. Still Krishna remains silent. Perhaps the Lord thought that he should not speak till Arjuna asked him to know the truth.

But Arjuna was not a common man. He understood his state of mind and the terrible perplexity and despair into which he was plunged by the tremendous responsibility of the situation. He realised that his own estimate of the situation was not all true as his mind was distracted by sorrow and despondency. So he stops the flow of his own obsessed thoughts and feelings, and simply surrenders to the Lord, to enlighten him and show the right path of action. He assumes the correct position of a humble disciple. The divine Master was pleased with Arjuna's humility. So it is in the relation between all disciples and teachers. The more humble the disciple is, the greater is the love of the surrendered to the Lord with complete faith; Arjuna sought for light and guidance. The Lord at once took upon himself the responsibility of a *Guru*. He taught him the highest wisdom. He cleared all doubts and answered the questions. He revealed his universal form (*Visvarupa*) and in every way pulled up the sinking Arjuna from the slough of despondency. Arjuna did a great service to humanity by his self-surrender, for the Lord had then the proper occasion to deliver the message of the Gita to mankind. Let all seekers understand the inner meaning and significance of the subtle relations between the disciple and the master.

Mind distracted : Nature in its own original state is pure in every man. It becomes defiled and impure by bad elements like lust, greed and hatred. Without these defiling

elements, man's nature is verily divine and spiritual. The whole attempt of religion is to show the way how to bring back the mind to its original state of purity. The position of Arjuna is not the impurity of lust or greed, or hatred, but of ignorance which rendered him incapable of deciding the great problem of righteous action in that critical situation. The unwise do not seek for a remedy even though all of them pass through the same state of perplexity and confusion in solving the problem of life. On the other hand, Arjuna discovered his mental weakness and immediately sought for a remedy. What is that remedy? - Taking refuge in the *Guru*. Who is that *Guru*? the Blessed Lord Krishna himself. Arjuna surrendered to the Lord and appealed to him, "I am your disciple, command me what I should do?". He fell at the feet of the Lord. His egoism vanished. This is the surest path to spiritual realisation. This is the ship that takes the bound soul across the ocean of 'samsara'. The *Guru* is the expert pilot. If he is at the helm, there is no danger of any storm or tempest in life. He takes the disciple who has taken refuge in him safely through all dangers to the heaven of peace and freedom. Therefore the aspirants should surrender to a competent *Guru* and practice the virtue of humility. Then they receive illumination and realise the Supreme.

Arjuna confesses that he finds no other way but surrender to the Lord to transcend his sorrow.

8. न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद् यच्छोकसुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।

अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८

Na hi prapasyami mamapanudyad

Yac chokam ucchoshanam indriyanam ।

Avapya bhumavasapatnamriddham

Rajyam suranam api chadhipatyam ॥

8

Meaning : भूमी *bhumam* : in the world, असपत्नम् *asapatnam* : without rivals, ऋद्धम् *riddham* : prosperous, राज्यम् *rajyam* : kingdom, सुराणाम् *suranam* : of the gods, आधिपत्यम् *adhipatyam* : dominion, अवाप्य अपि *avapya ap* : possessing even, इन्द्रियाणाम् *indriyanam* : of the senses, उच्छोषणम् *ucchoshanam* : withering,

मम शोकम् mama sokam .. य sorrow, यत् yat : that, अपनुद्धात् apanud-yat : would remove, नहि प्रपश्यामि nahi prapasyami : I do not see.

Substance : Though possessing prosperous kingdom free from rivals, and holding even power over the gods, I do not yet see what could remove this sorrow of mine which burns up my senses.

Commentary : Though a man possess all the power and prosperity in the world, and even acquire lordship over the gods, yet it cannot remove the distractions of the mind. The disease of the mind cannot abate by feeding it with greater wealth, power and position. To discover this truth is the very first step on the spiritual path. Arjuna understood it clearly. So he confesses that power and lordship over the three worlds cannot remove the withering sorrow. The storm does not abate. The only cure for all diseases of the mind is the knowledge of *Atma*. It is this supreme panacea which Lord Krishna offers to Arjuna. Therefore it is clear that what one should strive for in this life is not power or position or enjoyment but the knowledge of the Supreme Self.

Sanjaya narrates what Arjuna did afterwards.

संजय उवाच

९. एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दं उक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥

९

Samjaya uvacha

Evam uktva hrishikesam gudakesah paramitapah ।
Na yotsya iti govindam uktva tushnim babhuvaha ॥

९

संजय उवाच *Samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said-

Meaning : परन्तपः paramitapah : destroyer of foes, गुडाकेशः gudakesah : Arjuna, हृषीकेशम् hrishikesham : to Krishna, एवम् उक्त्वा evam uktva : thus having spoken, नयोत्स्य na yotsya : I will not fight, इति iti : thus, गोविन्दम् govindam : to Krishna, उक्त्वा

uktva : having spoken, तृष्णीम् *tushnim* : silent, बभुवह् *babhuvaha* : became.

Substance : Sanjaya said : Having spoke thus, Arjuna, the destroyer of foes, finally said to Lord Krishna, "I will not fight" and became silent

Sanjaya narrates what Krishna did then.

10. तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥

१०

Tam uvacha hrisikesah prahasann ivabharata।

Senayor ubhayor madhye visidantam idam vachah॥ 10

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Dhritarashtra, सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये *senayor ubhayor madhye* : in the middle of the two armies, विषीदन्तम् *vishidantam* : to the sorrowing, तम् *tam* : Arjuna (him), हृषीकेशः *hrisikesah* : Krishna, प्रहसन्निव *prahasan niva* as if laughing, इदम् वचः *idam vachah* : this word. उवाच *uvacha* : said.

Substance : O King Dhritarashtra ! seeing Arjuna lamenting in the middle of the two armies, Lord Krishna, as if laughing loud, spoke thus to him.

Commentary : *As if laughing* : 'Hasan' means laughing, 'prahasan' means laughing loud. The man of knowledge is generally amused when he hears the talk of the ignorant and observes what they say and do. Arjuna was caught in the grip of sorrow, as he did not understand the hidden laws of *Dharma*. Lord Krishna was the very embodiment of knowledge and *Dharma*. Therefore the specious arguments of Arjuna, the spurious feelings of pity and compassion, the mental distraction, and physical collapse of Arjuna, raised a smile on the lips of the Lord. Those who have not transcended 'avidya' suffer from a false identification with the creations of 'Maya', the body and mind and other worldly objects. The man of knowledge on the other hand knows that he is never contaminated by the modifications of the body and mind, and looks at them from the vantage point of a disinterested spectator.

That is the difference between the wise and the ignorant. When a man sees a rope and knows it as only a rope, he is naturally amused to see a man of defective sight who takes the rope to be a snake and jumps about in fear and confusion. The father laughs at the peculiar ideas and behaviour of his little children. So does the wise men smile at the fanciful theories and conduct of the ignorant. To the ignorant, 'goshpadam sagarayate' - a span of ground appears like an ocean, and to the wise 'sagaram goshpadayate' - the ocean becomes a span of ground. Lord Krishna was the master of *Yoga* and *Jnana*. To him Arjuna's peculiar argumentation, his bodily and mental agitation appeared laughable. So a smile beautified the sublime features of the Lord when he observed the mental acrobatics of his former friend and present disciple. Look at this picture and that - the wailing Arjuna and the smiling Lord. Such exactly is the difference between the wise and the ignorant.

The Lord speaks. Sanjaya now records the teaching of Lord Krishna, who first of all asserts that there is no one for whom there need be sorrow.

श्री भगवानुवाच

11. अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।

गतासृनगतासुंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥

११

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Asochyananvasochastvam prajnavadamscha bhashase
Gatasunagatasumscha nanusochanti panditah ॥*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : त्वम् *tvam* : you, अशोच्यान् *asochyan* : those who should not be grieved for, अन्वशोचः *anvasochah* : have grieved, प्रज्ञावादांश्च *prajnavadamcha* : and words of wisdom, भाषसे *bhashase* : speak, पण्डिताः *panditah* : the wise, गतासृन् *gatasun* : th dead, अगतासुंश्च *agatasums cha* : and the living, नानुशोचन्ति *nanusochanti* : grieve not,

(11)

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna !

You grieve for those for whom there need be no sorrow, yet you speak words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for the dead or the living.

Commentary : The teaching of the Gita starts from this *Sloka*. So in the Gita-Sastra, this verse is regarded as the seed or source ('Bija') .

Just as the whole tree is involved in the seed, the whole of the 'Gita Sastra' is implied in this *Sloka*.

The message of the Gita starts with the word 'Asochyan' and ends with the words 'ma suchah' (do not grieve). So it appears that the main purpose of the Gita teaching is "the removal of sorrow."

Those who should not be grieved for : Every object in the world has five aspects : (1) existence, (2) light, (3) joy, (4) name, and (5) form. Of these the first three - existence, light, and joy (*sat, chit, ananda*) are real and eternal. The later two, name and form (*nama* and *rupa*) are unreal and transitory. The first three constitute the real nature of man, and not name and form. But such is the power of ignorance ('avidya') that man sees, knows and clings to the later two only - namely name and form. The first three are not directly seen, though they are experienced every moment of life. Thus, if we analyse and go a little deeper into the real nature of man, we find that it is indestructible and eternal. Only the later two go on continuously changing from time to time. Therefore, since the real man is eternal, one need not weep and wail for the modifications of name and form which he observes in life and death. When the real man is deathless, for whom should we grieve, and for what? That is the Lord's position.

Words of wisdom : Intellectual arguments are conceived by *Buddhi*, by which power man comes to decisions after due consideration. But the intellect is finite. It operates within a limited range. It cannot go beyond the *buddhi*.

Buddhi, and the intellect are parts of nature, and they are subject to errors and mistakes in their concepts and conclusions. But it is different with men who have crossed the border land of the intellect, and entered the realm of *Atma* – the super-conscious state. He alone knows and speaks the truth. Arjuna did not attain that state. So he measures every thing with the yardstick of his own deluded intellect. His arguments not to fight the battle are of this nature. Lord Krishna dismisses them all in one suggestive phrase ('Prajnavadah') and proceeds to state the ultimate position.

The wise : Ordinarily a Pandit is one who is well-versed in the languages and literature, poetry and scripture, logic and oratory. But the Lord here gives a new definition for the word. He is a pandit who grieves not either for the living or the dead.

Again in the 4th Chapter, Pandit is described as one who has burnt up all actions in the fire of 'Jnana'.

And again in the 5th Chapter, the Pandit is described as one who looks upon all with an equal eye.

So the word should be understood in the higher sense of a man of wisdom. It is necessary that, besides mere learning and book-knowledge he should attain the knowledge of *Atma* and receive the grace of God.

Question : *Who is a Pandit ?*

Answer : He who does not grieve for the living or the dead or for any object in the world is a Pandit.

The Lord lays down the law of the immortality of Atma.

12. न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपा :

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥

१२

Na tveva'ham jatu na'sam na tvam ne'me janadhipah ।

Na cai'va na bhavishyamah sarve vayam atah param ॥ 12

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, जातु *jatu* : at any time, नासम् *nasam* : was not, नत्वेव *naiveva* : never was, त्वम् *tvam* : you, ने *na* (*na asih iti*) : never was not, इमे *ime* : these, जनाधिपाः *janadhipah* : kings, न *na* (*na asih iti*) : never were not, अतः *param* *atah*

param : hereafter, वयम् सर्वे *vayam sarve* : all of us, नभविष्यामः *nabhavishyamah* : would not be in future, च *cha* : and, नएव *na eva* : never also.

Substance : (O Arjuna !) Myself, you and all these Kings here never were not in the past, and never would not be in the future.

Commentary : Through this verse, the Lord teaches the 'Mahavakya' 'tat tvam asi' (Thou art That). 'I', 'you' and all beings in the world are all forms of the one Supreme Self. So the individual being and the Supreme Being are not two separate entities, but one and only one. This is the most secret of all spiritual secrets. This is the essence of *Brahma Jnana*. Since Arjuna renounced all the powers and pleasures of the three worlds, Lord Krishna considered him fit to receive the supreme knowledge, and so begins to teach the highest Truth.

Three important facts come out in the Lord's declaration that all beings are eternal —

- 1) *Atma* is eternal,
- 2) Each individual being is *Atma*, and not the body with name and form,
- 3) The one *Atma* pervades all beings in the world.

This teaching inspires tremendous strength and courage. When a man comes to know that he and others essentially do not perish, there is no cause for grief at all. Death is then regarded as only a change of name and form. When the seed breaks up and grows into a plant, there is no need for grief at all. The name and form of the seed have disappeared, but it is there in the form of a plant. Lord Krishna found out the root cause of Arjuna's grief and sorrow, and he knew that the knowledge of *Atma* alone could put an end to all weakness and despondency. So he starts his teaching with the tremendous affirmation of the immortality of the Soul and the deathlessness of the individual being.

All of us hereafter : 'all of us' - From the point of view of the Supreme Self, there is no separation between God, Guru, and the common man. All belong to the same eternal existence.

So we find that Anjaneya speaking to Sri Rama says: ('Atma budhya tvamevaham'). The individual being manifesting as the ego is the result of the limitations of the body, mind and senses. When these limitations are discarded, the so-called individual being, the ego, becomes veritably the all-pervading Supreme Self. That is the Reality. Knowing that he is the immortal *Atma*, where is sorrow, where is weakness? Thus the Lord inspires Arjuna with courage born of knowledge.

Question: *Who is Jiva?*

Answer : The *Atman* conditioned by the body, mind, and senses is *Jiva*.

Question: *What is Atma?*

Answer : The unconditioned Self is *Atma*. It exists in the present, the past, and the future. It is deathless and eternal.

Question: *Does this apply only to a few?*

Answer : No. From the creating 'Brhma' down to the meanest insect, it applies to all alike. All beings without exception are the *Atma* and not anything else.

The Atma exists even after the death of the body.

13. देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥

१३

Dehino'smin yatha dehe kaumaram yavvanam jara ।

Tatha dehantarapraptir dhiras tatra na muhyati ॥ 13

Meaning : देहिनः *dehinaha* : for the embodied being, अस्मिन् देहे *asmindehe* : in this body, कौमारम् *kaumaram* : boyhood, यौवनम् *yavvanam* : youth, जरा *jara* : old age, यथा *yatha* : as, तथा *tatha* : so, देहान्तरप्राप्तिः *dehantarapraptih* : the attaining of another body, तत्र *tatra* : thereat, धीरः *dhirah* : the firm man, न मुह्यति *na muhyati* : is not deluded.

Substance: Just as man in this body passes through the various stages of boyhood, youth and old age, like so, he passes into another body after death. The wise know it and are not deluded.

Commentary: Boyhood, youth, old age, and migrating into another body - these four stages are inevitable for the embodied being.

In the body : It is made clear that these changes affect the body and not the *Atma*. When from boyhood one passes to youth, and from youth to age, he does not grieve. No one grieves when the seed dies as it is giving birth to the plant. And so, the Lord questions why one should grieve when the body falls and another is taken up by the individual being. The wise who know the secret remain firm when these changes overtake the body. The first three stages are seen and known by all, but the fourth change is unseen and so it is looked upon with a feeling of awe and wonder. But the Lord points out that even this change is just like the former and not in the least different from them. So he exhorts every one to know the truth and be fearless. It should however be remembered that the *Jnani* whose 'karmic' force is already exhausted has no need to take another body. The common man is subject to the law of rebirth to work out his *karma* till the last when he too becomes free.

Cycle of the body :

Boyhood — Youth — Old Age — Rebirth.

The cycle rotates inevitably so long as the *karma* force works. When it is neutralised and destroyed by knowledge, the man is freed from the cycle of birth and death. This is liberation (*Moksha*).

Question : *What are the changes for the embodied being ?*

Answer : Boyhood, youth, old age and rebirth in a different body, are the changes.

Question : *Who is the man of courage ?*

Answer : He is the man of courage who does not grieve when these modifications overtake the body, when man dies and passes into another body.

*Heat and cold, pain and pleasure are temporary phenomena.
Endure them*

14. मात्रास्पर्शस्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्याः तांस्तिक्षश्व भारत ॥

१४

*Matrasparsas tu kaunteya sitoshna sukhaduhkhadah ।
Agamapayino 'nityah tam stitikshasva bharata ॥*

14

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : Arjuna (son of Kunti), मात्रास्पर्शस्तु *matrasparsastu* : contact of the senses with objects indeed, शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः *sitoshnasukhaduhkhadah* : producers of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, आगमापायिनः *agamapayanah* : with beginning and end, अनित्याः *anityah* : transitory, तान् *tan* : them, भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna !, तिक्षश्व *titikshasva* : endure.

Substance : Contact of the senses with objects produce heat and cold, pain and pleasure. These experiences come and go, and are impermanent. Endure them, O Arjuna.

Commentary : Those who do not know that the world is a great illusion consider that the experiences of the senses and the mind are real, and super-impose them on themselves and suffer all-through their life. But those who know that these modifications belong to the realm of the body only, and that the Self remains untroubled and uncontaminated by them, are free from pleasure and pain, and such men live always in a state of happiness. However, so long as man is in the embodied state, even the *Jnani* must go through the physical changes. But since he knows the sharp distinction between the body and *Atma*, his attitude to them is entirely different from that of the ignorant man. So the Lord's command is 'endure them'. ("Titikshasva") There is no other way.

Producers of pleasure and pain : The pleasure experienced by the senses is not pure pleasure. It is mixed with pain. If it is a pure pleasure, it should not have any touch of pain either before or afterwards. Elsewhere in the Gita it is said

that the pleasures derived through contact of the senses with worldly objects are themselves the source of pain. Common experience is also the same. The same thing causes pain and pleasure under different circumstances, in varying degrees. There can be no such thing as pleasure apart from pain. They are the two sides of the same coin. They are called 'dvandvas'—pairs of opposites, which always go together. So the Lord speaks of them together as producers of pleasure and pain (*sukhadukhadah*).

With beginning and end : When wordly pleasures come no one need be elated, for their nature is not simply to appear but to disappear also, and where there is elation there should be depression. Pleasures come as guests and again depart. They are transitory and short-lived. Therefore one should not get himself attached to them. Such attachment will always lead to pain when they disappear, and it is absolutely certain that they disappear in course of time. He is then the 'dhira'—the man of courage, who is disinterested in them, and feels no attraction for them. The foolish man is deluded by the superficial attractions offered by sense-objects, runs after them, and gets himself caught in the whirlpool of *Samsara*. And besides, even a casual observer knows that, not desired by him, several painful things come to him by the power of providence in the cyclic motion of time, and he should be in a position to conclude that even pleasures would come similarly through time, and precious life need not be wasted for obtaining such pleasures. The duty of every thoughtful man is to seek for Truth in the midst of this changing phenomena, and the unadulterated *Ananda* which is pure and perfect and which brings no pain in its wake. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to seek for such permanent joy.

Endure : Endure them (*Titikshasva*). This is one of the great *mantras* of the Gita. Man should be equal-minded when cold and heat, pleasure and pain, come in the form of an endless chain. So long as man has the body, they come. No one can stop them. So the Lord gives the *satvic* law (*titikshasva*)—endure them. Like *sama* and *dama*-control of the internal and external organs, '*titiksha*'—endurance is an absolutely necessary qualification for the spiritual seeker.

Question : *What is the nature of sence-experiences ?*

Answer : They produce heat and cold, pleasure and pain. They come and go. They are impermanent.

Question : *What should one do when they come ?*

Answer : He should endure them with an equal mind and remain calm and unmoved.

Lord Krishna declares the fruit of such equanimity of mind.

15. यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥

१५

*Yam hi na vyayantyete purusham purusharshabha !
Sama duhkha sukham dhiram so'mritatvaya kalpate ॥ 15*

Meaning : पुरुषर्षभ *purusharshabha* : chief among mortals, O Arjuna !, एते *ete* : these, समदुःखसुखम् *samaduhkhasukham* : equal in pain and pleasure, धीरम् *dhiram* : firm, यम् *yam* : whom, पुरुषम् *purusham* : man, नव्यथयन्ति *na vyayante* : do not affect, सः हि *sah hi* : he, surely, अमृतत्वाय *amritatvaya* : for immortality, कल्पते *kalpate* : is fit.

Substance : The firm man who is not affected by pain and pleasure, who remains equal-minded, surely is fit for immortality, O Arjuna, Chief of mortals !

Commentary : *Chief among mortals* : He who has controlled the senses, who is not attracted by worldly objects, and who is equal-minded in pain and pleasure, is the best of men. Worldly greatness is not enough, but along with it one should acquire spiritual excellence also. Then alone he becomes the chief among mortals. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to acquire spiritual greatness, and so he addresses him as 'chief among mortals' - ('Purusharshabha.')

Equal in pain and pleasure :- Firmness of character implies equanimity of mind under all conditions of pain and pleasure. He is firmly fixed in *Atma* who feels that the pairs of

'opposites ('dvandas') are only modifications of the body and mind. Pleasure is only a wave of the mind, and pain is also a wave of the mind. The *Atma* is above the mind. It is a witness of these changes. So the firm man is indifferent to them, like Suka in the court of Janaka.

He is fit for immortality :- Liberation is known as immortality. The world of name and form is dead matter, *Jada*. It is subject to birth and death. The state of *Atma* is deathless. So liberation is not something to be acquired fresh by man, but it is his essential nature. It is not something existing in the Heaven or sky. It is immortality here and now and for ever. He who attains this state does not come under the power of death. He has no need to take a body again.

Fitness for *Moksha* is not here confined to any race, religion or caste. The Lord simply says that the man of heroic endurance and equal-mindedness is alone fit for liberation. There is no distinction of caste or creed.

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : The state of happiness 'ananda' is *Moksha*.

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : He who is not drawn by sence-objects, who is firm and equal-minded in pain and pleasure attains it.

Question : *Who is a firm man (dhira) ?*

Answer : The man of equanimity in life and death, in the midst of all the tremendous agitations of life, is entitled to be called a firm man ('dhira').

The Lord defines what is real and what is unreal.

16. नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि द्रष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥

१६

na'sato vidyate bhavo na'bhavo vidyate satah ।

ubhayorapi dristo 'ntastvanayo stattvadarsibhih ॥

16

Meaning : असतः *asatah* : of the unreal, भावः *bhavah* : being, नविद्यते *na vidyate* : is not, सतः *satah* : of the real, अभावः *abhavah* :

non-being, नविद्यते *na vidyate* : is not, अनयोः *anayah* : of these, उभयोः *ubhayoh* : of the two, अपि *api* : also, अन्तः *antah* : the final truth, तु *tu* : indeed, तत्त्वदर्शिभिः *tatvadarsibhīḥ* : by knowers of the truth, दृष्टः *drishtah* : is seen.

Substance : The unreal has no being, the real has no non-being. The final truth of these two has been seen indeed by those who have experienced the essence of things.

Knowers of the truth :- This refers to persons who have directly seen the final Truth. For them, it is no longer speculation or argument or mere imagination, but direct perception. Such realised men understand clearly what is real and what is not real. The body and the world are subject to destruction, and so they are not the truth; They are non-existent. That which becomes non-existent cannot have a state of reality at any time. Even if it appears to be real, it is the reality of the mirage only. The *Atma* alone is real. At no time was it not. At no time will it cease to be. The man of knowledge knows the truth. Others who are ignorant confuse the two by ascribing reality to the unreal (body and the world) and denying the real, (the *Atman*). This confusion is the root cause of all sorrow and suffering for mankind.

To deny the existence of the real *Atma*, who alone is real, is the first error. To assert the existence of the unreal, body and world, is the second error. The first error is known as 'asambhavana' and the second error 'viparitabhavana'. By the first error, what is real vanishes and so the eternal *Atma* becomes something which is far away from us. By the second error what is palpably unreal is taken for the real and thus the ignorant man brings upon himself endless suffering and sorrow.

To end the sorrow, it is just enough for man to see the real as real, and the unreal as unreal. This is the way to peace and the removal of sorrow. The spiritual masters know the secret and hence they are filled with bliss. The ignorant man fails to see the Truth, and so he is caught in the whirlpool of 'samsara' and suffer endlessly.

In this verse, the Lord propounds the fundamental proposition of Vedanta - 'Brahma Satyam, Jagat midhya.'

Question : Who are the seers of truth :

Answer : Those who see that *Atma* alone is real and that the body and world are unreal, are the seers of Truth.

The nature of Sat :-

17. अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुर्मर्हति ॥

१७

Avinasi tu tadviddhi yena sarvamidam tatam ।

vinasa mavyayasya'sya na kaschit kartum arhati ॥

17

Meaning : सर्वमिदम् *sarvam idam* : all this (world), येन *yena* : by which, ततम् *tatam* : is pervaded, तत् तु *tat tu* : that (*Atma*) indeed, अविनाशि *avinasi* : indestructable, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, अव्ययस्यास्य *avyayasya* : of the imperishable (*Atma*), विनाशम् *vinasam* : destruction, कर्तुम् *kartum* : to do, नक्षित् *na kaschit* : any one, अर्हति *arhati* : is not able.

Substance : (O Arjuna !) Know that [*Atma*] by which this whole universe is pervaded, is indestructable. No one can cause the destruction of the imperishable.

Commentary : Since every thing - the moving and the non-moving objects of the world - is pervaded by the Self, which is present in the heart of every individual, one should consider every object as the manifestation of the self and be full of love and kindness for all. He should not commit any sin, since *Atma*, the Lord, is present every where. Since nothing can cause the destruction of *Atma*, one should contemplate and strive to live in *Atma* without any kind of doubt or fear.

Question : What is the nature of *Atma* ?

Answer : *Atma* pervades the whole universe. It is imperishable. No one can cause its destruction.

The real is further explained in contrast with the unreal.

18. अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥

१८

Antavanta ime deha nityasyo'uktah saririnah ।

anasino 'prameyasya tasmadyudhyasva bharata ॥

18

Meaning : नित्यस्य *nityasya* : of the real, अनाशिनः *anasinah* : of the indestructable, अप्रमेयस्य *aprameyasya* : of the incomprehensible, शरीरिणः *saririnah* : of the embodied, इमे *ime* : these, देहाः *dehah* : bodies, अन्तवन्तः *antavantah* : subject to end, उक्ताः *uktah* : are said, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, भारत *Bharata* : O Arjuna ! युध्यस्व *yudhyasva* : fight.

Substance : These bodies which belong to the real imperishable, unknowable *Atma* are said to be subject to end; therefore fight, O Arjuna !

Commentary : *Subject to end* :- These bodies are subject to death. You are not the body. You are *Atma*, the indweller, holding the body as a vehicle. So no one should depend on the perishable bodies. You should hold on to *Atma*, till you obtain the consciousness of your identity with *Atma*, and cut off the false identification with the body.

Of the embodied : *Atma* is not far away. He is in and pervading the body, but completely free and uncontaminated by all the modifications of the physical and subtle bodies. Man should constantly cultivate his identity with *Atma*, and reject the identity with the body ('dehatmabuddhi'), and remain as *Atma*.

Therefore fight : Since *Atma* is imperishable, and the bodies are subject to death now or hereafter, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to carry out his duty and fight the battle free from sorrow and fear. The Lord wants his disciple to act in the light of his knowledge of *Atma*, and the perishable nature of material things.

Question : *What is the nature of the body ?*

Answer : It is subject to dissolution and death.

Question : *What is Atma, the dweller of the body ?*

Answer : It is real, imperishable and unknowable by the senses and the mind.

Atma and its deathless nature is further explained :

19. य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
अभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९

*Ya enam vetti hantaram yaschai'nam manyate hatam ।
ubhau tau na vijanito na 'yam hanti na hanyate ॥ 19*

Meaning : यः *yah* : he who, एनम् *enam* : this (self), हन्तारम् *hantaram* : the slayer, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, यश्च *yas cha* : and he who, एनम् *enam* : this (self), हतम् *hatam* : is slain, मन्यते *manyate* : thinks, उभौतौ *ubhouta* : these two, न विजानीतः *navijaniti* : do not know, अयम् *ayam* : this (self), न हन्ति *na hanti* : does not slay, न हन्यते *na hanyanti* : nor is slain.

Substance : He who thinks that *Atma* slays, or he who thinks that *Atma* is slain, both these do not know the Truth. *Atma* does not slay, nor is slain.

(1) Since *Atma* does not slay, it follows that *Atma* does not perform any action. It is actionless. It does not do any thing, nor does it prompt any thing to do. The sense of action and the feeling of activity belong to *Buddhi* only, and do not touch *Atma* which is beyond *Buddhi*. He is an ignorant man who ascribes action to *Atma*.

(2) *Atma* is imperishable and so it cannot be slain. It is eternal and unchanging. Therefore, the spiritual aspirant should persistently contemplate that he is the immortal *Atma*, the witness of the physical and subtle bodies, the ever pure and perfect.

Question : *What is the nature of Aima ?*

Answer : It is free from all action. It does not slay, nor is it slain.

The Lord explains how Atma is immortal.

20. न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २०

*Na jayate mriyate va kadachin
nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah !
ajo nityah sasvato 'yam purano
na hanyate hanyamane sarire ॥*

20

Meaning : अयम् ayam : this (*Atma*), कदाचित् *kadachit* : at any time, न जायते *na jayate* : is not born, न म्रियते वा *na mriyate va* : or not dies, न भूत्वा *na bhutva* : having not been, भूयः *bhuyah* : (any) more, भविता *bhavita* : will be, वा न *va na* : or not, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अजः *ajah* : unborn, नित्यः *nityah* : eternal, शाश्वतः *sasvatah* : unchanging, पुराणः *puranah* : the ancient, शरीरे *sarire* : in body, हन्यमाने *hanyamane* : being killed, न हन्यते *na hanyate* : is not killed.

Substance : *Atma* is not born, nor does it ever die; after having been it does not cease to be, unborn, eternal, changeless, and ancient; it is not killed when the body is destroyed.

Commentary : In the Katha Upanishad, there is a verse similar to this. This shows clearly that the Gita is the essence of the Upanishads.

Though the body is destroyed, yet the all-pervading *Atma* never dies. It shows that *Atma* remains only as a witness to the modifications of the body like birth, youth and death, and of the mind in the form of pain and pleasure. The disturbance of the storm clouds does not affect the sun or the sky through which they pass. Therefore man should not identify himself with the foul perishable body and the ever-functioning mind, but should hold on to his identity with the Self. Supreme joy and courage are realised by the wise who are one with *Atma*. The fear of death is at once driven off by the knowledge that he is the immortal *Atma*.

Question : What is the nature of Atma ?

Answer : It has no birth or death. It is eternal, firm and immovable. It is the ancient one. It exists when the body dies.

The Lord explains why Atma does not slay anything nor is slain.

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

२१

*Vedavinasinam nityam ya ena majamavyayam ।
katham sa purushah partha kam ghatayati hanti kam ॥ 21*

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna !, यः yah : he who, एनम् enam : this (Atma), अजम् ajam : birthless, अव्ययम् avyayam : eternal, अविनाशिनम् avinasinam : imperishable, नित्यम् nityam : real, वेद veda : knows, सपुरुषः sa purushah : that man, कथम् katham : how, कम् kam : whom, घातयति ghatayati : causes to be slain, कम् kam : whom ? हन्ति hanti : kills.

Substance : O Arjuna ! He who knows that Atma is birthless, deathless, real and imperishable, whom can he slay or cause to be slain ?

Commentary : The idea is emphasised that since Atma is eternal the man who knows Him, cannot slay any one, nor even cause to slay by any means.

The relation between Atma and the body is explained through a simile.

22. वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२

*Vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya
navani grihnati naro 'parani!
tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany...
anpani samyati navani dehi ॥ 22*

Meaning : नरः *narah* : man, जीर्णानि *jirnani* : worn out, वासांसि *vasamsi* : clothes, विहाय *vihaya* : having thrown away, अपराणि *aparani* : others, नवानि *navani* : new, यथा *yatha* : as, गृह्णाति *grihnati* : takes, तथा *tatha* : so, देही *dehi* : the embodied, जीर्णानि *jirnani* : decayed, शरीराणि *sarirani* : bodies, विहाय *vihaya* : having cast away, अन्यानि *anyani* : others, नवानि *navani* : new, (bodies), संयाति *samyati* : takes.

Substance : Just as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and puts on new ones so also the Self throws away its worn out bodies and takes other fresh bodies.

Commentary : The Lord adopts the method of explaining his ideas by means of vivid similes. Such comparisons help to make the idea clear to common man. We have here a familiar simili to explain a very high vedantic doctrine that the body is just like a garment worn by man and just as these garments are changed from time to time, even so the *Jiva* goes on changing the physical body birth after birth.

No one grieves when he casts off dirty and torn clothes and puts on other fresh garments. No one grieves when the autumn-withered leaves fall off from the branches. There is always the knowledge that fresh leaves come up with the arrival of spring. The whole of Nature presents such alternate pictures of barenness and beauty according to the changes of seasons. The Lord points out that death is no more than the rejection of the old and decayed body. The *Jiva* drops off the decayed body by death and adopts a fresh one. So there is absolutely no cause for grief. But of course, to destroy the past *karma* by supreme *jnana*, and escape from the cycle of birth and death is the reward of the highest realisation.

Bodies :- The plural is used here to show that man has to pass through innumerable bodies, birth after birth, so long as he remains ignorant of his real nature.

Worn out :- We have to interpret this word as bodies whose *karmic* force is exhausted. We see that people die in child and youth, when the physical body is not supposed to be

old or worn out. In such cases the *karmic* force for that particular body is exhausted and it falls off accordingly.

The Vedantic doctrine is that the Self remains deathless, passing from one body to another, according to the force of *Karma* done with the body. These bodies (*upadhis*) continue to change but the real man, *Atma*, remains unaffected and changeless.

The five elemental forces cannot affect the Self, Atma.

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

२३

*Nainam chhindanti sastrani nainam dahati pavakah !
na chainam kledayantyapo na soshayati marutah* ॥ 23

Meaning : एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), शस्त्राणि *sastrani* : weapons, नछिन्दन्ति *na chhindanti* : cannot cut, पावकः *pavakah* : fire, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), नदहति *na dahati* : cannot burn, आपः च *apah cha* : and waters, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), नक्लेदयन्ति *na kledayanti* : cannot wet, मारुतः *marutah* : wind, नशोषयति *na soshayati* : cannot dry up.

Substance : Weapons cannot cut, fire cannot burn, water cannot wet, wind cannot dry up this *Atma*.

Commentary : The *Jiva* is the combination of three factors, body, mind and *Atma*. One is subtler than the other. The five material elements can affect the body only, because the body is composed of the five elements. They cannot affect the mind, the subtle body, because the subtle body is finer than the gross body. We see that gross matter can break up or destroy only a gross object. The sword can cut through a plant or human body, but it cannot cut the air or the ether. Finer and finer objects are not touched or affected by gross things, *Atma*, being the subtlest element nothing can touch or affect it in any way.

From the spiritual point of view, both the gross and subtle bodies are just false creations caused by ignorance (*avidya*), like the snake in the rope. So the superimposed mind

and body do not in any way interfere with or change *Atma*, which remains always the underlying substratum, like the rope on which the illusion of the snake is superimposed. The creations of the body and mind are like the water in a mirage. They appear to exist, but they have no existence in reality. What exists is *Atma* and *Atma* alone. Thus if the seeker contemplates the eternal and immortable Self, he acquires boundless courage and firmness.

The indestructability of Atma is again affirmed.

24. अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयं अक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुः अचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥

२४

Accchedho 'yamadahyo 'yamakledyo 'soshya eva cha ।

nityah sarvagatah sthanuh achalo 'yam sanatanah ॥ 24

Meaning : अयम् ayam : this *Atma*, अच्छेद्यः acchedyah : cannot be cut, अयम् ayam : this (*Atma*) अदाह्यः adahyah : cannot be burnt, अक्लेद्यः akledyah : cannot be wetted, अशोष्येवच्च asoshya evacha and also cannot be dried, अप्य् ayam : this (*Atma*), नित्यः nityah : eternal, सर्वगतः sarvagatah : all-pervading, स्थाणुः sthanuh : stab'e, अचलः Achalah : immovable, सनातनः sanatanah : ancient.

Substance : This *Atma* cannot be cut, cannot be burnt, cannot be wetted and also cannot be dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, firm, immovable and ancient.

Commentary : The five elements can only affect the body, because it is composed of the five elements. The Self is not a composition. If it is a composition, it should naturally decompose like the body and die. But the Self is deathless. It is One.

Eternal, all-pervading :- By these two epithets, *Atma* is declared to be beyond time and place. 'Nityah' mean eternal (i.e.) having existence in the past, present and future. 'Sarvagatah' means all-pervading i.e. pervading the whole universe entirely. Having entered time and space, the Self remains still above and beyond them. Every object in time is subject to time. There is no object which is not finally destroyed by time.

Worlds, stars, constellations, all things seen and known are swallowed up by time. And what is most wonderful is that the Self swallows up time and remains as Self. It is known as 'antakantaka'. It is eternal. It is eminence. It shines in all as existence, knowledge, and bliss. Such being the truth, how can any one commit sin against another. The noble ideal of universal love is the logical corollary from this truth that the Self alone exists every where, and in all beings. The seeker has thus to eliminate all sin and uncharitable thoughts and feelings against others by the contemplation of the supreme Self as the Lord of the Universe.

Because *Atma* is all-pervading and universal, there is no question of its moving from one place to another. And so, it is the immovable ('sthānu'). It is also the ancient (*sanatanah*). So '*Sanatana dharma*' would really mean '*Atma-dharma*'. Those who have reached the state of *Atma* are liberated men, *Jivan-muktahs* the living-free.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It cannot be cut or burnt or wetted, or dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, immovable and ancient.

Knowing that Atma is eternal, one overcomes sorrow.

25. अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयं अविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥

२५

Avyakto'yan achintyo'yan avikaryo'yanuchyate ।

tasmadevam viditvainam nanusochitu marhasi ॥

25

Meaning : अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अव्यक्तः *avyaktah* : un-knowable, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अचिन्त्यः *achintyah* : beyond thought, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अविकार्यः *avikaryah* : change-less, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), एवम् *evam* : so, विदित्वा *viditva* : knowing, अनुशोचितुं *anusochitam* : to lament, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : is not right for you.

Substance : This self is unknowable by the senses, unthinkable by the mind, and is not subject to any kind of change. Knowing this, you should not grieve.

Commentary : An object made up of the gross elements can be seen by the eye. *Atma* is not such an object. So the eye cannot see it. Since *Atma* is beyond thought, the mind is powerless to know it, *Atma* is the eternal substratum that exists after the mind vanishes. When the mind is purified, it merges in the *Atma* and disappears, and when the mind disappears the whole of the objective world disappears, and only *Atma* remains in its own state. How then can the mind understand *Atma*? Moreover every object in the world goes through six processes of change-birth, growth etc. *Atma* is not born, is not subject to death, is changeless and eternal. It is the eternal subject, the seer, It is the eternal witness of the universe. It is the very essence of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. It is the final cause of the Universe. Ultimately the Universe dissolves into *Atma* and it alone remains without a second.

You should not grieve : The root cause of all sorrow is man's ignorance of his real nature, and his identification with the body and mind. Thus sorrow takes possession of the embodied being. Sorrow ('*Soka*') is the direct consequence of ignorance ('*Moha*'). But when, by the study of the '*Sastras*' and by the grace of God and '*Guru*', man comes to know that he is not the body but the Self (*Atma*), all sorrow leaves at once. This is the solution to the whole spiritual problem. Man should know and establish himself firmly in the Self. All spiritual practices are intended to pave the way for this blissful consummation. So long as there is the slightest separation between *Atma* and the individual being, there is scope for fear and sorrow to enter one way or the other. But when the union is complete, then is only bliss and blessedness all around. Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to know the Truth and transcend all sorrow and delusion. From this, we understand that the realisation of the Self is the only way to become free from the twin evils of ignorance and sorrow ('*Moha and Soka*'). Knowledge alone is the pure light to dispel the darkness of *samsara*.

Question : *What further is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It cannot be seen by the senses, cannot be understood by the mind, is not subject to any kind of change.

Question : *What is the way to transcend sorrow ?*

Answer : To know that he is *Atma* and not the body and mind, is the way to transcend sorrow.

Even from the limited human point of view, one should not grieve.

26. अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

२६

*Atha chainam nityajatam nityam va manyase mritam ।
tatha'pi tvam mahabaho naivam sochitu marhasi ॥ 26*

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : mighty-armed Arjuna !, अथच *atha cha* : even if, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), नित्यजातम् वा *nityajatam va* : constantly born or, नित्यं *nityam* : constantly, मृतम् *mritam* : dead, मन्यसे *manyase* : (thou) thinkest, तथापि *tathapi* : even then, एवम् *evam* : thus, शोचितुम् *sochitum* : to grieve, त्वम् *tvam* : you, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : should not.

Substance : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! Even if you think that the Self is constantly born and constantly dies, you should not grieve in this way.

Commentary :- *Mighty-armed* : The Lord addresses Arjuna as 'mighty-armed'. Arjuna was endowed with great physical strength and energy. But it was of no avail to him in that perplexity-situation. His physical strength could not help him in his mental confusion and sorrow. So the Lord suggests that he should acquire spiritual light and knowledge, besides physical strength and energy.'

The Lord argues out the point from the lower level of ordinary human-understanding, in order to comfort Arjuna and lift him up to the higher level of spiritual insight. Even if the

Self of man is constantly born and constantly dies, there is no cause for grief; for, whatever dies takes a fresh birth again. The ordinary man whose insight does not go deep enough to comprehend the eternal *Atma*, sees that the body dies. When it dies, it should have again a birth. It is the process of endless repetition. So, why grieve when the bodies are destroyed? The Lord knows that mere theoretical affirmation of the immortality of *Atma* may not be immediately understood by his disciple. So he gives a practical reason which the common man can easily understand.

But the practical arguments are mere assumptions of the limited intellect only. Even if it is taken that *Atma*, like the body, is subject to birth and death and rebirth, there is no need to grieve for the destruction of the body. It follows that it is utter madness to grieve for *Atma* which is real, deathless and eternal.

27. जातस्य हि धृवो मृत्युः धृवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहायेऽथे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

२७

*Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh dhruvam janma mritasya cha!
tasmatpariharye 'rthe na tvam sochitumarhasi* ॥ 27

Meaning : जातस्य *jatasya* : the born, हि *hi* : for, मृत्युः *mri-tyuh* : death, धृवः *dhruvah* : certain, मृतस्य *mritasya* : of the dead, जन्म च *janma cha* : and birth, धृवम् *dhruvam* : certain, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, अपरिहायेऽथे *apariharyerthe* : in inevitable matter, त्वम् *tvam* : you, शोचितुम् *sochitum* : to grieve, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : must not.

Substance : For, certain is death for the born, and certain is birth for the dead, and therefore you should not grieve about this inevitable course.

Commentary : The Lord continues the argument. For that which is born, there is death, and for that which dies there is birth. This is the unalterable law for the body and all material things. The Self (*Atma*) as declared above, is not the body and is not the composition of material elements, and so it has neither birth nor death. So long as man remains in a

state of ignorance and identifies with the body, he inevitably passes through the cycle of birth and death. The same man, when he realises his identity with the Self, the procession of birth and death stops for him. The Lord here speaks of the common man who has not understood the secret of his real nature. The purpose of the Lord is to rouse Arjuna from the slough of despondency into which he sank in that hour of test and trial. So He employs every argument both of spiritual Truth and common-understanding with equal force and conviction. But the ultimate spiritual law remains unchanged by the mundane considerations brought forward to drive home a particular aspect of the Truth.

28. अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भास्त ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥

२८

*Avyaktadeeni bhutani vyakta madhyani bharata ।
avyaktanidhananyeva tara ka paridevana ॥*

28

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : Arjuna !, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, अव्यक्तादीनि *avyaktadeeni* : (are of) unknown origin, व्यक्तमध्यानि *vyaktamadhyani* : known middle, अव्यक्तनिधनानि *avyaktanidhanani* : of unknown end, एव *eva* : only, तत्र *tatra* : in that case, परिदेवना *paridevana* : lamentation, का *ka* : why.

Substance : O Arjuna ! All these beings are of unknown origin, known middle, and of unknown end. Why then lament for it ?

Commentary : This is a true estimate of all beings in the universe. Their state before their birth is not known. They appear to exist for a period after they are born. And again, they disappear after death. One does not see them before birth and after death. Why men feel so much when they pass away ?

People have no connection with the body before it is born. And they cease all contact with the body after death. Only for a brief interval in the middle period, there is a kind of link. What has not existed in the beginning and what does not exist after the end, though it appears in between the two points, cannot be real. It is non-existence.

The whole universe is thus an illusion. This is the drum-beat of Vedanta.

The dream world did not exist before the dream. It does not exist after one wakes up from the dream. It exists only while the dream lasts. He knows it to be a tremendous illusion after he wakes up. In the same way, the whole universe and all the pleasures and pains that one experiences, are all illusions for the man who has awakened from the dream. They are like the water in the mirage, which to the eye appears clear and beautiful, and which when one investigates disappears at once. Why then all this fear and sorrow, weeping and wailing when the whole thing is an illusion ?

In this manner, the Lord argues out the issue, and the succession of thoughts so far may be summarised thus.

(1) *Atma* is eternal. All living beings, the so called relations and friends are different manifestations of the same indestructible *Atma*, and so Arjuna should not grieve for them.

(2) *Atma* is unchanging; one wears and throws away different bodies, as old clothes are discarded and new garments are worn.

(3) Even if it is accepted for the sake of argument, that *Atma* itself is born and dies again and again, Arjuna should not grieve for the dead, because they should take birth again.

(4) These bodies did not exist before birth, and so do not exist after death. They appear in between for a brief interval of time only. Therefore they are unreal, and illusory. Why then grieve for them ?

The Lord now declares that the realisation of Atma is a rare achievement for human beings.

29. आश्र्वयवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनं आश्र्वयवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्र्वयवच्चनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९

*Ascharyayatpasyati kaschidenam
ascharyavadvadati tathaiya chanyah !*

*ascharyavacchainam anyah srunoti
srutya'pyenam veda na chaiva kaschit* ॥ 29

Meaning : कश्चित् *kaschit* : some one, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), आश्र्वयत् *ascharyavat* : as a surprise, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, तथैव *tathaiya* : and also, अन्यः च *anyah cha* : and another, आश्चर्वयत् *ascharyavat* : as a wonder, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), वदति *vadati* : speaks, अन्यः च *anyah cha* : and another, एनम् *enam* : this (Self). आश्र्वयत् *ascharyavat* : as a wonder, श्रुणोति *srunoti* : hears, श्रुत्वापि *srutvapi* : though hearing, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), कश्चित् च *kaschit cha* : and any one, वेद न एव *Veda na eva* : also knows not.

Substance : One sees this (Self) as a wonder, another speaks of this (Self) as a wonder, another hears of this (Self) as a wonder, yet, having heard, none understands this (Self) at all.

Commentary : The spiritual science does not end with mere theory. It is a practical experience. Only by experience does a man know the Self and understand what it is and how it functions in the practical world. But, for such direct experience, much good should have accumulated in the past, the mind should have been purified and freed from all bad tendencies. Therefore only the man who has long practised the control of the senses, ('*Sama*' and '*Dama*'), and who has gone through many forms of spiritual discipline, is qualified to enter the domain of the Self. Others, though they enquire after the truth, are far away from understanding and realising it. When the mirror is clear, the image is reflected clearly in it. A pure cloth can easily be dyed with any colour. The seed sown in a watered ground soon sprouts into a plant. Even so, when the mind is pure, the Self is reflected in it clearly. But such men of pure mind are rare. So spiritual experience is a rare achievement for any human being. The same idea is expressed in the Katha Upanishad.

The man of heroic courage and determination desiring immortality, turns the out-going senses and mind inwards, and sees the supreme Self.

The Self is not an object to be seen or spoken or heard of. It is beyond the senses and mind. It is the subtlest of the subtle. It is hidden in the inmost recesses of the heart. By selfless action, devotion, dispassion, mediation and such other methods, the heart should first be purified, and the enquiry for the Self should be continued for a long time before the Self is directly perceived. The Lord does not say that no one knows Him. He means only that such men are rare.

Since the Self is entirely different from any object seen or known, it is looked upon as a wonder.

The verse may also mean that the speaker, the hearer, and the knower of the Supreme Being are all men of wonder.

The Lord concludes this part of the argument by restating the final position that Atma is indestructible, and so there is no reason to grieve.

30. देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

३०

Dehi nityamavadyo'yam dehe sarvasya bharata ।

tasmat sarvani bhutani na tvam sochitumarhasi ॥

30

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna !, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all beings, देहे *dehi* : in the body, अयम् देही *ayam dehi* : this indwelling Self, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, अवध्यः *avadhyah* : not slain, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, सर्वाणि *sarvani* : (for) all, भूतानि *bhutani* : creation, त्वम् *tvam* : you, शोचितुम् *sochitum* : to grieve, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : should not.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The Self existing in the body of all beings is never slain. So it is not right for you to grieve for any creature.

Commentary : Though the body is slain, the indwelling *Atma* is not slain. This is true in the case of all creatures. It follows that *Atma* dwells in the body, as a witness, unaffected by the modifications of the body.

Always :- The immortality of *Atma* applies to all time, past, present and future.

The body may belong to any man, beast, or plant or any thing in the universe. The indwelling *Atma* is the same everywhere. When the body suffers and dies, the ignorant man thinks that he is suffering and dying, and so weeps and wails for the destruction of the body. The Lord here states categorically that the real man is no other than *Atma*, and so whatever might happen to the body, he is not at all affected by it, even as the sky is not affected by the passage of clouds over it. So where is the cause for sorrow ? Sorrow comes only by the false identification of the Self with the body. To think that you are the body is the very source, the very cause of all sorrow and suffering. It is immediately removed when you come to know that you are *Atma*. So the seeker should constantly contemplate and realise his oneness with the immortal and ever-blessed Self.

Bharata : Arjuna is addressed as '*Bharata*' (i. e.) 'Lover of Light'. It is in the light of the Self that all things shine, all things are seen and known. Whatever light is in the world, all that belongs to *Atma*, and not to insentient matter. He who loves this light is '*Bharata*'.

Question : *Explain the nature of the body and the Atma ?*

Answer : The body dies. *Atma* is imperishable and eternal.

Question : *What is the way to remove sorrow ?*

Answer : Not to identify oneself with the body, but realise his oneness with the *Atma*, is the way to remove all sorrow for ever.

Thus the Lord enunciated the eternal nature of Atma, and from this verse onwards, he stresses the duty of Arjuna to fight even according to 'Kshatriya Dharma'.

31. स्वधर्मपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्वि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यतक्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥

३१

*Svadharman api cha'�ekshya
na vikampitu marhasi ।*

*Dharmyaddhi yuddhacchreyo 'nyat
kshatriyasya na vidyate ॥*

31

Meaning : च *cha* : moreover, स्वधर्मम् *svadharma* : one's own duty, अवेक्ष्य *avekshya* *api* : considering, विकम्पितुम् *vikampitum* : waver, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : (you) should not, क्षत्रियस्य *Kshatriyasya* : for a Kshatriya, धर्म्यात् *dharmat* : than righteous, युद्धात् *yuddhat* : war, अन्यत् *anyat* : other, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good, नविष्टे हि *na vidyate hi* : is not.

Substance : And moreover, considering your own duty, you should not waver, for, there is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous war.

Commentary : We understand from this verse how much the Lord loves the performance of one's own *Dharma*. One should not waver in discharging his duty. This is the Lord's command. So long as the body lasts, every being has to do some work or other. This is the inescapable law of our nature. Action being inevitable in the material world, it is necessary for man to do some selfless work, according to his duty, which leads to great good on the physical plane and elsewhere. More so, selfless work purifies the mind and leads ultimately to liberation. It is the duty of a Kshatriya to fight a righteous war. The Lord emphasizes the righteousness of the undertaking. Otherwise, it would be an unrighteous war resulting only in hatred, sorrow, and death, and no merit comes to any one.

32. यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थं लभन्ते युद्धमीदशम् ॥

३२

*Yadricchaya cho'papannam svargadvaram apavritam ।
sukhinah kshatriyah partha labhante yuddhamidrisam ॥ 32*

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna !, यदृच्छया *yadricchaya* : and of itself, उपपन्नम् *upapannam* : come, अपावृतम् *apavritam* : opened, स्वर्गद्वारम् च *svargadvaram cha* : and the gates of Heaven, ईदशम् *idrisam* : such, युद्धम् *yuddham* : war, क्षत्रियाः *Kshatriyah* : Kshatriyas, लभन्ते *labhante* : get, सुखिनः *sukhinah* : happy.

Substance : For a Kshatriya, a righteous war of this type that has come of itself, is the open gateway to Heaven, and such warriors who are called upon to fight a righteous war are happy indeed.

Commentary : Arjuna is here addressed as Partha, the son of Pritha (Kunti). This reminds us of the message that the mother sent to her son on the eve of the battle through Lord Krishna.

"O Krishna! Tell Arjuna and the battle-minded Bhima that the time has come to justify why a Kshatriya mother desires to have sons."

War against external enemies is the duty prescribed for the Kshatriya. But the internal conflict with bad instincts and impulses, like lust, greed and hate, is taking place in the heart of every human being. The Kshatriya who fights a righteous war gains a kingdom or Heaven. The man who defeats the internal enemies attains *Moksha*, liberation (*Moksha dvaram apavrutam*). The true warrior is always eager to undertake a righteous war. The spiritual seeker is always ready and alert to fight ignorance in whatever form it may raise its head.

33. अथ चेत्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्ति च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

३३

*Atha chettvam imam dharmyam
samgramam na karishyasi ।
tatah svadharman kirtim cha
hitva papam avapsyasi ॥*

33

Meaning : अथ *atha* : but, त्वम् *tvam* : you, इमम् *imam* : this, धर्म्यम् *dharma* : righteous, संग्रामम् *sangramam* : war, न करिष्यसि चेत् *na karishyasi chet* : if do not (fight), ततः *tatah* : then, स्वधर्मम् *svadharman* : your duty, कीर्तिम् च *kirtim cha* : fame, हित्वा *hitva* : having abandoned, पापम् *papam* : sin, अवाप्स्यसि *avapsyasi* : will incur.

Substance : But if you do not fight this righteous war, you would incur sin by abandoning your own duty, name and fame.

34. अकीर्तिंचापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम्
संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिः मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥

३४

*Akirtim cha 'pi bhutani kathayishanti te 'vyayam |
sambhavitasya cha 'kirithrmaranad atirichyate ||*

34

Meaning : अपिच apicha : and also, भूतानि *bhutani* : all beings, ते *te* : your, अव्ययाम् *avyayam* : everlasting, अकीर्तिम् *akirtim* : dishonour, कथयिष्यन्ति *kathayishyanti* : speak of, संभावितस्य *sambhavitasya* : to a renounced man, अकीर्तिः *akirtih* : disgrace, मरणात् च *maranat cha* : than death, अतिरिच्यते *atirichyate* : is greater.

Substance : And also, these people will speak of your everlasting dishonour, and to one who is honoured, disgrace is worse than death.

Commentary : Disgrace comes when a man neglects his duty or when he does an unrighteous deed. The Lord points out that disgrace is worse than death, for death destroys the body, but disgrace stains the fair name of a man for generations.

There is an inner meaning also. The individual human being is *Atma*, the imperishable ever-glorious Self. But man foolishly identifies himself with the foul small cage of flesh and suffers disgrace voluntarily, which no honourable man can contemplate or ensure. It is man's highest duty to live in and feel the glory of *Atma*, and his identity with the whole universe.

35. भयाद्रानादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥

३५

*Bhayadranaduparatam mamsyante tvam maharathah |
yesham cha tvam bahumato bhutva yasyasi laghayam ||* 35

Meaning : च *cha* : and, येषाम् *yesham* : among whom, त्वम् *tvam* : you, बहुमतः *bahumatah* : much thought of, भूत्वा *bhutva* : having been, लाघवम् *laghayam* littleness (ridicule and contempt), यास्यसि *yasyasi* : will receive, महारथाः *maharathah* : the great heroes, त्वाम् *tvam* : you, रणात् *ranat* : from the battle, भयात्

The Lord propounds the law of work in the world, free from sin

38. सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लभालभौ जयजयौ ॥

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

३८

Sukha duhkhe same kritva labhalabhou jayajayau ।

tato yuddhaya yujyasva nai'vam papam avapsyasi ॥ 38

Meaning : सुखदुःखे *sukhadukhae* : in pleasure and pain, लभालभौ *labhalabhou* : gain and loss, जयजयौ *jayajayau* : victory and defeat, समेकृत्वा *same kritva* : having made equal, ततः *tatah* : then, युद्धाय *yuddhaya* : for battle, युज्यस्व *yujyasva* : engage thou, एवम् *evam* : thus, पापम् *papam* : sin, न अवाप्स्यसि *na avapsyasi* : (you) shall not incur.

Substance : Having an equal mind in pain and pleasure, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage in battle and thereby you will not incur sin.

Commentary : In this verse, the Lord teaches the secret of *Karma Yoga*. Though engaged in various types of activity, a man can live without any taint of sin. That secret lies in the balance of mind, equanimity and detachment. So should man work without losing his equanimity in the vicissitudes of natural change. Success unbalances the mind by a wave of elation, and defeat by a wave of depression.

This is what the common man experiences in the course of his life's activity. The Gita propounds equanimity, as the only cure for these mental waves carrying man from one extreme to another. And these mental disturbances are caused by attachment to the enjoyments of life. The seeker should know that he has nothing to gain or lose by victory or defeat in his endeavours. Thus he would be free from the disturbing emotions of pride, egotism and elation in success, self-pity in sorrow and despair in failure. When the mind is kept in a state of equanimity, *Atma* is reflected clearly. How can such a man incur sin? Some people think that the *yoga* of work is a lower path, and that work binds man to the wheel of birth and death.

The Lord denies it. It is not work that binds, but the attachment to the fruits of work that binds. If a man attaches himself to the fruits of work, then he is bound and he has to take a number of births to enjoy or suffer the effect of his works. On the other hand, if the aspirant knows that he has nothing to seek for in the universe, that he is *Atma*, then he is indifferent to the results of his work. He is equal-minded. This is the secret of *Karma Yoga*.

Then engage in battle : From this we understand that before plunging into action, one should know and practice the secret of work. The Lord's command is 'then fight' (i. e.) after attaining equanimity of mind. Otherwise action immediately binds him to the wheel of birth and death. The ups and downs of worldly life and its reactions will throw the man off the gear into a tormented state of pain and suffering. Perfect knowledge should illumine work. Then work becomes worship. Therefore the Lord first teaches Arjuna in the second discourse (*Sankhya Yoga*) the highest doctrine of *Vedanta* (i. e.), the indivisibility of the personal man with *Paramatma*, the immortality of the Self, and then, comes down to teach the method of work.

Question : *How should man work ?*

Answer : By being firmly established in equanimity.

Question : *What is the way of work without being tarnished with sin ?*

Answer : Detachment.

Having spoken of Sankhya Yoga the Lord now explains the rudiment of Karma Yoga.

39. एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धियोगे त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥

३९

*Esha te 'bhihita samkhye
buddhiryoge tvimam sruṇu ।
buddhya yukto yaya partha
ka-mabandham prakasyasti ॥*

39

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna !, संख्ये sankhye : in Sankhya Yoga, एषा esha : this, बुद्धिः buddhiḥ : knowledge, ते te : to you, अभिहिता abhihitā : is declared, ययाबुद्ध्या yaya buddhyā : with what knowledge, युक्तः yuktah : associated, कर्मबन्धम् karma-bandham : bondage of karma, प्रहास्यसि prahasyasi : shall cast off, तम् (tam : that Yoga), योगे yoge : in the Karma Yoga, तु tu : in deed, इमम् imam : this knowledge to be taught, शृणु srinu : hear.

Substance : O Arjuna ! So far the knowledge of *Sankhya Yoga* about *Atma* is declared. Now hear the knowledge of *Karma Yoga*, knowing which you shall cast off the bondage of work.

Commentary : To work and yet to be free from the effects of work requires subtle understanding of the secret of work. Such understanding is termed *buddhi*. Holding this knowledge man is not caught in the knowledge of *Karma*. Such work, instead of binding man, becomes a means to his liberation. The Lord now explains the secret of *Karma Yoga* for the benefit of all mankind. Knowing the secret of *Karma Yoga* every individual can transcend the reactions of his own *Karma*, and reach the ultimate goal of liberation.

The Lord describes the power of Karma Yoga.

40. नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥

४०

*Neha'bhidikramanaso 'sti pratyavayayo na vidyate ।
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat ॥ 40*

Meaning : इह iha : in Karma Yoga (which leads to *Moksha*), अभिक्रमनाशः abhikramanasah : loss of effort, नास्ति na asti : is not, प्रत्यवायः pratyavayah : adverse effects, नविद्यते na vidyate : is not, अस्य धर्मस्य asya dharmasya : of this principle (of Karma Yoga), स्वल्पमपि svalpamapi : even a little, महतः mahataḥ : from great, भयात् bhayat : fear, त्रायते trayate : protects.

Substance : In this *Karma Yoga*, there is no loss of effort. Even if it is stopped in the middle, no taint or adverse effect is produced. Even a little practice of this *Yoga* protects man from great fear.

Commentary : This *Karma Yoga*, performed with discrimination, is a powerful spiritual force. It never goes to waste. When once it is started, good results flow from whatever is done in this *Yoga*. There is no harm or adverse effect even if it is stopped in the middle. For instance, when we plant a seed in the soil, we should water the soil constantly. Otherwise the seed is destroyed. Such is not the case with this *Yoga*. Whatever is done produces its own good results in proper measure and at the proper time. Nothing is lost and no effort is wasted.

Protects from great fear :- Even a little of this *Sadhana* protects man from great fear. And what is the great fear of man in this world? Death. The cycle of birth and death constitutes *Samsara*. By the practice of this *Yoga*, man transcends this awful fear.

A small spark of fire is capable of spreading and burning up a whole forest; A small ship is capable of taking us over the big ocean. Even so, even a little practice of the *Karma Yoga* protects man from the great ills of life. The seeker need not feel discouraged at all. Though he cannot attain to the state of perfection all at once, he should continue this practice, little by little, without intermission. Even it is a piece of worship, or a small *mantra* – have faith in it and go on doing it as best as you can. This will enable you to cross the ocean of *samsara*. A bit of medicine, taken with proper diet, helps a man to overcome a fearful disease.

This declaration is the most encouraging assurance of the Lord to all mankind. Generally the seekers are discouraged by thinking of the obstacles on the path of spiritual life “How can I swim across this mighty inscrutable ocean of *samsara*? How can I transcend this limitless darkness of ignorance? Alas! I am not a *Rishi*. I cannot perform painful *Tapas*. I have no steadiness of mind. How can I be saved?” Such is the usual train of thought for the majority of the seekers. Such discouraging

thoughts are the real obstruction to progress. So the Lord assures all that whatever little they do will yield the best results and they can work wonders by their faith. This is the Lord's promise. This is the Lord's hope for mankind.

Question : *Explain the point of Karma Yoga.*

Answer : (1) Whatever is done in this *Yoga* never goes to waste.

(2) There is no adverse effect, even if it is stopped in the middle.

(3) A little of this practice saves man from great fear.

Question : *What is the way to escape the fear of Samsara?*

Answer : To act according to the law of *Karma Yoga* with discrimination is the way.

The Lord points out the difference between the yogis' singleness of mind, and the distracted mind of the ordinary man.

41. व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥

४१

Vyavasayatmika buddhirekeha kurunandana ।

bahusakha hyanantascha buddhoyo 'vyavasayinam ॥ 41

Meaning : कुरुनन्दन *kurunandana* : O Arjuna !, इह *iha* : in the practice of this *yoga*, व्यवसायात्मिका *vyavasayatmika* : one-pointed, बुद्धि : *buddhih* : determination, एका *eka* : single, अव्यवसायिनां *avyavasayinam* : of the irresolute, बुद्धयः *buddhayah* : thoughts, बहुशाखा : *bahusakha* : many branched, अनन्ताः हि *anan-tah hi* : endless, indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There is only one faith and thought for those who practise this *Karma Yoga*. The minds of others are divided into various branches, and their thoughts and speculations are endless.

Commentary : Faith in *Atma* (God) is only one concentrated thought. It seeks for nothing else. It does not disperse

itself and spread out like the branches of a tree. Though the man is engaged in a hundred tasks, yet the main affirmation of the mind is only one (i. e.) the universality of the Supreme Self. So in all that he does, his mind is firmly fixed in *Atma*. He sees the same *Atma*, in all that he does. This is faith. He surrenders the fruits of his work to God. He has no desire to enjoy any thing of the fruits of his work. Those who have not cultivated this single-minded faith, attach their minds to various objects of the world, enjoy them in various ways, and go on hopping from one thing to another just as birds hop from one branch to another in search of leaf or fruit. They have no concentration of mind because they have no faith.

The different rays of the sun passing through a concave lense become one, and the heat produced by it is capable of burning up anything. When the rays are separate, they have no such power. In the same way, when the mind becomes one-pointed, it acquires a tremendous power. Therefore it is necessary to collect one's mind and bring it to focal point. This is possible only when man is not drawn by the various objects of the world, which he desires to possess and enjoy. So long as man desires worldly objects, there is no rest or peace for him. The only way to acquire such peace is the faith that *Atma* alone is the real, and everything else mere shadow. Having faith in this spiritual truth, the seeker should practice *Karma Yoga*.

The Lord describes the nature of distracted mind.

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|-----|---|----|
| 42. | यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः ॥ | ४२ |
| 43. | कामात्मानः स्वर्गपराः जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ | ४३ |
| 44. | भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ | ४४ |

*Yam imam pushpitam vacham pravadantyavipaschitah !
vedavadaratah partha na'nyadasti' ti vadinhah ||* 42

*Kamatmanah svarga parah janma karma phala pradam !
kriya visesha bahulam bhogaisvarya gatim prati* ॥ 43

*Bhogaisvarya prasaktanam taya 'pahritachetasam !
vyavasayatmika buddhih samadhau na vidhiyate* ॥ 44

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna !, वेदवादरत्ताः *vedavadarataḥ* : those who desire to enjoy the fruits of Vedic rituals, नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः *nanyadastiti vadinaḥ* : who do not believe in any thing higher than Heaven and its pleasures, कामात्मानः *kamātmanah* : mind filled with desiers, स्वर्गपराः *svarga parah* : desirous of enjoyments in heaven, अविपश्चितः *avipashchitah* : ignorant men, जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् *janmakarmaphalapradam* : leading to births as the result of their works, भोगैश्चर्यगतिप्रति *bhogaisvaryagatimprati* : to obtain enjoyment and prosperity, क्रियाविशेषबहुलां *kriyavise-shabahulam* : having innumerable rights and rituals, पुष्पिताम् *pushpitam* : appearing attractive like flowers but bearing no fruit, याम् इमाम् *yam imam* : who this, वाचम् *vacham* : word, प्रवदन्ति *pravadanti* : utter, तया *taya* : by that, अपहृतचेतसाम् *apahritachetasam* : mind drawn away, भोगैश्चर्यप्रसक्तानाम् *bhogaisvarya prasakta-nam* : people desirous of enjoyment and prosperity, व्यवसायात्मिकाबुद्धिः *vyavasayatmika buddhiḥ* : determinate reason, समाधौ *sama-dhau* : in the divine communion, न विधीयते *na vidhiyate* : is not fixed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The unwise utter flowery speech, taking pleasure in the laudatory words of the Vedas, and say that there is nothing else but pleasures and enjoyments either here or in Heaven.

They are full of desire, with heaven as their highest goal, leading to new births as the effect of their own *Karma*, and they engage themselves in a multiplicity of specific works for the purpose of acquiring enjoyments and prosperity.

The mind of such men who are drawn away by attachment to pleasure and wealth, cannot be concentrated to remain fixed in the ecstasy of divine contemplation.

Commentary : Flowery speech :— Some flowers appear attractive to the eye, but they do not bear fruit, and as such, they are finally useless. The works prepared with a desire do not bear the fruit of *Moksha*, which should be the aim of all spiritual seekers.

Utter :— This word, is used to show that these men loudly proclaim that enjoyment in heaven is the highest aim of man. They are men of little knowledge. Naturally, empty vessels make much noise.

Ignorant men :— These are unwise men. Those who perform rites and rituals for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of heaven are spoken of as unwise men. So, however learned and versed in the ‘Vedas’ a person may be, he is still an unwise man because he is not able to know the truth and fix his mind on the Supreme Reality. The verse is intended to open the eyes of such persons who have learnt much but whose mind dwells on the lower levels of desires, pleasures and enjoyments. The Lord condemns at every step sense-pleasures either here or in heaven.

Those who take pleasure in the laudatory words of the Vedas :— In the *Vedas* the first part is *Karma kanda* which deals with rites and rituals for the fulfilment of earthly or heavenly pleasures. “If you perform this ceremony or this sacrifice, you will get this reward”. This part of the *Vedas* is all-absorbing to wordly men. They cannot think of any thing higher. So they declare that *Karma kanda* alone is the highest among the *Vedas*. There are three parts in the *Vedas* — (1) *Karma kanda* (2) *Upasana kanda*, (3) *Jnana kanda*. The unwise cling to the first part, act neglecting the other two which are gradually of higher and higher value. The teacher of the *Gita* declares that this is a wrong attitude, because it is not conducive to spiritual enlightenment.

Minds filled with desires :— Those whose minds are filled with desires are *kamatmanah*. They are slaves to a hundred desires, for wife and children, for name and fame, for power and position. Whether these are fulfilled or unfulfilled, their minds are restless. How can divinity find a place in the hearts

of such people. Desire (*Kama*) leads to Anger (*Krodha*) when frustrated. Only when the heart is purified of all these foul and filthy stuff, will God reveal himself in the sanctuary of the human heart.

Desirous of enjoyments in Heaven : Those who consider heaven (*svarga*) as their highest goal are *svargaparah*. The spiritual seeker sets no value on *svarga* and all that it offers by way of pleasures and enjoyments. On the other hand, those who discard them as worthless stuff are alone qualified to attain freedom and perfection. Of course, the luxurics of Heaven may be more beautiful and captivating than what we find here. But they are subject to the same laws as we find here. They are subject to death and dissolution. They end in time, Heavenly pleasures are worthless, from the point of view of spiritual realisation also. It is foolish to think that heaven is the highest goal of mankind. The highest goal for man is to know and realise the Eternal Truth. Every thing that comes short of it is of no consequence to the spiritual aspirant. Heaven is not the goal, for, when the (*Punya*) good done by man is exhausted, down he falls from heaven to the earth.

So there is nothing that should draw mankind towards the pleasures of Heaven. They are also intended to satisfy the animal instincts of man, like food and sex. Of what use are they for the aspirants? An understanding of earthly pleasures will help us to know what heavenly enjoyments would be like, and how shortlived and wretched they are to satisfy man. It is the height of folly to spend a whole life-time merely for the sake of attaining Heaven by performing elaborate sacrifices, at great cost and labour. There the main aim of spiritual realisation was forgotten. Therefore the Lord directly attacks heaven-seeking ritual-ridden religious men, and teaches them that they are slaves to their own desires, and with such distracted minds, they can never hope to remain fixed in the ecstatic contemplation of the Self which alone confers immortality and eternal bliss.

Leading to births as the result of their works :- The present birth is the result of past work (*karma*) and the work one

does now leads on to the next birth. So, endless the cycle goes on. This is *samsara*. The aspirant hopes to reach a state when the cycle stops forever and he attains to a condition of supreme blessedness from which there is no fall. To attain this state, the Lord prescribes the law of *nishkama karma* as the rule of conduct in this world.

Having innumerable rituals to obtain enjoyment :- The *Karma kanda* in the 'Vedas' mentions various rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices, which yield different enjoyments here and in Heaven. Men who are bound by desires are simply drowned in the ocean of *karma kanda*. They cannot come out of it. One desire leads to another, and at no time will these desires end, for they are almost infinite. This is what we find in man's limited experience or wordly life. So the spiritual aspirant should cut at the root of desires and burn it up into cinders. He has nothing to gain from *karma kanda*. The aim is to root out desire from the heart, and to become pure, so that the sanctified heart is at once filled with the blessedness of the Lord. Then alone is man fully satisfied. There is nothing more for him to seek for Eternal Contentment; Eternal renunciation comes to such a man.

Drawn away by that : Almost the whole of mankind with the exception of rare personalities, are absorbed in the task of getting some reward or enjoyment from their wordly activities. The spiritual seeker should keep away from such men. He should associate himself with men of renunciation, purity and knowledge.

Cannot be concentrated in Divine Contemplation :- Such men whose minds are disturbed by desire cannot get one-pointed concentration on the Eternal. Desires crop up and draw the mind off its balance. Pleasures and pains upset the mind constantly, like a lake when a storm blows over it. It is agitated, waves rise and fall and the whole lake to its very bottom is in a state of commotion. Such will be the mind of a man who is obsessed with thoughts of worldly enjoyment. He can never hope to get the necessary serenity and concentration to fix the mind on that which is the ever-blessed Reality. So 'give up desires' is the Lord's command.

The Lord exhorts Arjuna to give up desires and think of the Supreme Reality.

45. त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निश्चैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो नियोगक्षेमः आत्मवान् ॥

४५

Traigunya vishaya veda nistraigunyo bhava'rjuna!

nirdvandvo nitya satyastho niryogakshema atmayan ॥ 45

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna !, वेदा: *Vedah* : the Vedas (*Karma kanda*), त्रैगुण्यविषयाः *traigunyavishayah* : deal with things pertaining to the three *gunas*, त्वम् *tvam* : you, निश्चैगुण्यः *nistraigunyah* : one who has given up three *gunas* or the three desires arising from them, निर्द्वन्द्वः *nirdvandah* : having no pains of opposites like pleasure and pain, नित्यसत्त्वस्थः *nityasatvasthah* : taking refuge in the pure *satvic* state, नियोगक्षेमः *niryogakshemah* : having nothing to gain or retain in the world, आत्मवान् *atmanam* : established in *Atma*, भव *bhava* : become.

Substance : The first part of the *Vedas* (*Karma kanda*) deal with material things pertaining to the three *gunas*. One should transcend the three *gunas*, become free from the operation of the pains of opposites, take refuge in the pure *satvic* state, and firmly establish himself in *Atma*.

Commentary : *Deal with things pertaining the three Gunas* : This should be understood from the context to refer only to the *Karma kanda* of the *Vedas*. The later parts in *Upanishads* deal with the Supreme Reality, beyond all conditions and states of mind, though here and there reference is made to the rites and rituals of *Karma kanda*. The material world comprehended by the senses is conditioned by the three *gunas* or attributes of the mind. This world so comprehended is very limited, is transitory and perishable. *Atma*, which is the seer of all objective phenomena is not conditioned by the *gunas*. It is beyond them. It is eternally perfect. The bondage of life is only for those who are subject to the influence of the three *gunas*. Birth and death, sorrow and suffering, pleasures and

enjoyments, all these do not affect the wise man who has rooted himself in *Atma*. Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to transcend them and hold to the Supreme Self.

Taking refuge in the pure 'Satvic' state : The *satva guna* mentioned here is not *misra satva* which is mixed with the other two attributes, *rajas* and *tamas*. To transcend the three *gunas*, one should overcome *satya guna* also. In the early stages of the *sadhana*, the *satvic* state is coloured by the inherent *rajasic* and *tamasic* qualities. As these later two are slowly eliminated, pure *satva* (*sudha satva*) alone remains, when the *sadhaka* experiences the bliss of *Atma*. But in the final state of realisation, even this is transcended, and *Atma* alone, unconditioned and attributeless, remains in its own purity and perfection. The mind which has acquired the power to contemplate the Infinite *Atma* is called *Satya*. So says Sage Vasishta. Since it is enjoined, *nityasatvasthah*, it is imperative that the seeker should hold on to that state always.

Having nothing to gain or retain in the world :- *Yoga* means the requisition of new things. *Kshema* means the preservation of the things required. The whole world is engaged in these two things, acquisition and preservation. Wealth, name, position, power, health, children, etc., these are the things which man is constantly trying to acquire, and preserving them after they are acquired. The Lord's injunction here is to give up both these things. For the man who firmly believes that *Atma* alone is the Reality, there is no such thing to possess or preserve, because *Atma* is everything and everything is *Atma*. He has nothing to gain or loose. Most of the worldly people desire to acquire wealth, possession, beauty and so on. But who is there who desires to rest in *Atma*? To rest in *Atma* is the greatest achievement, and when this is achieved, supreme content descends on the man, and there is no restlessness. So the way to transcend the *gunas* is to hold on to the *Atmic* state, with perseverance and determination.

Question : *What is the Lord's command?*

Answer : (1) To transcend the three *gunas*, (2) to be free from the pairs of opposites, (3) to give up thoughts of gain

and loss, (4) to remain in the state of *satya* (5) to be established in the Self.

46. यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥

४६

*Yayanartha udapane sarvatah samplutodake ।
tayan sarveshu vedeshu brahmanasya vijanatah ॥*

46

Meaning : उदपाने *udapane* : in the reservoir, यावान् *yavan* : what, अर्थः *arthah* : use, सर्वतसंप्लुतोदके *sarvatah samplutodake* : in the all-filling flood, तावान् *tayan* : that (use), सर्वेषु *sarveshu* : in all, वेदेषु *vedeshu* : Vedas, विजानतः *vijanatah* : to the known, ब्राह्मणस्य *brahmanasya* : of Brahman.

Substance : To an enlightened person who has known the Self all the vedas are of as much use as is a reservoir of water in a place where there is a flood.

Commentary : A small well is useful for purposes of drinking and washing. The same use is implicit in the all-filling flood of water. In the same way, all the rewards and enjoyments mentioned in the *Karma Kanda* of the *Vedas* are comprehended in the bliss of Brahman. Therefore the knower of Brahman does not care for the desire of fulfilling works mentioned in the *Karma Kanda*. According to the law 'fifty is implicit in hundred' (*Sate panchasat*) and according to the truth that in the foot of the elephant the feet of all other animals are comprehended, all the various pleasures and enjoyments are comprehended in the bliss and blessedness of *Atma*. Therefore the wise man does not hanker after rites and rituals in the hope of enjoyments here or in heaven. It is stated here *vijanatah*, and so superficial knowledge is not enough, but deep experience of *Atma* is necessary for perfect realisation.

Ramanuja and others also have given a different interpretation to this verse. For the thirsty man all the water in the well or flood is not necessary. A few glasses will do. For the sick man all the medicines in the world are not necessary. One

or two suitable medicines are enough. For the hungry man, all the food in the world is not necessary. A few handfuls are enough. In the same way, for the wise man, a few practices mentioned in the Vedas leading to Self-knowledge are quite sufficient. By following them he attains realisation of the Supreme. All the others are not needed for him. In the Vedas, innumerable *Mantras*, modes of worship, and works are revealed. The seeker may choose what suits him best to destroy the disease of ignorance and reach the goal of liberation. Here the Lord assures the devotee not at all to be discouraged by thinking that he does not know all the injunctions and practices mentioned in the Vedas.

The Lord propounds the doctrine of Karma Yoga.

47. कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुभूमा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

४७

Karmanyeva'dhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana ।

ma karmaphalaheturbhurmate sango'stvakarmani ॥

47

Meaning : ते te : to you, कर्मण्येव karmanyeva : in work only, अधिकारः adhikarah : right, कदाचन kadachana : at any time, फलेषु phaleshu : in the fruits of work, मा ma : not, कर्मफलहेतुः karmaphalahetuh : the cause and motive for the fruits of work, माभूः ma bhuh : do not become, अकर्मणि akarmani : in inaction, ते te : to you, सङ्गः sangah : attachment, अस्ति (astu : is), मा ma (astu) : shall not be.

Substance : (O Arjuna !) You have right to work only, and not to the fruits of work. Let not the fruit of action be your motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction.

Commentary : The doctrine of *Karma Yoga* is declared in this verse. Man has a right to work, and not to the fruits of his work. It means that work should be done in a spirit of surrendering the fruits to the Lord. At all times, and under all circumstances, man should keep the mind free from the desire for the fruits of work. Otherwise, the mind cannot be brought to a condition of peace and restfulness, and one-pointed concentra-

tion becomes impossible. As man thinks of the results of work, anxieties and fears rush into the mind. Spectres of failure haunt the mind. Difficulties and dangers born of imagination, bar the way to work. The emotions are disturbed by the shame of failure and the frustration of defeat. Mental energy is thus wasted in painful passions, and man's personality is wrecked on the rocks of anger and hatred. Life becomes miserable. This is the practical experience of every individual in the world. Thus, we see that work prompted by desire is a disturbing and not a purifying factor in spiritual *sadhana*. Unless the mind is purified, man cannot get a glimpse of the Self. Therefore *nishkama karma* is absolutely essential for spiritual realisation.

Let not thine attachment be to inaction :— This should be clearly understood. The Lord's command is that attachment to the fruits of work should be given up, and not the works. To give up work is a sign of laziness and inaction. It is *tamas*. It is the negation of spiritual progress. In sleep one does not do anything at all. But sleep is not self-realisation. The walls and polls do not work. They are not philosophers for that reason. Therefore inaction born of *tamas* should be counteracted in very possible way. The Lord's command is an axe-stroke on all forms of idleness and weakness, which apparently looks like the peace of *Jnana*. Some people, out of ignorance, spend their time in empty nothingness, imagining that state to be *Brahmanishta*. Such people fail both in material and spiritual life. It is imperative for them to recognise *tamasic* inaction as the first enemy in spiritual life. They should wake up from *tamas* and start doing something good. No one can live without work. Man must do some kind of work or other. Let that work which you do, be done without attachment is the Lord's command. That will yield the highest fruit of liberation. *Nishkama karma* is one of the main tenets of the Gita. This is the message which roused Arjuna to the level of heroic action from his present state of despair and delusion.

Question : *What is the man qualified to do ?*

Answer : Man has a right to work, but not to seek for the fruits of work.

Question : *What should be given up ?*

Answer : The fruits of work, and the negation of work, both should be given up.

Question : *What then is the law ?*

Answer : To work without desire for the fruits of work is the law.

48. योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गम् त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय !

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

४८

*Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhanamjaya !
sidhyasidhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate* ॥ 48

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna !, योगस्थः *yoga-stah* : established in yoga, सङ्गम् *sangam* : attachment of I and mine, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : renouncing, सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः *sidhyasidhyoh* : in success and failure, समो भूत्वा *samo bhutva* : having become equal-minded, कर्माणि *karmani* : works, कुरु *kuru* : do, समत्वम् *samatvam* : (such) equanimity, योगः *yogah* : yoga, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Steadfast in *Yoga*, giving up all attachment, unmindful of success or failure, do your work. Such equanimity of mind is called *Yoga*.

Commentary : The Lord's command is that man should work, having established himself firmly in *Yoga*. What is *Yoga*? Equanimity of mind in success and failure is *Yoga*. The definition of *Yoga* should be carefully noted. How can one acquire such perfect mental equilibrium? Such a state can be had only when one transcends the mind and enter the Atmic state. That is the yogic position. The merging of the mind in *Atma* is *Yoga*. As this state alone can bring about perfect equanimity, the word *Yoga* is here applied to *samatvam* (i. e.) equal-mind-edness under all circumstances. Free from any kind of desire, realising one's unity with *Atma*, man should work.

One should cultivate the habit of remaining steadfast in *Atma*, before plunging into work, Godliness and spirituality

should permeate the mind. One should feel his identity with the universal Being. Otherwise the work he does will bind him to the world. The success and failures, losses and failures of his worldly activities disturb the mind by throwing it up in waves of momentary elation and depression and of pride and despondency. So one should deeply think of the Self and discriminate the real from the unreal. Then only can a man work with real detachment and with a steady mind. That is why the Lord first teaches the *yoga* of self-realisation and next speaks of *Karma Yoga*.

Question : *What is yoga ?*

Answer : Equanimity of mind is *yoga*.

Question : *What is the method of work ?*

Answer : Steadfast in *yoga*, free from attachment, and equal-minded in success and failure, man should work.

49. दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनज्जय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणः फलहेतवः ॥

४९

*Durena hyavaram karma buddhiyogaddhanamjaya ।
buddhau saranam anviccha kripanah phalahetayah ॥ 49*

Meaning : धनंजय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna !, बुद्धियोगात् : *buddhiyogat* : to work done with equal-minded intellect, कर्म *karma* : work with attachment, दूरेण *durena* : very much, अवस्था हि *ayaram hi* : inferior indeed, बुद्धौ *buddhau* : in equanimity born of intellect, शरणम् *saranam* : refuge, अन्विच्छ *anviccha* : seek, फलहेतवः *phalahetayah* : those who desire the fruits of work, कृपणः *kripanah* : (are) wrecked men.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Work with attachment is far inferior to *nishkama karma*. Therefore seek refuge in desireless action with equanimity of mind. Those who work for fruits and reward are wrecked.

Commentary : We find that Arjuna is addressed as *Dhanamjaya* in this and the previous verse. The Lord exhorts him not to content with worldly wealth and dominion which

are perishable stuff, but seek and strive for spiritual treasure which is eternal.

In the Gita, the term *buddhi yoga* is many times used as an equivalent to *jnana yoga*. Here the term is used in the sense of the discriminative intellect which makes *nishkama karma* possible. *Buddhi* is *nischyatmaka* (i. e.) the determining faculty of the pure intellect by which *Atma* is realised, and freedom from *samsara* is attained. The mind is polluted by various tendencies (*vasanas*) which bind man to the pleasures of the objective world, and carry him on from birth to birth. The discriminative intellect has the power to order the mind and determine what is right from the spiritual point of view. Therefore take refuge in *buddhi* is the Lord's advice. When man brings into direct operation this faculty of the intellect, the dust and heat of passions raging through the material world are cleared up and the perception of Reality becomes possible. The impure tendencies (*vasanas*) of the mind create a hundred desires, and man goes on acting for the fulfilment of these desires. Consequently the cycle of birth and death continues endlessly for the ignorant man.

Desireless work is the open gateway to knowledge and liberation. The two types of work – work with desire for enjoyment and work without desire – are at the opposite poles. Two persons may be engaged in the same work. One does it for personal enjoyment and fame, and he misses the true end. Another does it without any personal thought or feeling. He achieves the true aim and becomes free. So the attitude to work is most important whatever may be the actual value of the work. The ignorant people who cannot see this difference in mental attitude are confused because they find the wise and the ignorant doing the same work externally.

The Lord condemns the poor souls who are always seeking for small rewards for their little work. They are mean-spirited and wretched men *Kripanah*. They are carried away helplessly and painfully. Why should man make himself a wretched play-thing in the hands of nature? Why should he become a toy in the hands of fate to be turned in a whirl of

worthless pleasures and bitter sorrows? The Lord wants Arjuna to be a real man and not merely a show-boy in the hands of nature. Being born as men endowed with intellect and discrimination, it is shameful that people should make themselves slaves and bondmen to nature, forgetting the glory and blessedness of their real Self.

'Seek refuge in the equanimity born of knowledge' That is the clarian call of the Lord. Through the purified *buddhi* man attains the supreme.

Question : *What is work with desire?*

Answer : It is wretched. (*Nishkama Karma* is the highest form of work).

Question : *In what should a man take refuge?*

Answer : Man should take refuge in equanimity born of knowledge.

The result of performing one's own duty with evenness of mind is stated.

50. बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥

५०

*Buddhiyukto jahatiha ubhe sukruta duskrite ।
tasmat yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam ॥ 50*

Meaning : बुद्धियुक्तः *buddhiyuktha* : one who possesses equanimity born of wisdom, उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते *ubhe sukruta duskrite* : both good and bad, इह *iha* : in this life, जहाति *jahati* : casts off, तस्मा॒त् *tasmat* : therefore, योगाय *yogaya* : to yoga (nishkama karma), युज्यस्व *yujyasva* : devote thyself, योगः *yogah* : yoga, कौशलम् *kausalam* : (is) skill, कर्मसु *karmasu* : in actions.

Substance : The man of equanimity born of wisdom releases himself both from good and bad even in this life. Therefore strive for *nishkama karma* with an equal mind. *Yoga* is skill in action.

Commentary : *One who possesses equanimity born of wisdom :-* It means a person who is endowed with the discri-

mination and determining intellect, and who therefore is capable of acting with an equal mind. Such a man is not tainted by good or bad, merit or demerit. Only the bound soul attached to the world is subject to the effect of his actions, good or bad. The wise man rises above these pairs of opposites.

Great men continue to do good work for the welfare of mankind, though they have nothing to gain for themselves by such work. The Lord encourages such good work in several places in the Gita.

The seeker should first stop evil and take to good works. Then he should learn to do the good work without desire for enjoying the fruits of his good work. Thus he would release himself from the bondage of *Karma*. It is in this sense that the Lord says that the man of great mind is free from the effects of good and evil. Man attains the actionless state in *nirvikalpa asmadhi*, when the bodily organs, the senses, and the mind remain perfectly still. At all other levels, he functions with his body, mind, and the senses. The wise man uses these intervals in doing good to humanity in every way he thinks fit. Their example should be followed by all seekers. They should train themselves to do good work selflessly, and this opens the path to perfection.

Skill in action : Dexterity in action is *yoga*. What is this dexterity? It is the capacity to remain detached and equal-minded while engaged in all forms of practical work in the world. Such dexterity is *yoga*. The present definition - *yoga* is dexterity in action - is used to cover the entire range of human action with evenness of mind as the determining condition.

Question : *What is yoga?*

Answer : Skill in action is *yoga* (i.e.) the capacity to act without attachment and with perfect equanimity.

51. कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ताहि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।

जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥

५१

*Karmajam buddhiyukta hi phalam tyaktya manisinah ।
janma bandha vinirmuktah padam gacchantyanamayam ॥ 51*

Meaning : बुद्धियुक्ताः *buddhiyuktah* : equalminded men, मनीषिणः *manishinah* : possessing wisdom, कर्मजम् *karmajam* : action-born, फलम् *phalam* : fruits, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having abandoned, जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः *janmabandhavinirmuktah* : released from the bonds of *samsara*, अनामयम् *anamayam* : free from sorrow and evil, पदम् *padam* : position, abode, गच्छन्ति हि *gacchanti hi* : go indeed.

Substance : Wise men endowed with equanimity, having abandoned the fruits of action, go to the abode beyond all sorrow and evil.

Commentary : *Manisha* - means knowledge He who possesses discrimination and true knowledge has no concern or use for the fruits of work. It follows that discrimination is necessary to understand the principle of right action. The man who has properly understood the bondage arising from work done with desire and attachment, and the great good arising from doing work without attachment and desire, is alone fit to ascend to the abode of peace and blessedness beyond all evil and sorrow. And through discrimination alone can man work without attachment.

When the mind is purified by *nishkama karma*, knowledge of *Atma* dawns, by which man is permanently released from the cycle of birth and death, caused by *Karma*. So we understand how *Karma Yoga* leads to final liberation. Some people may doubt how *Karma* could lead to liberation. The Lord clears this doubt here. He affirms that the man who practices *nishkama karma* will certainly attain the pure sorrowless state of absolute freedom (i e.) *Moksha*.

Released from the bonds of birth and death : Every thoughtful human being is instinctively seeking for freedom from the ills of life The Lord here points out the easiest path. He is addressing all man-kind. "O ye bound souls! If you desire for freedom from the bondage of *samsara*, if you seek for the joy and blessedness of spiritual life, do all your duties whatever they are without attachment for the fruits thereof. Surren-

der them to the Supreme Lord. Your mind will then become pure. Then the knowledge of *Atma* dawns of its own accord. The moment you experience the *Atmic* state, you become free and free for ever."

Whether a person is free from attachment or not is the real test of wisdom. Scholarship, power of speech, expounding the vedic texts - these are for the delight of the learned only. They are of little use unless the man is capable of discriminating the real from the unreal, and rejecting the unreal through 'Buddhi Yoga'.

Go to the abode free from sorrow : People speak of many positions in the world. They say that an emperor holds a high position. They say that Indra is the Lord of Heaven. Though they are in very high positions still the occupants are caught in the wheel of *samsara*. They have birth and death, joy and sorrow pleasure and pain. There is only one state, one position, where there is not the least touch of pain or sorrow, where it is all an ocean of supreme bliss, and that position is the *Atma State*, the domain of *Brahma Jnana*. How to attain it? The Lord shows the path here. Do your duty without attachment and desire for the fruits thereof. That is the secret of *Karma Yoga* and its consummation is *Brahmajnana*.

Question : What is the sign of a great man ?

Answer : The ability to perform *nishkama-karma* is the distinguishing sign of a great man.

Question : What will he attain ?

Answer : Emancipation and *Moksha*.

Question : What is *Moksha* ?

Answer : It is freedom from *samsara*, from the cycle of birth and death.

The Lord states when liberation is attained.

52. यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतिरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निवेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥

*Yada te mohakalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati ।
tada gantasi nirvedam srotavyasya cha ॥*

५२

52

Meaning : यदा yada : when, ते te : your, बुद्धिः buddhiḥ : intellect, मोहकलिलम् mohakalilam : mire of delusion, व्यतिरिष्यति vyatitarishyati : crosses, तदा tada : then, श्रौतव्यस्य srotavyasya : of what has to be heard, श्रुतस्यच्च srutasya cha : and of what has been heard, निर्वेदम् nirvedam : dispassion, गन्तासि gantasi : you will attain.

Substance : When your mind crosses the mire of delusion, you will then attain to indifference of what has been heard and what has to be heard.

Commentary : The aim of human individual is to cross the mire of delusion, the darkness of ignorance. This ignorance and delusion is called in philosophical terminology *Maya* or nature. Beyond darkness is *Atma* - the abode of light. The Vedas declare it so - (*Thamasastu pare*). To reach that realm of light, one has to cross the ocean of darkness and go beyond sorrow and delusion (*soka and moha*). Through *nishkama-karma*, through hearing the truth, through concentration and meditation on the truth, one should realise the light of *Atma*. When he arrives at this state, he is filled with the bliss of *Atma*, and has no further need to hear or think of the *sastras*. He becomes indifferent to them. One should understand that this is spoken of about men of Self-realisation. The seeker should continue to hear the Truth enshrined in the Vedas and the *Sastras* till he attains the higher state of direct perception of the Reality.

Mire of delusion : The impure tendencies (*vasanas*) stagnating in the mind through several births are the mire of delusion. It is the duty of the seeker to purify himself by spiritual practices like *nishkama-karma* and enquiry into the Self.

53. श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।

समाधावचला बुद्धिः तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥

५३

*Srutivipratipanna te yada sthasyati nischala ॥
samadhay achala buddhiḥ tada yogam avapsyasi ॥*

53

Meaning: श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना *srutiviprati panna* : perplexed by what you have heard of the various *sastras*, ते *te* : your, बुद्धिः *buddhiḥ* : intellect, यदा *yada* : when, निश्चला *nischala* : unshaken, समाधौ *samadhau* : in samadhi, अचला *achala* : immovable, स्थास्यति *sthasyati* : remains fixed, तदा *tada* : then, योगाम् *yogam* : union with the Supreme Being, अवाप्स्यसि *avapsyasi* : (you) shall attain.

Substance: When your intellect which is perplexed by hearing the various *sastras* becomes steady and immovable in ecstatic concentration, then you shall attain union with the Supreme Being.

Commentary : Naturally the seeker in the initial stages is distracted by the innumerable rites and rituals mentioned in the *Vedas* for the purpose of acquiring material pleasures and prosperity. The mind is distracted by the impulse of the mind, by the outgoing power of the senses in contact with physical objects. Such distraction is a great obstacle to Self-realisation. By the practice of discrimination and *nishkama-karma*, these distractions gradually disappear. The mind is then calm and collected because it has then overcome the tendency to run after material things. It is gradually fixed in the Self-state and man experiences the bliss of Self-realisation. That is *yoga*. *Yoga* means union of the individual self with the Supreme Being. The Ego which keeps up the delusion of being a separate quantity is merged in its own source (i.e.) Self, and then there remains only one *Atma*, and not two distinct entities as imagined by the deluded mind. Like a bit of salt being dissolved in the ocean, the Ego dissolves itself in the ocean of *Sat-Chit-Anand*. Then there is supreme peace of blessedness. Till that consummation the mind is troubled. When *yoga* takes place, there is no mind or Ego existing separately from the Supreme Being. The mind becomes still and immovable, because it has become one with That. Then it is all one indivisible ocean of bliss and blessedness.

So long as the mind is unsteady, *yoga* (union with the Self) cannot happen. That is why the Lord insists on immo-

vable steadiness of mind ('nischala', 'achala'). If the hand is shaking it is impossible to pass the thread through the eye of the needle. So also, if the mind is split and fragmented, it cannot enter the Atmic plane.

Therefore the seeker should hear of *Atma* and endeavour to think and meditate on That. He should listen for a brief while and spend more time in concentration and meditation. That is the way. More over, rejecting the objective world as an illusion he should look inside into the fathomless spirit pure, calm, serene, and immovable. The more one practices this inward look, the nearer he moves towards *Atma*, and furthers away from the superficial distractions of the material world. Thus a moment arrives when, the mind gets itself completely dissolved in *Atma* in *samadhi*.

There is no time-limit for this consummation. When the mind becomes perfectly still and motionless, and is turned inwards, *samadhi* is reached, and immediately man attains liberation by the knowledge of his real Self.

Question : *When does man attain Yoga ?*

Answer : When the intellect is pure and steady in ecstatic concentration, union with the Self takes place.

Arjuna asks the Lord to tell him the characteristics of the man of steady wisdom

अर्जुन उवाच

54. स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत् किमासीत् व्रजेत् किम् ॥

५४

Arjuna uvacha

*Sthitaprajnasya ka bhasha samadhishthasya kesava
sthitadhih kim prabhasheta kim asita vrajeta kim ॥ 54.*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said:

Meaning : केशव *Kesava* : O Krishna !, समाधिस्थस्य *samadhi-sthasya* : merged in the supreme conscious state, स्थितप्रज्ञस्य *sthitaprajnasya* : of the man of steady wisdom, भाषा *bhasha* : description ? का *ka* : what, स्थितधीः *sthitadhih* : the man of steady

intellect, किम् *kim* : what, प्रभाषेत् *prabhasheta* : would speak ?
 किम् *kim* : (what) how, आसीत् *asita* : sits ? किम् *kim* : (what)
 how, व्रजेत् *vrajeta* : moves ?

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! What are the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom ? How does the man merged in the super-conscious state, sit and move ?

Commentary : Arjuna was anxious to know the characteristics of the man of steady wisdom, the man of self-realisation, the *Jivanmukta*. It is possible for a man to appear outwardly to be in a state of *samadhi*. But that is only self-deception and deception of the world. We should be able rightly to know whether a person is really a *Jivanmukta* or not. Arjuna asks the Lord to describe the characteristics of the *jivanmukta*, so that he could understand who they are and how they live. Of course, man's character is reflected in his speech and action. The ignorant man is discovered by his *tamasic* and *rajasic* qualities, and the impurity of his life and work. In the life of *jivanmukta* we find peace and purity, divinity and blessedness. So if one observes, and keeps company with a *jivanmukta*, he would be able to reform his life accordingly, and rise above delusion and ignorance.

Man of steady wisdom and steady intellect (*sthitapragnah*) : These are men of steady wisdom and knowledge (i. e.) men whose mind is firmly established in *Atma*. The others are of unsteady and infirm wisdom. Their intellect is not purified, nor are their minds rooted in the Self. They are attached to the material world. So the aspirant should follow the footsteps of the *sthitaprajna* and attain to higher status of spiritual illumination by modelling his life accordingly.

This part of the Gita - from 54 to 72 verses describing the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* is very important. Mahatma Gandhi used to recite these verses as a spiritual discipline and he has practically acquired that state of steady wisdom by the purity of his discriminative intellect, by his surrender to God, and by his *nishkama-karma*.

The Lord explains the characteristics of 'sthitaprajna' in the following 18 verses.

श्री भगवानुवाच

५५. प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थं मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मा तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

५५

*Prajahati yada kaman sarvan partha manogathan ।
atmanyeva'tmana tustah sthitaprajna stado'cyate ॥ 55*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said :

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! यदा *yada* : when, मनोगतान् *manogatan* : of the mind, सर्वान् *sarvan* : all, कामान् *kaman* : desires, प्रजहाति *prajahati* : casts off, आत्मनि *atmani* : in Atma, एव *eva* : only, आत्मना *atmana* : by the self (mind), तुष्टः *tushtah* : contented, तदा *tada* : then, स्थितप्रज्ञः *sthitaprajnah* : man of steady wisdom, उच्यते *uchyate* : (he) is called.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : When a man renounces completely all the desires of the mind, and when he is fully satisfied with his mind fixed in *Atma*, then he is declared to be a *sthitaprajna*.

Commentary : Many people go to a holy man and ask him, "Revered Sir, when shall we be free from the ills of life ?" The holy man repeats this *sloka* in response to their appeal. The auspicious moment of liberation from the ills of life is in the hands of each individual. When you have acquired faith in the eternal Self, and when you carry out the precepts of spiritual discipline, when the mind is brought to a state of equanimity, and when it is fixed steadily in *Atma*, that very moment man is liberated and he becomes a *jivanmukta*. Liberation is a natural process and not a sudden high-jump into the spiritual realm. The *Sastras* and the holy men point the way, and the seeker has to realise the Truth by his own self-effort.

Now, what is that practice which leads to emancipation ? Desires should be given up. The Lord uses a strong term *Prajahati* instead of *jahati*, implying thereby that desires should be given up thoroughly, and again, not simply some desires but all desires, without leaving the least residue in the innermost recesses of the mind. This is the inevitable and universal law. There is no other way. Even if the smallest seed of desire is left in the pit of the mind, it sprouts and grows unconsciously, and there is always the danger of the seeker being driven out of the self-state and once again plunged in the mire of delusion.

That is what the *sastras* say. It is not sufficient to partly give up all desires or totally give up some desires only. All desires should be given up totally for all time.

Desires lie concealed in the unseen nooks and corners of the mind. They survive in the seed form of mental impressions. Whenever they come into contact with the objects of the material world through the senses, they spring up with subtle and irresistible force and cause *samsara*. Bondage and delusion are not in the outside world. They are inside the mind. It is here that the spiritual operation should be conducted, and the diseased mind-stuff cut off. The mind is some-thing like dark cavern which is only partially visible to man. The lamp of discrimination should be lighted, and there should be a thorough search of the vast dark region to find out the last and least living desire and burn it up into ashes. Just as all the small pebbles in grain are sifted and thrown off before food is prepared, just as all the weeds are cleared off when the garden plants are grown, just as all worms, germs and pests are removed from vegetable plants, even so all the desires should be carefully searched for and rejected by the seeker.

These desires are of very ancient origin, as the darkness in an undiscovered cave is there from time immemorial. They have taken root in the subtle body through innumerable births. They are mental impressions (*vasanas*). Having established themselves firmly by spreading their roots deep into the subtle body, they cause *samsara*, the endless cycle of birth and death for man. They should be pulled out along with the roots. Other-

wise, some little desire left untouched is capable of causing a birth or even a whole series of births. Particles of fire from a half-extinguished heath is capable of destroying a whole colony of huts. Therefore the Lord here insists on complete renunciation of all desires forever. Towards this final renunciation, enquiry into the Self, discrimination of the real and the unreal, surrender to the Lord, company of holy men, and such other practices should be undertaken by the aspirant.

The Lord immediately explains what happens when the mind is purified of all desire-breeding impressions.

Satisfied with his mind fixed in Atma : This is the consummation of all spiritual practices – to be perfectly satisfied in the Self by the self. When all the desires are cast off, the mind remains quiet in *Atma* – the very source of all bliss. Fullness of joy – where is it to be found ? It is in the Self. Bliss is not outside in the external objective world. One may go on searching for it in earth and sky, in the fourteen worlds up and down inch by inch, he cannot find it, because it is not there. Of what use is it to search for a thing in a place where it is not ? And yet, such is the power of *maya* that man seeks for it, inspite of repeated failures and disappointments – disasters and calamities, in the objective world. The search is carried and birth after birth, till man tired and exhausted by his pursuit of the hare's horn, may be out of sheer despair, turns inwards into his own Self, and Lo ! the miracle happens, he finds that joy in his own self; that joy and Self are one. The mind is purified, and in the purified mind, the natural and spontaneous bliss of *Atma* is reflected in a flash. This is the secret of Vedanta. Brahmananda is not a newly manufactured article by the skill and technology of man. It is already there by its own right, already full, unpolluted and uncontaminated by any material taint. But it is covered up, misunderstood, and muddled up with extraneous things. To remove the impure covering and discover the natural *ananda* is the aim of Vedanta. Now, the man of discrimination clears up the dust and garbage from his mind, and finds that the happiness which he has been seeking from

everywhere in the world, is in his own Self. When the outer covering of moss is cleared, pure water is seen. When the dust is cleared off a mirror, it shows a clear reflection. So also, when the impurity of mind in the form of desire is taken away, the seer *Atma* reveals himself as the pure and perfect Self of man. The search for happiness ends here. So the Lord points out both the aspects of Vedanta—the practice of equanimity and desirelessness, and next the goal to be attained. The practice is the renunciation of desire, and the goal is the experience of *Atma*. The first is *Sadhana*, and the second is *Sadhyā*. The practice leads to the goal.

So the first outstanding quality of the *sthitaprajna* is untainted and perfect bliss. This is his badge, his flag, the banner of his achievement. He is distinguished from others by this characteristic feature. When we find the ignorant people plunged in fear and sorrow, distracted and restless, he alone remains free and blissful in the midst of the ever-changing spectacle of human life.

Question : What is the characteristic mark of *sthitaprajna* ?

Answer : Giving up of all desires, and contentment in the Self are his qualities.

Question : Where is uncontaminated joy ?

Answer : In the Self – *Atma*.

56. दुःखेवनुद्विग्ममनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

५६

*Duhkheshvanudvignamanah sukheshu vigatasprihah ।
vita raga bhaya krodhah sthitadhir munir uchyate ॥ 56*

Meaning : दुःखेषु *dhukheshu* : in sorrow, अनुद्विग्ममनाः *anudvignamanah* : without mental agitation, सुखेषु *sukheshu* : in pleasures, विगतस्पृहः *vigatasprihah* : without hankering, वीतरागभयक्रोधः *vitaragabhayakrodhah* : free from attachment, fear and hatred, मुनिः *munih* : sage, स्थितधीः *sthitadhih* : man of steady wisdom, उच्यते *uchyate* : (he) is called.

Substance : He whose mind is not troubled in sorrow, who does not hanker after pleasures and is free from attachment fear and hatred, is called the sage of steady wisdom.

Commentary : The characteristics of *sthitaprajna* are further elaborated here.

Mind not troubled in sorrow : The mind of the *sthitaprajna* is not troubled by the sorrows, disasters and calamities of life. The sun who is far above the storm clouds is not affected by thunder, lightening and rain. In the same way, pain and pleasure are the natural reactions of the mind to external phenomenon, and *Atma* being above the mind (i.e.) transcending the mind, is not affected by its modifications. It remains as the witness of the mind, in the same way, as the Sun is just the witness of what is happening in the lower region of the earth. Vasishta explains to Sri Rama that just as arrows cannot powder a mountain, just as the sea-waves cannot move the mountain on the shore, just as the lotus creeper cannot bind an elephant, even so the sorrows and troubles of the world cannot affect the *Jivanmukta*, the *sthitaprajna*.

Who does not hanker after pleasures : The *Stitatprajna* does not hanker after the pleasures of the body and the senses. He is not thrown off his Self-state when pleasant and delighted things come to him. Pain and pleasure are just two different waves of the mind. One wave is called pleasure and another is called pain. Both are caused by the contact of the mind with external objects. If the object is agreeable, there is a wave of pleasure. If the object is undesirable, there is a wave of pain. The *sthitaprajna* whose mind is firmly established in *Atma* is not moved one way or the other when pleasant and unpleasant things occur. The *Jivanmukta* has found himself one with the ocean of bliss, and as such how can he think of attaching himself to any kind of material pleasure? He knows that these little pleasures are only ripples on the surface of the ocean of bliss and that they are shadowy reflections of his own Self. No one can cling to the pleasures of a dream when he awakens from the dream. If really he desires such pleasures, it only

shows that he has not yet fully awakened from the dream. So also, he who clings to worldly pleasures arising from the senses and sense objects, is not a *Sthitaprajna*. We have the shining example of Suka, as the *Sthitaprajna* par excellence. If today we come across a man of such calibre who can look upon pain and pleasure with an equal eye, verily we have to honour him as a *Jivanmukta*.

Free from attachment, fear and hatred : Again, it is pointed out that the *Sthitaprajna* is free from attachment, fear and hatred. To the man of knowledge, every thing appears as *Atma*, in the same way as everything appears as material objects to the ignorant man. What then can he desire ? Whom can he fear or hate ? The same truth is declared in the *Esavasya Upanishad* also.

For the wise man who knows that every thing is that one *Atma*, there can be no delusion and no sorrow. He has realised that all that exists is only the Supreme Self and nothing else. Fear and hatred arise only when there is a second thing. When all this is one indivisible *Satchidananda* Absolute, where is fear and where is hate ? He is himself every thing. Can he hate himself ? Can he fear himself ? No. That is the state of the *Jivanmukta*, the *Sthitaprajna* — supreme and transcendental

Muni : The sage who is engaged in speechless absorption in the Self is a *Muni*. Only such a strong-willed man of action can ascend the peak of the *Soham*, (I am he) mount. The idle and the lethargic have no chance of winning the goal. The sage who has acquired one-pointed concentration in the Self is *Sthitaprajna*.

Question : *What further qualities of the sthitaprajna are mentioned here ?*

Answer : He is not distressed by sorrow, does not hanker after pleasure, is free from attachment, fear and hatred.

57. यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

५७

*Yah sarvatra nabhisne hastat-tat prapya subhasubham ।
na'bhinandati na dvesti tasya prajna pratishitta ॥ 57*

Meaning : यः *yah* : (he) who, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : in all things, अनभिस्नेहः *anabhi snehah* : without attachment, तत् तत् *tat - tat* : that and that, शुभाशुभम् *subhasubham* : good and bad, प्राप्य *prapya* : having obtained, नाभिनन्दति *nabhinandati* : does not rejoice, नद्वेष्टि *nadveshti* : does not hate, तस्य *tasya* : his, प्रज्ञा *prajna* : wisdom, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishtita* : is fixed.

Substance : He who has no attachment to anything anywhere, who does not rejoice and hate when good and bad things happen, his wisdom is fixed and steady. He is a *sthitaprajna*.

Commentary : In the Gita we find that the Lord uses the general term *yah* (anybody) without limiting its scope to any caste or creed, race or nationality. Any one who has acquired firmness in the wisdom of the Self is declared to be a *Sthitaprajna* whoever he is and whatever may be his caste or creed. This is the sign of the universality of the Gita.

Without attachment in all things : One should be detached from and indifferent to every thing in the world. Of course no one is attached to unpleasant things. A similar attitude is to be cultivated towards pleasant things also. Things pleasant and unpleasant are both in the domain of *Maya*, and the Self is beyond *Maya*, and so these lower modifications do not in any way affect the Self. The *sthitaprajna* having reached the Self-state is not at all concerned with them. The man of wisdom does not seek for any thing. And yet, nature brings many things to him, both pleasant and unpleasant in the course of his life. But he neither rejoices nor laments when these things happen of their own accord. He remains immovable like a mountain in a state of perfect equanimity. This is the mark of *sthitaprajna*. It should be understood that the Lord is not advocating a cowardly spirit desisting from the battle-field of life with all its duties, obligations and responsibilities. Detachment is not neglect of duty. In fact Arjuna was confused at first when he thought that he could attain peace by running away from the battle-field and taking up the life of

a mendicant. The whole of the Gita is intended to emphasise that the challenge of life should be met with courage, equanimity, and knowledge of the real Self. Frustration may put on the garb of detachment. Cowardice may shine under the mask of renunciation. These are the common delusions of a weak mind. The Lord here insists that the good and the bad should be met without elation or depression. The *sthitaprajna* knows how to live life under all circumstances with mental equipoise and the joy of wisdom.

Question : *What other characteristics of the sthitaprajna are mentioned here ?*

Answer : The *sthitaprajna* is not attached to any thing, he does not rejoice or hate when pleasant and unpleasant things happen in the course of his life.

58. यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

५८

*Yada samharate chayam kurmo'nganiva sarvasah
indriyanindriyarthebhya stasya prajna pratisthita* 58

Meaning : यदा: *yada* : when, अयम् *ayam* : this (yogi), कूर्मः *kurmah* : tortoise, अङ्गानि इव *angani iva* : like its limbs, इन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः *indriyebhyah* : from the sense-objects like sound, touch, etc., इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, सर्वशः च: *sarvasah cha* : and every where, संहरते *samharate* : withdraws, (तदा) (*tada* : then), तस्य *tasya* : his (the yogi's), प्रज्ञा *prajna* : wisdom, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishita* : is fixed.

Substance : When the yogi, like the tortoise drawing back its limbs into its own shell withdraws all the senses from the sense-objects, his wisdom is firmly fixed. He is then a *sthitapragna*.

Commentary : For self-realisation (Moksha) control of the senses is essential. When the senses are drawn back from contact with the sense-objects like, sound, colour etc. then the intellect is rooted in *Atma*. The same truth is stated by Patanjali in the sutras *Yogaschittavrittinirodhah, tada*-

shtuh svarupe Avasthanum. These two sutras are affirmed by the verse. It means that the senses, which by their nature run after wordly objects should be drawn back, and the mind centred in *Atma*. When this is done firmly, and when there is no deviation from the Self, one's knowledge becomes perfect.

This idea is very clearly brought out by means of an illustration. The tortoise withdraws all its limbs into its own shell at the slightest apprehension of danger from outside. Even if the shell is hacked to pieces it would not extend its limbs. The yogi, like the tortoise should draw back his senses from the objective world, and settle himself in the Self. It is not enough to restrain one of the senses from one set of objects. Of course, if one sense is controlled, it will make the control of the others easy. The yogi should withdraw all the senses from all the wordly objects. That is why the word *sarvasah* is used. Even if all the doors are closed except one, through that one door dacoits may enter the house. Even if one window is kept open, a gust of wind from it may extinguish the lamp. So it is absolutely necessary that all the senses should be turned back, and there should be no contact with the external world. It is the sense-organs which make the person aware of the outside world. When they are drawn back there is no external world. In deep sleep there is no external world because the senses are not functioning. Similarly the yogi should stop the operation of the senses in his fully conscious state, and then the mind sees the Self within. Sense-restraint is thus the first and foremost of all spiritual disciplines.

Question : *When does a man become 'sthitaprajna' ?*

Answer : When he withdraws all the senses from the objective world and turns his mind inwards, he becomes a '*sthitaprajna*'.

When Atma is perceived, all the latent tendencies of the mind are removed.

59. विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्टा निवर्तते ॥

५९

Vishaya vinivartante niraharasya dehinah ।

rasavarjam raso'pyasya param dristva nivartate ॥

59

Meaning : निराहारस्य *niraharasya* : abstinent, देहिनः *dehinah* : of the embodied being, रसवर्जनम् *rasavarjyam* : except the longing, विषयाः *vishayah* : the objects of senses, विनिवर्ततन्ते *vinivartante* : turn away, परम् *param* : the supreme, दृष्टि *drishtva* : having seen, रसोपि *rasahapi* : even the longing (taste), अस्य *Asya* : of his, निवर्तते *nivartate* : turns away.

Substance : When a man rejects the sense-objects by withdrawing the senses, he becomes free from the sense-world only. The longing or taste for them still remains in the mind. Even this longing is removed when the Self is perceived.

Commentary : An essential secret of spiritual realisation is revealed here.

Restraining the senses is not alone enough. Direct perception of the Supreme is necessary. No doubt by restraining the senses, the objective world is repelled. But the taste for man remains in the form of subtle tendencies (*vasanas*) and unless these *vasanas* are removed steadiness of wisdom is not possible. Latent longing may rush forth when the restraint is relaxed. Even temporary causes like sickness and calamity may bring about a partial rejection of the sense-world. But when these external causes pass away, the subtle *vasanas* break forth with all their original force. Hence the Lord declares that only when the Supreme is perceived, these *vasanas* are finally destroyed.

The destruction of the *vasanas*, the destruction of the mind, and direct experience of the Self take place simultaneously. In the previous verse, it is said that by destroying the *vasanas*, self-knowledge comes to man and in this verse, it is stated that Self-knowledge destroys the *vasanas*. These are two aspects of the same Truth.

Destruction of the *vasanas* is not an easy task. It is the only path to *Moksha*. If one achieves it, every thing is achieved. The innumerable experiences of the past births have taken root in the mind in the form of powerful tendencies, attitudes and

propensities. They work through the senses, and the senses function by contact with the world. The material world provides the widest field of activity and the food for the senses. Through many births, the senses have been accustomed to browse at will on these delicious pasture lands of material pleasures. To deny them this form of food means to restrain the senses and prevent them from contacting the objective world. But this does not solve the problem. The taste for the objects would still be there in the mind; whenever opportunity arises the mental tendencies spring forth to grasp the illusory pleasures, because the taste for them is not dead. So the attempt at first is to withdraw the senses from the sense-objects (*Pratyahara*) and next to destroy the taste for them concealed in seed-form in the mind. When the *vasanas* are destroyed, man attains freedom, and the objective world is then powerless to influence him. It is stated here that direct Self-knowledge alone is capable of destroying the *vasanas*.

One must understand clearly the reality of *Atma*, and the illusory nature of the world. One must hear of *Atma* often and often. He should think of *Atma* and contemplate on it frequently and intensely. He should know for certain that the world before his eyes is a painful illusion, that it is full of sorrow and suffering, that there is no permanent joy anywhere else except in *Atma*, and that *Atma* alone is the all-pervading substratum of the entire universe. As one thinks and acts on these fundamental truths, his attachment and craving for sense-pleasures become less and less and as they become weaker and weaker, the bliss of Self is experienced more and more, till finally the bliss and blessedness of the Self swallows up the universe and converts it into its own element.

Abstinent : Some interpret this as fasting. Here what is meant is not the abstinence of food, but the rejection of all sense-experiences.

Question : Is it sufficient for liberation to control the senses ?

Answer : No. The craving for them in the mind should be destroyed.

Question : How is that done ?

Aaswer : By direct perception of Atma.

If the senses are not controlled, they do harm, and it is difficult to control them.

60. यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

६०

Yatato hyapi kaunteya purushasya vi paschitah ।

indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah ॥

60

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! यततः *yatatah* अपि *hyapi* : Striving for Atma jnana, विपश्चितः *vi paschitah* पुरुषस्य *purushasya* : even of learned man, मनः *mahaḥ* : Mind, प्रमाथीनि *pramathini* : turbulent, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, प्रसभम् *prasabham* : forcefully, हरन्ति *haranti* हि : draw indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The turbulent senses carry away the mind even of the learned man though he is striving to control them.

Commentary : Even the learned man, well versed in the *Sastras* and vedic lore, is merely a play-thing under the power of the mind and the senses. The mind does not easily turn inwards. It is pushed out, as it were, and through the senses attaches itself to the objective world. If this is so in the case of a learned man who has understood the truth intellectually at least, what about the others ? Similarly, the turbulent senses defeat and perplex the man who is trying his best to control them. The fate of the man who has not understood this principle can easily be imagined. The senses draw the mind and drive it on in different directions. He is restless and distracted. He becomes utterly the slave of the uncontrollable senses. He who should have been the master is turned a slave ! That is the unfortunate position in which many live and die.

Even the Pandits, the learned exponents of religion and philosophy, are carried off by the power of the senses and the attractions of the sense-world.

In the heart of every human being, the struggle between the real and the unreal, between good and evil, is taking place to some extent. As man tries to get some divine force into himself in this struggle, *Maya* with all the regiments, spies, fifth columns, is increasing her own forces to neutralise the divine force which the seeker is gathering bit by bit. This verse describes an aspect of the struggle. The seeker should muster greater and greater divine strength by acquiring divine qualities, and then only can he hope to overpower the enemy. No one need be discouraged by the power of the senses. Indeed they are powerful. But what of it? The divinity within is far more powerful. If a pin is placed between two magnets the one which has the lesser power can do nothing. So is man placed between the sense world on the one side and the Divine on the other. The Divine is a far greater magnet and finally draws man to Himself. By control (*sama* and *dama*) practised continuously, the necessary power is acquired by the seeker, and ultimately victory is his. Only no relaxation of vigilance, no neglect of effort should be allowed to interrupt the practice. The same exhortation is to be found in the next verse

Learned : Mere book-learning is not enough. Spiritual experience is necessary

Perhaps, so far, people have under-estimated the strength of the enemy, and consequently their effort has not been as intense as it should be. But now, the Lord has given us an idea of the hostile forces which one has to conquer. The first thing in a war is to know the full potency of the enemy forces, and only then the defence and offence could be made with adequate strength and suitable strategy.

Question : What is the power of the senses ?

Answer : The senses are so powerful as to draw away the mind of a scholar even, who is striving for liberation.

61. तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।

वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

६१

*Tani sarvani samyamya yuktha asita matparah ।
vase hi yasye'ndriyani tasya prajna pratisthitha ॥*

61

Meaning : तानि *tani* : them (the senses), सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, संयम्य *samyumya* : restraining, युक्तः *yuktah* : harmonised, भूत्परः *matparah* : intent on Me, आसीत् *asita* : should sit, हि *hi* : because, यस्य *yasya* : whose, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, वशे *vase* : under control, तस्य *tasya* : his, प्रज्ञा *prajna* : wisdom, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishtita* : (is) steady.

Substance : Having restrained all the senses the harmonised should sit intent on Me. His wisdom is steady whose senses are under control.

Commentary : All the senses should be controlled not merely one or two. A pot with a single small hole cannot retain water. So sense-pleasures of any kind will lead to a downright fall from the spiritual aim. This is emphasised again and again by the Lord. That is why the word *Sarvani* (all) is used frequently verse after verse.

In this verse, two practises are mentioned : (1) Control of the senses from running out and attaching themselves to sense-objects, and (2) directing the mind towards the Supreme Lord (merging in *Atma*). It means rejection of the objective world (*Drisya*) and identification with the subject (*Drik*). Both practices are necessary. The first practice alone is not enough. In sleep, the senses do not function, and the objective world is not there. And yet there is no knowledge. So identification with the subject (*Drik*) is essential, while rejecting the objective world (*Drishya*). It is not enough to clear debts; one should acquire some property. Then he is satisfied. Similarly let a man ceaselessly reject the sense-world as it appears and at the same time, let him think of himself as the pure and perfect *Atma*. Again, the second practice meditating on *Atma*, is no doubt good, but without the first, the seeker is sure to fall off from the high aim. So the two practices should be undertaken simultaneously.

Harmonised : With what ? - not with the sense-world, but with the Self. It means one who is in super-conscious state (*Samadhi*).

With mind absorbed in Me : Lord Krishna is God Himself.
So, when He speaks of Me, the Supreme Self is suggested.

The Dualists contemplate the sublime and beautiful form of Lord Krishna, and are entranced by it. They sing His name in a thousand ways, they find delight in his glory, and the wonderful attributes of divinity in Him. Blessed are those devotees who have renounced the world and live in the Lord in an ecstasy of joy.

The *Advaitin* makes no difference between the Lord and the Supreme Self. They are one and the same. This is the finest fruit of Vedanta, that there is only one indivisible existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. In that state, God and the devotee become one. The Gita is the scripture both for the devotees-*Bhaktas* and the *Jnanis*. So the reader should interpret these expressions correctly, and not fall into the error of accepting only one aspect of truth and rejecting the other. In this verse, the first line points out the practice, and the second line the result of the practice. The first line says that the seeker should control the senses and establish himself in *Atma*. The second line declares that such a man acquires firm knowledge of the Supreme.

Without sense-control the mind cannot be fixed in *Atma*. Even if one tries to do so, it is immediately drawn out by the distracting power of the senses. The energy acquired through meditation is frittered away by indulgence in sense-pleasures. The peasant may work hard all the day to water the field, but if there are rat-holes, all the water goes into them, and nothing remains to water the field. So, these rat-holes should be plugged first, and then the work of the peasant bears fruit. Even so, the rat-holes of sense-desires and sense-pleasures should be stopped first, so that whatever divine contemplation one may practice might gather strength gradually and lead to final illumination. Let the seekers understand the importance of sense-control for Self-realisation, and follow the practice with courage and determination.

Question : *What are the means of Self-realisation ?*

Answer : Restraining the senses and fixing the mind in *Atma* are the ways to Self-realisation.

Question : *What knowledge is firm ?*

Answer : The knowledge of the man who has controlled all the senses remains firm.

The Lord warns the disciple about the disastrous consequences of yielding to sense pleasures.

62. ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषुपजायते ।

सङ्गात् संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

६२

*Dhyayato vishayan pumsah sangasteshupajayate ।
sangat samjayate kamah kamat krydho'bhijayate ॥*

62

63. क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिविभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

६३

*Krodhadbhayati sammohah sammohat smritivibhramah ।
smritibhramsa dbuddhinaso buddhinasat pranasyati ॥ 63*

Meaning : विषयान् *vishayan* : the objects of the senses, ध्यायतः *dhyayatah* : contemplating, पुंसः *pumsah* : of a man, तेषु *teshu* : in them, सङ्गः *sangah* : attachment, उपजायते *upajayate* : arises, सङ्गात् *sangat* : from attachment, कामः *kamah* : desire, संजायते *sanjayate* : is born, कामात् *kamat* : from desire, क्रोधः *krodhah* : anger, अभिजायते *abhijayate* : arises, क्रोधान् : *krodhah* : from anger, संमोहः *sammohah* : delusion, भवति *bhavati* : comes, मंमोहात् *sammohat* : from delusion, स्मृतिविभ्रमः *smritivibhramah* : loss of memory, स्मृतिविभ्रंशात् *smritibhramsat* : from loss of memory, बुद्धिनाशः *buddhinasah* : destruction of discrimination, बुद्धिनाशात् *buddhinasat* : from destruction of discrimination, प्रणश्यति *pranasyati* : (he) perishes.

Substance : As man contemplates sense-objects, attachment for them arises, from attachment, desire for them will be born, from desire arises anger, from anger comes delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, from loss of memory, comes destruction of discrimination, and from destruction of discrimination he perishes.

Commentary : These two verses are of great importance for the spiritual aspirant. The gradual process of Self-destruction is traced here with psychological accuracy.

The contemplation of sense-objects is the first step in the downward process. The enemy enters the house in the guise of a friend, and gradually occupies the whole house, and pushes the owner out. There is an English Proverb—“Give me room to sit down, and I can make room to lie down.” Such is the power of *Maya* that from very small imperceptible beginnings, it grows almost to infinity.

At first, man may not have any particular attachment to anything, but gradually the senses prompted by past *samskaras* settle on a particular object and the mind begins to contemplate it. So a kind of contact is established between the mind and that object, the senses being the connecting link. The object may be anything from a fashionable piece of dress to the glamour and glory of an Emperor. That contact becomes stronger and stronger, and a deeply felt desire arises to possess and enjoy that object. This is *Kama*. It is the worst enemy of man. *Mahapapna* (all sinfull)—such is the Lord’s description of *Kama*. When *Kama* enters the mind, it is like a reptile moving about in the house. The occupants of that house live in horrible dread and there is every danger of their being stung and killed. Such indeed is the destructive power of *Kama* when it enters the human heart. It is indeed better to stop it before it enters the mind. But if it enters stealthily, the moment one discovers it, he should throw it out with all the power at his command. Otherwise, the *Kama* in its wake will bring his associates, friends and other destructive forces, like *Krodha* and throw down the unfortunate man into destruction. All this is vividly described by the teacher of the

Gita. Let the seeker know who his enemies are, how they work, how they tempt, how they subdue, and how they finally destroy man.

When *Kama* enters the mind, just behind him comes *Krodha*. These two are eternal associates of evil. One cannot be without the other. Such is the closeness of their intimacy. The frustration of desire causes anger, and hatred. *Krodha* is like powerful alchohal. Passion like poison, fills the whole personality. He trembles and shivers all over the body, the eyes become blood-shot, speech becomes incoherent, abuse and violence are indulged in, and the human being is transformed into a wild animal which is deprived of a piece of flesh when it is hungry. He behaves like a man possessed by an evil-spirit. So it is said here that delusion (*sammoha*) overpowers him by anger (*Krodha*). Delusion causes loss of memory.

The deluded man, fired with anger, forgets the people with whom he is dealing. Be he a father or *Guru*, or friend; the angry man abuses him and strikes him down. For the time being, he forgets the status of the person, honour for the father, reverence for the *Guru*, affection for the friend. This is loss of memory (*smritiyibramah*) of one's Self. So long as a man holds on to the Self, anger cannot overpower him. But the moment that memory of his true Self is lost, man becomes a beast.

From loss of memory, discrimination of right and wrong is lost. By the destruction of the grinding intellect, man perishes. Therefore the Lord warns the aspirant to keep himself away from sense-objects, and practise self-control.

Contemplating the objects of the senses: It is important to note that the word contemplation is used in this context. Contemplation is not a new faculty to be acquired. Every man is constantly in a state of contemplation. Some contemplate wealth, others the pleasure of wine, others the pleasures of sex, others the dignity of position, name and fame. So the world moves on, each one attached to a particular desire, meditating on it, and trying to realise it as much as possible. So contemplation is the natural faculty.

of the mind. The wise man who has understood the worthlessness of the worldly pleasures, turns his mind to God, and contemplates the purity and glory of God. He attains pure joy and endless peace.

What is required is that the same power of contemplation which runs after worldly objects, should be given a new direction towards a spiritual aim. We come across stories of men immersed in sensuality, suddenly turning out to be pure devotees of God. What happens in such cases is that the man, by some cause or other, discovers the filthy nature of sensual pleasures, and turns away from them, and the mind naturally runs for the pure and perfect, with the same force and momentum as it formerly had for sense-pleasures. The point is contemplation should be directed towards *Atma*, and not towards sense-objects. Prahlada asked the Lord for the same boon, that his mind may always be fixed in the Lord and not in the ephemeral world.

Question : *What is the cause of man's destruction ?*

Answer : Contemplation of the sense-world is the first in the chain of causes leading to destruction.

Question : *How does it lead to man's destruction ?*

Answer : By the contemplation of the sens-objects desire for them arises. Desire leads to anger when it is frustrated, anger causes delusion, delusion causes loss of memory, loss of memory causes destruction of discrimination, and by the loss of discrimination, man perishes.

The Lord explains the way to peace.

64. रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियशरन् ।

आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

६४

*Raga dvesha viyuktaistu vishayan indriyaischaran
atmavasyai rvidheyatma prasadam adhigacchatः ॥ 64.*

Meaning : तु tu : but, विधेयात्मा vidheyatma : the self-controlled, रागद्वेषवियुक्तैः ragadveshavyukataih : free from

attraction and repulsion, आत्मवश्यैः *atmavasyaiḥ* : self-restrained, इन्द्रियैः *indriyaiḥ* : with senses, विषयान् : *vishayan* : objects, चरन् *charan* : moving (amongst), प्रसादम् *prasadam* : peace, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

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

Commentary : The man who is able to restrain the senses and control the mind attains peace. He may be using the senses and sense-objects for the purpose of sustaining his life, but such work does not befoul the purity and peace of his mind. When the poisonous fangs are pulled out, the serpent is harmless. Similarly when attraction and repulsion *Raga* and *Dwesha* are eliminated from the mind, the senses lose their evil power, and then they are only instruments in the hands of man to do what he wants them to do, or to remain quiet in their places. Such a man can move freely in the world and no harm comes to him. When the horses are well under control, the charioteer feels free and happy because they take him easily to the destination without trouble and danger. So the senses help and not hinder the man who has obtained control over the mind.

Self-restrained, self-controlled : Self-control is the necessary condition for Self realisation. Without it spiritual life is not possible. The mind and the senses should be under one's own control, and not be under their control. The deluded self of the common man consists of turbulent senses, sensual impulses of the the mind, and animal instincts of hunger, fear, lust etc. So man acts under the power and instigation of the mind and the senses. They have mastered him, and he is their slave. Man should regain his mastery over himself. Without self-mastery no man can attain peace and happiness. He may have all the wealth and power in the world, he may have all the desires fulfilled, but peace he cannot have, because peace is the reward of self-mastery.

It cannot be purchased with wealth and power. The Lord points out the way to peace. Control of the senses, purification of mind—these two conditions should be fulfilled first, before man could experience the bliss of *Atma*

Question : *Who can attain peace?*

Answer : He whose mind is free from attachment, whose senses are restrained, and whose mind is controlled attains peace.

65. प्रसादे सर्वदुःखाना हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठति ॥

६५

*Prasade sarvaduhkhanam hani rasyo'pajayate ।
prasannachetaso hyasu buddhih paryavatisthati ॥* 65

Meaning : प्रसादे *prasade* : in peace, अस्य *asya* : of him, सर्वदुःखानाम् *sarvaduhkhanam* : of all sufferings, हानि: *hanih* : destruction, उपजायते *upajayate* : aires, happens, प्रसन्नचेतसः *prasannachetasah* : of the tranquil-minded, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : intellect, आशु *asu* : quickly, पर्यवतिष्ठति *paryavatishtati* : becomes steady, remains firmly fixed in Atma, हि *hi* : indeed.

Substance : When a man attains peace, all sorrow and suffering caused by the unbalanced mind and rebellious senses come to an end. By peace and purity the mind is soon fixed in the Self.

Commentary : Every individual is seeking for the elimination of sorrow, and the attainment of peace. How can he get them? The path is shown here. By purity and peace of mind, both are acquired. When the mind is freed from impure impulses the aim of spiritual life is achieved. Just as in a clean mirror the reflection is perfectly clear, even so in the purified mind the Self shines forth in its own splendour and glory.

Sage Vasishta states that purity of mind arising from deep knowledge of *Atma* is *Moksha* (liberation). So all those

who desire *Moksha* should keep the mind pure by constant enquiry of the Self. Two great benefits are derived from the peace of mind - (1) Elimination of all sorrow and suffering, (2) Resting of the mind firmly in *Atma*.

Of all sufferings : All sorrows and sufferings-(*adhyatmika, adhibhautika, adhidaivika*) - are removed at once when peace is attained. What a wonderful boon of peace for man! What more does man want? A casual look at the world and humanity would reveal the horrid restlessness, distraction and pain, both of the body and mind, which man is undergoing in this earthly life. Life is a fitful fever. Mad and delirious, man runs here and there, getting and spending, exhausting his energies, angry, distressed and subject to the innumerable shocks of life. That is the unfortunate state of man. From all these evils man is protected by the contemplation of the Self and when peace is attained, these are completely eliminated. Peace is the condition of *Moksha*. If peace does not fill the whole being of man, *Moksha* remains only in intellectual concept without real meaning or substance in it.

Mind is firmly fixed in Atma : When the mind is untroubled and peaceful the intellect is easily fixed in *Atma*. Then it is all bliss and blessedness. It is like a small river emptying itself into the ocean and becoming one with it. Even the happiness of the creator Brahma is only a drop in the ocean of the bliss of the Supreme Self. What more does a man want than to merge himself in the ocean of bliss? So let every man who is punished with sorrow and suffering by his own evil, know the path of liberation, and strive for peace.

The man without Self-control suffers.

66. नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥

६६

*Na'sti buddhir ayuktasya na chayuktasya bhavana ।
nacha'bhayayatah santi rasantasya kutah sukham ।* 66

Meaning : अयुक्तस्य *ayuktasya* : of the unharmonised, बुद्धिः *buddhiḥ* : knowledge of Self, नास्ति *nasti* : is not,

अयुक्तस्य *ayuktasya* : of the unharmonised, भावनाच्च *bhavanacha* : and contemplation, न *na* : not, अभावयतः *abhavayatah* : of the men without meditation, शान्तिः च *santih cha* : and peace, न *na* : not, अशान्तस्य *asantasya* : of the peaceless, सुखम् *sukham* : happiness कुरु *kutah* : whence ?

Substance : To the man not harmonised in yoga, there is no knowledge of Self; to the unharmonised, there is no meditation, to the man without meditation there is no peace and to the man without peace, whence is happiness ?

Commentary : Whence is happiness for man without peace ? Peace and happiness go together. Happiness is in the Self, and peace unlocks the flood gates of *Atmananda*. This peace is attained by constant meditation on the Self. And meditation is possible only when the mind is in a state of balance and harmony. So the first stage is harmony and balance of mind.

Such balance and harmony is the immediate result of the purified mind. It has already been pointed out that a mind free from attraction and repulsion comes to be harmonised in yoga. So without purity, there is frequent mental agitation which makes it impossible for man to meditate on *Atma*. Through purity, mental harmony is acquired, through harmony the power of meditation is acquired, and through meditation peace and through peace, happiness. The negative form of the ideas and interrogation at the end prove that the Lord wants to emphasis these ideas for the guidance of the seeker. Peace is the important step for self-realisation.

The power of the senses is once again emphasised.

67. इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नाभिवांभसि ॥

६७

*Indriyanam hi charatam yanmano'nuvidhi rate ।
tadasya harati p ajanam vayur navam ivambhasi ॥ 67*

Meaning : चरता॑ इन्द्रियाणाम् *charatam indriyanam* : wandering senses, यत् *yat* : which, मनः *manah* : mind, अनुविधीयते *anuvidhiyate* : follows, तत् *tat* : that, अस्य *asya* : his, प्रज्ञाम् *prajnam* : discrimination, अभसि *ambhasi* : in the water, नावं *navam* : boat, वायुरिव *vayuriva* : like wind, हरति हि *harati hi* : carries away indeed.

Substance : For, the mind which follows the wandering senses carries away the discrimination, just as the gale carries away a ship upon the waters.

Commentary : The seeker should have dispassion towards sense-objects like colour, sound, form etc. If the senses are allowed freely to wander in the wilderness of the objective world, there is great danger. The mind functions through the senses which are constantly in contact with material objects. The mind by its own impurities prompts the senses to seek for enjoyment in the objective world. The mind follows the senses, and is carried away in various ways. A simile is used to illustrate the idea. The gale carries away the ship on the waters. The ship may capsize by the gale or otherwise be damaged and lost. Likewise the mind is driven away from *Atma*, and wrecked on the rocks of sensual pleasures. Even a single sense-organ is capable of pulling away the mind from the spiritual goal. If all the senses rebel, what should be the fate of that man?

Therefore the mind should be trained to think of the Self and to discriminate between the real and the unreal. If the mind is trained in this way, it can resist the temptation caused by the senses. Otherwise the mind runs after the senses. The eye sees an attractive object and the mind thinks of it. The power of discrimination is lost. When the intellect yields to the glamour of the mind, man becomes a slave to the material world. So the seeker should carefully preserve his power of discrimination and spiritual attitude, by shutting out the objective world as much as possible. We come across instances of spiritual aspirants suddenly lapsing into sense-

pleasures and ruining their chances of ultimate victory. By some amount of practice, they acquire a little steadiness of mind, and experience a little peace, but then, by their own negligence, they allow the senses to touch some material object, and the whole process of degradation starts. The mind is like a rubber ball. If the ball is let down on the top of the staircase, it rolls down step by step till it falls on the ground. The seeker therefore should not relax his vigilence even for a moment till the final goal is reached.

Question : *What is the harm if the senses and the mind wander through worldly objects ?*

Answer : They destroy the discrimination, spirituality and Godliness of the aspirant.

Therefore the man of sense-restraint alone can hope to possess steady wisdom.

68. तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

६८

*Tasmad yasya mahabaho nigrihitani sarvasah ।
indriyanindriyarthebhyah stasya prajna pratishitta ॥ 68*

Meaning: महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O Arjuna ! तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, यस्य *yasya* : whose, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, इन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः *indriyarthebhyah* : from the sense-objects, सर्वशः *sarvasah* : completely, निगृहीतानि *nigrihitani* : restrained, तस्य *tasya* : his, प्रज्ञा *prajna* : knowledge, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishitta* : (is) steady.

Substance : Therefore, O Arjuna ! his knowledge is steady whose senses are completely restrained from all sense-objects.

Commentary : It is not enough to have the senses half-restrained or partly controlled. Every effort should be made to control all the activities of the senses completely. Ceaseless vigilence and perseverance is necessary. The Lord repeatedly

states that the senses should be restrained and the mind turned towards God (*Atma*), for spiritual life. Knowledge should be steady and firm and not wavering and blithering like a lamp placed in the open. Any gust of wind may extinguish it. So are the senses. The little lamp of wisdom is put out by the power of the roving senses, and the attractions of the sense-world. The senses should be withdrawn from the sense-objects. The mind should be turned within to look into the Self. There is no use of lamenting that life is full of sorrow and suffering. The Lord is addressing such miserable mortals, and is exhorting men to take to spiritual practices and overcome sorrow and delusion.

Question : *Whose knowledge is steady ?*

Answer : The knowledge of the man who has completely controlled all the senses is firm.

The Lord explains the difference of life-experience between the yogi and the common man.

69. या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

६९

Ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami ।

yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh ॥ . 69

Meaning : सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhutanam* : for all beings, या *ya* : which (is), निशा *nisa* : night, तस्याम् *tasyam* : in it, संयमी *samyami* : the self-controlled, जागर्ति *jagarti* : wakes, यस्याम् *yasyam* : in which, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, जाग्रति *jagrati* : wake, सा *sa* : that, निशा *nisa* : night, पश्यतः *pasyatah* : of the seeing, मुनेः *muneh* : sage.

Substance : That which is night to all beings, in it the sage is awake; where all beings are awake, that is the night for the sage who sees (the Self).

Commentary : For the common man, the Self-state appears like night, because he can see nothing beyond the senses and the sense-world. What the common man calls day and wakefulness is simply the functioning of the senses

in the material world. But it is not so for the yogi who is one with the light of *Atma*. For him, the senses and the sense-world are not there, but he is fully wakeful in his experience of the Self. So what is night for the common man, is real wakefulness for the self-controlled. Similarly being awake only in the infinite light of *Atma*, seeing nothing of the objective world, the yogi finds night in the day when all beings are awake to the diversity of the objective world.

For the Yogi who sees the Self, the objective world does not exist, and so it is night. For the common man who sees the world, the Self does not appear and so it is night for him.

So the experiences of the sage and the common man are at the opposite poles. The man of knowledge knows that the objective world is like a dream, appearing to exist, but really non-existent. He is therefore utterly indifferent to the avocations of worldly life from day to day. He has developed intense dispassion and so the sense-world has no meaning for him. He does not recognise its existence. So sense-world is all night and sleep for him. But for the ignorant the objective world is the only reality. To them, this is all day and wakefulness.

Self-Controlled : The aspirant who has perfected self-restraint is mentioned here as the one capable of perceiving the Self, without the distractions of the sense-world.

The sage who realises the Self : There may be many meditating on the Self, but only a few could have direct vision. It is made quite clear that direct experience of Brahman is the goal of all spiritual *sadhana* and the *Muni* obtains it by long and continuous absorption in the Reality. But the total rejection of the sense-world can only open the vision of the Supreme. Again and again, the Lord reiterates the need for self-restraint and self-control.

Question : *What is the difference between the Self-Controlled and the common man ?*

Answer : The common man lives and moves in the material world. The sage leaves behind the objective world

and enters the subtle plane of the spirit and attains direct vision of the Truth.

In the following two verses, The Lord explains who could attain peace.

70. आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं

समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे

स शान्तिमाग्नोति न कामकामी ॥

७०

Apuryamanam achala pratistham

samudram apah pravisanti yadvat ।

tadvat kama yam pravisanti sarve

sa santim apnoti na kamakami ॥

70

Meaning : आपूर्यमानम् *apuryamanam* : filled from all sides, अचलप्रतिष्ठम् *achalapratishtham* : based in stillness, समुद्रम् *samudram* : ocean, आपः *apah* : waters, यद्वत् *yadvat* : as, प्रविशन्ति *pravisanti* : enter, तद्वत् *tadvat* : so, सर्वे *sarve* : all, कामाः *kamah* : desires, यम् *yam* : whom, प्रविशन्ति *pravisanti* : enter, सः *sah* : he, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, आग्नोति *apnoti* : attains, कामकामी *kamakami* : the desirer of desires, न *na* : not.

Substance : As the ocean is filled with water flowing into it from all sides, and remains immovable, so the man into whom all desires flow, but is not a bit affected attains peace and not the man who craves the desires.

Commentary : The man who is moved by desires and pleasures cannot attain peace. He alone attains peace who has conquered all desires.

The man of steady wisdom, the *sthitaprajna* is compared to the ocean. Though the waters of the ocean are drawn up by the sun in the form of clouds, it is not reduced in any way. So also, though rains and floods join the ocean, it does not expand. It remains the same, immovable. In the same way, the sage of steady wisdom remains unmoved, when all desires

flow into him without producing any reactions of the mind or the body. All the enjoyments of the sense-world may come to him, but they are all absorbed in the blissfull experience of the Self. He does not recognise them as anything other than the bliss of Self-realisation. He may be put in a palace surrounded by all earthly pleasures. And yet he is indifferent to them. He knows only one Reality one happiness, in which everything is dissolved as all the waters are absorbed by the ocean. Similarly the sage may be placed in the most painful circumstances and yet he knows only one Reality and one happiness (*Ananda*). The pain also merges into the same reality and disappears.

The *Jnani* has dispassion towards the pleasures of the material world. If there is the least trace of desire for this or that, he is still not a sage. The real *Jnani* is like the ocean, vast, and full. He is filled with the bliss of *Brahmananda*. And just as the ocean is full and immovable, the *Jnani* is firm, immovable, and changeless, in all the states and conditions of life.

Small wells, tanks, and reservoirs are not like the ocean. When floods come, they overflow, cut the bund and cause damage. When there is drought, they dry up and look like empty pits. They change. But the ocean is changeless. The ignorant man is upset one way or the other by the pleasures and sufferings of life. They are distracted both when pleasures come, and when suffering falls to their lot.

The ocean does not seek for augmenting its water from rains and rivers. They come and the ocean simply absorbs them. That is all. The *Jnani* also does not seek for anything. When Providence brings pleasures, he absorbs them into his own *Brahmananda*, and remains unaffected.

So those who desire for peace should constantly meditate on the last line of this verse. They should root out all the secret desires from their heart and fix their mind in the one Reality and the one Bliss that exists everywhere. The seeker should be desireless (*akamakami*).

Question : Who enjoys peace ?

Answer : The desireless man who like the ocean, absorbs into himself all the pleasures and enjoyments attains peace.

71. विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

७१

*Vihaya kaman yah sarvan pumamscharati nisprahah
nirmamo nirahamkarah sa santim adhigacchati ॥ 71*

Meaning : यः पुमान् *yah puman* : that man, सर्वान् *sarvan* : all, कामान् *kaman* : desires, विहाय *vihaya* : leaving : निःस्पृहः *nisprihah* : having no relish for them, निर्ममः *nirmamah* : without feeling of I and mine, निरहङ्कारः *nirahankarah* : ego-less, चरति *charata* : moves about, सः *sah* : he, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : The man who abandoning all desires lives without any relish for them, and without any feeling of I and mine, attains peace.

Commentary : Arjuna asked the Lord four questions about the *Sthitaprajna* - (1) What are his qualities ? (2) What does he speak ? (3) How does he move ? (4) How does he act ?

From the 55 th verse till the end of the discourse, all the qualities mentioned constitute the general character of the sage of steady wisdom.

In this verse again the Lord speaks of the man who attains peace. Four important conditions are to be fulfilled before man could experience the supreme peace of the Self.

- (1) All desires should be given up completely.
- (2) There should not be any taste or relish for them.
- (3) The feeling of *me* and *mine* should be given up.
- (4) The ego-centre attitude should be dropped.

The Lord repeats at the end what He has affirmed at the beginning of his estimate of the *sthitaprajna*. The word all (*Sarvam*) is repeated emphatically many times, to show that all desires should be given up without any exception. Even if there is a single left in the mind, it grows and grows and binds man in *samsara*.

It is not enough to give up desires and sense pleasures externally. The seeker should not think of them even, nor entertain any longing for them.

The ego-centric attitude which is the root cause of bondage should be eliminated by knowledge of the real Self. It is the ego which attaches itself to the body and forges all the bonds of friends, relations, enemies and so on. It is because of the ego-centric attitude that Arjuna was overpowered by delusion and sorrow at the thought of killing his people *svajanam* in battle. When the man does not identify himself with the body, all other attachments arising from the body are removed completely. When the body is not his, how can he have any attachment for things outside the body ? Knowledge of the real Self clears away all doubts and perplexities, and then peace is attained.

We note once again that the general term anybody (*yah*) is used here, implying that wisdom is not the monopoly of persons belonging to any particular caste or creed. Whoever follows the Lord and the way shown by him will attain peace.

Question : Who can attain peace ?

Answer : The man who has given up all desires, who has no longing for enjoyments, who has abandoned the idea of *mine* and who has transcended the ego, attains peace.

In conclusion the Lord declares that Brahmi state once acquired removes all delusion for ever.

72. एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थं नैनां प्राप्य विमुद्धति ।
स्थित्वाऽस्यमन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्गणमृच्छति ॥

72. *Esha brahmisthitih partha
nai'nam prapya vimuhyati ।
sthitva'syamantakale'pi
brahma nirvana mricchati ॥*

72

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna, एषा *esha* : this, ब्राह्मीस्थितिः *brahmi sthitih* : (is) state of Brahman, एनाम् *enam* : this, प्राप्य *prapya* : having obtained, नविमुह्यति *nayimuhyati* : is not deluded, अन्तकालेऽपि *antakale'pi* : even at the end of life, अस्याम् *asyam* : in this, स्थित्वा *sthitva* : being established, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *brahmanirvanam* : one-ness with Brahman (i.e.) Moksha, ऋच्छति *ricchati* : attains.

Substance : Having obtained this Brahmi state man is not deluded. Being established in this even at the end of life man attains oneness with Brahman (*Moksha*).

Commentary : The final goal of Vedanta is set forth here. All the practices—restraint of the senses, mind-control, abandoning all ego-centric thoughts and feelings, having no consciousness of me and mine lead to the ultimate union of the individual being with the Supreme Self. The individual who thought of himself, as a separate entity now realises that he is no other than the Self, which is the Reality in himself and in all beings. This is the Brahmi-state. By constant meditation on the Self, the individual being becomes that, even as the worm becomes the bee by contemplating on it deeply and continuously. When the Brahmi-state is reached, all delusions cease, all doubts are cleared. The absolute Truth is realised.

The Lord declares that the sage who has attained this state, will not be subject to delusion at any time thereafter.

Even at the end of life : It does not mean that man attains the Brahmi-state in the last moments of his life. It means that he retains the supreme state even at the end of life. Such a man attains *Moksha*, the highest state of freedom

and bliss. It is not possible to reach that state in the last moments of life, if one had not struggled for it through a whole life-time by performing *sadhana*. Even in old age one should retain the memory of the supreme realisation. What is acquired by long practice should be kept fresh in the mind, even in the last moments of one's life. The body and mind are weak in old age. So the practice (*sadhana*) should begin when one is young and strong. The bad tendencies (*samskaras*) should be gradually eliminated. The mind should be purified and turned towards the Self, and constant meditation on the Self will lead to *samadhi*, and in *samadhi* man realises his oneness with Brahman.

The Lord declares that He should be remembered at all times, not simply at the time of death. Moreover what one thinks of and practises during a whole life-time would be in the mind at the last moments. So continuous practice is necessary. No one can say when the end may come. So uninterrupted *sadhana* should go on from day to day, even from childhood. Then it does not matter when the end comes. He will be ready to face it because he knows the Truth.

So, instead of wasting time in foolish pursuits and vain endeavours, let the seeker start the *sadhana* at once and realise the Truth.

Question : *What is the Brahmi-state ?*

Answer : Oneness with Bahman, acquired through conquest of desires, Self-control, meditation on *Atma*, is the Brahmi state.

Question : *When should a man posses this state ?*

Answer : At all times, including the moments of death, man should retain this experience.

Question : *What will it lead to ?*

Answer : The individual being attains *Moksha*, the state of supreme freedom and bliss.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे साङ्ख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade samkhya yogo
nama dvitiyo'dhyayah ॥*

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Second Discourse, entitled-Samkhya Yoga (The yoga of knowledge)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ तृतीयोऽध्यायः

Atha Tritiyodhyayah

THE THIRD DISCOURSE

कर्म योगः

KARMA YOGA

THE YOGA OF ACTION

The title of the Discourse :

No one can live without doing some work or other. All men should do their prescribed duties without any feeling of personal attachment. They should perform them in a spirit of dedication to the Lord. Why man should carry out his duties in the world ? What harm would result from their non-performance ? What good would be gained by doing them ? How work binds man, how it leads man to liberation-these problems are prescribed and solved in this Discourse, and so it is entitled Karma Yoga.

Main Points of the Discourse :

- 1) Proving that detached performance of prescribed duties is the best way of life. (1-8)
- 2) Showing that work done without desire to enjoy the fruits is Yoga, and the need for *yajna* in the world. (9-16)
- 3) Stating that the sage of knowledge and God work for the good of humanity and the creation. (17-24)

- 4) Differentiating the wise and the ignorant, and exhorting men to work free from attachments and revulsion. (25-35)
- 5) Describing *Kama* and *Krodha*, and pointing out the way to conquer them. (36-48)

The connection between this Discourse and the previous one :

In the Sankhya Yoga, the Lord taught Arjuna the highest spiritual Truth. In the middle of the discourse reference is made to Nishkama Karma. At the end, the characteristic features of the Sthitaprajna are described. Once again, at the end, the highest aspect of knowledge, perfect control of the body, senses and mind, the highest state of spiritual illumination and the experience of the Supreme Brahman—these are described with wonderful force. Hearing it, Arjuna naturally thought that spiritual wisdom was the last goal of man, and asks the Lord why he is placing him in the field of action in the midst of a dreadful battle. This question is answered in the present Discourse.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्कं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥

१

Arjuna uvacha

*Jyayasi chetkarmanaste mata buddhir janardana ।
tatkim karmani ghore mam niyojayasi kesava ॥* १

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said :

Meaning : जनार्दन *janardana* : O Krishna ! बुद्धिः *buddhiḥ* : knowledge, कर्मणः *karmanah* : to action, ज्यायसी *jayasi* : superior, ते *te* : your, मताचेत् *mata chet* : belief (is), तत् *tat* : then, केशव *kesva* : O Krishna ! घोरे *ghore* : in dreadful, कर्मणि *karmani* : action (battle), माम् *mam* : me, नियोजयसि *niyojayasi* : you engage, किम् *kim* : why.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! If your belief is that knowledge is superior to action, then why do you engage me in this dreadful act of battle ?

Commentary : In verses 49, 50, 51 of Samkhya Yoga, the Lord declared the superiority of knowledge to action. The doubt might have crept into Arjuna's mind even then. But the Lord proceeded to speak of *samadhi*, and the ultimate union of the individual with *Paramatma*, and hence Arjuna simply put the question about the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna*. The lord answered the question and explained the highest *Brahmi Sthiti* and the Samkhya Yoga comes to an end with it. Now Arjuna wanted to have the doubt cleared by the Lord, how he should reconcile the two paths of knowledge (*Jnana* and work (*Karma*)). So he presents his doubt in the first two verses.

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

२

*Vyamisrena'va vakyena buddhim mohayasi'va me'
tadekam vada nischitya yena sreyo'ham apnuyam ॥ 2*

Meaning : व्यामिश्रेण *vyamisrena* : perplexing, एव *iva* : as it were, वाक्येन *vakyena* : by expression, मे *me* : my, बुद्धिम् *buddhim* : intellect, मोहयसीव *mohayasiva* : confuse as it were, अहम् *aham* : I, येन *yena* : by which, श्रेयः *sreyah* : bliss, आप्नुयाम् *apnuyam* : may attain, तदेकम् *tadekam* : that one (either knowledge or action), निश्चित्य *nischitya* : for certain, वद *vada* : tell.

Substance : You confuse my intellect as it were with speech which appears paradoxical. Tell me decisively that one path by which I may attain the highest.

Commentary : The word *iva* (as it were) is used twice in this verse. It means that Arjuna has full faith in the Lord, that he is not actually puzzling the intellect, but that, out of

his own ignorance, it appears to him that the two doctrines of *Jnana* and *Karma* are contradictory to each other. Hence with child-like innocence, Arjuna wants to know for certain what course would be best for him to attain the highest.

In answer to Arjuna's questions, the Lord states the two paths leading to liberation.

श्री भगवानुवाच

3. लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विधा निष्ठा पुरा ग्रोक्ता मयानघ ।
ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥

३

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Loke'smin dvividha nistha pura prokta maya'nagha ।
jnayanayogena samkhyanam karmayogena yoginam ॥ 3*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : अनघ *anagha* : O Sinless Arjuna ! पुरा *pura* : formerly, लोकेऽस्मिन् *loke'smin* : in this world, मया *maya* : by me, सांख्यानाम् *samkhyanam* : of the samkhyas, ज्ञानयोगेन *jnanayogena* : by the path of knowledge, योगिनाम् *yoginam* : of the yogins, कर्मयोगेन *karma yogina* : by the path of action, द्विधा *dvividha* : two-fold, निष्ठा *nishta* : path, ग्रोक्ता *prokta* : spoken.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O sinless Arjuna ! In ancient times two paths of spiritual description were spoken by me—the *Jnana yoga* for the followers of the path of knowledge, and *Karma yoga* for the followers of the path of action.

Commentary : *O Sinless* : Arjuna is free from sin. So he is fully qualified to receive the highest wisdom. When the cloth is clean, it can be dyed in any colour. The Lord knew the purity of Arjuna's mind, and therefore he chose to teach him *Brahma Vidya*.

Each individual, according to his ingrained disposition, seeks the path which is congenial to his nature. Some are born with an intellectual frame of mind and the path for him is that of enquiring into the Self (*Jnanayoga*). For these the Lord taught the path of knowledge. Others are born with a practical temperament, and they love action. For them, the Lord pointed out another path—*karma yoga*. Each man is perfectly free to choose his own path. There is no compulsion. Any course of imposed discipline will go against nature, and will not yield the desired result. There may be many roads leading to the same destination. There may be different routes to climb up a peak. Any route will ultimately take the people to the top of the mountain. So the Lord here declares that man may follow any path which is agreeable to his character and reach the goal. Though in the Gita several yogas are stated, all of them can be brought under these two main divisions—*Jnana Yoga* and *Karma Yoga*.

The Lord says that he taught the two-fold path in times immemorial. So he is beyond time and place. He is *Paramatma*, appearing in the form of Sri Krishna and teaching the highest wisdom to humanity.

Question : *What are the two paths of spiritual discipline ?*

Answer : Sankhya yoga, the path of knowledge and Karma yoga, the path of work, are the two types of discipline taught by the Lord.

Liberation cannot be attained by merely giving up work.

4. न कर्मणामनारम्भानैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽस्तुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

४

*Na karmanam anarambhan naiskarmyam purusho'snute !
na cha sannyasanat eva siddhim samadhidgacchati ॥ 4*

Meaning : पुरुषः *purushah* : man, कर्मणाम् *karmanam* : of action, अनारम्भात् *anarambhah* : from non-performance, नैष्कर्म्यम् *naishkarmyam* : the actionless state of Brahman,

न अश्नुते *na asnute* : does not reach, सन्यसनादेव *sannyasanat eva* : from renunciation only, सिद्धिम् *siddhim* : perfection, न च समधिगच्छति *nacha samadhibigacchati* : and (man) does not attain.

Substance : Man does not reach the actionless state of Brahman by mere non-performance of work, nor does he attain perfection by renunciation only.

Commentary : The first line of the verse refers to *Karma Yoga* and the second line to *Jnana Yoga*.

By simply declining to do the prescribed duties, man cannot reach the still, actionless state of Brahman. In the same way, by merely adopting the external formalities of *Sanyasa*, no man can attain liberation. What is needed for perfection is purity of mind.

Unless work is done without attachment there cannot be purity of mind; without purity knowledge of *Atma* will not dawn; without knowledge, there is no *Moksha* (liberation). Therefore the Lord here declares that there is no *Moksha* for the man who does not work. In the beginning all seekers should undertake some form of work and learn to do it without hankering after the fruits thereof, and in the final stages they attain experience of Self. No one gains *Moksha* by merely giving up work. If that is so, the idlers would be the greatest philosophers of the world ! On the other hand, such men fall deeper into the mire of *tamas*, and it would take many births for them to lift themselves up from the bog of inaction. Many ignorant people imagine that when they give up work, they simply attain *Moksha*, and on account of this misconception, lose worldly prosperity as much as spiritual progress. They are neither *Karmayogis* or *Jnanayogis*. They are neither useful to the world nor to themselves, nor can they move an inch towards perfection. It is absolutely necessary to understand the position correctly.

The path of spiritual progress is slow and gradual. Sudden illumination never occurs except in very rare cases.

Every one should pass from *tamas* to *rajas*, from *rajas* to *sattva*, and from *sattva* to *pure sattva*, when Self is realised. The first step is the performance of prescribed duties by so disciplining the body and mind that they take to action easily and naturally. Therefore the Lord here declares that the final experience of Brahman is not an easily attainable objective by merely giving up one's duties. Work should be done, without attachment. That is the trumpet call of the Lord. Moreover it is utterly useless to renounce work while all the inherent tendencies of the mind and heart are actively and powerfully functioning in their own way without any check or control. Nothing good can come from mere external renunciation of action. The spiritual aim cannot be achieved by that.

The question is not whether to work or give up work. The main issue is how to get inner purity of mind and heart, how to eradicate the evil impulses and instincts which have taken root in the depths of the human personality. Towards this end, the Lord prescribes selfless work. He exhorts all men to undertake some form of good work and do it without any motive of gain or profit, and with a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Question : *What is the way to attain Moksha ?*

Answer : *Moksha* cannot be attained either by non-performance of work or by external renunciation.

Question : *How then can Moksha be attained ?*

Answer : By purifying the mind through *nishkama karma*, Moksha can be attained.

It is physically impossible to give up work, for man is prompted to act by the qualities of nature.

5. न हि कश्चित्काणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥

५

*Na hi kaschit kshanamapi jatu tisthatyakarmakrit ।
karyate hyavashah karma sarvah prakritijair gunaih ॥ 5*

Meaning : कथित् *kaschit* : any one, जातु *jatu* : verily, श्वणमपि *kshanamapi* : even a moment, अकर्मकृत् *akarmakrit* : without performing action, नहि तिष्ठति *nahi tishtathi* : not remains, हि *hi* : because, प्रकृतिजैः *prakritijaih* : (by) born of prakriti (Maya), गुणैः *gunaih* : by qualities, सर्वः *sarvah* : every one, अवशः *avasah* : without his will, कर्म *karma* : action, कार्यते *karyate* : is made to do.

Substance : No one can live even for a moment without doing work. Every one without his will, is made to do work by the qualities born of *Prakriti*.

Commentary : No one can live without work even for a second. Breathing is work, eating is work, walking is work, talking is work. So it is known to all that work is a part of life itself.

Except the *Jnani*, every one else is subject to *Maya* (*Prakriti*). And the impulses of the mind compell all people to do some kind of work or other according to their nature. The scholar cannot live without study of books. The idler cannot live without aimless wandering. The learned and the ignorant are acting under the power of the qualities born of *Prakriti*. Each according to his nature is doing some work or other, over which he has no control. The law applies to all beings in the world. Animals and birds work according to their nature. Each has its own peculiar characteristics. Man being endowed with reason (*buddhi*) may choose the work, but what is chosen is also according to his nature. So it is true that all are prompted by *Prakriti*. Here the word *sarvah* is used with only the single exception of the *Jnani*, who has become a *Jivanmukta* by direct realisation of the Supreme, having attained the *Brahmi-sthiti* the *Jnani* transcends the *gunas*, and so he is not moved by the impulses arising from the qualities of nature. But since he has a body which is the instrument of *Prakriti*, he uses it just for maintaining life. He is perfectly detached from the vehicle of action.

The ignorant people who are every minute dragged and whirled about in all directions by the forces of nature need not however be discouraged. They should first of all understand that they have become slaves to certain modes of thought and action which they have themselves created in previous births. Knowing it, they should undertake some form of discipline, and by their own effort overcome bad karma by good karma, surrender the fruits of work to the Lord, and gradually purify their mind, and become *Jeevan-muktas* in the end.

Repression of external organs, while contemplating sense-objects within, is false discipline.

6. कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥

६

Karmendriyani samyamya ya aste manasa smaran ।

indriyarthan vimudhatma mithyacharah sa uchyate ॥

6

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, कर्मेन्द्रियाणि *karmendriyani* : the organs of action, संयम्य *samyamya* : restraining, मनसा *manasa* : with the mind, इन्द्रियार्थान् *indriyarthan* : sense objects, स्मरन् *smaran* : contemplating, आस्ते *aste* : sits, विमूढात्मा *vimudhatma* : of deluded understanding, सः *sah* : he, मिथ्याचारः *mithyacharah* : a hypocrite, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : The man of deluded understanding who, restraining the organs of action, sits contemplating the sense-objects with the mind is called a hypocrite.

Commentary : This is the Lord's warning to those aspirants who renounce action before attaining complete self-mastery.

Restraining : This is not the true self-restraint of the real seeker. Some pretenders to spirituality appear outwardly pure by keeping back the instruments of action from their natural functions. Such external repression does not

lead man to higher planes of spiritual life. Hypocrites appear like *sanyasis* in their outward life while their mind and heart are defiled by low motives and sensual desires. Such pretenders are found in large numbers everywhere. They have brought disrepute to religion.

The sincere seeker is prompted by the noble aim of realising the truth of religion. Of course in the early stages of *Sadhana*, while the external organs are kept in check, the mind wanders about enjoying sense-pleasures in recollections and imaginations. But his aim is to wash the mind of all its impurities both by internal and external restraint. The pretender has no such aim. His object is merely to use religion as a means of livelihood and social prestige. There is a world of difference between the real *sadhu* and the hypocrite.

Let not the seeker fall into the delusion that the battle with the evil forces is over simply by restraining the organs of action. He should restrain the mind. It is the nature of the mind to wander at random through the objective world, feeding on sensual delights. This has become a mental habit on account of former indulgence in sense-pleasures. Slowly the habit should be changed. Perseverance is necessary. Nothing can be done in a day. Repeated effort over a long period will surely change the mental attitude.

When a seeker undertakes a spiritual practice, he should clearly understand the method and purpose of the *sadhana*. Otherwise he moves in the wrong direction. He should learn the principles and practice from experienced teachers. It is not enough to know that sense-organs should be restrained. He should understand its implications. Of what use is it to restrain the sense-organs when the mind is thinking and enjoying all the forbidden pleasures of the body? The Lord emphatically declares that the purpose of restraining the senses is to purify the mind. Sense-control is not an end in itself. It is the means to an end, the end being purity of mind.

Of deluded understanding : The wrong practice of the hypocrite is an act of self-delusion. The sense organs and the organs of action have no power to know or experience the objects of the world. It is only when the mind is attached to the senses and the body that sensuous experience is derived. So sense-control should go hand in hand with mind control. Rather mind-control comes first and sense-control in effect takes place as a natural sequence. When the mind is kept under control, there is no harm even if the body and the senses move about in the world to obtain the bare necessities of life. The next verse clarifies the position.

Question : What is *mithyachara* ?

Answer : Restraining the organs of action, and allowing the mind to wander about in the material world is *mithyachara*.

He is the best who gives up attachment in the mind and works without desire.

7. यस्त्वन्दियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥

७

*Yastvindriyani manasa niyamya'rabhate'rjuna !
karmendriyah karmayogam asaktah sa visishyate ॥ 7*

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! तु tu : but, यः yah : who, इन्द्रियाणि indriyani : the senses, मनसा manasa : with the mind, नियम्य niyamya : controlling, कर्मेन्द्रियैः karmendriyah : with the organs of action, कर्मयोगम् karma-yogam : karma yoga, असक्तः asaktah : without attachment, आरभते arabhate : commences, सः sah : he, विशिष्यते visishyate : is the best.

Substance : But, O Arjuna ! he who controls the senses with the mind, and commences the discipline of *Karma yoga* by his organs of action without attachment, is the best.

Commentary : Both the organs of action and inner instruments of cognition are included in the practice of *karma yoga*. Then only the discipline is complete. It is the mind that moves the bodily organs of action and the sense-organs of perception. So the mind should be kept detached from desire and longing for material pleasures. Such a man does his prescribed work without any desire for personal enjoyment.

The senses and instruments of action should be under the control of the mind, and the mind should be under one's control. Bondage results from mental attachment to material objects, whether the body and the senses work or remain inactive. So the point is how to keep the mind free from becoming entangled in the meshes of the material world. Such freedom is its *Moksha*. So the Lord here says that, when the mind is kept free and pure, though a man moves and works in the world, he is not affected by it at all. Keeping the mind in a pure and harmonised state comes first, and the control of the body and the senses follow as a natural effect. Great men have done immortal work for the benefit of humanity by following this law.

Question : *What is Karma Yoga ?*

Answer : Control of body and senses by the mind, and doing selfless work in the world is *Karma Yoga*.

*The Lord commands that work prescribed by the *Sastras* should be performed.*

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

*Niyatam kuru karmyatam karma jyayo hyakarmanah ।
sarirayatra'pi cha te na prasiddhye dakarmanah ॥ 8*

Meaning : त्वम् *tvam* : you, नियतम् *niyatam* : prescribed by the *Sastras*, कर्म *karma* : work, कुरु *kuru* : do, अकर्मणः *akarmanah* : to inaction, कर्म *karma* : work, ज्यायोहि *jyayohi* :

is superior indeed, अकर्मणः akarmanah : by inaction, ते te : your, सरीरयात्रापिच् sarirayatrapicha : and even maintainance of body, न प्रसिद्ध्येत् na prasidhyet : would not be possible.

Substance : Doing the work prescribed by the Sastras is superior to inaction. By inaction even maintainance of the body for you would not be possible.

Commentary : *Do the work prescribed by the Sastras :* This is the Lord's direct answer to Arjuna's appeal—*tell me decisively one path (tadeham vada nishechitya)* (3-2).

The work prescribed by the Sastras should be performed. By it, the mind becomes purified and the Self is realised in the end. Nothing comes from inaction. Work certainly is superior to inaction. By inaction, even bodily existence is impossible. The Lord commands Arjuna to be up and active in the performance of his duty.

It is befitting the universality of the Gita to give to this word *karma* a larger interpretation than mere performance of ritual. Man is continuously acting in various fields of personal, social, and national life. He is at work in the house, in the office or factory, in the co-operation endeavour of national projects. All this is *karma*. The Lord's observation that even physical existence becomes impossible by inaction, should be understood as a call to the nation to work and work hard for its own and universal benefit. The world today needs men capable of and dedicated to work. Each one in his own field has to do work and more work as much as possible for him to do.

Question : *What is superior ? Work or inaction ?*

Answer : Work is superior.

Question : *What type of work?*

Answer : Work prescribed by the Sastras.

Question : *What harm would be caused by inaction ?*

Answer : Without work, the mind cannot be purified, and self-realisation is not possible. Even physical existence becomes impossible by inaction.

The way to release oneself from the bondage of karma is pointed out.

9. यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥

*Yajnarthatkarmano'nyatra
loko 'yam karmabandhanah ।
tadartham karma kaunteya
muktasangah samachara ॥*

9

Meaning : कौन्तेय kaunteya : O! Arjuna, यज्ञार्थात् *yajnarthat* : than for the sake of sacrifice (to please God or some mankind), कर्मणः *karmanah* : of action, अन्यत्र *anyatra* : otherwise, अपलोकः *ayam lokah* : this world (men), कर्मबन्धनः *karmabandhanah* : bound by karma, (therefore) तदर्थम् *tadartham* : for sacrifice, कर्म *karma* : work, मुक्तसङ्गः *muktasangah* : unattached, समाचर *samachara* : do well.

Substance : O Arjuna! Works other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice (*Yajna*) binds this world. So perform work for sacrifice without attachment.

Commentary : The teacher of the Gita gives new interpretations to familiarise terms like *yajna*, *sannyasa*, *tyaga* etc. Ordinarily *yajna* means a certain form of ritual, accompanied with the sacred fire, oblations, *mantras* and *tantras* and other rites. The Lord defines the word as an 'act performed with no selfish motive for the service of humanity. Whatever may be the scope of the work, great or small, if it is done as an act of dedication to God and service to beings, it becomes a *yajna*. This is within the capacity of all men to perform and acquire merit. Generally it is a mistaken view to think that *karma* binds men to *Samsara*. And even if it is

good work, man has to be born again and again to enjoy the fruits of such *karma*. They argue that *karma* should be given up. But the Lord clears this misconception. When *karma* is done with the desire of enjoying its fruits, it binds man to the wheel of birth and death. What is done without desire and attachment cannot bind man. On the other hand, it purifies the mind and heart and leads to ultimate freedom.

Work done with attachment binds; the same work performed without attachment, liberates. Work performed as dedicated to God or as service to mankind liberates. So there is nothing evil in work as such. The evil lies in the personal motive behind it—the desire for reward and enjoyment.

The Lord exhorts Arjuna to work intensely (*samachara*). But he wants his disciple to understand the principle behind work. One should understand it correctly and go into action. Otherwise he is caught in the meshes of *karma*. The law of work is thus explained here—(1) *Yajna* should be done as an act of dedication to God and as service to humanity. (2) *Yajna* should be done without any attachment for the fruits thereof. Work done in this spirit, though it is of a common quality is transformed into a great *yajna*. Work then becomes worthier. It purifies and liberates.

Question : *What kind of karma does not bind ?*

Answer : Work dedicated to God and humanity, and performed without desire for its fruits, does not cause bondage.

The miraculous power of Yajna is stated.

10. सहयज्ञः प्रजाः सृष्टा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेषवोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥

१०

*Sahayajnah prajah sristva purovacha prajapatih !
aneni prasavisyadhyam eshavo'stvishtha kamadhuk ॥ 10*

Meaning : प्रजापतिः *prajapatih* : Brahma (Creator), पुरा
pura : in the beginning, सहयज्ञाः *sahayajnah* : together with
 sacrifice, प्रजाः *prajah* : mankind, सृष्टा *srishtva* : having
 created, अनेन *anena* : by this, प्रसविष्यध्वम् *prasavishyadhyam* :
 shall you propagate, एषः *eshaḥ* : this (yajna), वः *vah* : to
 you, इष्टकामधुक् *ishtakamadhuk* : milk-cow of desires, अस्तु
asti : let be, उवाच *uvacha* : said.

Substance : Having created mankind together with *yagna* in the beginning, Brahma (Creator) said - "By this shall you propagate; it shall be to you the milk-cow of desires, the wish-fulfilling heavenly cow *Kamadhenu*."

Commentary : The moment when mankind was created, that very moment the ways and means for their prosperity and freedom were also brought into the world. The Lord's mercy is infinite. He knew that man would plunge into all kinds of action and get himself caught in the wheel of *samsara*, and suffer pain and sorrow endlessly. So along with man, the Creator introduced into the world several types of *yajnas* which would help mankind in their journey through life to final perfection.

Yajna means an act of dedication to God or service to humanity or meditation on God the Supreme Reality.

Milk-cow of desires : The *yajna* is said to yield all the good things that man needs in his journey through life. Man needs above every thing else the removal of sorrow and the attainment of peace. They can be achieved by performing *yajna*. Therefore it is compared to the wish-fulfilling *Kamadhenu* of Heaven. Not only the spiritual welfare of mankind, but also their material prosperity is answered by the performance of *yajna*.

Question : What did Brahma create along with mankind?

Answer : Yajna-good and godly works.

Question *What is its use?*

Answer : It helps the spiritual growth of man and like the *Kamadhenu*, it confers all the good things of life here and hereafter.

11. देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥

११

*Devan bhavayata'nena te deva bhavayantu vah !
parasparam bhavayantah sreyah param avapsyatha ॥ 11*

Meaning : अनेन *anena* : with yajna, देवान् *devan* : the Gods, भावयत *bhavayata* : nourish, ते देवाः *te devah* : those gods, वः *vah* : you, भावयन्तु *bhavayantu* : nourish, परस्परम् *parasparam* : one another, भावयन्तः *bhavayantah* : nourishing, परम् *param* : the highest, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good, अवाप्स्यथ *avapsyatha* : (both men and Gods) shall attain.

Substance : Nourish the Gods with *Yajna*, and they shall nourish you, and thus nourishing one another both men and Gods you shall attain the highest good.

Commentary : It is the Supreme Lord who appears in the form of different Gods (shining ones) embodying the multifarious powers of the One, ruler of the Universe. So whom-so-ever one worships, without desiring for any material benefits, he is liberated by the mercy of the Supreme Being.

Highest good : In the world there are many things good and enjoyable, like wealth, children, popularity, prosperity etc. Of all these, the highest good, namely liberation, is attained by the worship of the Supreme Being, by the worship of the Truth which is covered up by the inscrutable power of *Maya*. Man's effort and God's grace are both necessary for liberation.

Even in the common affairs of life, the man who Nunks himself with the Lord finds protection from dangers in the

daily turmoil of life, and obtains alround prosperity. Better it is to depend on the Lord than on ordinary mortals who are subject to all the ills of life. They may help or not help according to their self-interest. In any away such contact with mortal benefactors comes to an end with death. The contact with the Lord continues forever and if man's devotion is intense enough, he is liberated even in this birth.

Question : *How can man attain highest good ?*

Answer : Man attains the highest good by desireless performance of *yajna*.

He who does not offer to the Gods the things which they have given him is indeed a thief.

12. इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥

१२

*Istan bhoganih yo deva dasyante yajnabhavithah ।
tairdattanapradayai'bhyo yo bhunkte stena evasah ॥ 12*

Meaning : यज्ञभाविताः *yajnabhavithah* : nourished by *yajna*, देवाः *devah* : the Shining Ones (Gods), वः *vah* : to you, इष्टान् *ishtam* : desirable, भोगान् *bhogam* : enjoyments, दास्यन्ते हि *dasyante hi* : give indeed, तैः *taih* : by them, दत्तान् *dattan* : given, एभ्यः *ebhyah* : to them, अप्रदाय *apradya* : without offering, यः *yah* : who, भुङ्क्ते *bhunkte* : enjoys, सः *sah* : he, स्तेनः *stenah* : thief, एव *eva* : verily.

Substance : Nourished by sacrifice, the Gods give to you desirable enjoyments. He who enjoys objects given by the Gods without offering them is verily a thief.

Commentary : When the Gods are worshipped by means of sacrifice, they confer on mankind many material blessings and prevent many material calamities. He who enjoys these material things without offering them to the Gods or to fellow-

beings in the form of God, is indeed a thief, because he enjoys objects without paying the price for them. Food, water, air and other things which we use belong to God. They are not manufactured by us. What we call the discoveries and inventions of modern science are but combinations and modifications of things already created, and the utilisation of powers already present in nature. In fact, even the intelligence of man is itself the gift of God. So from first to last, in every way, and for every thing, man is indebted to God. Any one who forgets to offer Him what belongs to him only, should be regarded as a thief. Gratitude and devotion are the proper price that one should pay to enjoy the fruits of life. Offering them to God or to fellow beings is the first duty for all mankind. Otherwise people will lay themselves open to the charge of being robbers and dacoits who misappropriate what does not belong to them.

How many people follow this law ? Of what avail is it to acquire name and fame, wealth and learning in the eyes of humanity, when in the eyes of God people are only thieves and robbers ? Moreover, even in this earthly life, the thief is condemned and punished. If so, will there be no punishment when one robs things belonging to God ? They shall of course pay the full penalty for such misappropriation. So let the seekers who desire to win the grace of God make it their duty to give something to the fellow mortals (*dana*) — a morsel of food or a cup of water to the needy every day before they enjoy the food. Let them offer their whole to God, and think that nothing belongs to them. All is offered to God in the spirit of *Brahmarpanam* or *Sarvam Sri Krishnarpanam isthu*. Thus one repays the debt of gratitude that he owes to God for the innumerable blessings which He has conferred on mankind.

Question : *What do the Gods give us ?*

Answer : Nourished by sacrifice, they give us desirable objects.

Question : *What is man's duty then ?*

Answer : He should offer them to God.

Question : What is he who does not do so ?

Answer : He is verily a thief.

The good arising from offering to the Gods and the evil of not doing so is stated —

13. यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥

१३

*Yajnasishtasinhah santo muchyante sarvakilbishaiah
bhunjate te tvagham papa ye pachanti atmakaranat ॥ 13*

Meaning : यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः *yajnasishtasinhah* : who eat the remnants of sacrifice, सन्तः *santah* : the righteous, सर्वकिल्बिषैः *sarvakilbhishaih* : from all sins, मुच्यन्ते *muchyante* : are freed, येतु *yetu* : those indeed, आत्मकरणात् *atmakaranat* : for their own sake, पचन्ति *pachanti* : cook (food), पापाः *papah* : (are) sinners, ते *te* : they, अघम् *aghām* : sin, भुञ्जते *bhunjate* : eat.

Substance : The righteous who offer food to the Gods in sacrifice and eat the remnants, are freed from all sins. But those who cook food to satisfy their own needs, are sinners and verily eat sin.

Commentary : To cherish the Gods by offering food to them in sacrifice or to offer food to fellow mortals—the poor and hungry—and then to eat the remnants is an act of righteousness capable of destroying all sins. Not one or two sins, but all the horrible sins of man are cleansed by this act of divine or human offering. We understand from this what a powerful antidote *yajna* is to destroy all types of accumulated sins. Divine offering, compassionate relief given to suffering fellow-beings,—this is the best remedy to kill all sins. So it is said in the Esava yopanishad—

“From what you have, give something as sacrifice to the Gods or other fellow beings, and eat the remaining portion.”

The selfish who cooks and eats all to satisfy his own bodily needs, is indeed eating not food, but sin ! Such men accumulate sin. They eat and digest sin. and they become living embodiments of sin. So it is clear that sacrifice leads to the highest good and selfishness leads to the worst sin and suffering. Such food not offered to the Gods or fellow beings is poison, though it is the richest and the most relishing. And that food sacrificed to Gods and offered to fellow beings is nectar though it is simple boiled rice and water.

According to Vedic traditions, man commits five kinds of sin each day by the use of (1) the broomstick, (2) the waterpot, (3) the mortar and pestle, (4) the grinding stone, and (5) the oven. To eliminate these sins, the *Pancha mahayajnas* are prescribed. They are (1) Deva Yajna, (2) Brahma Yajna, (3) Pitri Yajna, (4) Nri yajna, and (5) Bhuta Yajna.

The Vedic tradition has prescribed many types of *yajnas* to eliminate the sins committed in the course of innumerable births. The generalisation is that *all sins* would be cleared by sacrifice. All acts performed as worship of God or service to fellow-beings—not simply man but animals, birds and all lesser manifestations of life—create a sinless state of purity which enables man to realise the spiritual aim.

Question : How does *yajna* help man ?

Answer : By *yajna* man is released from all sins.

Question : What is the effect of neglecting *yajna* ?

Answer : The man who eats food without offering it to the Gods, verily eats sin.

Yajna by which man obtained food is the purest ritual and the Supreme Being is established in it.

14. अन्नाद्युपन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादयमभवः ।

यज्ञाद्युपति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भावः ॥

१४

*Annad bhavanti bhutani parjanvad annasañbhavah ।
yajnad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karmasamudbhayah ॥ 14 ॥*

15. कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात् सर्वगतं ब्रह्मा नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

१५

*Karma brahmodbhavam viddhi
brahma'ksharasamudbhavam ।
tasmat sarvagatam brahma
nityam yajne pratisthitam ॥*

15

Meaning : अन्नात् *annat* : from food, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, भवन्ति *bhavanti* : are born, पर्जन्यात् *parjanyat* : from rain, अन्नसम्भवः *annasambhavah* : production of food, यज्ञात् *yajnat* : from yajna, पर्जन्यः *parjanyah* : rain, भवति *bhavati* : arises, यज्ञः *yajnah* : yajna, कर्मसमुद्भवः *karmasamudbhavah* : born of action, कर्म *karma* : action, ब्रह्मोद्भवम् *brahmodbhavam* : arises from the Vedas, ब्रह्म *brahma* : Veda, अक्षरसमुद्भवम् *akshara-samudbhavam* : is born of the imperishable Paramatma, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, सर्वगतम् *sarvagatam* : all-pervading, ब्रह्मा *Brahma* : The Supreme Being, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, यज्ञे *yajna* : in yajna, प्रतिष्ठितम् *supratishtitam* : established, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : Beings are born of food, food is produced from rain, rain arises from yajna, yajna is born of action, action arises from Vedas, Vedas are born from the Imperishable Paramatma; therefore know that the Supreme Being is established in yajna.

Commentary : *Dharma Chakra—*

Brahma — Veda — Karma — Yajna.

From *Brahma*, *Veda*; from *Veda*, *Karma*; from *karma*, *yajna*-this is the order of creation. So in *yajna*, *Brahma* is established. *Yajna* is an act of self-purification which leads to the realisation of the Supreme (In the above *Chakra*, rain, food, and the body are included in *yajna*, and so they are not separately mentioned). *Yajna* and other righteous works

are not ordinary actions, because the all-pervading Brahman is directly present in them. Let all seekers take refuge in them and cross the ocean of *samsara*.

It is said that *yajna* produces rain, and its non-performance is the cause of drought and other evils from which mankind suffers. So it is an act of human welfare and personal redemption.

Question : *Why is yajna an act of purity ?*

Answer : It is pure because the all-pervading Brahman is directly present in it.

16. एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थं स जीवति ॥

१६

*Evam pravartitam chakram na'nuvartayati'hayah ।
aghayur indriyaramo mogham partha sajivati ॥* 16

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! यः *yah* : who, एवम् *evam* : in this manner, प्रवर्तितम् *pravartitam* : set revolving, चक्रं *chakram* : cycle. इह *iha* : in this world, नानुवर्तयति *nanuvartayati* : does not follow, सः *sah* : he, अघायुः *aghayuh* : living in sin, इन्द्रियारामः *indriyaramah* : rejoicing in sense-pleasures, मोघम् *mogham* : in vain, जीवति *jivati* : lives.

Substance : The man who does not follow the cycle thus set revolving, is a sinner rejoicing in sense-pleasures and he lives in vain.

Commentary : It is already said that *yajna* and other selfless acts of worship and service are necessary for the purification and protection of all beings, because the Supreme Being is directly present in them. Such men who follow the *Chakra* are purified and attain *Moksha*. The rest live a useless life. They forget God; they are enslaved by earthly

pleasures; they have no purity and so their life is a waste, and they go down into the bottomless pit of *Samsara*. One way of life is pure and blessed; another way of life is sinful and useless. One is *Atmarama*, and another is *Indriyarama*, one fulfils his life, another destroys it.

To forget God is sin. Those who do not follow the *Dharma Chakra* forget God and run after the mirage of sensual pleasures. So they accumulate sin. They are described as "living in sin" (*Aghayuh*). They are men rejoicing in sensual delights. Their life is not useful either to themselves or to others. So their life is a waste. Is it proper for men to live like animals, reptiles, worms and germs? According to the Lord's command one should fulfil his life by maintaining the *Dharma Chakra*.

Question : *What is he that does not follow the Dharma Chakra ?*

Answer : He is a sinner. He is a slave to sense-pleasures
His life is a waste.

The sages of Self-realisation are exempt from the law of yajna.

17. यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव सादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७

*Yastvatmaratireva syad atmatriptascha manavah ।
atmanyeva cha santustas tasya karyam na vidyate ॥ 17*

Meaning : यः मानव तु *yah manavah tu* : but that man who, आत्मरतिरेव *atmarathih eva* : rejoices in Atma only, आत्मतृप्तश्च *atmatriptas cha* and contented in Self, आत्मन्येव *atmanyeva* : in Self only, संतुष्टः च *Santustah cha* : happy, सात् *syat* : becomes, तस्य *tasya* : for him, कार्यम् *karyam* : action (the law of yajna), नविद्यते *navidyate* : is not.

Substance : But he who rejoices, who is contented, who finds happiness in *Atma* only, has no work to perform.

Commentary : Except the *Paramahansa* who has directly experienced the Supreme Self, for all others *Karma yoga* is the inevitable law. In this verse the Lord describes the liberated sage. He finds all joy in *Atma*, all satisfaction in *Atma*, all contentment in *Atma*. He does not move outside *Atma*. For him, the law of *karma* does not apply, because he has already realised the highest fruit of *karma* (i. e.) *Moksha*. So he is released from the operation of the law of *karma*. But still, if he works, he does so for the benefit of mankind. There is no harm whether he works or does not work.

Such realised sages are very rare indeed. All the others must work. They should endeavour to attain the highest state by diligent performance of *yajna*. They should understand what they are, where they are, how they live, and avoid the dangerous delusion of giving up *karma* before reaching the goal. It would be as foolish to do so as to throw away the leaf before eating the food.

In modern times the attachment and distractions of the material world have assumed dangerous proportions. Man has sunk into the mire of material pleasures and is caught by them in a ready embrace from which he is not able to extricate himself. He is not able to conceive of anything higher than food and sex. The true joy of life is lost. Man is reduced to the level of the animal creation. It would be understood by the purified intellect that joy and happiness cannot arise from dead matter. It is the greatest error to think so. True joy is actually flooding the heart of all people. What one imagines as joy coming from external objects is only the reflected Atmic happiness ever present in the heart. To know this is *Jnana*. Not to know this is *Maya*. The realised sage is perfectly contented because he knows that all the joys, delights, and pleasures of the material world are comprehended in the happiness of the Self. Knowing and realising this, he does not hanker for sense-pleasures. He does not go outside himself to seek for this or that as the ignorant man does. He is *Atmarama*, *Atmatripta*, *Atmatushta*.

The general term man (*manavah*) is used to show that no one is denied the merit of Self-realisation for reasons of caste, creed, or sex.

Question : Who is exempt from the law of karma ?

Answer : The sage of Self-realisation is free from the law of Karma. For him there is no work to do.

18. नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कथिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥

१८

*Nai'va tasya kritena'rtho na'kritene'ha kaschana ।
na cha'sya sarvabhuteshu kaschid arthavyapasrayah ॥ 18*

Meaning : तस्य *tasya* : to the Jnani, इह *tha* : here in this world, कृतेन *kritena* : by work done, अर्थः *arthah* : use, न एव *na eva* : is indeed not, च *cha* : and, अकृतेन *akritena* : by work not done, कश्चन *kaschana* : any, न *na* : no (evil), अस्य *asya* : to him, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings, अर्थव्यपाश्रयः *arthavyapasrayah* : depending for any object, कथित् *kaschit* : any, न *na* : (is) not.

Substance : For him there is in this world no interest whatsoever by work done or not done. He does not depend upon any being for any object.

Commentary : It is said that the *Jivanmukta* may work or may not work. In both he has nothing to gain or lose. He is constantly rooted in the Self and is perfectly satisfied in the Self. And so, with work done or not done he has no concern whatsoever. There is nothing for him to achieve beyond the realisation of Self. So the law of *Karma Yoga* does not apply to him. But we find that some of the realised sages engage themselves in work to illuminate mankind with true knowledge.

The *jivanmukta* has nothing to seek for from any being in the world. All pleasures, delights, and joys are

in the Self, and he lives and moves and has his being in the Self. So, what would he need and to which of the Devas should he offer sacrifice? Why and what for? He has arrived at the central station of all Bliss and blessedness, the source from which all joy emanates expressing itself through the mind, the senses and the body. All material benefits are included in Brahmananda according to the law—*Satey Panchasat* (Fifty is included in hundred). They have nothing to gain from any one.

It should be understood that the Lord has spoken of the *Jivanmukta*. But the ordinary seeker has still to go a long way before reaching the goal. He should perform work with detachment and devotion to God. Of course, we see that men having completed their period of service qualify themselves for pension and live a free life. This does not apply to young men who are still students and workers. They should do their work and complete the term of work, and then only they qualify themselves to gain pension and be free from work. Otherwise they lose their job and their livelihood. So the seeker should work with devotion and detachment, till by the grace of God, he is emancipated from the cycle of birth and death. This is the law for all common men.

The Lord commands Arjuna to work without attachment.

19. तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥

१९

*Tasmad asaktah satatam karyam karma samachara ।
asakto hyacharan karma param apnoti purushah ॥ 19*

Meaning : तस्माद् *tasmad* : therefore, त्वम् *tvam* : you), असक्तः *asaktah* : without attachment, सततम् *satatam* : always, कार्यम् *karyam* : that which should be done, कर्म *karma* : work, समाचर *samachara* : perform, अप्नतः *asaktaḥ* : without attachment, कर्म *karma* : work, आचरन् *acharan* : performing,

पुरुषः *purushah* : man, परम् *param* : the supreme, आप्नोति
opnoti : attains.

Substance : Therefore that work which should be done, do it well always without attachment. He who performs all the prescribed duties in a detached spirit will attain the Supreme.

Commentary : Work should be done (1) without attachment and (2) as prescribed by the *Sastras*. Working in this way, action becomes a means of liberation. So people should always perform *Nishkama Karma*. Detached work leads to the Supreme. Otherwise it binds and becomes the cause of *samsara*. This is the secret of *Karma yoga*.

It is here explained how *karma yoga* along with other *yogas* leads to emancipation. By *Nishkama Karma* the mind is purified and then it ascends to the highest plane. *Moksha* is purity of mind. Purity is attained by detached action.

Generally among seekers very few take to *Jnana yoga* or *Dhyana yoga*. Most people are naturally inclined to *Karma yoga* and *Bhakti yoga*. So the Lord lays special emphasis on *Karma yoga* as it is the natural path of evolution for the majority of mankind.

Question : How should man perform work ?

Answer : Man should act without attachment and according to the *Sastras*.

Question : What is the result of such work ?

Answer : *Moksha*, the highest state of liberation is attained

Janaka and others are mentioned as Karma Yogis who attained the Supreme.

20. कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
 लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपदयन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥

२०

*Karmanat'ya hi sam siddhim asthita janakadayah ।
 lokasam graham eva'pi sampasyan kartumarhasi ॥*

20

Meaning : जनकादयः Janakadayah : King Janaka and others, कर्मणैव karmanaiva : by action only, संसिद्धिम् samsiddhim : Moksha, perfection, आस्थिता हि asthitah hi : indeed attained, लोकसमग्रहम् lokasamgraham : to show the right way to the masses, सम्पश्यन् आपि sampasyan api : having in view even, कर्तुम् kartum : act, अर्हसि arhasi : you should.

Substance : King Janaka and others attained perfection by action. Even having in view the need to show the right path to the masses, you should work.

Commentary : The principle that man attains liberation by *Nishkamakarma* is illustrated by the example of *King Janaka* and others like Asvapati, Ikshvaku, Ambarisha, Bhagiradha. They were all emperors who followed the doctrine of *Nishkama karma*, and attained the highest spiritual goal. It is an ancient way of life, and men of the greatest responsibilities in the world understood the secret of the work, and practiced it in their daily life. Arjuna, a prince of the Royal family of Bharata, could do it. It is an answer to the doubt whether man could attain *Moksha* while engaged in the practical duties of the world, and whether work could lead to liberation. *Nishkama karma* purifies the mind and knowledge dawns at once. It is said in the *Yoga Vasista* that *Janaka* performed many acts of righteousness without attachment, purified his mind thereby, and by enquiry into the Self, realised the Supreme Being.

The Lord further emphasises the need for good work even from a worldly point of view. Man should work at least to serve mankind, to show them the right path, and to set an example to them. Service to humanity has indeed a very high place in religion and philosophy. Even to help a single individual is indeed a great work. To liberate oneself, and then to lead others to spiritual illumination is undoubtedly the highest act of service to mankind. Wealth and lands, power and position could be won and lost. But emancipation

and God-realisation is a blessing to humanity. So the Lord advises Arjuna to work, not only for self-purification but to show the path of work to mankind, and to help the masses by his personal example.

What the best of men do is followed by others.

21. यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

२१

*Yad-yadacharati srestha tat-tad eve'taro janah'
sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate ॥*

21

Meaning : श्रेष्ठः *sreshthah* : the best, यद् *yadyat* : whatsoever, आचरति *acharati* : does, इतरः *itarah* : other, जनः *janah* : people, तत्तदेव *tattat eva* : that and that only, सः *sah* : he (that great man), यत् *yat* : what, प्रमाणम् *pramanam* : standard authority, कुरुते *kurutey* : sets, लोकः *lokah* : the world (man), तत् *tat* : that, अनुवर्तते *anuvavtate* : follows.

Substance : What-so-ever a great man does, that other men do; whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world follows.

Commentary : The Lord argues the issue from a practical point of view. The actions of great men occupying a spectacular position in the world or observed by the common people. Naturally they act in the same way. What the elders do, children imitate. We see this in daily life very often that to justify ones actions, one refers to the example of great men. So, as a man acquires leadership, comes to occupy a prominent position, he should be extremely careful about what he does. It is a social responsibility for that man to live up to a high standard of moral and spiritual conduct.

Individually a man may be a *Jnani*. He may not be bound by any kind of action. But so long as he is in an embodied state, his outer life should be perfectly befitting the injunctions of the *Sastras*. Generally, when one comes across

a realised saint, he regards him as the standard of excellence, as an example and demonstration of Sastric law in actual life. Thus he has a social responsibility to show the right way to the masses by following the *Sastras*.

What the great people and leaders do, is copied by the common man. *Yatha raja tatha praja*. That is the popular saying of the elders. Arjuna was a prominent figure at that time. People looked up to him with admiration. So the Lord instructs him to act, to carry out the injunctions of the *Sastras*, to perform the duty prescribed by the standard in life, to fight the battle as a Kshatriya ought to do, and thus set an example of *Nishkama karma*. If he fails to stand up to the law, he would confuse and corrupt the minds of the people and they would lose both the material and spiritual realms. They would become inactive, lazy and by self-delusion they may become hypocrites pretending to have *Jnana* which they do not really possess.

The principles, doctrines, and laws which the elders accept and follow form the code of conduct for the masses. So the elders of the community should make it a rule to follow the truth, to follow the *sastras*, to live nobly, to shed the light of the spirit all around, to be the beacons and guide-posts for all people in their journey through life. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to set a great example of righteous action for the people.

The Lord insists on practice and not mere talk. Any one can talk high philosophy, but very few people are able to mould their life according to the truths of spirituality. The master should live the life according to *Atma Dharma*, and show the world how such life should be lived. It is only then that the people could cultivate faith in God and the laws of the *Sastras*.

The Lord is an example of karma Yoga par excellence.

22. न मे पार्थस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवासमवासव्यं वर्ते एव च कर्मणि ॥

22. *Na me partha'sti kartavyam trishu lokeshu kimchana
na'navaptam avaptavyam varta eva cha karmani* ॥ 22

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! मे *me* : to me, त्रिषुलोकेषु *trishulokeshu* : in the three worlds, कर्तव्यम् *kartavyam* : duty to do, किंचन *kimchana* : any, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, अनवासम् *anavaptam* : unattained, अवासव्यम् *avaptavyam* : to be attained, न *na* : is not, च *cha* : and yet, कर्मणि *karmani* : in action, वर्तते वा *vayta eva* : (I) am also engaged.

Substance : There is no duty for me to do in the three worlds. There is nothing unattained or to be attained for me. And yet I am also engaged in work.

Commentary : Lord Krishna is God himself. He is in all the worlds and all the worlds are in Him. What then should he work for ? What is he to gain by work ? He is every thing, and yet out of compassion for humanity He incarnates Himself again and again to maintain *Dharma* for the well-being and progress of the world. He is ceaselessly working everywhere for establishing *Dharma*. He, the infinite formless *Brahman*, takes birth, comes into the world, mingles with men, teaches them, elevates them, and leads them on to freedom and bliss. If the Lord Himself is thus engaged in work, should not the common man work for his own good ? The great *Jivanmuktas* like Buddha, Shankara and a long line of sages and prophets have all done tremendous work in the world. Why ? Not for their own gain, because they have nothing to gain, but for the sake of humanity. So the seekers and aspirants should do honest and sincere work to purify themselves and attain the spiritual aim. They should not be inactive, because inaction is *tamas*. Work, work is the Lord's command. Work without attachment, performing one's duty unmindful of the results, is the law of *karma yoga*.

23. यदि हाहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्दितः ।
यस्म वस्त्वानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थं सर्वशः ॥

People would become unrighteous and sinful. As a result natural calamities would overtake them. I would be the author and cause of the destruction of beings. So, for the protection and welfare of all the worlds, I work. Thus the Lord proves the need for the discipline of *karma yoga* in the world.

The Lord is the cosmic intelligence who gives the law for the orderly evolution of the Universe. The plan of the Universe and its orderly functioning is due to the will of the Lord. Let us imagine what would happen to mankind on the globe if the laws of the universe are relaxed for a brief while. The whole world would crash into destruction. The pride of human intelligence appears childish when one contemplates the beneficent power that keeps the planets in their orbits. So the Lord says that if he does not work the world would perish.

The same law applies to the various duties and functions of man for the orderly maintenance and progress of humanity. The violation of this law would lead to confusion of duties and functions. The Lord expects every man to keep the law by the performance of the duties in the scheme of the world. By doing so, the community as a whole would grow and prosper. *Karma Yoga*, besides being the path of self-purification and Self-realisation, is the divine technic to secure peace and prosperity for mankind in this earthly life.

The sage works without attachment for the good of the world.

25. सत्ता॑ः कर्मण्यविद्वां गो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथा सत्ता॑श्चिकीर्षुलोकसंग्रहम् ॥

२५

*Saktaḥ karmanyavidvamso yatha kurvanti bharata !
kuryad vidvams tatha'saktas chikirshur lokasangraham ! 25*

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! अविद्वासः *avidvamsah* : the ignorant, कर्मणि *karmani* : in work, सत्ता॑ः *saktah* : attached,

यथा *yatha* : as, कुर्वन्ति *kurvanti* : act, तथा *tatha* : so, चिद्राज्
vidvan : the wise, असक्तः *asaktah* : without attachement,
लोकसंग्रहम् *lokasangraham* : world-welfare, चिकिर्षुः *chikirshuh* :
wishing, कुर्यात् *kuryat* : should act.

Substance : O Arjuna ! As the ignorant men work with attachment to action, so should the wise act without attachment, for the welfare of the world.

Commentary : The wise and the ignorant both perform work. But there is a clear difference in attitude between the two. The wise act without attachment to the fruits of work. The ignorant act with attachment to the fruits of work. The wise are not entangled in work because they have no sense of doership. The ignorant are caught in the meshes of work by thinking that they are the doers. The wise work for the welfare of the world. The ignorant work for their own satisfaction. Work is common to both. But what a world of difference in purpose and spirit. Therefore the wise attain liberation through work and the ignorant are bound to the wheel of birth and death. Work is like a sword. For one who knows how to use it, it is a good instrument of action; for another it is a deadly weapon of self-destruction. The wise use fire for useful purposes, the ignorant get themselves burned by it. This being so, it is essential that the seeker should understand the secret of right action, its method, attitude, and aim.

The Lord says, "Do not be inactive. Use this great instrument of action (*karma*) for Self-realisation. Know how you should work and with what aim." He explains the method here. The principle of work is detachment. Work should be done without desire for personal enjoyment of the fruits thereof, and unmindful of success or failure.

The common man is constantly at work, earning money with zeal and enthusiasm, building houses, purchasing lands, securing for himself and his family all the material pleasures of life. Besides, he thinks that he is the doer of all this work.

23. *Yadi hyaham na varteyam jatu karmanyatandritah !
mama vartmanuvartante manushyah partha sarvasah* || 23

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! हि *hi* : because, अहम् *aham* : I, जातु *jatu* : always, अतन्द्रितः *atandritah* : without relaxation, कर्मणि *karmani* : in action, नवर्तेयम् यदि *na varteyam yadi* : if am not engaged, मनुष्याः *manushyah* : men, सर्वशः *sarvasah* : in every way, मम *mama* : my, वर्त्म *varma* : path, way of life, अनुवर्तन्ते *anuvartante* : follow.

Substance : Because, if I am not engaged in action always, without relaxation, men follow my path in every way, O Arjuna !

Commentary : Unworried and unrelaxed, the Lord is every moment actively engaged in work for the protection and welfare of all beings in all the world, because, if He remains inactive, all the people follow the same path and go down unto anarchy and self-destruction. That is why great men, ideal personalities, prophets, and leaders are constantly alert and active in the service of humanity. Even today we come across *karma yogis* of great eminence. History has recorded the lines of many of the leaders, and the way how they worked till the last breath of their life for a righteous cause.

More over the word *atandritah* (without relaxation) implies that the seekers and aspirants should be alert and watchful in the *sadhana*. If the Lord who is eternally free and perfect is so alert and watchful in performing his duty, how much more so should the common man be in his discipline to free himself from the shackles of *Samsara*. However intelligent one may be, if he is not vigilant, he is easily knocked out of his path by *Maya*. The senses are so powerful as to draw away the mind from the spiritual idea. Night and day, at all times, under all circumstances, vigilance is necessary to preserve the mind from lapsing into dullness and sense-pleasures. Discrimination between the real and the unreal,

God's grace, ceaseless effort are all necessary for spiritual progress. How much care is needed for the driver of an Express Train in the night ! Could he afford to be negligent ? How many lives depend on his care and caution ? Even so the seeker has to be continuously vigilant and active in his practices. The human machine is sure to be damaged if he is negligent and a break down is certain.

Always : The lord is always alert in the performance of his duty for the welfare of mankind. The *Sastras* say—'negligence is death (Pramado vai mrityuh.)'

Negligence regarding the awareness of *Brahman* should not be at any time. Such forgetfulness of *Atma* is death—so says Sanatkumara. The seeker should therefore remember the key word *alert* (atandritah) and always be wakeful in his contemplation of the Self.

24. उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चैदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥

२४

*Utsideyur ime loka na kuryam karma ched aham !
samkarasya cha karta syam upahanyam imah prajah ॥ 24*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, कर्म *karma* : work, नकुर्याचेत् *na kuryam chet* : if not do, इमे लोकाः *ime lokah* : these worlds, उत्सीदेयुः *utsideyuh* : would perish, संकरस्य च *samkarasya cha* : and of confusion of species, कर्ता *karta* : the author, स्याम् *syam* : (I) would become, इमाः *imah* : these, प्रजाः *prajah* : beings, उपहन्याम् *upahanyam* : (I) would destroy.

Substance : These worlds would perish if I do not perform work; I would be the cause of confusion of species and the destruction of these beings.

Commentary : If I do not work, these worlds would perish. People would not work. Consequently there would be confusion in all fields of life. Peace would not be there.

But the impersonal attitude to work is *Karma yoga*. The wise people work with equal zeal and enthusiasm, but they know that they are only the instruments of the Lord in the service of humanity. Acting in this spirit, they attain liberation.

Welfare of the world : We understand from these words that the Lord values service to humanity and other beings. It is the duty of all seekers to do what is most pleasing to the Lord. In this service, work is worship of the Lord. Any little help and service done to fellow beings is accepted by Him as an act of devotion to Him.

Bharata : The ordinary meaning for this word is one who belongs to the family of *Bharata*. It has a special meaning also. *Bha* means light, *ratah* means desirous of light. (spiritual illumination). The Lord addresses Arjuna as the seeker of divine light. He exhorts his disciple to dispel darkness by spiritual realisation.

Question : *How should a wise man work ?*

Answer : He should work in a detached spirit.

Question : *For what purpose ?*

Answer : He should work for the welfare of the world.

26. न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥

२६

*Na buddhibhedam janayed
ajnanam karmasanginam
joshayet sarva karmani
vidvan yuktah samacharan*

26

Meaning : विद्वन् *vidvan* : the wise, कर्मसङ्गिनाम् *karmasanginam* : attached to action, अज्ञानाम् *ajnanam* : of the ignorant, बुद्धिभेदम् *buddhibhedam* : unsettlement in the mind, न जनयेत् *na janayet* : should not produce, सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani* : all action, युक्तः *yuktah* : with yogic equanimity,

समाचरन् *samacharan* : doing, जोषयेत् *joshayet*, should make them (the ignorant) do (accordingly).

Substance : The wise man should not disturb and confuse the minds of the ignorant attached to action. By performing all actions with yogic equanimity, they should make the ignorant do accordingly.

Commentary : The Lord continues to lay stress on the duty of the wise to lead the people on the right path by personal demonstration of *karma yoga*.

The *Jnani*, though he is individually free from all action and work, should not disturb and confuse the minds of the people by abstract doctrines and theories. He should set the example by his personal life. It is only then that people could understand the secret of *karma yoga*. The world is action; life is action; people are acting in a variety of ways; the whole of nature is in ceaseless motion. The realised sage may understand the state of absolute stillness in the Supreme Being, but for all others it is a theory which they do not comprehend. Several people who are religiously-minded are doing worship with some faith in God in the hope of gaining some worldly good. The poor man worships God to attain some property. The sick man worships God to be relieved of pain and suffering. The house-holder beset with a thousand difficulties all around worships God to overcome the troubles of life. All this is *sakama karma*. But it would be foolish to tell them that what they are doing is wrong.

Such verbal teaching makes no meaning to them. It might confuse their minds and some of them may give up action, thinking that it is the right path. So the wise man should be carefull that his teaching does not run counter to the law of nature and human disposition. He should remain steadfast in the Atmic state, work without attachment, be equal-minded under all circumstances, and emanate peace and blessedness all around him. Thus the people would see and understand how they should live and work. It is not theory.

It is direct personal example that the Lord wants the wise man (*Vidvan*) to present before the people.

Any one with a little learning of religious theory can make impressive speeches from the public platform. People may admire his eloquence and flowery flow of language. But it does not enlighten the people. Any thing could be affirmed or denied by subtle argument. This leads no-where. Instead of clarifying the position, it makes confusion worse confounded. But real solid experience and practical living needs no argument to prove the efficacy of religious realisation. When we come across a realised one who emanates peace and blessedness by his very presence, all doubts come to rest and the seeker experiences a state of mind which is an affirmation of spiritual Truth. No more argumentation, speculation, theories and dogmas and doubts. They are all gone, and people would come to know what life in the Spirit is and how to live it. That is what the Lord expects the wise man to do.

Doing with equanimity : The Lord's command is that the wise man, established in the Self, should perform work with equanimity and by his detachment, purity, and peace show the way to all.

Question : How should the wise teach the ignorant ?

Answer : The wise should live a pure life and work in a detached way, and set an example for others to follow.

The ignorant man thinks that he is a doer of action.

27. प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः
अहङ्कारविमुद्धात्मा कर्त्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥

27

*Prakriteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah
ahamkara vimudhatma karta'ham iti manyate ॥*

27

Meaning : प्रकृतेः *prakriteh* : of nature, गुणैः *gunaih* : by the qualities, सर्वशः *sarvasah* : in all cases, क्रियमाणानि *kriyamanani* : are performed, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions,

अहंकारविमुद्धतमा ahankaravimudhatma : one whose mind is deluded by egoism, अहम् aham : I, कर्ता karta : doer, इति iti : thus, मन्यते manyate : thinks.

Substance : By the qualities of nature actions are performed in all cases, but one whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer".

Commentary : The Lord explains how action takes place. Action takes place by the power of the qualities of nature. Those qualities are - *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. They are called the three *Gunas*. These qualities of nature are modified into the four elements - *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *ahamkara*, the five subtle elements, the five organs of action, the five organs of perception, and the five objects of the senses. Thus the human organism and the universe around are the product of Nature. All actions wherever and in whatever manner they take place are actually done by the power of the three *gunas*. *Atma* remains as the eternal uncontaminated witness. The real man is *Atma*. It is the witness of the body, the internal and external organs and the modifications of the mind. In truth, the real man is not the doer. All the actions that man apparently performs with his physical and subtle organs is the work of Nature, and not of the man himself in his real Being. But the deluded man having identified himself with the body thinks "I am the doer," and so thinking he burdens himself with the responsibility for all of them. Consequently he has to pass through several births and suffer endless pain and sorrow.

This is exactly the difference between the wise and the ignorant. The ignorant man imagines himself to be the body and thinks that he is the doer, enjoyer of all actions and the fruits thereof. The wise man separates himself from the vehicle of the body and knows that he is the Self, that he is not the doer nor is he subject to the binding power of his actions.

Joy and sorrow depend upon the idea of doership. If you think you are the body, you have to bear pain and grief and all

the innumerable ills of life. If you think you are the Self, you are at the source of all bliss. So let the seeker discriminate between the Self and the non-Self, and know his real nature. Then all that he does is sublimated into the Self and he remains unaffected.

The secret of *Karma Yoga* is to understand the law how actions are performed and with what power they are performed. The Lord makes it clear that the cause of action is Nature functioning through the three *gunas*.

One whose mind is deluded by egoism : The ignorant man is deluded by his ego and considers that he is doing this and that and all the thousand actions of bodily life. Identification with the body "*Dehatma Buddhi*" is the root cause of delusion. Such a man is called *Vimudhatma*. The wise man knows that he is the blissful and blessed Brahman.

Question : How are actions performed ?

Answer : They are performed by the three *gunas* born of nature.

Question *What does the ignorant man think ?*

Answer : He identifies himself with the *gunas* and thinks that he is the doer.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He is bound by the wheel of birth and death. So man should know that he is the blissful Self and not the body.

28. तत्त्ववित् महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

गुणा गुणेषु चर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥

२८

*Tattvavittu mahabaho gunakaramavibhagayoh ।
guna guneshu vartanta iti matvana sajjate ॥*

28

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna! गुणकर्मविभागयोः *gunakaramavibhagayoh* : of the divisions of the qualities and functions, तत्त्ववित् तु *tattvavit tu* : but the knower of truth, गुणः *gunah* : qualities, in the form of

senses, गुणेषु *guneshu* : in the qualities, in the form of sense-objects, वर्तन्ते *varntante* : move, इति *iti* : thus, मत्वा *matva* : knowing, न सज्जते *na sajjate* : is not attached.

Substance : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! But the knower of Truth understands the divisions of qualities and functions. He knows that the qualities in the form of senses function amidst the objects of the senses, and he, as the Supreme Self, is not affected by them. Thus knowing, he remains unattached.

Commentary : In this verse the Lord explains how the knower of Truth understands man's actions in the world.

In the human body and the universe around, the Self and the non-Self, the *Drik* and *Drisya*, are intermingled. They should be separated. He who knows how to separate them is the knower of Truth.

As the holy grass is separated from the blades, as grain is separated from the chaff, the Self should be separated from the non-Self, and the spirit should be separated from matter. Having thus separated the two by the power of his discriminative understanding, the man of knowledge looks upon all modifications in himself and the universe as only the functions of nature with which he is not concerned. So he remains completely detached from his own senses and mind and the world around him. He is uncontaminated by any thing physical and material. He is like the water-drop on the lotus-leaf.

How can the self-realised man have any attraction for the world which is insentient and unreal as a dream? As churned butter will not mix with butter-milk but floats on it, so also the knower of truth, who lives in the Self, is not burdened with the tremendous weight of the objective world. He has thus no concern at all with the pleasures and pains caused and suffered by Nature. Detachment from the modifications of Nature is emancipation. Patanjali says—

“The intermingling of the seer and the seen should be given up.” The ignorant man who has not purified his

discriminative understanding is plunged in 'Samsara,' because he thinks that he is the body, that he is undergoing all the changes of the body, mind and senses, and that he is acting and reacting. So the seeker should gradually develop his contact with *Atma*, leaving off his former attachment for the body.

Question : *How does the knower of Truth act ?*

Answer : He knows that he is the Self, and considers that all changes, functions and actions, are merely the qualities of Nature acting in the sense-objects. So he remains unattached.

The Lord once again emphasises the idea expressed in the twenty sixth verse.

29. प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूदाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्सनविदो मन्दान्कृत्सनविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ २९

*Prakriter guna summudhah sajjante guna karmasu ।
tan akritisnavido mandan kritsnavin na vichalayet ॥ 29*

Meaning : प्रकृतेः *prakriteh* : of nature, गुणसम्मूदाः *guna-sammudhah* : persons deluded by the gunas, गुणकर्मसु *gunakarmsu* : in the functions of the qualities, सज्जन्ते *sajjante* : are attached, अकृत्सनविदः *akritisnavidah* : of imperfect understanding, मन्दान् *mandan* : the dull-witted, तान् *tan* : them, कृत्सनवित् *kristnavit* : man of perfect knowledge, न विचालयेत् *na vichalayet* : should not unsettle, confuse.

Substance : The man of knowledge should not confuse the mind of those men of imperfect understanding who, deluded by the *Gunas* of Nature, are attached to action in the material world.

Commentary : In the twenty sixth verse of this Discourse, the Lord warned the man of knowledge not to confuse the mind of the ignorant by theoretical speculations, but to

show the right way by acting in the right spirit. The same idea is repeated here. The ignorant who form the majority are attached to the body, and consider the qualities of Nature as their own. Spontaneously they think that they are working and acting with the definite object of enjoyment of the fruits of work. Such people should not be confused by theorising about the actionlessness of Brahman, which they cannot easily understand. So the wise man (*Vidvan, tatvavit*) should show the way by himself acting without attachment, and acting always on the highest principles of righteousness. The wise have to shoulder a tremendous responsibility. His life should confirm to the pattern enjoined by the Sastras, though he is himself beyond all laws, rules and regulations.

Of imperfect understanding : Those who are attached to the body, mind and senses, are men of imperfect knowledge. Worldly wisdom, knowledge of Sastras, learning, capacity to interpret the scripture, oratorical powers - all these and more do not qualify a man to be entitled a man of knowledge, if he identifies himself with them. This identity with the body should be given up and union with the Self should be established.

Man of perfect knowledge : Perfection of knowledge consists in realising the Self, knowing which man knows everything.

The sages of yore directed their enquiring not so much to the objective world outside but to discovering in themselves the secret of their being. They discovered the all-pervading *Atma*, and were satisfied because they realised that the whole universe is *Atma* and nothing else is the material and efficient cause of all that exists. They have thus become free from the delusion of the limited ego. They have become the possessors of perfect knowledge, bliss and blessedness. This should be the aim and goal of every seeker who is eager to know the Truth in the midst of the thousand and one ills and shocks of mortal life. This is the only way to peace.

Question : *What are those who are attached to action ?*

Answer : They are dull-witted men of improper knowledge.

Question : *How should the enlightened man teach them ?*

Answer : He should not confuse them by giving up action but set a personal example of righteous action free from attachment.

The Lord declares the law of knowledge.

30. मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशी निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्त्र विगतज्वरः ॥

३०

*Mayi sarvani karmani samnyasya'dhyatmachetasa :
nirashir nirmamo bhutva yudhyasva vigatajvarah ॥* 30

Meaning : सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, मयि *mayi* : in me, अध्यात्मचेतसा *adhyatmachetasa* : with mind established in Self, संन्यस्य *samnyasya* : renouncing (surrendering), निराशीः *nirashih* : without personal interest, निर्ममः *nirmamah* : free from egoism, भूत्वा *bhutva* : having become, विगतज्वरः *vigatajvarah* : without passion, युध्यस्त्र *yudhyasva* : (you) fight.

Substance : Renouncing all actions in Me with the mind fixed in Self, free from hope and egoism, fight without mental agitation.

Commentary : Most people's minds are filled with worldly knowledge and objective considerations. Such troubled minds cannot reflect the light of *paramatma*. It is not a spiritual mind. It is the gross mind capable of apprehending only material things. The aspirant should cultivate a spiritualised mind, illumined by knowledge and devoted to the Lord. Such is the purified mind capable of apprehending the subtle Reality underlying all matter. With the mind thus spiritualised, man should surrender all actions and their fruits to God.

All actions without exception should be surrendered. That is the Lord's command.

Free from desire and egoism : Desire and egoism (personal selfishness) should be given up. Man should understand that there is only one Reality. God (*Atma*) in the universe. Knowing this man cannot have any attachment of *I* and *Mine* to anything in the world. He knows that the world is only a reflection and dreamlike projection of the mind, which is subject to change, growth and decay. Thus freeing himself from the burden of material things, man should surrender to the Lord and carry out the duties of life in a detached manner. Since Arjuna is a Kshatriya the Lord's injunction to him is 'fight'. It means that every individual, according to his position in the social structure should execute his duty prescribed by custom and tradition in a spirit of dedication to the Lord—the Supreme Being.

Without passion : "Fight, free from passion"—that is again the Lord's command. The fever of life is of two kinds. One affects the body, another attacks the mind. The first could be cured by medicine. But the internal fever of the mind, being more subtle, requires spiritual cure. Every man runs to a Doctor at the slightest touch of physical ill-health, but is he taking the same care of the mind and its fever? No. The fire and passion expressing itself in anger and hatred, which consume the internal man, can be cured and extinguished only by spiritual knowledge. To divert to God, to surrender the fruits of work to God, to give up all foolish desires, to have no feeling of *I* and *Mine*—these are steps to be taken by the seeker. These four aspects of spiritual discipline constitute the most powerful cure for life's fitful fever.

It should be understood that the Lord insists on action and surrender. The terms 'fight' (*Yudhyasva*) and renouncing (*Samnyasya*) may appear apparently contrary, but it is not really so. If a wood-cutter or soldier or teacher or politician should realise the Truth, he should not for that reason change

himself or something else in the social structure. He would still be a wood-cutter or a teacher etc. and would be performing all the duties that belong to his profession. Only he knows that it is not the same person who is doing the work. The Kshatriya continues to fight the enemy and defend his country, but he knows that he is not the same person who is doing the work. Thus the concept of Hinduism is not a negation of action, but a proper understanding of the feeling of action which enables the actor to act without passion, without the elation of hope or the frustration of failure. Every man should surrender everything to the Lord and carry on the duties of life cheerfully and with courage.

Question : *What is the highest good for man ?*

Answer : Surrendering to the Lord, and acting without desire is the highest good.

Karma yoga releases man from the bondage of action.

31. ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥

३१

*Ye me matam idam nityam anutisthanti manavah ।
sraddhavanto'nasuyanto muchyante te 'pi karmabhih ॥*

Meaning : ये मानवाः : *ye manvah* : those men who, मे *me* : my, इदम् मतम् *idammatam* : this teaching, श्रद्धावन्तः *sradhavantah* : full of faith, अनसूयन्तः *anasuyantah* : not cavilling, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, अनुतिष्ठन्ति *anutishtanti* : practise, ते अपि *te api* : they also, कर्मभिः *karmabhih* : from action, मुच्यन्ते *muchyante* : are freed.

Substance : Those men who, with faith and free from ill-will, practise this my teaching, are also freed from the bondage of action.

Commentary : It is said that men cut the bonds of action by detached and selfless action. From this we understand

that work performed in the true spirit frees man from the bondage of *karma*. The *Karmayogi* like the *Jnanayogi* attains emancipation by following the law of *Nishkama karma*. The goal of the two paths of *yoga* are the same though the methods are different.

Always. The principle of selfless action should be applied to every work that man does, and always. Man is acting every moment of his life. So the teaching of the Lord should be remembered and practised at any moment of life. There is no time set apart for the practice, as the novices set apart a time for prayer and meditation. *Karma yoga* thus comes into one's life as a natural law which yields the highest fruit.

Two important virtues are to be cultivated during the period of *sadhana*-firstly faith, and secondly freedom from ill-will. Faith in the teaching of the Lord is the first step. The degree of faith in God determines the measure of achievement. The deeper the faith the greater is the benefit. And next, ill-will is like the canker worm. It eats up man's strength and power. In the field of spirituality it is a hostile force. All the other virtues which the aspirant may acquire after long struggle would be set at naught by ill-will, envy and spite. So faith in God and good-will for mankind are the two weapons for the man of action in the world. Such action performed with faith and surrender to God does not bind man to the wheel of *karma*. On the other hand, it releases him from bondage.

Question : Who are freed from the bondage of karma ?

Answer : Those who practise the law of selfless action with faith in God are freed from the bondage of *karma*.

The Lord declares the awful fate of those who have no faith in Him, and who carp and cavil at his teaching.

32. ये त्वेतदभ्यस्यन्तो नानुपिष्टन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥

32. *Ye tvetad abhyasuyanto nanutisthanti me matam¹
sarvajnana vimudham stan viddhi nastan achetasah²* 32

Meaning : येतु yetu : but those, मे me : my, एतत्
मतम् etat matam : this teaching, अभ्यस्यन्तः abhyasuyantah :
carping at न अनुतिष्ठन्ति na anutisthanti : not practise, तान्
tan : them, अचेतसः achetasah : devoid of discrimination,
सर्वज्ञानविमूढान् sarvajnanavimudhan : deluded in all knowlenghe,
नष्टान् nashtan : ruined, विद्धि viddhi : know.

Substance : But those who carp at my teaching and do not practise it, know them as men deluded in all knowledge, devoid of discrimination and doomed to destruction.

Commentary : Those who carp and cavil at the spiritual teaching of the Lord are doomed to destruction. Driven by desires, haunted by hopes and fears, blasted by frustration, they live a restless life and die in darkness. And they pass the endless stream of birth and death, without rest or peace. They cannot understand the secret of the Supreme Brahman, nor the liberation from the bondage of action. Though a man is learned in the *Sastras*, knows many languages, is acquired with many spiritual theories, if he is devoid of faith in God and discriminative understanding, he is indeed an ignorant man who knows nothing. His mind is gross, his discrimination is confused, and so he wanders in the wilderness of the perishable world, tired, weary, and restless. Such men are lost, because they have no discrimination, no faith in the Lord.

The power of Nature is irresistible.

33. सदां वेष्टे स्वस्याः प्रकृतीनवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३३

*Sadrisam chestate svasyah prakriter jnanavan api ।
prakritim yanti bhutani nigra'nah kim karishyati ॥ 33*

Meaning : ज्ञानवानपि jnanavan api : even a wise man,
स्वस्याः svasyah : of his own, प्रकृतिः prakritih : nature,

सदृशम् *sadrisam* : in accordance with (his nature), चेष्टते *cheshtate* : acts, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : nature, यान्ति *yanti* : follow, निग्रहः *nigrahah* : restraint, किम् करिष्यति *kim karishyati* : what will do ?

Substance : Even a wise man acts according to his own nature. Beings follow nature; what can restraint do ?

Commentary : The term—a wise man (*Jananavan*) refers only to a learned man who intellectually understands the principles of religion and philosophy. He has yet to realise the Truth. Mere intellectual culture and understanding of the *Sastras* are powerless to control the tremendous power of natural instincts and tendencies with which a man is born in this world. Though he knows much of spiritual lore, yet he acts in conformity with his own nature, the impulses and thought-patterns formed through a series of births. If such is the case with a learned man, what to speak of the ignorant !

Here the Lord's purpose is to emphasise the power of the tendencies (*Samskaras*) which constitute the nature of all beings, and definitely not to discourage the practice of self-restraint. The verse that immediately follows insists on self-restraint as the only means to liberation. Let no man imagine that he can have an easy walk over Nature. No. It is necessary for the seeker to understand fully the mysterious power of Nature, and the tremendous will that is needed to change and transcend it. But it is clear that spiritual realisation is not possible unless all the blind prejudices and evil tendencies of the past are gradually eradicated. Surrender to the Lord and selfless devotion to duty are the means to liberate oneself from the tyranny of Nature by which man has been enslaved from time immemorial.

The need is stressed to resist attachment and aversion in regard to the objective world.

34. इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्रेष्ठौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

तयोर्वै वशमाप्नुवेत्तु द्वास्य परिपन्थितौ ॥

34. *Indriyasye 'ndriyasya'rthe ragadveshau vyavasthitau !
taylor na vasam agacchet tau hyasya paripanthinau" 34*

Meaning : इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्य *indriyasyendriyasya* : of each and every sense, अर्थे *arthe* : in the object of the senses, रागद्वेषौ *ragadveshau* : attachment and aversion, व्यवस्थितौ *vyavasthitau* : abide, तयोः *tayoh* : of these two, वशम् *vasam* : sway, नागच्छेत् *na agacchet* : should not come under, तौ *tau* : these two, तु *tu* : indeed, अस्य *asya* : his, परिपन्धिनौ *paripanthinau* : (are) enemies.

Substance : In each of the senses abide attraction and repulsion for the objects of the senses. One should not come under their sway, for they are man's enemies.

Commentary : Here is the Lord's command about restraining the senses and conquering Nature. It would be wrong to interpret from the previous verse that the Lord was stating the impossibility of overcoming Nature. Man should not come under the sway of the material forces operating in the human personality. That is the Lord's injunction. So the whole progress of spiritual life is one continuous and systematic attempt to counteract the natural forces till they are completely subdued. All the different paths, methods, practices, and disciplines have only one end in view, and that is the conquest of Nature in all its subtle forms and manifestations.

Each of the five senses has a double current running in opposite directions. When the object is pleasing, it is delighted; when the object is disagreeable, it is pained: Attachment and repulsion are formed. So when the senses come into contact with the multifarious objects of the world, it is sometimes attached to them, and sometimes repulsed from them. The same object may be pleasing sometimes and under changed conditions may cause pain. These reactions of the senses are termed 'rāga' and 'dvesha.' These are inherent in the sense-world. The entire spiritual discipline

is to attain to a state of non-reaction or equal reaction to all the objects of the world under all conditions, whether they are agreeable or disagreeable. One who has acquired such equanimity is a *Yogi*, a *Sthitaprajna*.

Attachment and repulsion (*Raga* and *Dvesha*) are the eternal enemies of the spiritual aspirant. These pairs of opposites have long established their sway on the mind and the senses. And when man, by an enlightened consciousness, tries to equalise the reactions, the mind and the senses would stoutly refuse to submit to the new discipline. Thoughts and habits react. The aspirant has to remain firm and unyielding, and only then would he be able to stamp his will and attain mastery over the opposing forces. Devotion to God, selfless work, meditation on the real Self, grace of a *Guru*, are helpers to secure victory. Till then there is no rest or peace for man. When enemies enter a village they are dangerous, when they enter the house, they are still more dangerous; and when they find place in one's own heart, the danger is greatest. *Raga* and *Dvesha* are internal enemies. "Do not fall under their sway" is the Lord's command.

The internal reactions of each individual are determined by the accumulated force of several births. They are deep-rooted and well-established in the heart of man. The aspirant brings in his discrimination as the resisting power. The struggle goes on for a long time. That which is stronger wins. It is futile to lament about the persistence of past tendencies (*samskaras*). They are there, whether you want them or not. Cheerfully and with courage one has to fight them. The Lord's grace is on the side of the faithful aspirant. Nothing is impossible for him. Such should be the indomitable faith of the devotee, and the Lord's promise not to let down his devotee should give the aspirant the necessary will and inspiration, strength and courage to fight the battle till victory is achieved.

Question : *What is the nature of the senses ?*

Answer : Attachment and repulsion abide in the senses.

Question : *What should the aspirant do ?*

Answer : He should not come under their sway because they are his enemies.

The importance of performing one's own duty is declared.

35. श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

३५

*Sreyan svadharma vigunah paradharmat svanusthitat ।
svadharame nidhanam sreyah paradharmo bhayavahah ॥ 35*

Meaning : स्वनुष्ठितात् *svanusthitat* : well performed, परधर्मात् *paradharmat* : than the duty of another, विगुणः *vigunah* : without merit, स्वधर्मः *svadharma* : one's own duty, श्रेयान् *sreyan* : better, स्वधर्मे *svadharame* : in performing one's duty, निधनम् *nidhanam* : death, श्रेयः *sreyah* : better, परधर्मः *paradharmah* : another's duty, भयावहः *bhayavahah* : fraught with fear.

Substance : One's own duty, ill-performed and without merit, is better than the duty of another well-discharged. Better is death in discharging one's own duty. Another's duty is fraught with fear.

Commentary : Arjuna is a Kshatriya. It is his duty to fight a righteous war though he may face death in the attempt. To neglect his duty and adopt the duty of another is dangerous, because it would upset the order of the world, and create confusion and chaos in society. In the First Discourse, Arjuna spoke in a mood of despondency that he would prefer to live on alms like a mendicant than kill his relations and friends in battle. The Lord here states the law for a Kshatriya and the danger of neglecting it and adopting the life of another.

The word *Svadharma* may be taken to mean the law of the Self and *paradharma* may mean the law of the objective world, (i. e.) the pleasures of the senses and the physical body. Whatever is conducive to Self-realisation

should be followed, even if it causes death in the attempt. Whatever draws away from *Atma-dharma* should be avoided. Fasting, penance and other *sadhanas* though irksome in the beginning confer great merit finally. They constitute *Atma-dharma*. On the other hand worldly pleasures though enjoyable at first, lead to pain and suffering. So the seeker should hold on to the Self and go on practicing the prescribed duties. Sometimes the seeker may feel that he is not making any progress, and that his *sadhana* is futile. In these moments of doubt the seeker should be cautious and firm. He should not abandon his practices. If he dies in the midst of his *Yoga-sadhana*, he does not perish. He attains to higher world and would come to act again into the human body to continue his work. So the Lord exhorts the seeker not to give up *Svadharma, Atma-dharma* under any circumstances.

Question : *Between Svadharma and Paradharma which is better and why ?*

Answer : *Svadharma* is better though difficult to practice. *Paradharma* is fraught with fear, though easy to follow. By performing one's own duty, man realises God. Though one dies in the attempt, it is good for him.

Arjuna questions the Lord by what power man is forced to commit sin, even against his will.

अर्जुन उवाच

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

३६

Arjuna uvacha

*Atha kena prayukto 'yam papam charati purushah !
anicchannapi varshneya baladiva niyojitaḥ ॥*

36

Arjuna said

Meaning : वार्ष्णेय *varshneya* : O Krishna ! अथ *atha* : then, अयं पुरुषः *ayam purushah* : this man, केन *kena* : by

what, प्रयुक्तः *prayuktah* : impelled, अनिच्छत्वपि *anicchan api* : though without wishing, बलात् *balat* : by force, नियोजितः *niyojitah* : constrained, इवा *iva* : as it were, पापम् *pāpam* : sin, चरति *charati* : commits.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! Constrained by force as it were, by what does man commit sin even against his wish ?

Commentary : As the Lord continued his teaching about restraining the senses, overcoming *Raga* and *Dvesha*, and discharging one's duty, Arjuna was seized with a deep doubt about the mysterious force that seems to compel man into evil inspite of his effort to avoid it. Such a doubt will naturally occur to every seeker and so the question and the Lord's answer are of the greatest importance to mankind.

Who does not know that indulgence in sense-pleasures is a mental slavery ! Who does not know that anger, spite, ill-will, envy and pride are wrong mental attitudes ? And most of the people yield to them even against their wish. No one desires to do evil or commit sin and yet some mysterious force seems to drive mankind into evil and sinful ways of life. What is that mysterious power ? Where does it abide ? How can it be counteracted ; These things are essential for all seekers to know.

One should have a clear understanding of the cause and source of evil, and then only can its activity be neutralised. There are some plants which persist in sprouting up again and again, though the stem is cut off repeatedly. If the roots are pulled out and destroyed, there is no further danger of their growth. So the cause of the sin should be known, and if the cause is removed, the resulting evil would not be there.

The force of evil is in man himself. It is this power that drives man to do evil, though he knows that it is evil, and though he desires to avoid it. The Lord explains the nature of this mysterious force from the next verse onwards.

There are three types of individuals – (1) those who are free from evil, (2) those who do not wish to do evil, and yet are under its sway, (3) those who do evil knowing it to be such. The first are *Jivanmukthas*, rare men who have crossed the ocean of *samsara*. The tricks and subterfuges of *Maya* cannot betray them into evil at any time and for any reason. The second type of men are sincere seekers. Arjuna's question is from the stand point of this type of men. The third type of men are evil-minded, sinful, plunged in darkness, revelling in sensuality, and embodying all that is hateful and self-destructive.

श्री भगवानुवाच

37. काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिनम् ॥

३७

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Kama esha krodha esha rajoguna samudbhavah ।
mahasano mahapapma viddhyenamiha vairinam ॥* 37

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The blessed Lord Said—

Meaning : एषः *eshah* : this, रजोगुणसमुद्भवः *rajoguna-samudbhavah* : born of *Rajoguna*, कामः *kamah* : desire, एषः *eshah* : this, क्रोधः *krodhah* : anger, महाशनः *mahasanaḥ* : all-devouring, महापाप्मा *mahapapma*, all sinful, एनम् *enam* : this, इह *Iha* : here, वैरिनम् *vairinam* : the foe, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : *The Blessed Lord said* : It is desire, it is anger, born of *Rajoguna* (the impulse of action), all-consuming and all-evil. Know this as the enemy here.

Commentary : Here the Lord explains the secret of the mysterious force that compels man to commit sin, though he does not wish it. Knowing full-well that an act is evil, and sincerely wishing to avoid it, man, however, does it

in spite of himself. This is within the experience of all human beings. The Lord analyses the force, and says that the twin evils of *kama* and *krodha* constitute the power behind all the sins committed by man.

Kama and *Krodha* are wicked twins like Ravana and Kumbbakarna, like Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. The aforesaid *raga* and *dvesha* are manifestations of *kama* and *Krodha*. Of these two, *kama* is the first and *krodha* is but the effect of *kama*. The first is the cause and the second is the effect. When there is no cause, there can be no effect. When there is no *kama*, there is no *krodha*. *Kama* is therefore said to be the first of the six evil tendencies in man—*Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada* and *Matsarya*. *Kama* is the captain of the team of inimical forces which harass mankind, and stand directly in the way of Self-realisation.

The Lord describes *Kama* and *Krodha* by two significant epithets. *Kama* is all-devouring (*mahanah*). Like fire it burns, consuming everything that is offered to satisfy its hunger for enjoyment. Fire is not extinguished so long as you pour oblations of oil and ghee into it. They only add to its consuming power. Such is *kama*. The attempt to satisfy it only makes it stronger and more clamorous for further and further enjoyment. How then can it be conquered? Let no fuel be added to the fire and the fire weakens and dies in ashes. So also, let no attempt be made to satisfy *kama*, and it dies a natural death. The rejection of desire as soon as it is born is the way to overcome it. Constant inquiry into the nature of the Self, which is bliss itself, will naturally eliminate desires from the mind. When man by his birth-right is the very source and fountain-head of all bliss, why does he need small external objects to give him joy and pleasure? So the seeker should constantly contemplate the blissful nature of his real Self.

Those twin evils are all sinful (*maha-papma*). The most heinous sins are committed, the greatest disasters of the human race are caused by these forces. The little good that

man has accumulated through a series of births is neutralised and overweighed by the amount of sin committed by *kama* and *krodha*. Lust and greed form the food for *kama*. When *kama* is frustrated it takes the ugly form of *krodha* (wrath).

Again they are described as the foes of man. They are the nearest and the greatest enemies of man. Through a series of births they have acquired an undisputed mastery over the heart of man. Having occupied the innermost recesses of the heart, they have been exercising control and authority over man's impulses and conduct in the material world. The whole personality of man is thus enslaved by a secret and powerful enemy for a long time. They have brought their associates also—*lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya*—into the inner part of man's heart. These evils act with wonderful co-ordination. If one is suppressed another comes up. If that is suppressed, the former crops up again. With different shapes and forms, at unexpected time and in unexpected places, they show themselves up and harass the weak and unfortunate human being.

Therefore the Lord speaks inspiring words to the seeker to conquer the enemy with courage and determination, however long and hard the struggle may be. The forth-coming verses ending with '*jahi satrum mahabaho*' is the Lord's magnificent exhortation to defeat and destroy the enemy in every way possible.

Question : *What is the force that compels man to commit sin?*

Answer : It is *Kama*, and it is *Krodha*.

Question : *What is the nature of these twin-evils ?*

Answer : They are all-devouring and all-sinful, and they are the constant enemies of the spiritual seeker.

38. धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥

३८

*Dhumena'vriyate vahnir yatha 'darso malena cha ।
yatho'lberna 'vrito garbhas tatha tene 'dam avritam ॥ 38*

Meaning : यथा *yatha* : as, धूमेन *dhumena* : by smoke, वह्निः *vahnih* : fire, आव्रियते *avriyate* : is enveloped, यथा *yatha* : as, आदर्शः च *adarsah cha* : and a mirror, मलेन *malena* : by dust (is enveloped), यथा *yatha* : as, उल्बेन *ulbena* : by the amnion, गर्भः *garbhah* : embryo (is enveloped), आवृतः *Avritah* : enveloped, तथा *tatha* : so, तेन *tena* : by it (Kama and krodha), इदम् *idam* : this (knowledge of the Self), अवृतम् *avritam* : is enveloped.

Substance : As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as embryo by the amnion, so this knowledge of the Self is enveloped by *Kama* and *Kroda*.

Commentary : In the heart of every being, the light of *Atma* is always shining. But it is not seen because it is covered up by *kama* and *kroda*. To explain this, the Lord uses three illustrations – (1) as fire being covered by smoke, (2) a mirror being covered by dust, and (3) the embryo being enveloped by the amnion. When smoke is cleared away by fanning, the fire underneath shines bright. When the dust is rubbed off, the mirror shines in all its purity. Also, when the amnion is removed the new born comes out free from the womb. In the same way, when the enveloping force of *kama* is dispelled by the practice of devotion, dispassion, selfless action, and knowledge, the light of *Atma* shines forth in all its effulgence. When *Atma* manifests, man attains liberation, and gets freedom from all enveloping forces.

Moreover fire is not extinguished by smoke, nor does the mirror lose its original purity by dust. The enveloping amnion does no harm to the embryo. So also, though *kama* envelops *Atma*, *Atma* is not at all affected by it. Thus even in the state of ignorance, *Atma* is there in all its original purity. It is never touched or transformed or acted upon by anything. It remains in its own pristine purity. As it is covered up, it does not manifest its light. That is all. When the covering is taken off, it shines forth as it is. There is no change in *Atma*. Knowledge

simply means our being conscious of the purity of *Atma*. *Atma* is there, even when you do not know it. One's ignorance or knowledge of *Atma* does not make any difference in its existence, for it exists by its own right, unconditioned by time, place, and causation. If a person changes his dress, does it make any difference in the body itself ? No. The change is in the dress and not in the body. Looking at a landscape through a hole, one can see only a part of it. As the opening is made bigger and bigger, more and more of the landscape is revealed. All the time it is not the landscape that is changing. It is the opening that changes. So it is with *Atma*. When *kama* covers it, people do not see it, when *kama* is cast away they see it. *Atma* is there always, eternally pure and eternally perfect.

Man's duty is to realise *Atma* by taking off the flimsy covering that is hiding the effulgent spirit. It is in one sense not difficult at all. A fan can blow off the smoke, a piece of cloth can rub the dust away from the mirror. So let the seeker take courage and slowly remove the enveloping *Kama* from his heart. The light of the Self reveals itself slowly but surely.

This (Idam)-knowledge of the Self. In the succeeding verse the word *Jnanam* is directly used, and so the pronoun 'this' here should convey the same meaning—knowledge of the Self.

Question : *By what is the knowledge of Atma covered ?*

Answer : By *kama*.

Question : *How ?*

Answer : As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, as the embryo is covered by the amnion, so is *Atma* covered by *kama*.

Kama is compared to fire.

39. आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरणानलेन च ॥

39. *Ayritam jnanam etena jnanino nityavairina !
kamarupena kaunteya dushpurena 'nalena cha* ॥ 39

Meaning : कौन्तेय Kaunteya : O Arjuna ! दुष्पूरण dushpurena : insatiable, अनलेन च analena cha : and by the fire, कामरूपेण kamarupena : whose form is desire, ज्ञानिनः jnaninah : of the wise, नित्यवैरिणा nityavairina : by the everlasting foe, एतेन etena : by this (Kama), ज्ञानम् jnanam : knowledge of the Self, आवृतम् ayritam : is enveloped.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Knowledge of the Self is covered by this everlasting foe of the wise in the form of desire, insatiable like fire.

Commentary : The Lord elaborates the theme of *kama*, for it is the worst enemy of man, and more of its nature should be understood before one could deal with it in a suitable manner and overcome its destructive influence. *Kama* is the ever-lasting foe of the wise (*Nitya Vairi*) and it is insatiable like fire. Birth after birth, this formidable foe harasses man continuously. External enemies are not so persistent. Sometimes a former enemy may become a present friend. So they are not perpetual enemies. But *Kama* is a constant foe, ever-scheming and plotting how to fringe and bring down the spiritual aspirant. Highly learned scholars, kings and heroes, the gods of the different worlds, are struck down by *kama* at one time or other. Even highly advanced spiritual seekers, if they are not careful for a minute, are trapped by *kama* and lose their freedom. Though its external manifestations are checked by conscious efforts, yet it remains in a seed-form in the heart, and comes out when there is a suitable opportunity. So the seeker should be vigilant and with firm determination should strike down the enemy whenever he lifts his head in any form whatsoever.

Insatiable like the fire : Like fire, *kama* can never be appeased. Any amount of fuel may be thrown into fire. Yet we do

not find the fire crying 'enough'. Such is *kama*. Enjoyments do not reduce the power of *kama*. On the other hand, it becomes stronger and stronger after every pleasure offered to appease it. It is already described as 'all-devouring' (*mahasana*). The attempt to fill *kama* is as futile as to draw water from a river in a sieve. The word *analena* meaning fire is significant. *Alam* means enough, *analam* means not enough. That is, fire never says 'enough' however much you may feed it with fuel. Such is *kama*, and like fire, it burns any one who touches it. So the policy of appeasement should be given up, and a total war should be declared against the enemy.

Everlasting foe of the wise : To the spiritual aspirant who is striving to know the Truth, *kama* is the immediate and most dangerous foe. When one is awakened from the dream of desire followed by enjoyment, and enjoyment followed by further desire he tries to progress towards Truth. Then he would understand how *kama* had enslaved him, how bitter and short-lived its pleasures were, how hard and long should be the struggle to destroy this subtle enemy whom he fed and entertained as the ruling principle of his life through a series of births.

Question : *By what is the knowledge of Self covered ?*

Answer : By *kama*.

Question *What is its nature ?*

Answer : It is the constant foe of the wise, and all-consuming and insatiable like fire.

The origin and source of kama is explained.

40. इन्द्रियाणि मनोबुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥

४०

*Indriyani manobuddhir asyadhisthanam uchyate ।
etair vimohayatyesha jnanam avritya dehinam ॥*

40

Meaning : इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : the senses, मनः *manah* : the mind, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : intellect, अस्य *asya* : its (*kama*'s),

अधिष्ठानम् *adhishtanam* : seat, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, एषः *eshah* : this (kama), एतैः *etaih* : by these (senses etc.), **ज्ञानम्** *jnanam* : wisdom, आवृत्य *avritya* : enveloping, **देहिनम्** *dehinam* : of the embodied, विमोहयति *vimohayati* : deludes (man).

Substance : The senses, the mind, and the intellect are the seat of *kama*. Functioning through them this *kama* deludes the embodied by veiling the wisdom.

Commentary : When a person wants to destroy an enemy, he must first of all know what his stronghold is, and from which place he is attacking him. The stronghold of *kama* is the senses, the mind, and the intellect. With these under its power, *kama* veils the knowledge of Self and deludes mankind by attachment to the body and the material world. So the first step for the seeker is to bring the senses under his own control, by driving out *kama* from its stronghold. Then the mind becomes pure, and the discriminative intellect clear. When *kama* is thus driven out of its hiding place and feeding ground, it becomes weak and gradually dies for want of sustenance.

Question : *What is the seat of kama ?*

Answer : The senses, the mind and the intellect together form the abode of *kama*. With their aid, *kama* deludes man by veiling the wisdom of the embodied.

The method of conquering kama is pointed out.

41. तसाच्चमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥

82

*Tasmat tvam indriyany adau niyamya bharatarshabha !
papmanam prajahi hyenam jnanavijnana nasanam ॥ 41*

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : O best of the Bharatas, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, त्वम् : *tvam* : you, आदौ *adau* : in

the beginning, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : the senses, नियम्य *niyamya* : having controlled, ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् *jnanavijnana nasanam* : destroyer of knowledge and realisation, पापमानम् *papmanam* : sinful, एनम् *enam* : this (*kama*), प्रजहि॒हि *prajahi hy* : kill surely.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Therefore, having controlled the sensess in the begining, kill surely this *kama*, the sinful destroyer of knowledge and Self-realisation.

Commentary : *Kama* (lust) functions by first enslaving the senses, then deluding the mind, and then confusing the intellect. In the actual act of enjoyment no one can make the division. But *sadhana* consists in analysing the mechanism of the body and mind. The Lord insists on sense-control as the first step to get rid of *kama*. The senses are like the main gateway of a fort. If the enemy is attacked and repelled at the gate, he cannot enter the fort. The senses should not be allowed to possess the mind by filling it with sense-objects of pleasure. So the senses should be controlled first. The enjoyments derived through the senses should be given up by the practice of discrimination and dispassion. This is the starting point of spiritual advancement. The Lord says to every seeker "Whatever other obstacles and difficulties there may be, look to this first. Control the senses. Other things shall follow later." Therefore let every seeker examine the outgoing senses, and find out the objects towards which they are running. Then let him turn away from them by examining and understanding their filthy nature.

Sinful : The nature of *kama* is sin. It is all-sinful *maha-papma*. The most heinous sins are committed by man under the pressure of *Kama*. Thoughtful men know the cursed crimes that men commit by this horrible demon of *kama*. Blinded by *kama* man forgets what is right and wrong. All the *sastric* injunctions are violated, all common moral principles are set at naught, and shame and fear are lost, when the demands of *kama* press for immediate satisfaction. The

desire for lust and gold, position and power, have undone the best and wisest men even, and the world has suffered serious disasters in consequence.

Destroyer of knowledge and realisation : “*Jnana*” means knowledge acquired by the study of the ‘*Sastras*’, ‘*Vijnana*’ means direct knowledge of the Self. The first is indirect knowledge (*Paroksha Jnana*) and the second is direct knowledge (*Aparoksha Jnana*)—practical experience of the Self. Both are destroyed by *kama*. What little knowledge is acquired, what little experience is acquired by the *sadhaka*, all this is cancelled and nullified by the virulence of *kama*. We see highly learned men and gifted people yielding to common temptations like the most unlearned and ignorant. Such is the overwhelming power of *kama*. But its power, like the gravitational pull of the earth, can work only up to a certain radius. Those men who pass beyond its range are the free and the perfect. *Kama* cannot do anything to them. They are the *Jivanmuktas*—the living free—blessed men who live in the Self, and have absolutely no relish for the foul and filthy enjoyments of earthly life.

The Lord never for a moment says that *kama* cannot be conquered. That is not the import of these verses. Only the evil power of *kama* is explained in full, in order to inspire the aspirant with greater zeal and enthusiasm to overcome this deadly foe.

Prajahi: Conquer, that is the watch word, the war cry of the seeker. The Lord is behind every seeker, every sincere devotee. Therefore no man need be disheartened by thinking of the power of the inimical forces.

Question : *What is the first duty of the ‘Sadhaka’ ?*

Answer : Sense-control.

Question : *How will sense-control help ?*

Answer : It destroys *kama*.

Question : *How does the evil power of kama work ?*

Answer : It destroys both spiritual knowledge and experience.

The nature of Atma is explained.

42. इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥

४२

*Indriyani paranyahur indriyebhyah param manah
manasastu para buddhir yo buddheh paratstu sah ॥ 42*

Meaning : इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : the senses, पराणि *parani* : superior (to the body), इन्द्रियेभ्यः *indriyebhyah* : to the senses, मनः *manah* : the mind, परम् *param* : superior, मनसस्तु *manasah tu* : but to the mind, बुद्धिः *budhihi* : the intellect, परा *para* : superior, बुद्धेः *buddheh* : than the intellect, परतः *paratah* : greater, यः तु *yah tu* : but who, सः *sah* : he (Self), (इति) आहुः *(Iti) ahuh* : thus (they) say.

Substance : They say that the senses are superior (to the body), superior to the senses is the mind, superior to the mind is the intellect, but superior than the intellect is He (the *Atman*).

Commentary : In the previous verses, sense-restraint is enjoined as the first condition of spiritual progress. But how to achieve it ? The Lord answers it in this verse. Unless one stands above his enemy, or acquires greater strength than the enemy, he cannot defeat him. So one should understand what the position of the senses is in the organism of the human being. No doubt the senses are superior to the bodily organs like hands and legs, because they have a wider range of activity. But the mind is superior to the senses, because it has a still wider range of activity and endowed with higher powers of generating action. But the intellect is superior to the mind, because the operations of the mind are subject to the dictates of the intellect which directs the mind in its various activities. But higher than the intellect and greater than all, stands the *Atma*, the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, ever-blissful Self. The Self is All-mighty. Nothing can touch it or affect it. In the *Sankhya Yoga*

the Lord has already described the glory and indestructibility of *Atma*.

The *Atma* is the one conscious principle in the Universe. All else is *jada*—*Anatma*—a mass of insentience. It is the presence of *Atma* that gives life and activity to the insentient mass, right from the intellect down to the body. A ball of iron is illumined when fire enters and pervades it. So *Atma* enters and pervades the whole universe, giving it the appearance of life and activity. All this life belongs to *Atma*. He is the Reality in every thing.

So, keeping oneself in the *Atmic* state is the most powerful antidote to the intellect. When one acquires a stand in *Atma*, these lower functional instruments are deprived of the usual ramblings in the world of matter, and so they automatically come to a standstill in their own respective positions. They can no longer draw the person out and entangle him in the meshes of sense-enjoyments. Even the relish or taste for enjoyment is killed when *Atma* is directly perceived and experienced.

Thus the Lord points out the way to conquer the senses, the mind, and the intellect, all at once. ‘Never descend to the lower plane of the senses. All should ascend to the state of *Atma*’,—this is the injunction of the Lord. The lower things then cannot trouble the person for he would then understand that he is actually the witness to the modifications of the mind and the senses, and have nothing to do with them at all. ‘We are not the body, we are not the senses, we are not the mind, we are not the intellect, we are blessed *Atma*, pure and perfect, infinite and ever-blessful’.—When this thought is firmly held, the senses lose their power over the individual and cannot betray him into sinful acts and ways of life.

Question : What is the state of *Atma* ?

Answer : *Atma* is superior to the senses, the mind and the intellect. It is the ruler of all.

The Lord ends this discourse by exhorting Arjuna to conquer Kama by the realisation of Atma.

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

४३

*Evam buddheh param buddhva
samstabhya'tmanam atmana ।
jahi satrum mahabaho
kamarupam durasadam ॥*

43

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna, एवम् *evam* : thus, बुद्धेः *buddeh param* : what is superior to the intellect (Atma), बुद्ध्वा *budhva* : having known, आत्मना *atmana* : with intellect, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the self (i. e.) the senses, body and mind, संस्तम्य *samstabhya* : having restrained, दुरासदम् *durasadam* : hard to overcome, कामरूपम् *kamarupam* : in the form of desire, शत्रुम् *satrum* : enemy, जहि *jahi* : conquer.

Substance : O mighty-armed Arjuna! Thus, having known what is greater than the intellect (i. e.) *Atma*, and restraining the mind by the intellect conquer the foe (*kama*) in the form of desire which is indeed hard to overcome.

Commentary : The cause of all sorrow is the ignorance of man of his real Self. Thinking that he is the body, the senses and the mind, he attributes to himself all their distractions, disturbances, agitations and sufferings. This identification with the material body and the world is the root cause of all sorrow and suffering. So the Lord exhorts all mankind, "Know that you are the Self which is beyond the intellect. You are not the body. So take refuge in the Self and conquer the indomitable foe-*Kama*." This is the Lord's inspiring message to suffering humanity.

In fact, it is *Atma* that impregnates all material things with consciousness, power and activity. Whatever power is

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displayed by the bodily organs, the senses, and the mind, all that power is derived from *Atma* which is One indivisible ocean of power and blessedness. But as we see, these insentient instruments have acquired the appearance of reality by the interpretation of *Avidya*. They have, as it were, become the real, and what is real (i. e.) *Atma* is covered up by them. People have, so to say, realised the unreal, and unrealised the real. Now, therefore, the seeker has to make the hard distinction between the apparently real, and the really real. He should distinguish the unreal which is appearing as the real. If the Reality, *Atma* is experienced the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect—would immediately be subdued and brought under control. Thus *Karma* is conquered, the bonds of ignorance are broken, the Power of the Supreme is realised.

Therefore, discrimination – persistent discrimination—between the real and the unreal is the first and foremost practice for the aspirant. By this he would know that the various actions and functions of the senses, the mind and the intellect, have no absolute reality at all. *Atma* is separated from *Anatma*. Then all that is not *Atma* loses its mysterious power over the individual. Man then feels the freedom of the Self—the state of the *Jivanmukta*. The ignorant man has tied a strong knot between *Atma* and *Anatma*. This knot should be cut so that insentient matter is clearly distinguished from the life and light of *Atma*. To the realised man, *Atma* alone appears every where, as the immovable, unchinging, imperishable, substratum of all that exists. Then these senses and the mind remain under his control, and become servants to carry out the command of the master, the Self.

If the brake is applied, the fast-moving train comes to a standstill. If the connecting link is cut, the fast whirling wheel of the vast machine stops rotating. Thus the mighty wheel of birth and death comes to a stand-still, when the Self is realised. There is no other way to stop the wheel of *samsara*. If the phenomenal world is cut off from its deluding connection with the Self, the whole of it ceases to have any meaning or

life, or significance. The delusion banishes by the knowledge of *Atma*. The external world will be known as a mirage and no one would run after a mirage when he knows it to be such. The senses do not run after material things, the mind does not hanker after pleasures and enjoyment, and the intellect has no more any part to play in the scheme of things. There is no further quest for this or that. The Self alone shines as the eternal Truth. It is this grand and inspiring idea which is presented to us in this magnificent verse.

One should naturally feel the power of the inspiring words—‘Oh! mighty-armed Arjuna! conquer the foe (*jahi satrum mahabaho.*)’ Arjuna is addressed as the mighty-armed warrior. True. The aspirant should be like Arjuna, a hero who knows no defeat, who is ready to sacrifice his life for attaining the highest. His motto should be ‘Conquer’. But what kind of foe is he to conquer? The foe to be conquered is hard indeed to overcome (*durasadam*). It is no use to underestimate the power of the enemy. The enemy (*Kama*) is powerful, because it has sent its roots deep into the heart of man and has developed into a mighty many-branched tree. It should be cut and the roots pulled out of the solid earth. The sword that can cut this mighty tree of *Kama* is detachment from the unreal and identification with *Atma*. This is the axe which would cut the mighty tree.

Knowledge of the Self is the last word of the Lord in this Discourse, *Karma Yoga*, the *Yoga* of action. We understand that *Karma yoga* demands detachment and desirelessness and this is possible only when man understands *Atma*. So knowledge is the foundation of *Karma yoga*. *Nishkama Karma* leads to *Jnana*, and *Jnana* makes *Nishkama Karma* possible. So those who desire to cross the ocean of sorrow, those who aspire to conquer *Kama*, those who seek for liberation, should understand their real nature, that they are *Atma* and not dead matter, the body, etc. When they know this, whether they are in cities or forest, whether they are young or old, whether they work or cease to work, they would enjoy the supreme peace of *Atma*, and the world has no power to bind them again.

Question : *How can one conquer Kama ?*

Answer : If he knows that he is *Atma*, higher than the intellect, and if he is firmly established in the Self-state, *Kama* is conquered.

इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्री कृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो नाम
तृतीयोध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Karma Yogo
nama tritiyo 'dhyayah.*

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavadgita,
the science of the Enternal, the scripture of *Yoga*,
the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
ends the Third Discourse entitled

Karma Yoga (The Yoga of Action)

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ चतुर्थोऽध्यायः

Atha Chaturdhdhyayah

FOURTH DISCOURSE

ज्ञान योगः

JNANA YOGA

THE YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

The title of the Discourse :

This Discourse is entitled the *Yoga* of Knowledge (*Jnana Yoga*), because it deals with the investigation of supreme wisdom. In this are mentioned Jnana tapas, Jnana yajna, Jnana nauka, Jnana agni, Jnana khadga, and all that has reference to knowledge and understanding of the Self. The significance of spiritual knowledge, and the qualifications of the man of knowledge are elaborately stated in this Discourse, and so it is entitled *Jnana Yoga*.

Main Points of the Discourse :

- 1) The power of the Lord and mention of *Nishkama Karma*. (1-18)
- 2) The pure conduct of the *Jnani*. (19-23)
- 3) An account of various *Yajnas*, and the superiority of *Jnana Yajna*. (24-32)
- 4) The wonderful efficacy of *Jnana*. (33-42)

How the Discourse is connected with the previous one :-

The highest truth is that by desireless action the mind is purified, and in the pure mind the Self is reflected clearly, and man attains liberation, *Moksha*. In the Discourse on *Karma Yoga* all the principles and doctrines of desireless action are discussed and declared by the Lord. The present Discourse leads to the highest wisdom. So the Lord here propounds the theory and practice of Self-Knowledge. Though knowledge is its main theme, mention is made of action (*Karma*) also. The Lord starts the Discourse by narrating how He taught the *Yoga* of action (which leads to knowledge, *Jnana*) to *Vivasvan* (Sun-God) and how it was handed down to Manu, and from Manu to *Ikshyaku*.

श्री भगवानुवाच

१. इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवान् इमच्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवे ऽब्रवीत् ॥

१

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Imam vivasvate yogam proktayan aham avyayam ।
vivasvan manaye praha manur ikshvakave 'bravit ॥ 1*

The Blessed Lord said :

Meaning : अच्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, इमं योगम् *imam yogam* : this yoga of action (nishkama karma), अहम् *aham* : I, विवस्वते *vivasvate* : to Vivasvan (sun), प्रोक्तवान् *proktayan* : taught, मनवे *manave* : to Manu, प्राह *praha* : taught, मनुः *manuh* : Manu, इक्ष्वाकवे *ikshvakave* : to Ikshvaku, अब्रवीत् *abrayit* : taught.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : This imperishable *Yoga* of action (and the wisdom arising from it) I taught to *Vivasvan* (the Sun) at the beginning of creation. *Vivasvan* taught it to his son *Manu*, and *Manu* to his son *Ikshyaku*.

Commentary : The Lord at first taught the secret of '*nishkama karma*' to the Sun, and through him the Emperor-saints learnt it. By the power of this *Yoga*, the mind is purified and the Self is realised. All those who practised this *Yoga* became sages and attained freedom and perfection. Though they may belong to different strata of society, rich or poor, all of them attained the highest reward of truth and perfection.

Imperishable : The *yoga* is imperishable, because, as long as the universe lasts, work in some form or other has to be done, and desireless work is the direct road leading to *Moksha*. At all times, under all circumstances desireless action is the law of spiritual life, and out of it arises knowledge of the Self. So the *Yoga* is imperishable. As long as mankind exists, this law holds good as the direct path to emancipation.

Question : *What is the merit of 'nishkama karma'?*

Answer : It is imperishable and yields the highest point of liberation.

Question : *How did it spread in the world?*

Answer : The Lord taught it to *Vivasvan* (the sun) at the beginning of creation, and *Vivasvan* taught it to *Manu* and *Manu* to *Ikshvaku*.

2. एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥

2

*Evam parampara praptam imam rajarshayo viduh ।
sa kaleneha mahata yoga nastah parantapa ॥*

2

Meaning : परंतप *parantapa* : O Arjuna, scorcher of enemies, एवम् *evam* : thus, परम्पराप्राप्तम् *paramparapraptam* : handed down in regular succession, इमम् *imam* : this (*yoga*), राजर्षयः *rajarshayah* : Royal Sages, विदुः *viduh* : knew, महता कालेन *mahata kalena* : by long lapse of time, सयोगः *sa yogah* : that *yoga*, इह *iha* : in the world, नष्टः *nashtah* : was lost.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The royal sages know this (*yoga*) which was handed down in regular succession from generation to generation. But by long lapse of time, this *Yoga* was lost to the world.

Commentary : *Royal sages*—Kings who knew *Brahmavidya* are called royal sages. They are *Jnanis* as well as rulers, who possessed royalty and wisdom together. In earliest times several Kings and emperors were endowed with Self-knowledge. The term '*Rishi*' is a title. Any one can acquire it. Even an ordinary man becomes a '*Rishi*' when he comes to possess *Atma-vidya*. So, the man who conquers the senses and mind, who is able to practise *nishkama karma*, and who has attained a glimpse of the Supreme Self is a *Rishi*.

We have to understand that in former ages, *Kings* were the real possessors of *Brahma vidya*. This proves that worldly life is not in any way a barrier to *Atma vidya*. Let us imagine the life of a King in former times. He was the supreme power of the state, and he was responsible for the administration of the whole kingdom. How many cares and anxieties had he in discharging his royal duties. And yet, it was the king who acquired and possessed the highest wisdom. The practical application af *Vedanta* to actual life was the contribution of these great monarchs to the world. Let us hear the words of Swami Vivekananda on this point. "In various Upanishads we find that this *Vedanta* philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but that the very best parts of it were thought out by brains which were busiest in the every day affairs of life. We cannot conceive any man busier than an absolute monarch, a man ruling over millions of people and yet, some of these rulers were deep thinkers." Arjuna comes of a noble family of royal sages. So it would not be difficult for him to tread the path of the ancient kings who were adepts both in worldly matters and spiritual knowledge.

It does not mean that others are not qualified for this *Yoga*. In fact the Lord's message is for people who are engaged in the different avocations of life, like teachers

politicians, administrators, agriculturists or shop-keepers etc. Very often we hear people brushing aside anything of spiritual knowledge as an obstacle to their worldly activities, which they say are necessary for the maintenance of this life. This verse condemns such an apathetic attitude to spiritual life, because it is pointed out that monarchs have practised this *Yoga* with great advantage to their spiritual and practical life.

Was lost : This does not mean that *Karma Yoga* as a spiritual path was completely destroyed. Some incidents might have caused neglect of this *Yoga* for the time being. But it cannot be destroyed as it is imperishable—*Avyayam*. Just as the Lord is eternal, even so the *Dharma* established by Him is eternal.

3. स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

Sa eva 'yam maya te 'dya yogah proktah puratanah ।
bhakto 'si me sakha che 'ti rahasyam hyetaduttamam ॥ 3 ॥

Meaning : मे me : my, भक्तः bhaktah : my devotee, सखा च sakha cha : and friend, असि इति Asi iti : thus, thou art, पुरातनः puratanah : ancient, स एव sa eva : even that, अयं योगः ayam yogah : this yoga of nishkama karma, अद्य adya : now, ते आते : to you, मया maya : by me, प्रोक्तः proktah : is taught, उत्तमम् uttamam : best, एतत् etat : this, रहस्यम् हि rahasyam hi : secret indeed.

Substance : This same ancient *Yoga* has now been taught by Me, for you are My devotee and friend. It is indeed the supreme secret.

Commentary : The spiritual path of *Karma Yoga* is not a new invention. It is an ancient path. But owing to the change of times, it was covered up and neglected for some time. But it is imperishable. When spiritual *Dharma* suffers decline, the Lord incarnates Himself to re-establish it. Great spiritual

men like Sankara and others come into the world to reclaim the declining *Dharma* and re-establish it in the world. This same ancient knowledge is now taught to Arjuna by Lord Krishna.

Why should the Lord choose Arjuna only to be the recipient of this knowledge? This is answered by this verse. Arjuna was a devotee and a friend of the Lord. Therefore this supreme secret was revealed to him. Whoever loves the Lord is His friend and devotee. On him the Lord bestows supreme knowledge.

So one should acquire the faith and devotion of Arjuna, and to such a man the Lord Himself offers all the secrets of spiritual knowledge. The Lord has no attachment of friend or foe. Whoever loves Him receives His love and compassion. Arjuna's faith in the Lord has won for him a place in the heart of Krishna, and hence the divine message was offered to him.

Best secret : The spiritual path of 'nishkama karma' is not only a secret but a royal path to knowledge. Such a precious secret cannot be thrown away carelessly on indifferent people who can neither understand it nor wish to practise it. The right man should be chosen to communicate the secret of perfection. Arjuna was the right man because he had devotion and love for the Lord.

Question : *What is the excellence of Karma Yoga ?*

Answer : It is the ancient path of wisdom; it is the supreme secret.

Question : *Why did the Lord teach it to Arjuna ?*

Answer : Because Arjuna was the devotee and friend of the Lord.

Arjuna's doubt :

अर्जुन उवाच

4. अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्यतः ।
कथमेतद्विज्ञानीयां स्वमादौ प्रोक्षवानिति ॥

Arjuna uvacha

*Aparam bhavato janma param janma vivasvataḥ
katham etad vijaniyam tvam adau proktayan iti*

4

Meaning : भवतः *bhavataḥ* : your, जन्म *janma* : birth, अपरम् *aparam* : later, विवस्तः *vivasvataḥ* : of vivasvan (sun), जन्म *janma* : birth, परम् *param* : earlier, आदौ *adau* : in the beginning, त्वम् *tvam* : you, प्रोक्तवान् *proktayan* : taught, इति *iti* : thus, एतत् *etat* : this, कथम् *katham* : how, विजानीयम् *vijaniyam* : am I to understand ?

Substance : Arjuna said : Later was your birth, earlier the birth of Vivasvan (Sun); how then am I to understand that you taught it to him in the beginning ?

Commentary : In the *Rajasuya Yaga*, Arjuna has already come to know that Krishna is the eternal Lord of the Universe, though he is apparently the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Still, it is quite possible that the supreme secret of the Lord's incarnation might have appeared as a mystery to Arjuna, and he desired that the Lord Himself should unravel the mystery. Arjuna's doubt is the doubt of all ordinary human beings, and so the Lord's answer is intended to enlighten mankind about the mystery of His incarnation in the world.

Indeed, Lord Krishna is not a material form composed of the five elements as is the body of a human being. He is the eternal all-pervading Supreme Being of the Universe. This very truth is declared by the Lord in his reply to Arjuna. This universe and all that is in it can be looked at from three planes of vision. As soon as one sees a material object, man or animal or plant or stone or any thing else, he takes in the object through the visual sense organ - the form, the colour, shape and complexion and other aspects of its external appearance. When he rises to the mental plane, he considers the character, qualities and nature of the object which could be understood only by the mind. When he rises higher still, he finds that all

this universe with all that exists in it is nothing but the soul, the *Atma*-the supreme Sacchidananda. This is the spiritual plane of vision. The former two are relative truths. The last is the Absolute Truth. To distinguish this relative from the Absolute, and hold on to the Absolute is the aim of spiritual *Sadhana*.

The Lord declares His real nature and supreme power.

श्री भगवानुवाच

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

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Bahuni me vyatitani janmani tava cha'rjuna !
tanyaham veda sarvani na tyam vettha parantapa || 5*

श्री भगवानुवाच—*Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The blessed Lord said :

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! मे me : Mine, तव च taya cha : and your, बहूनि bahuni : many, जन्मानि janmani : births, व्यतीतानि vyatitani : have passed away, तानि tani : them, सर्वाणि sarvani : all, अहम् ahām : I, वेद veda : know, परन्तप parantapa : O Searcher of Enemies (Arjuna), त्वम् tyam : you, नवेत्थ na, vettha : do not know.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! Many births of Mine have passed as well as yours. I know them all but you know them not.

Commentary : Iswara, the Lord and Jiva, the personalised man are both of the same substance - the Supreme Brahman. Iswara is the Lord of *Maya*, and *Jiva* is subject to *Maya*. Iswara incarnates himself by controlling *Maya*, for the purpose of establishing *Dharma* in the world. But the *Jiya* is born again and again to work out his own *karma*, under the power and control of *Maya*. Since the Lord is the Lord of *Maya*, He knows all His incarnations from the beginning of creation, whereas the *Jiya* forgets them by the deluding power of *Maya*.

On account of *Avidya*, man's knowledge is confined to the present life only. In truth, every man has passed through myriads of births. He had parents, wives and children, and friends and enemies, wealth and prosperity, good and bad, during thousands of former births. But he has no knowledge of them now. If man fails to cut the bonds of *karma* by knowledge of *Atma*, he has still to pass through innumerable births. By virtue of the good that he has done, he has now acquired the human birth, endowed with reason and discrimination, and not the birth of a worm or reptile, bird or beast. Having this great good fortune if still he indulges in sense pleasures and gets lost in the meshes of *karma*, he is indeed an unfortunate being.

When the embryo in the mother's womb attains the seventh month, he gets the vision of his past births for a brief time and then, he vows to the Lord that he would strive to dedicate his present birth to Self-realisation. But as soon as he comes out of the mother's womb, he forgets all and is lost in the pleasures and pains of earthly existence. Such is the power of *Maya*.

Let people not forget that they have had the same pleasures and pains during myriads of births, and when they realise this, they lose all taste and resort for worldly attachments and pleasures. Then comes true renunciation, and the march to their original state of perfection begins. So the Lord tells Arjuna that he (Arjuna) had several births in the past, though he is not able to recollect them on account of the mortal nature.

The Lord reveals the secret of the incarnation :

6. अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीथरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

६

Ajo'pi sannavyayatma bhutanam isvaro 'pi san

prakritim svam adhishthaya sambhavam yatmamayaya ॥ 6

Meaning : (अहम् *aham* : I) अजः अपि सन् *ajah api san* : though having no birth, अव्ययात्मा *avyayatma* : through eternal, भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of all beings, ईश्वरः *isvarah* अपि सन्

isvarsh api san : the Lord and controller also, स्वम् svam : my own, प्रकृतिम् *pṛakritim* : Nature, अधिष्ठाय *adhishtaya* : controlling, आत्ममायया *atmamayaya* : by my Maya, (Sakti), सम्भवामि *sambhavami* : (I) come into being.

Substance : Though unborn and eternal in My being, the Lord and controller of all beings, controlling My own nature, I come into being by the power of My *Maya-Sakti*.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the Lord said that He too had passed through several births. And now, in order to clear any misconception concerning the nature of this birth the Lord explained the mystery and significance of his incarnation.

The common man takes birth as an effect of his own *Karma*. But the Lord has no such *Karma* to work out, and nothing has power over him. He is himself the Supreme Lord and master of the whole universe and rules over it by His mysterious power of *Maya*. Why then should he take birth ? It is for the purpose of doing good to the world. He takes a form by His own will, using the power of *Maya* as His instrument. Three attributes of the Lord are mentioned here. He has no birth (*Ajah*). He is eternal (*Avyayatma*). He is the Supreme Lord of all beings (*Bhutanam isvarah*). From this we understand that Lord Krishna is apparently the son of Devaki and Vasudeva, but really the Eternal Being, the Lord of the Universe.

Question : *What is the nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : He is birthless, eternal, the controller of all beings, and the Lord of *Maya*.

Question : *How then does He take birth as a personal being ?*

Answer : By controlling His nature, God incarnates Himself as a personal being by the power of His own *Maya*.

The Lord declares the purpose of His Incarnation :

7. यदा यदा हि पर्वत्यग्ननिर्वपति भारत ।

अव्युत्थानपर्यम्पा उद्गरपां च द्वाष्टात्रम् ॥

*Yada-yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata !
abhyutthanam adharmasya tada' tmanam srijamyaham ॥ 7*

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! यदा यदा *yadayada* : whenever, धर्मस्य *dharma* : of righteousness, ग्लानिः *glanih* : decline, अधर्मस्य *adharma* : of evil, अभ्युत्थानम् *abhuthanam* : rise, भवति *bhavati* : happens, तदा *tada* : then, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Myself, हि *hi* : surely, अहम् *aham* : I, सृजामि *srijami* : manifest.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of evil, I manifest Myself.

Commentary : The imperative necessity of *Dharma* as the basic principle of man's existence, peace and happiness, is declared by the Lord. *Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*—If one protects *Dharma*, *Dharma* protects him, *Dharma* alone gives peace and prosperity to humanity. So when the laws of righteousness are violated and suppressed, the Lord has to manifest Himself for re-establishing *Dharma*. Otherwise the universe falls to pieces. Men destroy themselves in a hundred ways. The whole scheme of creation will be disturbed and the very purpose of human existence is defeated. So the righteous way of life has to be kept clear and clean for humanity to tread the path of God-realisation. For that purpose, the Lord manifests Himself. Therefore whoever follows the *Dharmic* way of life is doing God's work. Whoever defies the *Dharma* is the foe of the Lord, and he shall be destroyed by the Lord.

Question : When does the Lord manifest Himself ?

Answer : When righteousness declines and evil rises, the Lord manifests Himself.

8. परित्रणाय साधुनां विनाशय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

*Paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya cha duskritam
dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge ॥ 8*

Meaning : साधूनाम् *sadhunam* : of the good, परित्राणाय *paritranaya* :: for the protection, दुष्कृताम् *dushkritam* : of the wicked, विनाशायच *vinasaya cha* : and for the destruction, धर्मसंस्थापनार्थयि *dharma samsthapanarthaya* : for establishing *Dharma*, युगेयुगे *yuge yuge* : in every age, सम्भवामि *sambhavami* : I take birth.

Substance : For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for establishing *Dharma*, I take birth in every age.

Commentary : The Lord Himself protects the good and the righteous. By obeying the laws of *Dharma*, man acquires the right of protection by the Lord, whose protecting hand never fails at any time. Thus the Lord's promise to the righteous is the only protection that a good man seeks in his perilous life. He escapes from the bonds of *samsara* easily. He crosses the ocean of ignorance quickly. He attains freedom. One should understand that there are internal enemies of man and the spiritual path and these foes in the heart of man are all destroyed by the Lord's grace. So for those devotees who have faith in the Lord, there is no fear either from the external or internal enemies, whoever they are and whatever power they may wield.

Besides protecting the good, the destruction of the wicked is the second vow of the Lord. So the spiritual seeker should be careful and vigilant. He should be far away from evil and evil men. He should tread the path of *Dharma*, for then the Lord is pleased, and when the Lord is pleased, nothing is impossible for them.

The third vow of the Lord is establishing *Dharma* in the world. *Dharma* is the life-breath of the Lord. It is the principle of human existence. It is the sustaining power of the whole universe. Any deviation from the law will immediately bring down the mighty structure of the universe. Hence the Lord has to manifest Himself to save the world from self-destruction by the force of evil.

When we study the history of the different incarnations of God, we find that He manifests Himself for any one or two or all the purposes mentioned above. The incarnation of Narasimha (Lion-man) came to eliminate Hiranya Kasipu and protect the devotee Prahlada. The incarnation of Sri Rama came to fulfil all the three vows of the Lord. He protected the good, destroyed the wicked Rakshasas, and established *Dharma* by holding sovereignty over the earth for several years.

The word 'Sadhu' is not limited to *sanyasis* only. It refers to all who are righteous whatever may be their caste or position or occupation.

In every age : This does not mean that the Lord appears only once in a *yuga* (i. e.) cycle of time. It means that the Lord is ready to appear whenever there is need and wherever the necessity arises. The Lord responds to the call of the devotees at all times and under all circumstances.

The reader has to notice the special emphasis laid on the three key-words in the verse. 'Paritranaya' is used instead of 'tranaya'; 'vinasaya' used instead of 'nasaya'; 'samsthapanarthaya' is used instead of 'sthapanarthaya'. This shows the special significance attached to every one of the vows uttered by the Lord.

One may doubt how the Lord who is the embodiment of all love and compassion could punish the wicked who are also His children. To punish the wicked is not an act of hatred but a measure of the Lord's mercy to bring them into the fold of the righteous. Besides this, unless evil is removed, it spreads like wild fire and consumes the entire humanity. Evil is a cancer in the human organism. If it is not removed by an operation, it will poison the whole system and destroys the entire man. So it is necessary that the evil-doers should be punished to save mankind from total corruption and death.

Those who understand the mystery of the Lord's divine birth and work have no rebirth.

9. जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमैवं यो वेति तत्त्वतः ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

22)

*Janma karma cha me divyamevam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punarjanma na'iti mameeti so'rjuna* || 9

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! यः yah : who, एवम् evam : thus, मे me : My, दिव्यम् divyam : divine, जन्म janma : birth, कर्मच् karma cha : and work, तत्त्वतः tattvatah : in its essence, वेत्ति vetti : knows, सः sah : he, देहम् deham : the body, त्यक्त्वा tyaktva : having abandoned, पुनः punah : again, जन्म janma : birth, नएति na eti : does not get, माम् mam : to me, एति eti : comes.

Substance : O Arjuna ! He who thus knows My divine birth and work in its essence, having abandoned the body, is not born again; to Me he comes.

Commentary : The essence of the *Upanishadic* declaration *Brahmavit Brahmaiva bhavati* is re-stated in this verse. One who knows Brahman becomes that. Between knowing and becoming, there is no distinction in *Brahmayidya*. It is different in the objective world; there the knower and the knowee are different. But in the realm of the Self, knowing and becoming are one. In other words, only he who knows Him becomes Brahman. But what is this knowing of Brahman ? It is certainly not an intellectual conclusion, drawn by logic and argument from a study of the *Sastras*. One may be convinced by logical argument that Brahman alone is real, and yet he may be far far away from realising Him. This is not knowledge of Brahman. Knowing Brahman means direct experience of *Atma* which is beyond the body, senses, mind and intellect. This is to know Brahman in the essence (*Tattvatah*).

In this verse, the Lord states that he who knows the essential principle of His divine birth and action enters Him and has no further birth. By deep meditation and ecstasy of devotion, man becomes one with the Lord. To know the nature of the Lord is *Sadhana*, and to become one with Him is *Sadhyā*. The first is practice the second the goal. One must

know Him *Tattvatah* (i. e.) by impersonal realisation according to the injunctions of the *Sastras*.

Divine : The life and work of the Lord are divine and they cannot be compared with those of mortal beings. The Lord is the master of *Maya*, whereas all mortals are enslaved by *Maya*. Their birth and action are controlled by *Maya*. On the other hand, the Lord controls *Maya* and acts in His own state of supreme perfection. The man who is able to understand the mystery unites himself with the Lord and has no need to go through the cycle of birth and death. It shows that birthlessness is not a negative state of emptiness or nothingness, but the positive state of perfection and blessedness. The doubt that the ultimate state can only be a state of nothingness is common to many people. Being habituated to confuse life with the operations of the body, senses and mind, man is not able to conceive a state beyond these planes. But it is made clear here that unity with the Lord comprehends life at all levels and in all planes of existence and is infinitely more beyond.

Having abandoned the body : One should note that abandoning the body is not a pre-condition of realisation. Even when the physical body remains, if man comes to know by meditation and devotion the ultimate mystery of the Lord, he becomes free from *Samsara*, the cycle of birth and death. What is here mentioned is only to affirm that there is no more birth for the knower of the Lord.

Question : *Who attains union with the Lord ?*

Answer : He who knows the mystery of the birth and work of the Lord in its essence attains union with Him.

Many wise men thus attained liberation.

10. वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥

१०

*Vita raga bhaya krodha manmaya mamupasritah ।
bahavo jnana tapasa puta madbhavamagatah ॥*

10

Meaning : वीतरागभयकोधः: *vitaragabhayakrodhah* : free from desire, fear and hatred, मन्मयः *manmayah* : absorbed in me, मामुपाश्रितः *mamupasritah* : taking refuge in me, बहवः *bahavah* : many, ज्ञानतपसा *jnanatapasa* : by the penance of knowledge, पूताः *putah* : purified, मद्भावम् *madbhavam* : My Being, आगताः *agatah* : have attained.

Substance : Free from desire, fear and hatred, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many purified by the penance of knowledge have attained Me.

Commentary : In this Discourse, the Lord describes the merits of *Jnana* in different ways, as *Tapas*, *Yajna*, *Agni*, *Nauka* and *Khadga*. Here *Jnana* is described as *tapas*, a penance of wonderful merit, because it cleanses all accumulated sins of previous births and all the impurities of inherited instincts, impulses and tendencies. Such men who are purified by this penance are mentioned as purified (*Putah*). What are the marks of this *Jnana tapas*? Freedom from desire, fear and hatred, intense devotion and absorption in the Lord, seeking ultimate refuge in Him, - these are the aspects of *Jnana tapas*. What is its effect? Attaining the Lord, Self-realisation through purity is the reward.

Free from desire, fear and hatred : Attachment to worldly objects, fear and hatred, form the triple-headed monster who should be killed and destroyed. Is it an easy task? How to destroy them? The Lord points the way. He says, 'think of me, be absolved in me, take refuge in me.' That is the way to conquer the enemy. As man acquires greater and greater firmness in *Jnana*, these obstacles are gradually cleared from the mind, and that very moment when the mind is destroyed, the supreme Self is realised. When the mind ceases to exist, Self is realised, and when Self is realised, mind ceases to exist. So one should practice the two aspects of *Jnana* simultaneously.

Many : The Lord produces direct evidence by showing that many aspirants have attained Him by *Jnana tapas*, having

purified their minds. What has been possible in the past should be possible in the present and the future. The aspirants should therefore follow this spiritual *sadhana* and attain the goal. The main points of the verse are given below—

1. Purity of mind is indispensable for God-realisation.
2. To achieve mental purity, *Jnana tapas* is necessary.
3. *Jnana tapas* implies freedom from desire, fear and hatred, absorption in the contemplation of the Divine, and taking refuge in the Lord.

11. ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

११

*Ye yatha mam prapadyante
tam stathai`va bhajamyaham
mama vartma'nuvartante
manushyah partha sarvasah ॥*

11

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna ! ये ye : who, यथा yatha : in what-so-ever manner, माम् mam : Me, प्रपद्यन्ते prapadyante : approach, ताम् tam : them, तथैव tatha eva : in that way only, अहम् aham : I, भजामि bhajami : (I) reward, मनुष्याः manushyah : men, मम mama : My, वर्त्म vartma : path, सर्वशः sarvasah : in all ways, अनुवर्तन्ते anuvartante : follow.

Substance : O Arjuna ! In whatever way men approach Me, even so do I reward them, for the path that men may take from every side is Mine.

Commentary : The Lord declares here that the reward for men who worship Him would be strictly in relation to the aim and object of their worship. The purpose of devotion, its method and manner, and its intensity would determine the nature of the reward. God is like the wish-yielding plant of Paradise. What man wishes to obtain, that the Lord gives. The man who

is suffering from bodily pain prays to be relieved of that pain, and the pain is relieved. The poor man wishes for wealth and prosperity, and God gives him these worldly benefits. The devotee yearns for the devotion and he gets that. The *Jnani* seeks for liberation and he attains *Moksha*. This is to say that different types of persons share the grace of God in different ways each according to his own *samskaras*. If men seek for perishable worldly things, they get only those things and not *Moksha*. When we approach God, we should clearly know what we should seek for. It would be absurd for a man to approach an Emperor and ask for a few vegetables. How foolish then would it be to approach God for worldly pleasures and enjoyments, instead of true knowledge and devotion ! The wind of God's grace is blowing every where and at all times. Let us keep the sails unfurled to catch the friendly breeze and make rapid progress in life's voyage to the heaven of peace, light and blessedness. The lazy and ignorant sailors remain where they are, for they do not know that the wind of God's grace is all-pervading and ever ready to help and guide all mankind.

It should be understood that mere wishful thinking of spiritual aims does not take a man far in that path. The responsibility is mainly on man. How he progresses and to what end and with what purpose he strives will determine his progress.

Follow my path : In every way men are treading the path that leads to God. Even a rank materialist who prays for the gratification of material demands, is also treading the path to God. For, after some time, he would realise the fleeting nature and futility of earthly pleasures, and then his devotion to God would take an upward turn. He would then seek for knowledge, and thus attains the goal. So all men are moving towards the Lord though they follow different paths. What is needed is faith in the Lord. *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana* and *Jnana* are all different paths leading to the Lord.

The Load explains why people worship other Devas :

12. काव्यक्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धि यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥

*Kankshantah karmanam siddhim yajanta tha devatah
kshipram hi manushe loke siddhir bhavati karmaja ॥ 12*

Meaning: कर्मणाम् *karmanam* : of actions, सिद्धिम् *siddhim* : success, काङ्क्षन्तः *kankshantah* : men longing for, इह *tha* : in this world, देवताः *devatah* : the Devas (Indra, Varuna, etc.) यजन्तः *yajantah* : after sacrifice to, हि *hi* : because, कर्मजा *karmaja* : born of action, सिद्धिः *siddhih* : success, मानुषेषोके *manushe loke* : in the world of men, क्षिप्रम् *kshipram* : quickly, भवति *bhavati* : is attained.

Substance : Men longing for success of their works sacrifice to the Gods, because in this world of men, success born of action is quickly attained.

Commentary : The Lord declares that in this world success is quickly attained by man for the work that he does. So men worship the *Devas* like *Indra*, *Varuna* etc. and offer sacrifices to them, and the fruits of such works are quickly attained and enjoyed. All the other worlds are places of enjoyment resulting from the work done here. The earth is the world of action (*Karma Bhumi*) for good or evil. Men attain Heaven or Hell according to the good or evil done by them in this world. When that experience is over, they take birth once again in this world. So this is the centre for spiritual realisation. Let all the seekers take to good work, purify their minds, and attain Knowledge.

If the sick man does not cure himself where there is medicine for his disease, what can he do when he goes to a place where there is no medicine ? So the wise man should undertake some form of spiritual discipline in this world and attain liberation from the disease of birth and death.

The Lord declares that though He acts He is not bound by Karma.

13. चातुर्वर्णं मया सुष्टु गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्त्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्त्तारमव्ययम् ॥

*Chaturvarnyam maya sritstam gunakarma vibhagashah
tasya kartaramapi mam viddhyakartara mavyayam* ॥ 13

Meaning : चारुवर्ण्यम् *chaturvarnyam* : the fourfold caste, गुणकर्मविभागशः *gunakarma vibhagashah* : according to the differentiation of qualities and functions, मया *maya* : by Me, सृष्टम् *srishtam* : has been created, तस्य *tasya* : of it, कर्तारमणि *kartaram api* : though the author, माम् *man* : Me, अकर्तारम् *akartaram* : non-doer, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : eternal, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : The four-fold caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of qualities and functions; though I am its author, know Me as non-doer, eternal.

Commentary : The following table shows the caste system as it was planned by the Lord.

<i>Quality.</i>	<i>Caste.</i>	<i>Functions.</i>
1. Sattva	Brahmins	Tapas and self-control.
2. Rajas	Kshatriyas	Domination, war, Kingship.
3. Rajas+Tamas	Vysyas	Trade and Commerce.
4. Tamas	Sudras	Labour and Service.

Though the Lord is the Creator and sustainer of the world and human functions yet He remains detached and unaffected by His work. This is the mystery of the Lord's action in the universe. Many a great man who came into the world and who worked for the good of humanity have done so without any feeling of personal agency in his work. That is the way how work should be done, and men who work in that spirit are not bound by the wheel of *Karma*.

14. न मां कर्मणि लिप्सन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥

१४

*Na mam karmani limpanti na me karmaphale spriha ।
iti mam yo 'bhijanati karmabhir na sa badhyate ॥* 14

Meaning : माम् *mam* : Me, कर्मणि *karmani* : actions, न लिप्तन्ति *na limpanti* : do not taint, मे *me* : to Me, कर्मफले *karmaphale* : in the fruit of actions, स्पृहा *sprīha* : desire, न *na* : no, इति *iti* : thus, माम् *mam* : Me, यः *yah* : who, अभिजानाति *abhijanati* : knows well, सः *sah* : he, कर्मभिः *karmabhiḥ* : by actions, न बध्यते *na badhyate* : is not bound.

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

Commentary : The Lord is Himself the greatest example of a *Karma Yogi*. He is every moment engaged in infinite work in the infinite universe. And yet, He is not tainted by anything because He is free from the desire for the fruit of actions. The seeker should try to understand the supreme unattachment of the Lord in the tremendous work going on all around Him. One who does understand this mystery becomes free from the bondage of *karma* like the Lord Himself.

The wise men of the past have done work with that knowledge.

14. एवं ज्ञात्वा कुतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कुतम् ॥

१५

*Evam jnatva kritam karma purvairapi mumukshubhiiḥ ।
kuru karmai'ya tasmat tvam puryaiḥ purvataram kritam ॥ 15*

Meaning : एवम् *evam* : thus, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : knowing, पूर्वैः *purvaiḥ* : by ancients, मुमुक्षुभिः *api* अपि *mumukshubhiiḥ* : aspirants for liberation also, कर्म *karma* : work, कुतम् *kritam* : was done, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, त्वम् *tvam* : you, पूर्वैः *purvaiḥ* : by ancients, कुतम् *kritam* : done, पूर्वतस्म् *purvataram* : in olden times, कर्म एव *karma eva* : action only (*nishkama karma*), कुरु *kuru* : do.

Substance : Thus knowing, the ancient spiritual aspirants performed action. Therefore you shall do the same (desireless) action as performed by the ancients in older times.

Commentary : *Nishkama karma* is the very foundation of spiritual life and the open gateway to final liberation. The mighty structure of Self-realisation is based on this wonderful and ancient law. Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to follow the example set by the ancient sages who performed magnificent work for the benefit of humanity, without the least idea of doership or personal attachment. This law of *nishkama karma* is therefore not a new path or novel doctrine. It is a very ancient principle of spiritual life, and Lord Krishna reassures the modern generations that the law holds good for all times. This path is still open to all people without distinction of caste and creed, and it is within the reach of the common man, and leads to the highest good.

The method of Nishkama Karma is explained in the course of fifteen verses.

16. किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तत्त्वे कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १६

*Kim karma kim akarme'ti kavayo'pyatra mohitah
tatte karma pravakshyami yajnatva mokshyase asubhat* ॥ 16

Meaning : कर्म karma : action, किम् *kim* : what, अकर्म *akarma* : not action, किम् *kim* : what, इति अत्र *iti atra* : thus, in this matter, कवयः *अपि kavayah api* : the wise also, मोहिताः *mohitah* : are deluded, यत् *yat* : which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : knowing, अशुभात् *asubhat* : from evil, मोक्ष्यसे *mokshyase* : you shall be liberated, तत् कर्म *tat karma* : that action, ते *te* : to you, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami* : I will teach.

Substance : What is action, what is not action ? In this matter even the wise are deluded. I will teach you that action knowing which you shall be liberated from evil.

Commentary : Right action is a subtle law which even the wise and the learned are not able to understand. So the Lord out of compassion for humanity begins to explain the secret of *Nishkama Karma*. It is only by knowing it that man can free himself from the bondage of evil. By wrong action man binds himself to endless *samsara*. By right action, he attains freedom. So it is necessary for all to understand the law of *karma*.

Question : *What is the way to free oneself from evil?*

Answer : To know what is action and what is not action is the way to transcend evil.

Karma, akarma, vikarma, should be properly understood.

17. कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥

१७

*Karmano hyapi boddhavyam
boddhavyam cha vikarmanah ।
akarmanascha boddhavyam
gahana karmano gatih ॥*

17

Meaning : कर्मणः *अपि karmanah api* : also of action enjoined by the *Sastras*, बोद्धव्यम् *boddhavyam* : (the nature) should be known, विकर्मणश्च *vikarmanah cha* : and of prohibited action, बोद्धव्यम् *boddhavyam* : (the nature) should be known, अकर्मणश्च *akarmanah cha* : and of inaction, बोद्धव्यम् *boddhavyam* : (the nature) should be known, हि *hi* : because, कर्मणः *karmanah* : of action, गतिः *gatih* : the path, गहना *gahana* : (is) deep, difficult to understand.

Substance : The nature of action (enjoined by the *Sastras*) and of wrong action (prohibited by the *Sastras*) and also of inaction should be known, because deep and difficult to understand is the path of action.

Commentary : (1) *karma* : that which should be done according to the *sastras* (*vihita karma*),

- (2) *vikarma* : that which is prohibited by the sastras (*nishiddha karma*),
 (3) *akarma* : inaction, idleness, non-performance of any work.

Another interpretation could also be given to these terms :

- (1) *karma* : ordinary action in the daily duties of life,
 (2) *vikarma* : doing the same work without personal attachment and in a spirit of dedication to the Lord,
 (3) *akarma* : the resulting state of purity and complete absorption in the Self when there is no action at all.

So the nature of *karma* has an unfathomable mystery behind it. To understand it clearly and practise it is the way to liberation.

The Lord propounds the method of action.

18. कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः !

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

१८

*Karmanyakarmayah pasyed akarmani cha karmayah !
sa buddhiman manushyeshu sa yuktah kritsnakarmakrit ॥ 18*

Meaning : कर्मणि *karmani* : in action, अकर्म *akarma* : no action (inaction), यः *yah* : who, पश्येत् *pasyet* : sees, अकर्मणि च *akarmani cha* : and in no action (in inaction), पश्येत् *pasyet* : sees, कर्म *karma* : action, यः *yah* : who, सः *sah* : he, मनुष्येषु *manushyeshu* : among men, बुद्धिमान् *buddhiman* : wise man, सः *sah* : he, युक्तः *yuktah* : the harmonised, कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् *kristnakarmakrit* : doer of all action.

Substance : Who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, he is the wise man, the yogi, the doer of all actions, among men.

Commentary : No action in action : If a man learns to work without the feeling of doership and without desire to enjoy the fruits thereof, he attains complete freedom. Any kind of work, and any amount of it, cannot bind him. So what he does amounts to no action or inaction, just because he knows that he is not doing anything at all, but that the bodily and mental organs and instruments are functioning according to their nature in their own fields of activity. Let us take the illustration of a mirror. Various objects and various forms of action are reflected in it constantly, and yet the mirror is not tainted in any way; it remains clear and pure. Even so, the *Jnani* knows that he is the all-pervading Self and in that Self all actions of the universe are taking place just like those reflected in the mirror. Thus we find that several sages and great men have done great good to mankind through detached and desireless action. Their action, from this point of view, is no action at all so far as they are concerned, as they have entered the Self-state beyond the physical and mental planes. The ignorant man may attribute action to him because he is confused and does not know the secret which the *Jnani* understands in all the actions. It is this philosophical position which is stated in this apparently paradoxical sentence.

Action in no action : Exactly opposite to these wise men are the idlers who apparently do not do any work but are constantly in a state of action. The idlers refuse to do any work; they are too lazy or too weak in body to perform any work. They may pose as philosophers and *Jnanis* because their bodily and sense organs are not engaged in any work. But they are always in a state of action because their minds wander about all over the world, think and perform a thousand forms of work, and they live a restless and tortured life. The inherent *samskaras* play havoc with their mind stuff which is the root cause of *samsara*, birth and death. They have not arrived at that state of peace and restfulness which belongs to the highest realm of

the Self. The Lord warns the seeker not to fall into this horrible error. Otherwise man does the greatest injury to himself by confounding the positive peace of self-realisation with the negative state of inaction of the body which is the same as death. He should understand that detachment is a mental attitude born of knowledge and not merely cessation of work. It is not action that binds but egotism and the past evil tendencies of the mind. The body is after all an external instrument. The operator is the mind. It is here that detachment should be cultivated. To restrain the sense-organs and go on thinking of sense pleasures and enjoyments with the mind, is '*midhyachara*' and the Lord has already condemned such men in the Discourse on *Karma yoga*. The same idea is presented here in a different context.

So, the realised man, whether he is working or not working enjoys the supreme peace of the Self. He gets the highest reward of performing all the good works enjoined by the *Sastras*. He is rooted in the Self in action and in inaction. For such a man action is no action.

The Lord eulogises the sage who has attained this state as '*buddhiman*', '*yuktah*' and '*kristnakarmakrit*'. By following the path of *nishkama karma*, he has purified his mind and attained the Atmic state and by that he has achieved the highest goal of life. For such a man, there is nothing more to do, and therefore he is said to have performed all the works enjoined by the *Sastras* (*kristnakarmakrit*).

Question : *Who is the wise man ?*

Answer : One who sees action in no action and no action in action is the wise man.

Question : *What is the fruit of his wisdom ?*

Answer : He attains Self-realisation, and so he gets the merit of having performed all the works enjoined by the *Sastras*.

The greatness of the Karmayogi is described in five verses.

19. यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाद्युद्गमकर्मणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

*Yasya sarve samarambhah kamasamkalpavarjitaḥ ।
jnagnidagdhakarmanam tam ahuh panditam budhah ॥*

Meaning : यस्य *yasya* : whose, सर्वे *sarve* : all, समारम्भः *samarambhah* : undertakings, कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः *kamasamkalpavarjitaḥ* : free from desire and volition, ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्मणम् *jnanagnidagdhakarmanam* : whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge, तम् *tam* : him, पण्डितम् *panditam* : a sage, बुधाः *budhah* : the wise, आहुः *ahuh* : call.

Substance : He whose undertakings are all free from desire and volition, whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge, is called a sage by the wise.

Commentary : From the spiritual point of view, a Pandit is one who has freed himself from desire and volition in performing all practical work in the world. Book-learning, intellectual gymnastics may dazzle the minds of the ignorant, but the all-knowing Lord does not care for such barren learning, and the title Pandit is given only to the sage who can act without desire and egotism and whose actions are burnt in the fire of Self-knowledge.

Free from desire and volition : ‘*Kama*’ means desire for enjoyment, ‘*samkalpa*’ means thought arising from egotism, which expresses itself in statements like “I will fight, I will acquire wealth and fame” and so on. Even thoughts like – “I will help mankind – I will do good to society” pertain to the ego and come under the category of ‘*samkalpa*’. The wise man works without such personal motive. He has understood the mystery of his real Self, and so when he acts, the action is thought of and executed by higher power than himself through the instrumentality of his vehicle (*upadhi*). He feels no personal responsibility at all. It is in this way that the greatest works are performed by rare men from time to time.

The doubt may arise whether any action is possible without ‘*samkalpa*’. The Lord clears the doubt and

emphatically declares that work is possible without 'samkalpa', in the sense that man acts like an instrument in the hands of a higher power than himself. The human agent is a visible agent of action. (*Nimithamatram*) whereas the real power that does every thing is the Lord Himself.

Whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge : The fire of *Atmajnana* burns up the whole heap of *karma* accumulated through several births, as soft cotton is burnt to ashes by a spark of fire. Such is the power of Self-Knowledge. The man who attains it is freed from the bondage of *karma* for ever. There is no further birth and death for him. There is no going to this or that heaven. The endless peregrination from one world to another comes to an end. He remains established in the Self-state. It is towards this consummation that man is striving. *Nishkamakarma* purifies the mind, and when the mind is purified, that ideal of Self-realisation is obtained.

Question : Who is a Pandit ?

Answer : He whose actions are free from desire and egotism, whose actions are burnt up in the fire of Knowledge, is a Pandit.

Question : How should action be performed ?

Answer : Without egotism and desire.

Question : By what is karma destroyed ?

Answer : By Self-Knowledge.

20. त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्कं नित्यत्रिपु निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥

२०

*Tyaktva karmaphalasangam nityatripto nirasarayah ।
karmanyabhi pravritto'pi naiva kimchit karoti sah ॥ 20*

Meaning : कर्मफलासङ्कम् *karmaphalasangam* : attachment to the fruits of action, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having given up, नित्यत्रिपुः *nityatripah* : ever content, निराश्रयः *nirasarayah* : not

depending on anything, कर्मणि karmani : in work, अभिप्रवृत्तः अपि abhipravrittah api : though engaged, सः sah : he, किञ्चित् kinchit : anything, न करोत्येव karoti eva : does not verily.

Substance : He who has given up attachment to the fruits of work, who is ever content, who does not depend upon anything, though engaged in action does not verily do anything.

Commentary : The state of the *Jivanmukta* is described here (1) He has abandoned all attachment for the fruits of work. (2) He is eternally satisfied in the Self. (3) He does not depend upon anything (i. e. *Atma* alone is his sole refuge). Such a man, though he is deeply engaged in a thousand activities, is really not doing anything at all. Several sages and Mahatmas have done immortal work for the good of humanity in that spirit.

They are not attached to the fruits of work, because they have surrendered everything to the Lord. They are ever content because they experience the bliss of the Self beyond which there is no delight any where at all. Their content is not conditioned by time, place, and circumstances and therefore they are ever content '*nityatruptah*'. The ignorant man is always seeking refuge in this or that material object, because the gross mind can only exist by clinging to such gross objects however wretched they might be. Without such prop, he cannot live. That is why man clings to objects in spite of all the suffering that they cause both by possession and non-possession. The wise man, on the other hand has found his abode of peace in *Atma*, and never falls down to the plane of matter though he lives in a physical body. For such a man action is no action. Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to find that state and live in it, while carrying out all the duties which he is called upon to perform by his earthly position as a human being.

Question : Who is the person who does no action while engaged in work ?

Answer : The man who is not attached to the fruits of work, ever content, depending on nothing, though he acts, does not do any thing.

The qualities of the man who while working with the body is not tainted by sin, are described.

21. निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

२२

*Nirasiryatachittatma tyakta sarva parigrahah
sariram kevalam karma kurvannapnoti kilbisham ॥*

2

Meaning : निराशीः *nirasih* : he who is free from hope, यतचित्तात्मा *yatachittatma* : who is Self-controlled, त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः *tyaktasarvaparigrahah* : who has abandoned all possessions, शारीरं केवलं कर्म *sariram kevalam karma* : action merely with the body, कुर्वन् *kurvan* : doing, किल्बिषम् *kilbisham* : sin, न आप्नोति *na apnoti* : does not get.

Substance : He who is free from hope, who is self-controlled, who has abandoned all possessions, though working merely with the body, does not get sin.

Commentary : Three attributes of the *Jivanmukta* are mentioned here— (1) desireless, (2) self-controlled (3) abandoning all possessions. The man who has no desire to enjoy the pleasures of the objective world has his mind turned inwards in the contemplation of *Atma*. He finds all happiness there. So even though he works he cannot have any attachment for the fruits of works. Self-control leads to *Atmajnana*. When the senses and the mind are restrained, naturally the man becomes free from the enticing temptations of the material world with all its glamour and attraction. When such a man works, he has no feeling of attachment for any material object at all. The third attribute ‘*aparigraha*’ should be carefully noted by the aspirant. Non-receiving of gifts and possessions is enjoined by the *Sastras* as a very important discipline for the seeker. When one receives gifts from others he takes with them part of the *karma* of the giver. The very purpose of the seeker (i. e.) to get rid of *Karma* is defeated. Why should he add to his own load the sins of others by receiving worthless possessions ‘of’ material things?

Non-receiving (*Aparigraha*) is therefore enjoined as the rule of conduct for all spiritual aspirants.

The man who while acting is not bound by action is described.

22. यद्रच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२

*Yadriccha labha samtusto dvandvatito vimatsarah :
samah siddhavasiddhau cha kritva'pi na nibadhyate ॥ 22*

Meaning : यद्रच्छालाभसंतुष्टः *yadricchalaabhasantushtah* : content with whatsoever he obtained without effort, द्वन्द्वातीतः *dvandvatitah* : transcending the pairs of opposites, विमत्सरः *vimatsarah* : free from malice, सिद्धौ *siddhau* : in success, असिद्धौ च *asiddhau cha* : and in failure, समः *samah* : equal, कृत्वापि *kritva api* : acting even, न *na* : (is) not, निबध्यते *nibadhyate* : bound.

Substance : Content with whatsoever he gets without efforts, free from the pains of opposites, free from malice, balanced in success and failure, though acting, he is not bound.

Commentary : Further attributes of the *Karma yogi* are mentioned here. He is thoroughly contented with what he obtains without any special effort on his part. He is not effected by the pains of opposites, like heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc. He is free from malice towards any being in the world. He is equal-minded in success and failure. These qualities distinguish the *Jivanmukta* and the perfect *Karma yogi*.

Work and wisdom, knowledge and action, are inter-dependent. It is only the man of knowledge who can be a perfect *Karma yogi*. Unless one acquires the knowledge of the Self, it is impossible to work without attachment, to go beyond the pairs of opposites, and to be free from evil of malice. Thus the *Jnani* who is acting in the world is not bound by *karma*. How is this knowledge of Self to be attained? Unless a man

undertakes selfless, desireless work, he cannot obtain purity of mind, and unless the mind is purified of all its evil tendencies of 'raga and dvesha', he cannot realise *Atma*. So these two aspects go together in the spiritual progress of man towards perfection. That is the reason why at the end of the Third Discourse on *Karma yoga*, the Lord declares the perfection of Self-realisation, and here in *Jnana yoga*, the secret of *Karma yoga* is emphasised prominently.

The *Jnani* is in a state of absorption in the Self, and so what he does with the bodily vehicle cannot bind him. He knows clearly that he has nothing to gain or lose by action or inaction, because he is united with *Brahman*. As long as the body lasts, its maintenance is carried on automatically without any *samkriyā* on his part. In this way the bodily vehicle and the mental instruments are used for the good of humanity without egotism or any sense of personal doership. Such a man is not bound by what he does.

Question : Who is not bound by action while working ?

Answer : One who is contended with what he obtains without effort, who is not affected by the pairs of opposites, who is free from envy and who is equal-minded in success and failure, is not bound by what he does.

23. गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥

२३

Gata sangasya muktasya jnanavasthitachetasah ।
yajnaya 'charatah karma samagram praviliyate ॥

23

Meaning : गतसङ्गस्य *gatasangasya* : of one who is devoid of attachment, मुक्तस्य *muktasya* : of the liberated (from the bondage of attraction and repulsion and of desire and anger); ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः: *jnanavasthitachetasah*: whose mind is established in knowledge, यज्ञाय *yajnaya* : for sacrifice (to worship God, to do good to others, or to maintain Dharma);

आचरतः *acharatah* : acting, कर्म *karma* : action, समग्रं *samagram* : whole, प्रविलीयते *praviliyate* : is dissolved.

Substance : Of the man who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, the whole action performed in the spirit of sacrifice is dissolved.

Commentary : The essential qualities of the man of Knowledge are described here (1) Non-attachement, (2) freedom from desire and hatred, attraction and repulsion, (3) absorption in *Atma*, (4) performing work in a spirit of sacrifice. The *karma* of the sage who possesses these qualities is entirely dissolved.

Whose mind is established in Knowledge : The mind of the sage is established in Knowledge. Such Knowledge is the result of non-attachment to the fruits of work, and liberation from agitations of desire and hatred. For such a man, though he is engaged in a thousand actions, all that he does is totally dissolved in the ocean of Knowledge. So it is clear that Knowledge of Self is the only way to cut the bonds of *karma*. Without true Knowledge man is inevitably bound to the material world through his unrestrained senses and mind and what he does is motivated by desire and egotism, and so he binds himself to the wheel of *samsara*. This bondage is the creation of man's own mind and is not the effect of the objective world. In fact the objective world exists as it is, and man attaches himself to it by his past *samskaras* and suffers the unavoidable consequences of birth and death. The sage has discovered the original freedom of his own Self and so he has released himself from the enslaving forces of the senses and the mind. Such a man is not bound by *karma*, because there is no desire for personal enjoyment and there is no feeling of doership. His work is thus dissolved in Knowledge.

Performed in the spirit of sacrifice : In the Third Discourse, it has already been stated that work done with any other motive except as dedicated to the Lord, as *Dharma* or as service to humanity, will cause bondage.

Is dissolved: It is emphatically stated here that nothing remains of *karma* for the man who has realised Brahman. *Sanchita* and *Agami karma* are destroyed in the fire of Knowledge. Only *Prarabdha* remains as long as the body lasts, and when the body falls, it is all over. There is no mind, no *karma* to lead to further births.

These ideas are a source of great thought for the man of action, the devotee, and the aspirant for liberation. All these are seeking for emancipation from the bondage of *karma*. And the message of the Gita is not the abandoning of action but the freedom of man through right action. The secret is revealed how man should work and yet remain free from being caught in the meshes of *karma*.

Different forms of yajna are explained in the following seven verses.

24. ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मेव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

२४

Brahma'rpnam brahma havir
brahmagnau brahma hutam ।
brahma'ya tena gantavyam
brahmakarma samadhina ॥

24

Meaning : अर्पणम् *arpnam* : the oblation (ghee, chips of wood offered to the God of Fire in yajna), ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman (the Supreme Being), हवि: *havih* : clarified butter, cooked rice etc. ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, ब्रह्मग्नौ *brahmagnau* : in the fire of Brahman, ब्रह्मणा *brahmaṇa* : by Brahman, हुतम् *hutam* : is offered, ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना *brahmakarmasamadhina* : by absorption in action which is Brahman, तेन *tena* : by him, गन्तव्यम् *gantavyam* : shall be reached, ब्रह्मेव *brahma eva* : only Brahman.

Substance : The oblation is Brahman, the offerings are Brahman, the sacrifice is Brahman, and by absorption in action

which is Brahman, Brahman alone shall be reached by him (by the sacrifice).

Commentary : Everything in the *yajna* is Brahman. The verse enunciates the Upanishadic truth –

All this is Brahman—*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*
(Chandogya iii-14-1).

Keeping this truth in mind one should work; *yajna* is *Brahman* in every part and in all its details.

If all this – the whole universe with all the beings in it and all the actions taking place in it – is *Brahman*, the One Reality without a second, why and wherefore the manifoldness? Name and form (*nama* and *rupa*) have super-imposed the diversity on the supreme secondless *Brahman*. What is super-imposed cannot change the nature of the original substance. The snake that is super-imposed on the rope out of delusion of the eye cannot change the nature of the rope. The rope remains the rope even when the snake is super-imposed on it by the illusion of the eye. When the illusion passes away by focussing the light on the object, the rope is seen and known as the rope. So, all the time what existed was the rope only and nothing else. Even so, the world of name and form has been super-imposed by the delusion of the mind and the senses on the supreme *Brahman*. When the delusion is cleared and the mind is purified, all this shall be seen and known as *Brahman*. The sage knows the truth. Everything that we see, feel, and think, and every action of ours is *Brahman* and nothing exists other than *Brahman*. It is this fundamental truth that is affirmed in this verse by the illustration of *yajna*. The oblation is *Brahman*. The material used is *Brahman*. The fire is *Brahman*. The sacrifice is *Brahman*. The act of sacrifice is *Brahman*. Thus contemplating, man realises *Brahman* every where and in all things.

Yajna is taken as illustration because at the end of *Dvaparayuga*, sacrifices were performed elaborately by all people and they were familiar with the rites and rituals. The principle is applicable to everything and every action that man does. He is blessed who acts in the understanding and experience of the truth that all is *Brahman*.

By absorption : Here the technique of transforming all work into Brahman is indicated. By concentration and meditation, by constant absorption in Brahman, every kind of work that is done melts into Brahman. Work then loses its separate limited quality, its binding power. It acquires a divine and spiritual quality.

The distinction between *karma* and *jnana* is thus eliminated, and Brahman alone is realised in all that one thinks and does. The seeker should understand the importance of this verse which shows the direct path to *Brahmajnana*. Any man in any work of life doing any kind of work can practice this method and reach the goal. There is a tradition among people to repeat this verse while taking food. The food is Brahman, the feeder is Brahman, the act of eating is Brahman. It is again an affirmation that everything and every act is That, appearing to be manifold by the super-imposition of name and form.

Different forms of yajna are described.

25. दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
ब्रह्मग्नावपरे यज्ञां यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥

25

*Daivameva'pare yajnam yoginah paryupasate
brahmagnavapare yajnam yajnenai'vo'pajuhvati ॥ 25*

Meaning : अपरे *apare* : some, योगिनः *yoginah* : yogis, दैवम् *daiyam* : pertaining to the God, यज्ञम् एव *yajnam eva* : sacrifice only, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : perform, अपरे *apare* : some, यज्ञेन एव *yajnena eva* : by union of jiva with Brahman only, यज्ञम् *yajnam* : the jiva (the individual ego), ब्रह्माग्नौ *brahmagnau* : in the fire of Brahman, उपजुह्वति *upajuhvati* : offer as sacrifice.

Substance : Some *yogis* perform sacrifice pertaining to the Gods only, others by union of the self (*jiva*) with Brahman, offer the *Jiva* as sacrifice in the fire of Brahman.

Commentary : The Lord explains the different types and forms of *yajna*. (1) Some *yogis* perform sacrifice to the Gods.

They worship different Gods, meditate on them, pray to them and in many ways please the Gods. They may be termed *Karmayogis* or *Bhaktiyogis*.

(2) Others perform sacrifice to Brahman by offering his separate individuality (*jiva*) as oblation in the fire of Brahman. Fire consumes every thing and converts all into its own element. Similarly the whole of the objective world melts into Brahman. The mind and ego are also objective phenomenon pertaining to the inner nature of man. So the *yogis* offer them as oblation in the fire of Brahman (i. e.) they are absorbed into Brahman and lose their separate limited personalities. There are the *Jnana-yogis*. This sacrifice leads to identity with Brahman ultimately. By inquiring into the real nature of man, by indisposition towards the objects of the world, by the eradication of bad *samskaras*, the mind which keeps up the illusion of duality is so purified that it is merged in Brahman. This is the liberated state of the *jnanayogi*. This is *Brahmajnana*.

23. श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति ।

शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥

२६

Srotradini'ndriyanyanye samyamagnishu juhvati ।

sabdadin vishayananya indriyagnishu juhnvati ॥ 26

Meaning : अन्ये *anye* : others, श्रोत्रादीनि *srotradini* : organs of hearing and others, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, संयमाग्निषु *samyamagnishu* : in the fire of restraint, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice, अन्ये *anye* : others, शब्दादीन् *sabdadin* : sound and others, विषयान् *vishayan* : sense-objects, इन्द्रियाग्निषु, *indriyagnishu* : in the fire of the senses, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice.

Substance : Others sacrifice the senses like the organ of hearing etc. in the fires of sense-restraint, and some others sacrifice the sense-objects like sound etc. in the fire of the senses.

Commentary : Here two types of *yajna* are mentioned—

(1) restraining the senses (2) rejecting the sense-objects.

Sense-restraint is the key to *Brahmajnana*, and so the Lord insists on this discipline many times in the Gita.

So, sense control is the first of all spiritual disciplines. Vedantic perorations without sense control do not have either light or power in them. The man of sense-control, though he does not talk anything, communicates vedantic truth to the ends of the world even without one spoken word. The sense-control is here mentioned as a sacrifice. Liberation can be attained only by mind-control, and this depends on sense-restraint. By practising several kinds of penance, by following several vows, rules and regulations of conduct, the seeker should get the senses under control. This is what is meant by sacrificing the senses in the fire of restraint. The plural form 'fires' is used because there are different senses to be controlled.

The second *yajna* mentioned here is closely related to the first. The senses, according to their nature, wander about freely in the objective world, experiencing pleasure and pain through pleasant and unpleasant objects. Therefore one has to reject the sense-objects by deeply examining them and understanding how painful and worthless they are. When one realises the worthlessness and shadowy nature of these sense-objects, the senses do not run after them. They remain steadfast in their own seats. It is the rushing out of the senses towards material objects that disturbs the mind and throws it into a state of commotion. When the senses are kept in their place, the mind is calm and when the mind is calm, the bliss of *Atma* is experienced. This is sacrificing the sense-objects in the fire of the senses.

27. सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।

आत्मसंयमयोगान्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥

२७

*Sarvani'ndriyakarmani pranakarmani cha' pare ।
atmasamyama yogagnau juhvati jnanadipite ॥*

27

Meaning: अपरे *apare* : others, सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, इन्द्रियकर्माणि *indriyakarmani* : functions of the senses, प्राणकर्माणि च *pranakarman* *cha* : and functions of the *prana* (vital energy),

ज्ञानदीपिते *jnanadipite* : illumined by knowledge, आत्मसंयमयोगान्वै
atmasamyamayogagnau : in the fire of the yoga of Self-control, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice.

Substance : Others sacrifice all the functions of the senses and the functions of the vital energy (*prana*) in the fire of the *yoga* of self-control, illumined by Knowledge.

Commentary : The mind is the barrier to Self-realisation. By its inherent *samskaras* acquired through several births, the mind has become a thick dark veil covering up the Reality and preventing the people from knowing their own real nature. To conquer the mind, various spiritual disciplines are necessary. Restraining the senses and controlling the breath are essential for mind-control. Otherwise the force of the senses and the ill-regulated health disturb the mind-stuff endlessly. So the seeker should gradually practise sense-restraint (*indriyanigraha*) and breath-regulation (*pranayama*). This idea is figuratively described as sacrificing the senses and the vital energy (*prana*) in the fire of self-control.

Illumined by Knowledge : *Jnana* is compared to light. By sense-control and self-control, the light of knowledge shines brightest. On the other side, by discrimination and knowledge of the Self, the mind is brought under control. Therefore it is here said that self-control is illumined by knowledge. The fire of self-control is fanned into flame by knowledge. It means that those who aspire for mind-control should practise discrimination and enquiry into the Self. The seeker has to carry on the enquiry – “what and whence this universe ? what is the reality behind all this ?” By such enquiry, the mind ceases to run after the transitory things of the objective world, and turn towards that which is the basis of all – *Atma*. It is evident from this epithet that the Atmic state is the absolute fulness of light, knowledge and bliss.

Question : *By what is self-control strengthened ?*

Answer : By spiritual enquiry and knowledge.

28. द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः

२८

*Dravyayajna tapoyajna yogayajna stathā 'pare'
svadhyayajna nayanayagnah cha yatayah samsita vrataḥ ॥ 28*

Meaning : अपरे *apare* : others, द्रव्ययज्ञाः *dravyayajnah* : (those) who offer wealth as sacrifice, तपोयज्ञाः *tapoyajnah* : who offer austerity as sacrifice, योगयज्ञाः *yogayajnah* : who offer yoga as sacrifice, तथा *tathā* : again, स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाः च *svadhyayajna nayanayagnah cha* : and who offer study and knowledge as sacrifice, यतयः *yatayah* : ascetics, संशितव्रताः *samsitavrataḥ* : men of rigid vows.

Substance : Others offer wealth, austerity and *Yoga* as sacrifice and again others, the ascetics of rigid vows offer study and knowledge as sacrifice.

Commentary : Some other forms of *Yajnas* are mentioned here :

- 1) *Dravyayajna* : Wealth offered to deserving persons (*dana*) and for benevolent purposes is considered as a form of sacrifice.
- 2) *Tapoyajna* : Subjecting the body and senses to severe austerities by vows of fasting and silence etc. is a form of sacrifice.
- 3) *Yogayajna* : Breath-control is a form of sacrifice.
- 4) *Svadhyayayajna* : The study and the recitation of the *Vedas* and other sacred texts is a form of sacrifice.
- 5) *Jnanayajna* : The pursuit of spiritual knowledge is a form of sacrifice.

Different types of persons, according to their *Samskaras*, follow different methods of sacrifice, and by performing them their mind reaches the final goal. All these are men of practical action in the field of spirituality. Those who work for Self-

purification and God-realisation are all men of rigid vows (*Samsitavratah*).

Hard discipline, Self-restraint, the practice of vows, and such other *Sadhanas* are all necessary for Self-purification. The past *Samskaras*, the physical habits and mental tendencies have become a part and parcel of one's nature. To change them is indeed an uphill task. Perseverence will ultimately conquer. Nothing can be done in a day. All crookedness shall be made straight in course of time. The idle and weak cannot make any progress. Spiritual realisation has its price and the price is self-control and renunciation. Renunciation of what ?— Of all the silly and worthless pleasures of the world. Indeed the price is very small compared to the fruit of attainment—the eternal bliss of *Brahmajnana*. It is like obtaining pure gold in exchange for worthless alloy. Who would not pay this price willingly and correctly ? The difficulty is not so great as it is thought of. The initial attempt disturbs the body and the mind as a result of the new discipline. But the discipline itself becomes natural by habit. The ascetic (*Yati*) mentioned here is not a *Sanyasi* but a worker on the spiritual path. A huge tree cannot be cut with a nail-chipper; the axe is needed. And the axe to cut the mighty tree of ignorance and delusion is persistent, hard, unremitting discipline, restraint and control.

29. अपाने जुहति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥

२९

*Apane juhyati pranam prane 'panam tatha 'pare ।
pranapānagati ruddhva pranayama parayanah ॥*

29

Meaning : प्राणायामपरायणाः *pranayama parayanah* : Those who are devoted to the practice of breath-control, अपरे *apare* : others, प्राणापानगती *pranapānagati* : the course of the in-coming and out-going breaths, रुद्ध्वा *ruddhva* : controlling, अपाने *apane* : in the out-going breath, प्राणम् *pranam* : the in-coming breath, तथा *tatha* : thus, प्राणे *prane* : in the in-coming breath, अपानम् *apanam* : the out-going breath, जुहति *juhyati* : sacrifice.

Substance : The technique of breath-control is described here as a form of sacrifice. In the science of *Ashtanga Yoga*, the fourth stage is *Pranayama*. This practice is helpful in removing the diseases of the body and keeping the mind still. *Pranayama* has three parts. Breathing in is called *Puraka*; expelling the breath is called *Rechaka*; and retention of breath is called *Kumbhaka*. *Pranayama* is often accompanied with some holy *mantra* like *OM*.

Breathing (*Prana*) is closely connected with the operations of the mind. It is everybody's experience. When a gust of passion disturbs the mind, the breath becomes at once irregular, and as the passion cools down the breath also becomes normal. When the breath is irregular owing to some physical exertion, it is again impossible to concentrate the mind. So regularity of breathing always accompanies mental concentration. By controlling the breath, the mind is also controlled. For this reason, breath-control is prescribed as a healthy and helpful practice in spiritual life. The seeker has to learn the technique from a competent master. Here breath-control is mentioned as a form of sacrifice.

30. अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकलमपाः ॥

३०

*Apare niyataharah pranan praneshu juhvati !
sarve 'pyete yajnavido yajnakshapita kalmashah ॥* 30

Meaning : अपरे *apare* : others, नियताहाराः *niyataharah* : of regulated food, प्राणान् *pranam* : life-breaths, प्राणेषु *praneshu* : in life breaths, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice, एते सर्वेऽपि : *ete sarve api* : all these also, यज्ञविदः *yajnavidah* : knowers of sacrifice, यज्ञक्षपितकलमपाः *yajnakshapitakalmashah* : whose sins are destroyed by sacrifice.

Substance : Others of regulated food, sacrifice the life-breaths in the life-breaths; all these also are knowers of sacrifice whose sins are destroyed by sacrifice.

Commentary : Thus far the Lord has explained twelve different types of *yajnas*. Of these the last two are the regulation and control of food-habits. No one should commit the mistake of doubting what connection there is between food and spiritual attainment. Without fear of any exaggeration, it can be asserted that food is the first thing about which the seeker should be extremely careful. Otherwise all his effort will come to naught. Over-eating or under-eating, eating at all odd times, in all places, all types of food from all kinds of persons, — all these should be carefully avoided. It is food that is turned into physical energy which in its turn is turned into mental energy that leads to spiritual illumination. Impure food not only unhinges the physical body but also irritates and provokes all kinds of undesirable humours which are detrimental to self-control. Some kinds of food like meat, garlic, and spices induce physical aberrations like indulgence in sex and irritability of temper, cruelty in word and deed, and other discordant impulses. They are all obstacles to spiritual progress.

Just as a loose nut in a complicated machine brings it to a standstill, just as a train meets with disaster if one of the sleepers is taken off, even so the whole system of spiritual life is disrupted if care is not taken about food. If the food is pure, the mind is pure; if the mind is pure, liberation is attained. The Lord here mentions that regulation of food is also a *yajna*. There are five conditions to determine the quality of food — (1) purity, (2) moderation, (3) righteous earning, (4) offering to the Lord, (5) timeliness.

The Lord has described various spiritual disciplines and each of them is given the sacred name of *yajna*. We understand that the old concept of *yajna* as a *Vedic* ritual accompanied with elaborate technique is given up, and a new significance is attached to other forms of discipline. Besides, it is here affirmed that all those who practise any of these disciplines are knowers of sacrifice (*yajnavidah*).

What then is the use of *yajnas*? It is first and last a method of purification. All the sins of the past and all the evil

tendencies of the mind are destroyed by *yajna*. So it is imperative that the seeker should undertake some form of discipline and strive to attain purity which alone can lead him to Self-realisation.

Question: *What is the effect of performing yajna?*

Answer : All sins are destroyed by *yajna*.

The good resulting from the performance of yajna and the evil from its non-performance are explained.

31. यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥

३१

*Yajnasistamrita bhujो yanti brahma sanatanam ॥
nayam loko'styayajnasya kuto'nyah kurusattama ।* 31

Meaning : कुरुसत्तम् *kurusattama* : O Arjuna ! यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजः *yajnasishtamritabhujah* : those who eat the remnant of sacrifice which is nectar, सनातनम् *sanatanam* : eternal, ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, यान्ति *yanti* : go, अयज्ञस्य *ayajnasya* : to the non-sacrificer, अयंलोकः *ayam lokah* : this world, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, अन्यः *anyah* : other, कुतः *kutah* : how.

Substance : Those who eat the remnants of sacrifice which is nectar go to eternal Brahman; to the non-sacrificer, even this world is not, how then can he get a higher world ?

Commentary : Thus far having explained various *yajnas*, the Lord now states their great merit. The remnants of food offered as sacrifice are equal to nectar, and by tasting it one reaches eternal Brahman. So the seeker should perform some form of *yajna*, some devotional act, some righteous deed, some oblation to the Divine, and then only should he take his food. Such food confers immortality. It has already been said that *yajna* destroys all sin and evil. Now the highest reward is offered to the sacrificer - the attainment of Brahman. The

purified mind merges in *Atma*, and *Atma* alone shines in its original untainted light. This is the Atmic state, the realisation of Brahman. How wondrous is the fruit of sacrifice !

The greatness of the result is proof of the excellence of the cause. *Yajna* is the cause and the result is direct realisation of Brahman. In this world, man endures all troubles for the purpose of acquiring a bit of wealth or pleasure or fame. After all, they are brief and short-lived. But the knowledge of Self is an eternal blessing for man. Should we not aspire for it ? If the same energy which one expends for possessing this or that worldly object, is directed towards the spiritual goal, man can achieve the highest even in this life. The Lord has offered ample choice in selecting the *yajna* most available to each individual. Various paths are open for this spiritual quest. Any one practice leads to the goal. Let people be alert and watchful, and they shall attain the goal.

The non-sacrificer loses both the worlds. What enjoyment or happiness or joy can he have even in this world ? Indisciplinary men who have neither will nor knowledge cannot hope to make anything even in this earthly life. It is all misery, doubt and despair for them, and such men proceed from sorrow to sorrow. It should be understood that success in attaining purity is also the fruit of sacrifice (i. e.) the result of self-discipline and proper action. If one cannot do this, how can he hope to enter a higher world ? The Lord calls on mankind - "O ye mortal beings ! Having attained this human birth, if you do nothing for your spiritual uplift, you cannot get anything even in this life, much less in the next world."

Those who eat the remnant of sacrifice : Food is not a necessary ingredient in such *yajnas* like sense-restraint, self-control, *pranayama* etc. So in these cases, the word food may be understood as the nectar of peace and joy arising from spiritual practices.

Question : What is the nature of Brahman ?

Answer : Eternal and imperishable.

Question : Who attains Brahman ?

Answer : Those who take the remnant of sacrifice.

Question : What is the fate of the non-sacrificer ?

Answer : He loses both this world and the next.

The Lord concludes this part of the Discourse on various Yajnas.

32. एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥

३२

*Evam bahuvidha yajna vitata brahmano mukhe ।
karmajan viddhi tan sarvan evam jnatva vimokshyase ॥ 32*

Meaning : एवम् evam : thus, बहुविधाः bahuvidhah : of different forms, यज्ञाः yajnah : sacrifices, ब्रह्मणः मुखे brahma-nah mukhe : in the vedas (in the face of Brahman), वितताः vitataḥ : are spread, तान् सर्वान् tan sarvan : all those, कर्मजान् karmajan : born of action, विद्धि viddhi : know, एवं evam : thus, ज्ञात्वा jnatva : having known, विमोक्ष्यसे vimokshyase : you shall be liberated.

Substance : Thus various forms of sacrifice are spread out in the *Vedas*; know then all to be born of action; thus knowing you shall be liberated.

Commentary : Not only those types of *yajna* mentioned before but many more are elaborately described in the *Vedas* which have originated from the supreme Brahmaan.

Born of action : These sacrifices are all different modes of action. Speech is action, thought is action, work done with the body is action, the operation of the senses is action. So, action well-planned and executed with resolution is the cause of *yajna*. Individual effort is essential for the performance of *Yajna*. Inaction leads to nothing. Spirituality is indeed a practical science, and not an empty talk. So the seekers should

use each one of their faculties, physical and mental, for the purpose of performing these sacrifices. Such determined action alone can yield the highest fruit of liberation. The Lord exhorts all mankind to take to a life of action, perform *yajna*, purify the mind, and attain Brahman. In fact the despondency of Arjuna was a cowardly renunciation of action which he thought was a state of *jnana*. The Lord explains that such spurious and sentimental inaction is a sign of ignorance, and on the other side, one should act fearlessly and selflessly, so that the path may be opened for spiritual knowledge in due course. When man comes to understand that all *yajnas* are modes of action, then he is liberated.

Question : *Where are the yajnas described.*

Answer : In the *Vedas* -

Question : *How are they performed ?*

Answer : By action -

Question : *When man knows this, what will he attain ?*

Answer : Liberation.

Question : *What are the various forms of Yajna mentioned so far ?*

Answer :	(1) Daiva Yajna	}	25	verses
	(2) Brahma yajna			
	(3) Sense-control	}	26	,
	(4) Rejection of sense objects			
	(5) Mind control		27	,
	(6) Dravya yajna	}		
	(7) Tapo yajna			
	(8) Yoga yajna		28	,
	(9) Svadhyaya Yajna			
	(10) Jnana Yajna		28	,
	(11) Pranayama Yajna		29	,
	(12) Niyatahara Yajna		30	,

The Lord explains the excellence of Jnana Yajna.

33. श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयायज्ञाज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पाथे ज्ञाने परिसमाप्ते ॥

३३

*Sreyan dravyamayad yajnat jnanayajnah parinatap ।
sarvam karma'khilam partha jnane parisamapyate ॥ 33*

Meaning: परन्तप *parantapa* : O Arjuna ! द्रव्यमयात् *dravyamaya*: of wealth (objects), यज्ञात् *yajnat* : than sacrifice, ज्ञानयज्ञः *jnanayajnah* : sacrifice of knowledge, श्रेयात् *sreyan*: more excellent, पाथे *Pardha* : O Arjuna ! सर्वम् *sarvam* *karma* : all actions, अखिलम् *akhilam* : in its entirety, ज्ञाने *jnane* : in knowledge, परिसमाप्ते *parisamapyate* : is culminated.

Substance: O scorcher of foes ! Knowledge-sacrifice is superior to sacrifice performed with objects. All actions, O Arjuna, in their entirety, culminate in knowledge.

Commentary: *Jnana-yajna* implies enquiry into the Truth, the pursuit of reality. Discrimination between *Atma* and *Anitma*, the Seer and the Seen, hearing of Truth, thinking and meditating on Truth, restraining the senses, controlling the mind, the destruction of the latent tendencies,—all these are comprehended by the term *Jnana Yajna*.

Dravya yajna means sacrifice performed with the aid of material objects. It is here said that *Jnana Yajna* is superior to *Dravya Yajna*. The reason is that Self-realisation (*Atma Jnana*), is the ultimate goal of all embodied beings. Man has forgotten his real nature by ignorance, and to become aware of his real Self is the object of all religions and philosophy. All religious practices lead finally to this knowledge. The fruits of all sacrifices are comprehended in Self-Knowledge, the supreme bliss and blessedness of Brahman. So whatever fruits are obtainable by the performance of *Dravya Yajna* are fully and completely realised in *Brahma Jnana*. Therefore it is declared

that *Jnana Yajna* is superior to all others. It is the *yajna* par excellence.

The end of all forms of *Karma* is knowledge. The sacrifices purify the mind, remove all sins, and in that way renders Self-Knowledge possible. And, just as the rivers join the ocean, so also all the works with their fruits are merged in Brahman. The idea is that the fruits of *karma* are not destroyed but fully realised in the bliss of *Brahma Jnana*.

So every man should strive for wisdom, and towards that end, he should take the aid of *Yajna* in the form of some good works. Whatever may be the practice followed, its goal is wisdom. At some time or other, every one should acquire this knowledge by which he attains liberation.

Karma is 'sadhana', knowledge is 'sadya'. *Karma* takes man to the threshold of *Jnana*, and *Jnana* lifts him up to the heights of the liberated state. From this we understand that liberation is not a sudden blast of knowledge, but the end of a long process of good and righteous action. By ceaseless devotion to God, man acquires His grace, and He by his infinite compassion opens the eye of wisdom in man and *Atma* is then perceived. Even after self-realisation, some wise men continue to work for the benefit of humanity. Thus in this verse the excellence of *Jnana* and the need for *Karma* are both emphasised.

Question : What is the supreme *yajna* ?

Answer : *Jnana Yajna* (Knowledge sacrifice).

Question : Then, what is the use of other *yajnas* ?

Answer : They are realised in their entirety and along with their fruits in the supreme bliss of *Brahma Jnana*.

The path to acquire wisdom is declared.

34. तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

३४

*Tad viddhi pranipatena pari prasnenā sevaya ।
upadekshyanti te jnanam jnaninastattvadarsinah ॥*

34

Meaning : तत् ज्ञानम् *tat jnanam* : that knowledge, प्रणिपातेन *pranipatena* : by long prostration, परिप्रश्ने *pariprasna* : by question, सेवया *sevaya* : by service, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, तत्त्वदर्शिनः *tattvadarsinah* : the seers of truth, ज्ञानिनः *jnaniah* : the sages of wisdom, ते *te* : to you, उपदेक्ष्यन्ति *upadekshyanti* : will instruct.

Substance : Know that (Knowledge) by long prostration, question and service (to the master). The sages who have realised the truth will instruct you in that Knowledge.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the excellence of *Jnana* is declared. The question how and from whom such knowledge could be obtained is answered here.

The seers of truth : *Brahma jnana* can be obtained only from the sages who have directly perceived the Truth. They are men who have realised the Self and transcended all the doubts and complications of earthly life. They have *seen* the Truth of the *Vedas* and *Sastras*. They have gone beyond them. Such men indeed are very rare. But they alone are qualified to instruct the aspirant in Self-Knowledge. The Lord uses the term '*tattvadarsinah*' (The seers of Truth) to distinguish these from others who have only read about Truth in books. Such book-learning is far different from actual Self-realisation. Truth is a direct experience. For such men, Truth is as clear as material objects are clear to us. When one speaks of sages who have seen the Truth, he should not imagine that Truth is some thing external to them like a pole or wall or tree. Truth is not different from one's own Self which is also the Self in every being. Thus, sages who are directly experiencing the Self-state are world-teachers from whom the sincere aspirants obtain Knowledge of *Atma*.

What are the qualifications of the aspirant and under what conditions would they receive the blessing of the Master? Three conditions are prescribed. 1) The seeker should approach the Master in all humility and prostrate himself at the feet of the Master. (*Pranipatena*). Pride and egotism should be utterly crushed when

the seeker stands in the presence of the Master. The seeker may be a King ruling over millions of people, but the pride of position counts for nothing when he stands before the Knower of Brahman. The seeker may be an intellectual giant, but supremacy of learning counts for nothing before the Knower of Brahman. The seeker may belong to a high caste, but superiority of caste counts for nothing before a Knower of Brahman. In short, all power and position, all wealth and treasure, are not in the least helpful to obtain that Knowledge which brings man face to face with Truth.

From the *Upanishads* and *Puranas* we get several illustrations of such humility on the part of learned Kings and Emperors who desired to know the Truth. They have walked bare-footed to some mountain-cave where the sage lived with only a loin cloth to cover his nakedness, with only roots and leaves to sustain his mortal body. Humility is the first condition imposed. Does the all-renouncing sage expect any honour from those who go to him ? Not at all. He is indifferent to honour and dishonour. It is for the benefit of the seeker that humility is prescribed as a condition, and not to confer honour on the sages. By such humility, the seeker overcomes the first and last obstacle on the path of Self-realisation, (i. e.) egotism, a clinging to the little self which produces a sense of false pride and greatness. So humility is the rule of conduct for all seekers in the presence of the Master.

Brahma Jnana is superior to every thing else in the world. Let us recall to mind the great combative encounter between Vasishta and Viswamitra. Viswamitra used all the weapons against Vasishta who defended himself with his lone *Brahmadanda*. All the weapons were swallowed up by the *Brahmadanda*, as the ocean swallows up all the floods in the world. Viswamitra then understood the superior power of Brahman.

The knower of Brahman has such power but he never uses it. Against whom and for what purpose should he use it ? The sage is embodied wisdom, is God Himself in the embodied state. So the seeker of knowledge should prostrate himself

before the Master with a deep feeling of humility and obedience. According to ordinary custom people remove the footwear and head-dress when they go to temple. Pride and egotism which cling to the body should be given up when one meets a great Master from whom he hopes to receive spiritual illumination.

(2) *By question*: Having prostrated himself before the Master, the seeker should then humbly ask the *Guru* to teach him, to clear his doubts, to lift him from the mine of delusion, to give him peace, and to help him to realise the Truth. The aim of the seeker should be to receive light and not to test the Master's capacity to argue with him, or examine the depth of his scholarship. Such an arrogant attitude is futile. The Master is not disturbed or perturbed by the puzzles and riddles of the questioner. But the seeker loses the very aim of his quest by foolish argumentation. The Master knows by a single glance at the seeker what type of man he is, what doubts he has, what obstacles there are for him to overcome, and gives him suitable instructions. But he does so only when he is convinced about the sincerity of the seeker. Otherwise the Master can do nothing to communicate his knowledge to the disciple. So it is prescribed as the second condition that the seeker should humbly place his doubts before the Master and accept his guidance.

(3) *By service* : Service to the Master is the third condition. Blessed are those who have opportunities of such divine service. To wash the Master's clothes, dry them and keep them ready for his use, to massage his feet, to prepare food for him, to bring fruits and flowers for his worship, - in these ways to serve the Master and win his grace is the duty of the aspirant. It should be remembered that the Master is not in need of somebody's service. It is meant only for the benefit of the disciple. It is an act of devotion. If the Master employs him in some work, it is a blessing that the Master confers on the aspirant. We come across instances of utterly illiterate persons rising to the heights of spiritual glory by simple devoted service to the Master. Their love for the *Guru* is the open secret of Self-realisation, and service works the miracle.

When the seeker fulfills these conditions, the Master out of his mercy instructs him in *Brahmajnana*. The right approach of the seeker induces the right spirit of the Master. It is the duty of the Master to help the aspirant in his quest for Truth, and he does so out of compassion and not for any material reward. Those great Masters are naturally full of pity for suffering humanity, and when people come to them loaded with sorrow and crushed by suffering, they are moved by cosmic compassion and do every thing possible to save the stricken souls from sorrow and delusion.

What is that the Master teaches ? Truth, which they have known and seen, in which they have their life and being.

This verse explains clearly the relationship between the Master and the disciple and the duties of each in relation to the other. We understand how the Masters and disciples lived in ancient hermitages. Even today there are Masters of this type if only the seeker is keen about his quest. The very power of the disciple's aspiration for knowledge will draw to him the right type of Master from the unknown regions of the earth. This is the simple law of magnetism and no real aspirant need be disheartened that he is not able to get the proper *Guru* (master). The *Guru* is always there if the seeker's aspiration is sufficiently intense to draw him into the orbit.

Here a doubt may be created why Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to seek out a Master and learn the Truth. (1) It may be that the Lord wants Arjuna to confirm his realisation by instructions from a *Guru*. (2) It may be that the Lord is just describing the normal mode of spiritual instruction in the world.

Question : *From whom is Knowledge obtained ?*

Answer : From the great Masters who have seen the Truth.

Question : *What is the code of conduct for the seeker ?*

Answer : He should prostrate himself at the feet of the Master, ask him for instruction in a humble manner, and serve him in all possible ways.

35. यज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥

३५

*Yajnatva na punar mohamevam yasyasi pandava ।
yena bhutanyaseshena drakshyasyatmanyatho mayi । 35*

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava* : O Arjuna ! यत् *yat* : which (*Jnana*), ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : knowing, पुनः *punah* : again, एवम् *evam* : thus, मोहम् *moham* : delusion, न यास्यसि *na yasyasi* : (you) will not get, येन *yena* : by which knowledge, भूतानि अशेषेण *bhutani aseshena* : all beings, आत्मनि *atmani* : in (your) Self, अथो *atho* : also, मयि *mayi* : in me, द्रक्ष्यसि *drakshyasi* : (you) will see.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Having obtained this Knowledge, you will not thus be deluded again and by this Knowledge you will see all beings in your Self and also in Me.

Commentary : The Knowledge received from the *Brahmanishta Guru* consists in (1) the removal of all former delusions for ever, and (2) the perception of all beings in one's own Self and also in God. Let us understand these two aspects in *Jnana*.

(1) The proof of having eyes is not to fall into the pit. If a person falls, it is clear that he cannot see. Thus the proof of *Brahmajnana* is the clearing away of all delusions which have been haunting man from time immemorial. *Atma*, the Self, is alone real and all else is an illusion. To know this from experience is *Jnana*. How can that wise man be deluded again? He sees every thing as his own Self and knows that there is nothing else but the Self. All this is one indivisible ocean of *Sachidananda*.

When the mango is raw it is sour and bitter. But when it becomes ripe, it is sweet all over. Thus in the deluded state when man sees the manifold world, there is fear and hatred, and sorrow and suffering. But when all is seen as *Atma*, as God Himself, there can be no delusion, and when there is no delusion,

there is no sorrow. Arjuna was deluded when he saw his relations and friends, and sorrow possessed him at the awful vision of their destruction on the battle-field. The Lord teaches him that he would never again be the victim of such delusion any time thereafter when he obtained *Brahmajnana* from the Master.

The sine qua non of wisdom is freedom from delusion and any kind of attachment to sense-pleasures. The Lord emphasised the need for practice and realisation and exposes the pretensions of those for whom religion is mere talk and verbal jugglery. It is practice that counts. The seeker should constantly examine himself : 'Am I free from delusion ? Am I free from pride and arrogance ? Am I free from envy towards other people's fame and prosperity ? Is there hatred and anger in me ? How far have I overcome my sensual nature?' In this way every one should thoroughly cleanse his mind day after day and purify the senses and the mind. There is no other way. The aspiration for the higher Self should be strengthened in order to overcome the desires of one's lower nature. 'Aim at the highest, do the best, and success is assured in due course'. This is the Lord's exhortation to all mankind in the Gita.

(2) The second aspect of the *Jnana* is that the sage of steady wisdom is able to see the whole universe in his own Self and also in God. The whole universe with all its elements moving and unmoving is superimposed on *Atma* which is the basic Reality. When the rope is mistaken for a snake, what is the reality on which the delusion is based ? The rope is the reality. So the snake which is super-imposed by one's delusion is not different from the rope. Even so the super-imposed universe is not really different from Brahman. This being so, the wise man sees the entire world in the Self, Brahman. The mind is the creator of the universe, and the mind itself is in *Atma*, the Self. Even so, the mind and all that it creates is in the Self. 'You are not in delusion. It is delusion that is in you; all the worlds are in you and you are not in any world; all time is in you and you are not in any time, past, present or future'. The *Jnani* has understood the Truth.

Also in me: For the sage of steady wisdom, the Self, is the Lord Himself. And so what he sees in his Self, the same is seen in God also.

"The *Jnani* is Myself"—says the Lord. There is no difference. This is the *Advaitic* realisation of the supreme Brahman. In that state, the devotee and God are one, the disciple and the *Guru* are one. There is no second thing at all. It is all one **indivisible** absolute Reality.

By seeing all beings in Self and God the sage becomes one with God. It cannot happen that the whole universe can be seen in two separate things. Self and God are one and the same. The man of Self-realisation is God Himself.

Question : *What is the fruit of obtaining Jnana.*

Answer : Man is never deluded thereafter; he sees the whole universe in his own Self, and also in God.

The excellence of Jnana is declared in various ways :

36. अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥

३६

*Api chedasi papebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ papakrittamah
sarvam jnana plavenai'va vrijinam samtarishyasi* ॥

36

Meaning : सर्वेभ्यः पापेभ्यः *sarvebhyaḥ papebhyaḥ* : than all sinners, पापकृत्तमः *papakrittamah* : most sinful, अपिचेत् असि *api chet asi* : even if, (you) are, सर्वम् *sarvam* : all, वृजिनम् *vrijinam* : sin, ज्ञानप्लवेन एव *jnanaplavena eva* : by the raft of knowledge, alone, सन्तरिष्यसि *santarishyasi* : you shall cross.

Substance : Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners, you shall cross over all sin by the raft of Knowledge.

Commentary : The excellence of *Brahmagnana* is further declared here. Even the worst sinner can purify himself of all

sins by Knowledge. Mountains of sins are burnt into ashes in a trice by a spark of divine wisdom. That is why the Lord gives a highly superlative definition of the sinner. If even the most wicked is able to cross over all sin by the raft of Knowledge, others need not have any doubt about their salvation through knowledge. Enough it is if there is repentence and a determination to sin no more.

The verse does not mean that people should wilfully commit sins. That is not the import of the Lord's teaching. In former births, out of ignorance, man might have committed several kinds of sins, but all of them would be cleared when the light of knowledge dawns. Indeed man's sins are compared to an ocean and Knowledge is rightly spoken of as the launch to cross the ocean. We have such examples of sinners turned into saints. The life of Valmiki illustrates this point. He lived the life of a dacoit in the beginning, but when wisdom dawned on him the sinner was transformed into a saint.

Question : *What is the means to overcome sins ?*

Answer : Knowledge.

Question : *What is the excellence of Jnana ?*

Answer : *Jnana* purifies the worst sinner and leads him to liberation.

The excellence of Jnana is further stated by comparing it to fire.

37. यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥

३१

*Yathai'dhamsi samiddho'gnir bhasmasat kurute'rjuna !
jnanaagnih sarva karmani bhasmasat kurute tatha ॥ 37*

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! समिद्धः *samiddhah*: blazing, अग्निः *agnih* : fire, एधांसि *edhamsi* : fuel, यथा *yatha* : as, भस्मसात् *bhasmasat* : reduces to ashes, तथा *tatha* : so, ज्ञानाग्निः *jnanagnih* : the fire of Knowledge, सर्वकर्माणि *sarva-*

karmani : all actions, भस्मसात्कुरुते *bhasmasatkurute* : reduces to ashes, destroys.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Just as blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, even so the fire of Knowledge destroys all actions.

Commentary : There is no sorrow when there is no birth; there is no birth when there is no action; and there is no action when Knowledge is acquired. All actions done in the former state of ignorance are destroyed by the Knowledge now acquired. But this Knowledge should be perfect. Burning fire consumes all fuel thrown into it. Fire covered by ashes is simply extinguished if fuel is thrown over it. So the blazing fire of Knowledge destroys all actions.

For the man who possessed knowledge and perceived *Atma* all actions are destroyed. In the former verse it is said that the ocean of sin is crossed over by the raft of Knowledge. Here it is further stated that all actions are destroyed by the fire of Knowledge.

Question : How can people get rid of Karma ?

Answer : By Knowledge.

Question : What is the excellence of Knowledge ?

Answer : Knowledge destroys all actions, and thus man attains liberation.

38. न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥

३७

Na hi jnanena sadrisam pavitramiha vidyate ।

tat svayam yogasamsiddhah kalenatmani vindati ॥

38

Meaning : इह *iha* : in this world, ज्ञानेन सदृशम् *jnanena sadrisam* : like wisdom, पवित्रम् *pavitram* : pure, न विद्यते हि *na vidyate hi* : is not indeed, तत् *tat* : that (wisdom), योगसंसिद्धः *yogasamsiddhah* : perfected in yoga, कालेन *kalena* :

in due season, आत्मनि *atmani* : in Self, स्वयम् *svayam* : oneself, विन्दति *vindati* : find.

Substance : Indeed there is nothing so pure as Knowledge in this world. He who is perfected in *Nishkama Karma* finds that wisdom by himself in *Atma* in due season.

Commentary : There are many things pure in this world. Of them all, knowledge is the purest and the most perfect. Nothing can purify man except Knowledge. The impurity caused by ignorance is only cleansed by Knowledge. The physical body needs cleansing with water and soap every day. The subtle body also needs purification. And the purifying agents are *Nishkama Karma*, meditation, worship of God and such other practices. Of them all, Knowledge is the best and greatest purifier.

By oneself : Each individual has to find that Knowledge by himself. One should eat by himself to satisfy his hunger. One should take medicine by himself to cure his own disease. The Master provides all the help needed for the spiritual quest, but finally each one should realise the Truth himself. There can be no proxy in *Jnana*. It is direct personal experience.

Perfected in Yoga : The man perfected in *yoga* obtains Knowledge. *Nishkama Karma Yoga* should become automatic, spontaneous and natural. Then *yoga* is said to be perfect. The mind is purified of the taint of Selfishness and attachment to the gross material world. Then man finds Knowledge.

In Self : Where is this Knowledge ? Is it in the sky or beyond the clouds? Is it in the other world? Or is it in the centre of the earth?—Where is this Knowledge ? It is in the Self. All the time it has been there. Not knowing it man has been seeking for it in the outside world, in temples, in rivers and mountains, and so on. After all this long search, man comes back to his own Self, and there he discovers that Knowledge which liberates him from sorrow and delusion. All knowledge, all perfection is already in the Self.

In due season : The Lord answers the question when this Knowledge becomes manifest. In due season, this Knowledge which is already in the Self reveals itself, and then the endless wanderings of the mind stop for ever. There is no time limit for this supreme revelation. When the mind becomes pure, Knowledge comes of its own accord. Sooner or later this Knowledge should manifest itself, the time taken depending on the ripeness of the individual. No one need be discouraged that he has not got it immediately. As he continues the spiritual *Sadhana*, the mind gradually drops off its taints and blemishes and Truth is seen and known. The plant of spirituality should be watered and taken care of in every way. Sincerity and earnestness are essential. By God's grace Knowledge is revealed to the aspirant.

Question : *What is the purest thing in the world ?*

Answer : Knowledge of *Atma*.

Question *How, when, and where is it found ?*

Answer : By the man perfected in *Karma Yoga*, the Knowledge is found in the Self in due time.

Who obtains this Knowledge, and what happens when it is obtained.

39. श्रद्धावौल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परा शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ३९

*Sraddhavan labhate jnanam tat parah samyatendriyah ।
jnanaṁ labdhva param santim achireṇādhibacchati ॥ 39*

Meaning : श्रद्धावान् *sraddhavan* : the man of faith, तत्परः *tatparah* : having that (Knowledge) as the supreme goal, संयतेन्द्रियः *samyatendriyah* : of controlled senses, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : Knowledge of Atma, लभते *labhate* : gains, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : Knowledge, लब्ध्वा *labdhva* : having obtained, परा *param* : supreme, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, अचिरेण *Achirena* : soon, अधिगच्छति *adhibacchati* : attains.

Substance : The man of faith, having Knowledge as his supreme goal having controlled the senses, obtains Knowledge of *Atma*, and having obtained that enjoys peace ere long.

Commentary : Three qualities are mentioned here for gaining Knowledge.

(1) *The man of faith* : Faith is the seed of success even in worldly matters. The degree of faith in the *Sastras* and the teaching of the *Guru*, determine the degree of success. The greater the faith the sooner the success. The seeker should do the prescribed *Sadhana* with deep faith and it would surely lead him to spiritual illumination. Doubt will not bear any fruit what-so-ever. Doubt is the very negation of faith and want of faith results in utter failure. That is why the Lord insists on faith as an indispensable condition for the aspirant. The sick man should have faith in the physician and the medicine prescribed by him. Otherwise the efficacy of the medicine is neutralised by the negative attitude of the patient. As the *Sadhaka* practises the discipline sincerely at first, he would gain some simple spiritual experience, which would confirm his faith in the higher laws of spirituality. Faith, it should be understood is not a denial of one's reason and judgment. What is implied is that the seeker should carry out the instructions of the *Sastras* and the *Guru* in the full hope that they would yield the best results. And when he knows by experience the value of faith, his progress becomes quicker and smoother. So one should have faith in his spiritual destiny.

(2) *Having Knowledge as the supreme goal* : The aspirant should have single-minded devotion to the spiritual ideal. There should not be any discordant note in the general harmony of word, thought and deed. One may talk of spirituality and yet his thoughts may be plunged in gross worldliness, and his deeds may be utterly sensual. Such a split personality cannot make any progress in any direction. Divided aims and distracted minds achieve nothing. The personality of man, complete and entire, should be dedicated to

the spiritual aim. He should fully realise within himself that there is no other goal to strive for. Naturally, by discrimination, when it is known that all other things are painful perishable worthless stuff, the spiritual aim alone shines as a perfect star. Then Self-realisation becomes possible.

(3) *Of controlled senses* : Faith and single-minded devotion to the divine aim should be accompanied with systematic practice of sense-restraint. Faith and aspiration may do much, but for perfection in *Jnana* the senses should be brought under control. So long as the mind runs after material objects through the channels of the senses, wisdom cannot be found. The attempt is to turn the mind inwards. The sense-organs by their very nature function by attaching themselves to some physical object or other. The mind is linked to the senses, and so the mind runs out. This link should be cut, and the mind should be trained to look inward. Then the senses can do nothing. They remain powerless in their places. So sense-control is prescribed as the third characteristic of the man of Knowledge.

What is the fruit of this Knowledge ? Peace, Supreme Peace (*Param santim adhi sacchati*). Swiftly the wise man attains peace. Every one is seeking for peace and happiness. But it is eluding him. He seeks for it in worldly pleasures and possessions. But he does not find it in them. So the mind is restless and distracted. Where is that peace ? The Lord answers the question. Peace is in the Knowledge of *Ama*, and nowhere else. Every little satisfaction which one desires from small pleasures and successes here and there in the world are only shadows of the real peace of the Self. So let all people go to the very source of Peace—*Atma*. Having thus described the excellence of *Jnana*, the Lord concludes that it leads to Supreme Peace.

Question : Who can attain *Jnana* ?

Answer : The man of faith, devotion, and self-control attains Knowledge.

Question : *What is the fruit of Jnana ?*

Answer : Peace -

Question : *What is the way to peace ?*

Answer : Atma Jnana.

The Lord describes the fate of those who have no faith.

40. अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ ४०

*Ajnascha sraddadhanascha samsayatma vinasyati । ।
na'yam loko'sti na paro na sukham samsayatmanah ॥ 40*

Meaning : अज्ञः च *ajnah cha* : the ignorant and, अश्रद्धानः च *asradhadhanah cha* : the faiithless and, संशयात्मा *samsayatma* : the doubting person, विनश्यति *vinasyati* : perishes, goes to destruction, संशयात्मनः *samsayatmanah* : for the doubting self, अयम् *ayam* : this, लोकः *lokah* : world, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, न परः *na parah* : no other world is not, न सुखम् *na sukham* : happiness, is not.

Substance : But the ignorant man, the faithless man, the doubting man goes to destruction. For the doubting self, this world is not, nor the next, nor happiness.

Commentary : While the positive declaration assures salvation to the man of faith, this nagative assertion condemns all those who have neither faith nor knowledge. It is necessary to describe the fate of the unbelievers to re-inforce the positive merits of the faithful.

(1) *The ignorant* : The ignorant man knows nothing of the Reality and so he believes that the objective world alone is real, and working for pleasure and fortune in it, he is cast into the ocean of *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death endlessly.

(2) *The faithless* : The faithless man also suffers destruction. The *Sastras* show the righteous path, the way of *Dharma*, and the *Guru* gives instructions about spiritual practices. The

seeker should have faith in both. Otherwise, he falls from the way of *Dharma*, and an unrighteous conduct of life leads to destruction.

(3) *The doubting person* : The doubting person knows not what his duty is. He doubts the veracity of the *Sastras*, the teachings of the *Guru*, and he has no goal to reach, no clear aim to achieve. Such a man is doomed to destruction. He is a failure in this world. He has no hope of a better world hereafter. He lives and dies unhappy and miserable.

So the Lord exhorts the seeker to work with faith, diligence, and determination. He should be filled with self-confidence and perfect faith in the *Sastras* and the *Guru*. Such a man attains spiritual progress and realisation.

Question : *Who suffers destruction ?*

Answer : The ignorant man, the faithless man, the doubting man, suffers destruction.

Question : *What is the fate of the doubting person ?*

Answer : He has no happiness either in this world or in the next.

Question : *What is the duty of the aspirant ?*

Answer : (1) He should acquire Knowledge.

(2) He should have faith in the *Sastras* and the teaching of the *Guru*.

(3) He should not doubt the Reality of the Self.

The man of Knowledge is not bound by Karma.

41. योगसन्न्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानं चिद्वसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्मणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ ४१

*Yogasannyastakarmanam jnanasamcch'nnasamsivam'
atmavantam na karmani nibadhnanti dhanamjaya ॥ 41*

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna ! योगसन्न्यस्तकर्माणम् *yogasanyastakarmanam* : one who has given up the

fruits of action by Nishkama karma yoga or who has surrendered the fruits of action to the Lord, ज्ञानसंचिन्नसंशयम् *jnanasamchinnasamsayam* : one whose doubts are cleared by direct knowledge, आत्मवन्तम् *atmavantam* : one who is established in Atma, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, न निबध्नन्ति *na nibadhnantि* : do not bind.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Actions do not bind the man who has surrendered the fruits of *karma* by *yoga*, whose doubts are cleared by Knowledge, and who is firmly established in the Self.

Commentary : It is evident that the man who has no longing for the fruits of action, who has surrendered them to the Lord, is not bound by the wheel of *Karma*. He has no attachment to the body and so he has no sense of doership. He is established in *Atma*, and looks upon the world as an illusion and a dream. Hence actions do not bind him. He may be, continuously working, and yet he is not in action as he has no feeling of attachment and doership. The fire of Knowledge burns up all actions, as it has been already declared.

One whose doubts are cleared by practical Knowledge : Till the aspirant reaches the ultimate Truth doubts will crop up in some form or other. Only when Truth is seen, all doubts are cleared.

One who is established in Atma : It has already been declared that the seeker should be firmly established in the Self to attain complete freedom. He who has the Knowledge of the Self alone removes the last trace of the bondage of *Karma*. All others are bound to reap the fruits of their actions in an endless series of births.

Question : *Who is not bound by Karma ?*

Answer : The *Nishkama karma yogi*, the man whose doubts are cleared by knowledge, who is firmly established in the Self, is not bound by *Karma*.

Question : So, what should man do to free himself from the bondage of Karma ?

Answer : He should give up the fruits of work and surrender to the Lord. He should acquire Knowledge and clear all his doubts. He should get established in the Self, Then Karma cannot bind him.

The Lord exhorts Arjuna to act in the true spirit of Self-Knowledge.

42. तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः।
छित्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोच्चिष्ट भारत ॥

42

*Tasmad ajnana-sambhutam hritsthām jnanasina'tmanah
cchittvai'nam samsayam yogam atistho'ttishta bharata. 42*

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! तस्मात् *tasmāt* : therefore, आत्मनः *atmanah* : your, हृत्स्थम् *hritsthām* : residing in the heart, अज्ञानसंभूतं *ajnana-sambhutam* : born of ignorance, एवं संशयम् *evam samsayam* : this doubt, ज्ञानासिना *jnanasina* : with the sword of knowledge, छित्वा *cchitvā* : having cut, योगम् *yogam* : Nishkama Karma yoga, आतिष्ठ *atishtha* : perform, उत्तिष्ठ *uttishta* : arise.

Substance : Therefore, with the sword of Knowledge cleave asunder the doubt born of ignorance about the Self, dwelling in the heart and take refuge in *Yoga*. Arise, O Arjuna !

Commentary : Thus the Lord, having taught the secret of the Supreme Self, and by that Knowledge, the ability to perform *Nishkama Karma*, finally exhorts Arjuna to stand up and fight the battle. It should be noted that *Jnana* enables man to discharge his duties under all circumstances with a clear vision of the true nature of action, and his own immovable station is the Self. This Discourse is entitled *Jnana Yoga* and the last words of the Lord are "Stand up, O Arjuna!". Arjuna was sunk in despair and doubt, and now knowing the Truth about the real Self, he should stand up and fight the battle as it is the duty prescribed for him in the present situation.

Born of ignorance : All doubts and delusions have their origin in ignorance. The moment Knowledge dawns, they are all cleared as the mist is cleared by the sun.

In the heart : Ignorance is lodged in the heart from the beginning of time. But all that darkness is cleared when the lamp of Knowledge is lit (i. e.) when the real Self is perceived.

With the sword of knowledge : Ignorance cannot be destroyed by anything except *Jnana*. So *Jnana* is compared to a sword that cuts the knot of ignorance and releases man from the bondage of *Karma* forever.

Perform Nishkama Karma : Having attained Knowledge, what should man do ? This question is answered here. Does the *Jnani* sit in a corner and idle away the time ? No. He works, works for the good of humanity. He has nothing to gain by such work. It is all done to lift mankind from the mire of delusion, to spread the glorious message of spirituality, to kindle the fire of *Atmajnana* in others, to purify and ennable man, to enable him to see the glory of his real Self. *Sankara*, *Buddha*, *Jesus* and other sages have done tremendous work for the good of mankind. Many wise men even today are performing such selfless work.

Arise : Stand up, O Arjuna ! How inspiring these words are for all people ! Are not millions of people, perplexed with doubt, and clouded by delusion, weeping and wailing helplessly on account of their weakness to meet the challenge of life ? To rouse such men from their ignorance, and inspire them with courage to fight the battle of life is the greatest service that could be done to humanity. Lord Krishna, through the medium of Arjuna, delivers this message to mankind. Ignorance is the root cause of all the evils of life. It should be shattered by the sword of Knowledge, and then man becomes fit to fight the battle of life under all circumstances.

Question : *Where are doubt and delusion ?*

Answer : In the human heart.

Question : Whence do they arise ?

Answer : From ignorance.

Question : How can ignorance be conquered ?

Answer : By the sword of Knowledge.

Question : Having obtained the highest Knowledge what is man's duty ?

Answer : He works for the good of all beings.

इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानयोगो नाम
चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Jnana Yogo
nama chaturtho 'dhyayah.*

Thus in the Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga* the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Fourth Discourse entitled *Jnana Yoga*
(The *Yoga* of Knowledge)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ पञ्चमोऽध्यायः

Atha Panchamodhyayah

THE FIFTH DISCOURSE

कर्मसंन्यास योगः

KARMA SAN NYASA YOGA

THE YOGA OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

The title of the Discourse :

Sannyasa means renunciation. In the beginning renunciation of *Karma* is not desirable. Action without desire and attachment should be practised, and when the mind is thus purified, it becomes possible for man to remain fixed in the Atmic state when there is no taint of the external world. So it is declared in this Discourse that *Karma Yoga* is superior to *Karmasannyasa*. When Self-realisation takes place, all actions drop away of their own accord. *Sannyasa* may also be taken to mean *Sankhya* or *Jnana*. Both *Karma Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga* are discussed in this Discourse. Hence this Discourse is entitled *Karmasannyasa Yoga*.

Important Points of the Discourse :

(1) Declaration about *Sankhya yoga* and *Karma yoga*.

(1-6 verses)

(2) The characteristics of the *Sankhyayogi* and *Karmayogi*,
and their respective merit. (7-12 verses)

- (3) Explanation of *Jnanayoga*. (13-26 verses)
- (4) The *Yoga* of Meditation (*Dhyanyoga*) accompanied with devotion (*Bhaktiyoga*) (27-29 verses)

How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the Third and Fourth Discourses, both *Nishkama Karma* and *Jnana* are alternately emphasised, and it was stated that through *Nishkamakarma* Knowledge is obtained and when Knowledge is obtained *Nishkamakarma* becomes possible. Arjuna feels confused and doubtful about the right course of conduct for him. So he asks the Lord to tell him decisively which is superior—*Sankya* or *Karma*. The Discourse begins with Arjuna's question.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. संन्यासं कर्मणा॑ कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥

१

Arjuna uvacha

*Sannyasam karmanam krishna punaryogam cha samsasi ।
yacchreya etayorekam tanme bruhi sunischitam ॥* 1

अर्जुन उवाच—*Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said :

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! कर्मणाम् *karmanam* : of actions, संन्यासं *Sanyasam* : renunciation, पुनः *punah* : again, योगम् च *yogam cha* : and Karmayoga, शंससि *samsasi* : you praise, एतयोः *etayoh* : of these two, यत् *yat* : which, श्रेयः *sreyah* : better, सुनिश्चितम् *sunischitam*, conclusively, तत् एकम् *tat ekam* : that one, मे *me* : to me, ब्रूहि *bruhi* : tell.

Substance : O Krishna! You praise renunciation of actions and again the *yoga* of action. Of these two which is better ? That one tell me conclusively.

Commentary : The Lord has taught two main doctrines, one of *Karma* and the other of *Jnana* through renunciation of actions.

These two paths are equally emphasised. Arjuna listened attentively to the teaching on both sides and felt a natural doubt about the superiority of either of the two. The Lord clears the doubt.

The Lord's reply :

श्री भगवानुवाच

२. संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकराबुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥

२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Sannyasah karmayogascha nihsreyasakarav ubhau :
tayostu karmasannyasat karmayogo visishyate* ॥

२

श्री भगवानुवाच—*Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said :

Meaning : संन्यासः *sanyasah* : renunciation, कर्मयोगश्च *karmayogah cha* : and yoga of action, उभौ *ubhau* : both, निःश्रेयसकरौ *nishreyasakarav* : lead the highest bliss, तयोः तु *tayoh tu* : but of these two, कर्मसंन्यासात् *karmasannyasat* : than renunciation of action, कर्मयोगः *Karmayoga* : Yoga of action, विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is superior.

Substance : Renunciation and *Yoga* of Action, both lead to the highest bliss. But of these two, *Yoga* of Action is superior to the renunciation of action.

Commentary : *Jnana* resulting in the renunciation of all actions, and *Karmayoga* consisting in action without desire and attachment, both lead to the highest good. Both yield the fruit of liberation. But in the process of development, the *Yoga* of desireless action is superior to the renunciation of action. *Karmayoga* is better than *Karmasannyasayoga*. Arjuna has not yet attained the Self-state, devoid of the phenomenal universe. Millions of people live, move, and have their being in the objective world. It is not proper to teach them renunciation of action in the very beginning because they would not understand

the true meaning of that doctrine. And, if a man without ripeness of Knowledge renounces action, he becomes a lost soul here and hereafter. The common man should act, work, carry out the injunctions of the *Sastras*, and do every thing demanded of him as a duty in the course of his daily life. Such selfless devotion to duty will gradually purify the mind of all its latent tendencies, and then man becomes fit to enter the Self-state, where there is no actor, no action and nothing to act.

Question: *Which is better, Karma or Karmasannyasa ?*

Answer : Both lead to the highest good. But of the two, action is better than renunciation of action.

The Karma Yogi who is free from the pairs of opposites (raga and dvesha) is praised.

3. ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्रेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥

३

*Jneyah sa nityasannyasi yo na dvēsti na kankshati ।
nirdvandvo hi mahabaho sukham bandhat pramuchiyate ॥ 3*

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! यः *yah* : who, न द्रेष्टि *na dveshii* : hates not, न काङ्क्षति *na kankshati* : desires not, सः *sah* : he, नित्यसंन्यासी *nityasannyasi* : (as) perpetual ascetic, ज्ञेयः *jneyah* : should be known, हि *hi* : because, निर्द्वन्द्वः *nirdvandah* : he who is free from the pairs of opposites, like heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc., सुखम् *sukham* : easily, बन्धात् *bandhat* : from bondage, प्रमुच्यते *pramuchyate* : is set free.

Substance : O Arjuna ! He who neither hates nor desires should be known as a man of eternal renunciation; He who is not subject to the pairs of opposites is easily set free from bondage.

Commentary : The meaning of *Sannyasa* is determined here. It signifies the abandoning of likes and dislikes and all

the host of the pairs of opposites to which man is subject every moment of his life. *Sannyasa* does not mean the abandoning of action.

Thus he who has freed himself from *Raga* and *Dvesha* is to be known as *Nityasannyasi* - the sage of eternal renunciation. The renunciation of others is only of a temporary and accidental character. They may wear the ochre robes and appear outwardly to belong to the class of *Sannyasins*, but so long as their hearts are tainted with desire and aversion, they are not *sannyasis* in the real sense of the term. So, renunciation of the hindering influence of *Raga* and *Dvesha* is *Sannyasa*. Abandoning the pairs of opposites is *Sannyasa*. Elimination of the internal tendencies is *Sannyasa*. He who has not these qualities, though he adopts the external form is not really a *Sannyasi*. He who has these qualities, though he is a householder engaged in a hundred tasks is a real *Sannyasi*.

Easily set free from bondage : Many people want to know if there is an easy path to salvation. Yes. There is. It is just giving up the selfishness which binds a man to the world by attachment and aversion. Such a man is '*nirdvandva*'. He cuts the knots of *Karma* easily, though he may be a house-holder performing all the duties of his station in life.

Question : *Who is a Nityasannyasi ?*

Answer : He who has given up attachment and aversion, who has gone beyond the pairs of opposites, is a *Nityasannyasi*.

Question : *What is the result of transcending the pairs of opposites?*

Answer : He is easily freed from the bondage of *samsara*.

Question : *What is the easy path to freedom ?*

Answer : Giving up all the pairs of opposites is the easiest path to freedom.

The fruit of Karmayoga and Jnanayoga is the same.

4. सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥

8

*Samkhyayogau prithagbalah priavadanti na panditah ।
ekamapyasthitah samyag ubhayor vindate phalam ॥ 4*

Meaning : सांख्ययोगौ *samkhyayogau*: Knowledge and performance of action, पृथक् *pridhak* : separate, distinct, बालाः *balah* : children, the ignorant, प्रवदन्ति *pravadanti* : speak, पण्डिताः *panditah* : the wise, न *na* : not, उभयोः *ubhayoh* : of both, एकमपि *ekam api* : even one of them, सम्यक् *samyak* : truly, आस्थितः *asthitah* : established in, फलम् *phalam* : fruit, विन्दते *vindate* : (he) obtains.

Substance : Children, not the wise, say that *Jnanayoga* and *karmayoga* are distinct: He who is truly established in either of them obtains the fruit of both.

Commentary : The Pandit mentioned here is the sage who knows the Truth and lives in it, and not a man of mere theoretical knowledge of the *Sastras* and the scriptures. Only the ignorant say that *karmayoga* and *jnanayoga* are distinct and separate. The Lord makes the categorical declaration that the fruit of both the *yogas* is the same, and that the *Sadhaka* who takes to one of them and is well established in it, will attain the highest fruit of both. Direct perception of *Atma* is the aim of all *yogas*. Some highly evolved men follow *Jnana marga*. They carry on the inquiry into the real nature of things, separate the *Drik* (the Seer) from the *Drisy* (the phenomenal world) as the mythical swan is able to separate milk and water. Thus they realise *Atma* through *Jnana marga*. Others, according to their natural tendencies, take to *Karma marga*, and through desireless action and surrender of the fruits to the Lord, reach the same goal of *Atm-sakshatkara* by their purified minds. The reward of freedom, liberation, is the same for both, only the paths differ. So, in both, the seeker aims at the absorption of the ego

into the Self, and thereby transcend the feeling of personal doership. When the Jiva-idea is given up, what remains is only *Sivat�am* and nothing else. So the Lord exhorts the aspirant to take up either of the two *yogas*, and practice it well.

Truly established in : The condition is that the practice of any *yoga* should be perfect and the *sadhaka* should be firmly established in it. He should become an expert in the technique of the *yoga* which he follows. Then alone the desired result follows.

The history of the world provides many examples of great men who followed different paths and achieved the highest aim of life. The wisest of men in the *Jnana marga* have done the greatest service to humanity by their work. The greatest *Karma yogis* have always experienced *Atma Jnana* through a realisation of the universality of the Self in all their acts and achievements. Of course, it is quite clear that what man is aiming at is the destruction of his personal separateness from the universal, the merging of the Self in the universal Self and the realisation of the universe in his own Self.

No wise man has ever disputed the truth of the different religions and creeds of the world. They practice not only tolerance but universal acceptance of all doctrines as paths to the one goal. The radio of a circle reach the centre from different positions and paths. The rivers reach the ocean through different ways. So one should give up narrowness and do not carp and cavil at those who do not follow the same path as his. Let there be greater understanding and larger outlook in these matters which concern the people most. This is the message of the Lord.

Question : *Are Sankhya and Karma yogas separate ?*

Answer : No. They appear different but produce the same fruit.

Question: *What then should be the objective of the seeker ?*

Answer : He should sincerely practice his chosen system and get firmly established in it. He will then attain the fruits of both the *yogas*.

5. यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तयोरपि गम्यते ।
एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

५

*Yat sankhyaih prapryate sthanam
tad yogairapigamyate ।
ekam samkhyam cha yogam cha
yah pasyati sa pasyati ॥*

5

Meaning : सांख्यैः *sankhyaih* : by the Jnanis, यत् स्थानम् *yat sthanam* : which position, state (*Moksha*), प्राप्यते *prapryate* : is reached, तत् *tat* : that (state), योऽपि अनि *yogaih api* : by the yogis (*Karma yogis*) also, गम्यते *gamyate* : is reached, सांख्यं च *sankhyam cha* : and Sankhya, योगं च *yogam cha* : and yoga (*Karma*), एकम् *ekam* : one, यः *yah* : who, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees (knows), सः *sah* : he, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees (knows).

Substance : That state (*Moksha*) reached by men of Knowledge is also reached by men of Action (*Karma yogis*). He who sees the oneness of *Jnana* and *Karma*, really sees.

Commentary : The Lord reiterates the unity of *Jnanayoga* and *Karmayoga* in regard to the ultimate goal. The wise man sees the truth behind each *sadhanam* and knows that though they are outwardly different, they are leading to the same consummation. It is only the ignorant who imagine that one path is superior to the other. These paths are intended to serve the needs of different aspirants born with different tendencies, and previous *samskaras*. One can reach any part of the globe by going east or west. Similarly one can reach the spiritual goal by any way. The harmonisation of different systems and creeds is the purpose of the Gita. At every step, the teacher of the Gita insists on the fact that the goal is the same, and explains the different paths from that stand-point. Hence the Gita is universal in its appeal to all mankind.

Question : Who is the wise man ?

Answer : The sage who knows that *Jnanayoga* and *Karmayoga* lead to the same state (*Moksha*) is the wise man.

Unless the mind is purified by Karmayoga firmness in Jnana is not possible.

6. सन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥

६

*Sannyasastu mahabaho dukhhamaptum ayogatah ।
yogayukto munirbrahma nachirena'dhigacchati ॥*

6

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! सन्यासस्तु *sanyasastu* : but renunciation, अयोगतः *ayogatah* : without Karma yoga, आप्तुम् *aptum* : to attain, दुःखम् *dukkham* : difficult, योगयुक्तः *yogayuktah* : harmonised in Karma yoga, मुनिः *munih* : sage (meditating on the Divine), न चिरेण *na chirena* : quickly, ब्रह्म *brahman* : to Brahman (the Supreme Reality), अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : goes.

Substance : O Arjuna ! But renunciation is difficult to attain without the *yoga* of action. The sage who is harmonised in *Yoga* quickly goes to *Brahman*.

Commentary : It is stated here that without the aid of *Karma Yoga* final renunciation and the realisation of Self is not possible. That is, perfection in *Karma Yoga*- doing work without desire and attachment, surrendering the fruits to the Lord - is absolutely necessary to rise to the plane of pure Knowledge. Certainly it is not an easy task to remain established in *Brahman*, without outward pulls and pressures of the objective world. All the bad *samskaras* have to be overcome, and they cannot be overcome except by righteous action and desireless performance of good work. *karmayoga* is therefore the elementary course, and *jnanayoga* is the higher course. Unless the foundation of *karmayoga* is strongly laid, the superstructure of *jnana* cannot stand for a minute. How can any one hope to remain fixed in the Atmic state when the mind is impure and drawn to the objective world in a hundred ways ? Let the mind be purified first. Hence the Lord insists on *karmayoga* for all seekers. Out of compassion, the Lord explains the natural sequence and graded progress of spiritual laws.

Sage : From the word *Muni* (Contemplator) we understand that the seeker should also contemplate on the Supreme, besides the practice of *Karmayoga*.

In this manner, the Lord prescribes *Karma marga* and self-surrender to the Divine as the natural evolution of spiritual life. It is of no use to take to *sannyasa* by a formal renunciation of action. Purity and sinlessness are the characteristic features of *sannyasa*. Without acquiring them, if a man adopts *sannyasa* by some accidental calamity or suffering, he would suffer ignominious failure in the attempt. Such men are deprived of the benefits of *Karma* and *Jnana*. "Acquire purity through *Nishkama Karma*, surrender to God, learn the secret of action; and you can quickly reach *Brahman*." This is the Lord's message.

Question : When can *Jnanayoga* be realised ?

Answer : After perfection is attained in *Karmayoga*.

Question : How can one reach *Brahman* quickly ?

Answer : The *Karmayogi* who has purified his mind reaches *Brahman* quickly.

The Karmayogi of self-control is not tainted by action.

7. योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।

सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥

७

Yogayukto visuddhatma vijitatma jitendriyah ।

sarvabhutatma bhutatma kurvannapi na lipyate ॥

7

Meaning : योगयुक्तः *yogayuktah* : one performing Nishkama Karma, विशुद्धात्मा *visuddhatma* : heart purified, विजितात्मा *vijitatma* : controlled in mind, जितेन्द्रियः *jitendriyah* : senses subdued, सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा *sarvabhutatmabhutatma* : knowing the Self in him and in all to be one, कुर्वन्नपि *kurvan api* : though acting, न लिप्यते *na lipyate* : is not tainted.

Substance : He who is devoted to the *yoga* of action, with heart purified, with mind controlled and senses subdued, though acting, is not tainted.

Commentary : The Lord describes the qualities of the man who is continuously acting, but who is not tainted by sin in any way. Performance of *Nishkama karma*, purity of heart, conquest of mind, surrendering the senses, perception of the one Self in all beings—these are the characteristics of the man of perfect wisdom.

From this we understand that the *Karmayogi* and *Jnanayogi* look alike in the final stages of spiritual life. If one possess these five qualities, he is not tainted by his work in any way. If action is done for selfish purposes, with an impure mind and heart and slavery to the senses then such action binds man to the wheel of *samsara*.

The perception of the one Supreme Self in himself and in all beings leads the aspirant to the realisation of the unity of all things. For such a man there cannot be any hatred of others, no desire to injure others for his own profit, no envy and jealousy, no competitive spirit, no mental hurry to go ahead of every other man, as we find in the practical world.

The seeker should cultivate these qualities with all sincerity and devotion. Nothing can then bind him.

Question : *Who is the man not tainted by action ?*

Answer : The *yogi* who performs *Nishkarma Karma*, who has purified his heart, who has controlled his mind, who has subdued the senses, who sees the one Self in himself and in all beings, is not tainted by action.

How the wise man looks upon all his actions is described in two verses.

8. नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यत्पृष्ठन्स्पृशत्प्रबन्धन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्चसन् ॥ ८

9. प्रलपन्विसूजन्गृह्णनुनिमपन्निभिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९

*Nai'va kimchit karomi'ti yukto manyeta tattvavit !
pasyan srinvan sprisan jighrann asnan gachhan svapan svasan॥*

*Pralapan visrijan grihnannunmishan nimishannapi¹
indriyani²ndriyartheshu vartanta iti dharayan³*

9

Meaning : तत्त्ववित् *tattvavit* : one who knows the essence of things, युक्तः *yuktah* : harmonised with Self, पश्यन् *pasyan* : seeing, स्रिवन् *srinvan* : hearing, स्पृशन् *sprisan* : touching, जिघन् *jighran* : smelling, अश्वन् *asnan* : eating, गच्छन् *gacchan* : going, स्वपन् *svapan* : sleeping, श्वसन् *svasan* : breathing, प्रलयन् *pralapan* : talking, विसृजन् *visrijan* : giving, गृह्णन् *grihnan* : grasping, उन्मिषन् निमिषन् अपि *unmishan nimishan api* : opening the eyelids and closing the eyelids even, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, इन्द्रियार्थेषु *indriyartheshu* : in the objects of senses, वर्तन्ते इति *vartante iti* : move thus, धारयन् *dharayan* : being convinced, किंचित् *kimchit* : anything, नैव करोमि इति *naiva karomi iti* : I do not even do thus, मन्येत् *manyeta* : should think.

Substance : The harmonised *yogi* who knows the essence of things, thinks “I do nothing”, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing the eyelids even. He is convinced that the senses move among the objects of the senses.

Commentary : The attitude of the man of perfect Knowledge is explained here. *Atma* is the witness of all phenomena. Just as the sun is only a witness of the various human actions that take place in the light that he sheds, just as the lamp is only a witness of the actions taking place in its light, *Atma* is just a witness of the activities of the body, the senses, and the mind, which take place by His all-pervading life-force. It remains untainted by them, ever pure and ever perfect.

To realise one's own identity with *Atma* is perfection of Knowledge.

In fact, there is only *Atma*, and the apparent existence of the individual-self is fiction. It is non-existent, and yet appears

to exist. Ignorance (*avidya*) covers up the reality, and has imposed a fictitious sense of separateness on man, and so he thinks of himself as *Jiva*, separate from *Paramatma*. It is like the wave imagining itself to be separate from the ocean.

The *Jiva*, having imagined that he is a separate entity, identifies himself with the body, senses and mind. When the bodily organs are moving and acting, when the mind thinks and feels, he thinks that he is thinking and feeling. When the senses function in their own respective sense-objects, he thinks that he is functioning. This body-identification is caused by ignorance. By spiritual *sadhana* and knowledge the wise man discovers the tremendous error of body-identification (*dehatmabuddhi*) and regains his original state of *Atma*. When *dehatmabuddhi* is removed, *Atmabuddhi* is achieved. In that state, the body, senses, and mind, and all their functions and actions, are perceived as distinctly separate from the Self.

Pretensions to *Jnana* is a dangerous tendency. Since *Atma* is beyond all laws and since the *Jiva* is no other than *Atma*, it is quite possible for pretenders to be plunged in the mire of sense-pleasures, and yet claim immunity from them by simply repeating the slogan 'I do not anything'. The Lord has declared the conditions of *Jnana* with perfect clarity. The *Jnani* who could say 'I do not anything' should be one whose heart is purified (*visuddhatma*) and whose senses are subdued (*Jitendriyah*). Of what avail is it to say 'I do not anything', when at every step one is identifying himself with all the pleasures of the body and the senses ? Let the seeker carry out a thorough search into their own hearts and find out taints and blemishes of lust, greed and hatred. Let these sins be purified first through *Nishkamakarma*, and then only the seekers would be fit to enter the plane of the pure Knowledge of the Self.

From *Tamas* to *Rajas*, from *Rajas* to *Sattva*, and from *Sattva* to pure *Sattva*, from the lower to the higher the seeker has to rise gradually. One who has reached the state of pure *Sattva* cannot be drawn by the senses to indulge in the common pleasures of the body. His mind cannot dwell on worldly matters.

His words do not smack of worldliness in any manner. In word, thought and deed, he is pure, nay purity is his nature. He lives constantly in the light and bliss of *Brahman*, and never more shall he be diverted by the illusion of worldly enjoyment. Would a man who has awokened from his sleep think of and run after the pleasures of the dream ? He knows that they are false and delusive. So would the *Jnani* understand that all the pleasures which he had in the past were only the reflections of a mirage, and he has been fooled too frequently by mistaking the apparent to be the Real. So he is careful to remain steadfast in the Self. It is only such a man of Self-Knowledge who can say - 'I do not any thing.' Such men have done great work for the good of humanity, without the least trace of personal doership.

So, first of all, by the practice of *Nishkama Karma*, devotion to God, *Dhyana*, the heart should be purified and the Self should be realised through direct experience. Then, whether he works or not, he is not bound in any way. The mind, like a burnt seed is void of producing any reactions. He sees and knows that the whole of the phenomenal world and all his actions in it are only dramatic performance taking place in His presence, while he remains only a spectator.

Question : *What is the attitude of the sage of wisdom towards the bodily and mental activities ?*

Answer : He knows that the senses move in the sense-world, and he has the clear idea 'I do not anything.'

The Lord explains how to act without being bound by Karma.

10. ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥

१०

*Brahmanyadhma karmani sangam tyaktva karoti yah ।
lipyate na sapapena padma patram iva'mbhasa ॥*

10

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, ब्रह्मणि *brahmani*: in the eternal Brahman, आधाय *adhaya*: having placed,

सङ्गम् sangam : attachment, त्यक्त्वा tyaktva : having given up, करोति karoti : does, सः sah : he, अभासा ambhasa : by water, पद्मपत्रम् इव padmapatram iva : like the lotus-leaf, पापेन papena : by sin, न लिप्यते na lipyate : is not tainted.

Substance : He who acts placing all actions in the enternal *Brahman*, giving up attachment, is unaffected by sin like the lotus leaf by water.

Commentary : The doctrine of *Karmayoga* is restated here. All actions should be surrendered in the Eternal, and all personal attachments to the fruits thereof should be given up. There should be no feeling of personal doership. Such a worker is not affected by sin. The idea is illustrated by means of a simile. The lotus leaf is in water, and yet it is not tainted by the water rolling over and around it. Similarly the expert in *Karmayoga* is engaged in a thousand activities, but he is not touched or tainted by sin in any way.

By the Knowledge he has acquired, he knows that all objects and actions are only reflected images in the Supreme *Brahman*. He is himself That. So there are no desires or attachments for him. Having themselves escaped from the tarments of *karma*, they work for the spiritual uplift of humanity. They are free because they know the Truth, and they have surrendered every thing to the Lord or the eternal *Brahman*.

Question : Who is not bound by karma ?

Answer : He who has surrendered all actions to the eternal *Brahman*, who has given up all attachments, is not bound by karma.

Question : How ?

Answer : Like the lotus-leaf in the water.

The Yogi acts without attachment.

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

*Kayena manasa buddhya
kevalairindriyairapi
yoginah karma kurvanti
sangam tyaktva'tmasuddhaye ॥*

11

Meaning : योगिनः *yoginah* : the Karmayogis, आत्मशुद्धये *atmasuddhaye* : for self-purification, सङ्गम् *sangam* : attachment, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : abandoning, कयेन *kayena* : with body, मनसा *manasa* : with mind, बुद्ध्या *buddhya* : with intellect, केवलैः *kevalaih* : only (without attachment), इन्द्रियैरपि *indriyanih api* : with senses also, कर्म *karma* : action, कुर्वन्ति *kurvanti* : do.

Substance : The devotees of *karmayoga* act for self-purification with body, mind, intellect, and also senses, abandoning all attachment.

Commentary : *For self-purification - Nishkama Karma* is done for self-purification. The *yogi* works with his body, mind and intellect, without egoism or attachment. He has acquired such control over the senses that they are free from attachment and aversion (*raga* and *dvesha*) and so they are described here as '*Kevalah*'. It seems that the perfect *yogi* makes the instruments of action work in their proper fields, even as a mechanic makes the machine work. By such work the mind becomes absolutely pure and liberation is thereby attained. The liberated *yogi* continues work so long as the vehicle of the body (*upadhi*) remains, but all that he does is only for the sake of others, for the benefit of mankind. The seekers should work in that spirit and attain Self-realisation.

Question : *How can the mind be purified ?*

Answer : Work without egoism or attachment purifies the mind.

Question : *How does the Nishkama karma Yogi act ?*

Answer : Abandoning all attachment, he works with the body, mind, intellect and senses.

Question : *What is the result of such work?*

Answer : Purity of mind.

The different results of Nishkama karma and Sakama karma are stated :

12. युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥

१२

Yuktah karmaphalam tyaktva santimapnoti naisthikim ।

ayuktah kamakarena phale sakto nibadhyate ॥

12

Meaning : युक्तः *yuktah* : harmonised in yoga, कर्मफलम् *karmaphalam* : the fruits of work, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having abandoned, नैष्ठिकीम् *naisthikim* : final (absorption in Atma), शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, आप्नोति *apnoti* : attains, अयुक्तः *ayuktah* : the non-united one, कामकारेण *kamakarena* : impelled by desire, फले *phale* : in the fruits, सक्तः *saktaḥ* : attached, निबध्यते *nibadhyate* : is bound.

Substance : The harmonised *yogi*, abandoning the fruits of action attains final peace, while the non-united one impelled by desire for the fruits of action is bound.

Commentary : The harmonised *yogi* attains eternal peace because he is free from desire and attachment. The non-integrated man suffers bondage because his actions are impelled by desire for enjoyment. Freedom is attained by desirelessness, bondage is caused by desire. The perfected *karma yogi* enjoys the eternal peace of *Brahman* and the *Jnana yogi* also enjoys the peace of the Eternal. Peace, supreme peace, is the goal of the two types of *yoga*. Both lead to Self-realisation.

Peace is the direct result of non-attachment. All the restlessness, frustration, ill-will, hatred, and struggle are caused by attachment to worldly objects and thirst for pleasures. When the *yogi* discovers higher joy in *Atma* untainted by any disturbing factors, he finds no relish for the lower pleasures of the material world. And this non-attachment leads to

supreme peace. So the aspirants should analyse the cause of suffering in the world, and when he analyses the problem, he would naturally find out that the attachments are the root cause for all the storms and tempests of his mind. Give up desire and attachment, peace is yours- This is the Lord's message.

Question : *What is the fruit of Nishkama Karma and why ?*

Answer : The peace of the Eternal is the fruit and the reason for it is non-attachment.

Question : *What is the fate of the man of desire and why ?*

Answer : He is bound by the wheel of *samsara* and the reason is desire.

Question : *What then is the cause of liberation and bondage ?*

Answer : Non-attachment is the cause of liberation, and attachment is the cause of bondage.

Question : *What is the way to supreme peace ?*

Answer : Desirelessness.

The state of the Yogi who has mentally renounced all actions is described.

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

*Sarvakarmani manasa samnyasya'ste sukham vasi ।
navadvare pure dehi nai'va kurvan na karayan ॥*

13

Meaning : वशी *vasi* : one of controlled senses, देही *dehi* : the embodied being, मनसा *manasa* : with the mind, सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani*: all actions, संन्यस्य *sannyasya*: having abandoned, नैक कुर्वन् *na eva kurvan*: not doing anything at all, न कारयन् *na karayan* : not causing any action, नवद्वारे *navadvare* : in the nine-gated, पुरे *pure* : city (body), सुखम् *sukham* : happily, आस्ते *aste* : rests.

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

Commentary : The principle of happiness in life is explained here. First and foremost, the senses should be brought under control. *Vasi* means a man of self-control. If the senses and mind are not under control, even the conquest of the whole world is of no avail. Man cannot be happy. Therefore having controlled the mind and the senses, the *yogi* rests happily in the body—(*Vasi sukham astे*).

The *yogi* should renounce all actions mentally. That is, he should give up the sense of doership and the attachment for the fruits of work. The body may work but the dweller in the body is completely at rest, because he knows that the mind and the senses are functioning according to their own nature, and he the Drik (seer) is just a witness. There is no identification of the Self with the functions of nature. So the principle is to abandon all actions in the mind. The body, according to its own nature goes on acting according to its own laws. This mental renunciation is *karma-Sannyasa*, and not abstaining from work as idlers and incapacitated persons do. When one attains this *karma-Sannyasa*, he rests peacefully in his own state. He neither acts nor causes anything else to act.

The individual self rests in *Atma* unattached to and unaffected by any thing taking place in and through the nine-gated city of the body.

In the nine-gated city : The body is described metaphysically as a city of nine gates—two eyes, two ears, two nasal passages, mouth, urethra and anus. The Self is the ruling monarch of this nine-gated city. In ancient times every great city had high gateways in different directions. When these gateways are fortified and strongly gaurded, the King remains safe and secure. But if they are undefended, enemies can easily enter and disturb the city. Material enjoyments and pleasures are the enemies who come in through the gate-ways of the senses, enter the mind, and shake the throne of the monarch,

harassing him in different ways. But the man of Self-control (*Vasti*) keeps those gate-ways closely guarded, and so he rests happily in his own state.

Question : *How can man attain happiness ?*

Answer : By self-control and mental renunciation of all actions, man attains happiness.

Question : *Is this renunciation physical or mental ?*

Answer : It is mental.

Work and the idea of personal agency are caused by Prakriti (Maya).

14. न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥

१४

*Na kartrityam na karmani lokasya srijati prabhuh ।
na karmaphala samyogam svabhavastu pravartate ॥* 14

Meaning : प्रभुः *prabhuh* : the Lord (Atma), लोकस्य *lokasya*: for this world, कर्तृत्वम् *kartrityam* : agency, न सृजति *na srijati* : creates not, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, न *na* (*srijati*) : creates not, कर्मफलसंयोगम् *karmaphalasamyogam* : union of actions with fruits, न *na* (*srijati*) : creates not, स्वभावः तु *svabhayah tu*: but nature (past samskarams), प्रवर्तते *pravarta te* : leads to action, (causes agency, motion, and the fruits of action).

Substance : The Lord (*Atma*) does not create agency, nor action, nor the union of action and its fruit; but Nature leads to action.

Commentary : The Lord (*Atma*) has nothing to do with personal agency, or actions, or the union of action with its fruits. He does not direct man to do this or that. Nature carries on the whole of this universal drama according to its own laws. By the power of *Prakriti* man has attached himself to actions, and thinks that he is acting, enjoying, suffering, and that he is the doer. In fact it is not the real man that is the doer. The personal agent is a

spurious idea created by the power of *Maya*. Having thus forgotten his real nature, man has created for himself a wilderness of likes and dislikes, good and bad-evil desires, and those *samskaras* go on functioning in their own way through the variegated phenomena of life. To know this secret is Knowledge. When a man does evil, it is not the real Self that does evil, but man's nature. When a man does good, it is not the real Self that does good, but man's nature. So, the evil accumulated in one's nature should be counteracted by the good, and then one should rise above both good and evil in the realisation of *Atma*. The seeker need not be disheartened by the evil in him. It is his own making, and what he has done, he can undo also. Effort is needed in that direction for self-purification. This struggle is the natural order of life. The Lord has nothing to do with it. Man has to attain purification by his own effort. The Lord here states that personal agency, actions and their results are all conducted by the power of *Prakriti*.

Question : *Is the Lord concerned with the actions of man ?*

Answer : No.

Question : *Then what is the power that is creating these actions ?*

Answer : *Prakriti* (Nature). The natural tendencies of man carry on the drama of earthly life.

The Lord is not concerned with the good and bad done by man.

15. नादते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जनतवः ॥

१५

*Na'datte kasyachit papam na chai'va sukritam vibhuh ।
ajnanena'vritam jnanam tena muhyanti jantavah ॥ 15*

Meaning : विभुः *vibhuh* : the Lord (Atma), कस्यचित् *kasyachit* : of any one, पापम् *papam* : evil, नादते *nadatte* : does not receive, सुकृतं चैव *sukritamchaiva* : and also good

(does not receive), न na : not, अज्ञानेन ajnanena : by ignorance, ज्ञानम् jnanam : knowledge, आवृतम् avritam : is enveloped, तेन tena : by it (ignorance), जन्तवः jantavah : beings, मुद्यन्ते mutyante : are deluded.

Substance : The Lord does not receive either the evil or good of any one. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, and by it beings are deluded.

Commentary : The good and the bad done by man affect him only, God does not touch either. If man does good, he enjoys the fruits of his good work. If he does evil, he suffers the result of his bad actions. God has nothing to do with them. Thus the whole responsibility is placed on man himself, as the maker of his own destiny. It is utter foolishness to imagine that God is conferring happiness on some people and suffering on others. No. He does neither. Man suffers from his own evil deeds. God is the eternal witness of this wonderful human life, with all its passions, victories and defeats, pleasures and pains, loves and hatreds and so on. He is Sakshi (witness).

In the second line, the Lord explains how this so-called earthly life is carried on by all beings. Knowledge is covered up by ignorance and by this all beings are deluded. Every man in his real nature is the immortal Self, and not the perishable body. But by ignorance, man has come to think that he is the body. By this delusion, man is subjecting himself to all the shocks and ills of earthly life, and is bound to the wheel of birth and death. But this ignorance (*avidya*) though is without a beginning has an end. A remote mountain cave is filled with darkness from time immemorial, and yet it is shattered the moment a light is brought into it. Thus Knowledge when it flashes on the heart ends all ignorance in a fraction of a second. When man realises his real nature, ignorance is destroyed. Therefore it is the duty of every man to remove the veil of ignorance and know himself as the immortal Self. There is nothing new to be acquired. Man has only to take off the blinding mask and understand his own true nature.

Question : *What is the cause of man's sorrow ?*

Answer : Knowledge is covered up by ignorance and hence man is deluded.

The way to remove ignorance is explained.

16. ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥

१६

*Jnanena tu tadajnanam yesham nasitam atmanah ।
tesham adityavajnanam prakasayati tat param ॥*

16

Meaning : आत्मनः *atmanah* : of Atma, ज्ञानेन तु *jnanena tu* : but by knowledge, येषाम् *yesham* : whose, तदज्ञानम् *tad ajnanam* : that ignorance, नाशितम् *nasitam* : is destroyed, तेषाम् *tesham* : for them, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, अदित्यवत् *adityavat* : like the sun, तत्परम् *tat param* : The Brahman, Supreme Reality, प्रकाशयति *prakasayati* : reveals.

Substance : But for those whose ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge of *Atma* that Knowledge, like the sun, reveals the Supreme Brahman.

Commentary : In the previous verse, it is stated that knowledge is covered by ignorance, and so man suffers misery. Here the way to remove sorrow is shown. Ignorance is the cause of sorrow, and Knowledge alone could remove ignorance. Knowledge of *Atma* is to be acquired by spiritual practices like hearing, contemplation, meditation etc. And such Knowledge reveals the Supreme Being, Brahman, just as the Sun reveals the objects in the sense-world.

Like the sun : When thick clouds spread over the sky, the Sun is hidden and the world is plunged in darkness. Powerful winds drive away the clouds, and immediately the glorious light of the Sun is revealed. Thereby all the objects of the sense-world become visible to us. Even so, the light of *Atma* is covered up by ignorance. When this ignorance is removed by knowledge, *Atma* shines forth with all its glory.

It should be clearly understood that *Atma* is not something to be created by anybody by some kind of spiritual discipline. *Atma* is already there, unaffected by anything, just as the Sun is there even when the clouds cover him up. Only the covering is to be taken away. *Atma* is unveiled.

When it is said that Knowledge causes *Atma* to shine forth, it does not mean that *Atma* is illumined by knowledge. *Atma* is Self-luminous. It is unlike material objects which are not self-luminous but which shine by the light of the Sun. *Atma* does not require anything else to illumine itself. It illuminates all.

When ignorance (*Jivabuddhi*) is destroyed, *Atma* is experienced, and that is Knowledge.

Let us take the illustration of a lamp kept under a pot. When the pot covers it, the lamp is hidden, and light is not seen. When the pot is broken, the light of the lamp shines forth. The covering of ignorance is shattered by Knowledge and then the light of *Atma* is unveiled by His own original power.

Either by *Nishkama karma*, or by devotion or by *Dhyana* or by all these methods put together man has to obtain Knowledge of the real Self to overcome the sorrows of his earthly existence.

It is to be noted that this Knowledge is free for all humanity to secure without distinction of caste, creed, race, colour or sex. Each soul is potentially divine. Whoever breaks through the clouds of ignorance will come face to face with the glorious Sun of *Atma*.

Each individual has the light of *Atma* in himself shining like the Sun. Even the light of the Sun is only a reflection of the light of *Atma*.

Question : *How is ignorance destroyed ?*

Answer : By the Knowledge of *Brahman*.

Question : *What is revealed when knowledge comes ?*

Answer : *Atma* which is the essence of the light of Knowledge shines forth (experienced).

The sage who has acquired Knowledge of the Self has no rebirth.

17. तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तनिष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकलमपाः १७

*Tadbuddhayas tadatmanas tannisthas tatparayanah
gacchantlyapunaravrittim jnananirdhutakalmashah ॥ 17*

Meaning : तद्बुद्धयः *tadbuddhayah* : with intellect absorbed in that, तदात्मानः *tadatmanah* : their self being That, तनिष्ठाः *tannishthah* : established in That, तत्परायणाः *tatparayanah* : having That as their goal, ज्ञाननिर्धूतकलमपाः *jnananirdhuta-kalmashah* : their sins dispelled by Knowledge, अपुनरावृत्तिम् *apunaravrittih* : to the birthless and deathless state, गच्छन्ति *gacchanti* : go.

Substance : With their intellect absorbed in That, their Self being That, established in that, they go from whence there is no return and their sins are dispelled by knowledge.

Commentary : The realisation of *Brahman* being the final goal of all spiritual practices, what is the duty of the aspirant ? He should think of that at all times, he should merge himself in That, he should be firmly rooted in That, and he should have no other thing except That as the sole refuge and aim. Such a man alone can realise *Brahman*. It is a psychological truth that man becomes That which he contemplates. By ignorance man is contemplating *samsara*, and so he is bound by it by the effect of his own absorption in it. Now the *sadhana* should be made in the opposite direction. Man should contemplate the Supreme Reality, the freedom of the Self, and if this is done constantly till the whole personality is filled with that, Then the *Atma* becomes manifest as the Reality in man. It is true that the mind cannot all of a sudden become absorbed in That. The mind oscillates between the objective world on the one side, and *Atma* on the other. But constant, unremitting and intense practice will fix the direction of the mind towards *Atma*. All great men

have gone through this practice. They have concentrated all their energies in *Atma*, and dedicated their whole being to That. And thus they have realised the Supreme.

To the birthless and deathless state : ‘*Punaravritti*’ means taking birth again and becoming bound by *samsara*. Birthlessness (*apunaravritti*) is the state of final emancipation.

Sins dispelled by Knowledge : Who shall attain that state ? Those who are free from sin and evil, free from ignorance and delusion, attain that state. How can sin be destroyed ? By the Knowledge of *Atma*. So long as there is the least trace of evil, the light is not revealed. So the enveloping darkness of evil should be shattered by Knowledge. Constant thought and meditation on *Atma* brings the spiritual knowledge to man.

Is it not true that the man engaged in worldly pursuits, attains success by the concentration of all his energies on that object which he desires to acquire ? Day and night, the wealthy are adding to their possessions. Most of the people are spending their whole life and energy in acquiring lands, houses, positions, name and fame. They come to possess these things by the very force of their efforts. And yet they still live in a state of fear, and suffer terrible torture of the mind. If they can turn their interest and energy towards the spiritual quest, they can easily acquire that Knowledge by which they can ever afterwards live a life of fearlessness, joy, and perfect freedom. *Atma-Jnana* is the greatest acquisition for a human being, because by it he transcends all the fears and sorrows of life, and lives in restful peace, bliss and blessedness.

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : It is the birthless and deathless state of the highest bliss.

Question : *Who can acquire it ?*

Answer : The man who is free from sin and evil can acquire it.

Question : *How is evil destroyed ?*

Answer : Evil is dispelled by Knowledge.

Question : How is Knowledge acquired ?

Answer : By thinking of That, by merging in That, by taking refuge in That, by having That as his supreme goal, man acquires *Atma-Jnana*.

The sage of equal vision is described.

18. विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

१८

Vidyavinayasampanne brahmane gavi hastini ! suni cha'va svapake cha panditah samadarsinah ॥ 18

Meaning : विद्याविनयसंपन्ने *vidyavinayasampanne* : endowed with knowledge and humility, ब्राह्मणे *brahmane* : towards Brahmana, गवि *gavi* : cow, हस्तिनि *hastini* : elephant, शुनि चैव *suni cha eva* : and also the dog, श्वपाकेच *svapake cha* : and the outcaste who feeds on dog's flesh, समदर्शिनः *samadarsinah* : are of equal vision, पण्डिताः *panditah* : the sages.

Substance : The sages look with equal eye on a *Brahmana* endowed with knowledge and humility, on a cow, on an elephant, on a dog and on the outcaste who feeds on dog's flesh.

Commentary : Sages who have acquired *Brahmajnana* see everything as *Brahman*. In all the varied manifestations of nature, they see the underlying substratum (i. e.) *Atma*, and so they do not make any distinction between one thing and another. For them all that exists, whatever the name and form may be, is made of one substance - *Brahman* (*Atma*). So they have love and compassion for all the creatures without distinction of high or low, caste and creed, and so on. The *Brahmana* here stands for the highest purity. The out caste (*svapaka*) represents the lowest order of human being. The sage looks upon both with an equal eye, because the background for the highest spiritual saint and the meanest wretch is *Brahman* and nothing else. Is the vision of the sage confined to humanity only ? No. His vision embraces all the created beings. So the elephants, dogs the cows are mentioned to represent the animal kingdom.

It means animals, birds, reptiles, and all living creatures without any exception at all, are included in the universal vision of the sage. All are *Brahman*. One who looks upon all these equally is the man of real Knowledge.

Each man is looking at things from a particular plane of vision. The most ignorant man looks upon objects only from the physical plane. He considers only the colour, stature, race, caste and so on. This is bodily outlook '*dehadrishi*' – the mere apprehension of the outermost fringes of all beings, the mere flesh and blood estimate. They are pleased or displeased according to these physical distinctions. The second class of persons look upon objects from the mental plane. They consider the character of man, his mental make up, his intellectual powers, and other talents which are exhibited in him. This is mental-outlook (*manodrishti*). The highest class of people look upon all things from the spiritual plane, and they find God or the Reality in every one. They penetrate to the innermost recesses of the heart through the outer coverings of the mind and body. Their vision is that of the One *Brahman* (*Atma*) being the essence of all things. This is Atmic outlook (*Atmadrishti*). All that exists is God. Out of that one substance, all the apparent distinctions and differences of name and form are created by the power of *Maya*. If a number of golden ornaments are given for sale to a jeweller, he sees them all as gold, and weighs and values them accordingly. All pots are made of earth. The reality in all of them is the earth. Thus the sages see the all-pervading *Atma* every where. Hence they possess equal vision. This is *Jnana*.

Love for all is the highest attribute of God. The *Jnani* has such love extended to all beings. This is the universality of the *Gita* message. All artificial limitations are transcended by the realisation of the Self. Brotherhood of man is no doubt a great ideal. But the love of the *Jnani* does not stop there. He finds the same Self in all beings. The ultimate goal is cosmic love, the identification of one's self with all that exists. In the human organism there are different organs, like hands, legs, eyes etc. If one of the limbs is affected, the whole

body feels the pain. So it is that the *Jnani* feels pained when any part of the universe suffers. We come across exceptional men who have reached this state, who take upon themselves the sorrows and sufferings of other beings, just because they see the same Self in all.

This universal love is the test of *jnana*. To know that *Atma* is the one indwelling principle of creation as a whole is to enter the plane of cosmic love and unity. In this the application of the *Vedantic* doctrine of oneness in practical life is clearly declared.

Question : *Who is a wise man ?*

Answer : He who looks with an equal eye on all beings is the man of real wisdom.

The excellence of Jnana is declared.

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

*Iha 'va tair jitah sargo yesham samye sthitam manah ।
nirdosham hi samam brahma tasmat brahmani te sthitah॥ 19*

Meaning : येषां *yesham* : whose, मनः *manah* : mind, साम्ये *samye* : in equality, स्थितम् *sthitam* : is established, तैः *taih* : by them, इहैव *iha eva* : here only, even in this world (living in this body), सर्गः *sargah* : samsara, birth and death, जितः *jitah* : is conquered, हि *hi* : because, ब्रह्म *brahma* : brahman, निर्दोषम् *nirdosham* : free from evil, समं *samam* : equal, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, ते *te* : they, ब्रह्मणि *brahmani* : in Brahman, स्थिताः *sthitah* : (are) established.

Substance : Even here (while living in this body) birth and death (*samsara*) are overcome by those whose mind is established in equality; for Brahman is free from evil and is balanced, and therefore they are established in Brahman.

Commentary : Mind is the cause of bondage or freedom. If the mind is corrupt and unbalanced, it is bondage. If the mind is pure and equal, it is freedom. Therefore the Lord declares that the man who keeps his mind pure and balanced conquers the bondage of *samsara*. While living in this body, the man becomes free - a *Jivan mukta* - the living free.

The reason for it is that *Atma*, the Self, is free from evil and is always balanced. Who - so - ever acquires these attributes of *Atma* have their life and being in *Atma*. Like things mix together and not unlike things. Water mixes with water and not with oil. Oil mixes with oil and not with milk. So to become *Atma*, one should cultivate *Atma dharma*. Two attributes are mentioned here as *Atma dharma* - purity and balance. When these qualities are acquired, man realises Brahman.

When the mind acquires purity, objectlessness, balance equal to that of *Atma*, man attains emancipation.

Moksha is purity of mind illumined by Knowledge. If one keeps the mind pure and balanced, he is free, now and here, and not elsewhere and at a distant time. There are no conditions of time and place. Wherever he is and whatever he is, if one acquires purity and balance of mind he attains freedom.

Mind established in equality : It means that the mind is balanced, free from the unsettling waves of attraction and repulsion while moving through the objective world. This balance is achieved by the *Jnani* as he is able to perceive the one Self in all beings. So much so there is no mental disturbance at all for him.

The highest state of freedom could be achieved while living in this body. This gives the greatest hope for suffering humanity. It is not after death that their freedom is attained. It is attained here and now by the aspirant whose mind is free and balanced.

Question : *Who can overcome the bondage of samsara ?*

Answer : He whose mind is pure and equal overcomes *Samsara*.

Question : *What is the way to cross over the ills of life ?*

Answer : (1) Purity of mind, (2) firmness and balance, (3) looking with an equal eye on all beings-these are the means to peace and bliss.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahman ?*

Answer : Purity and harmony.

Question : *When would man attain Moksha ?*

Answer : When the mind is pure and balanced, man attains *Moksha*.

Further attributes of Brahma-Jnani are mentioned.

20. न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥

२०

*Na prahrishyet priyam prapya
no 'dvijet prapya cha 'priyam'
sthirabuddhirusammudho
brahmavid brahmani sthitah ॥*

Meaning : स्थिरबुद्धिः *sthirabuddhih* : of steady intellect, असंमूढः *asammudhah* : not deluded, ब्रह्मणि *brahmani* : in Brahman, स्थितः *sthitah* : is established, ब्रह्मवित् *brahmavit* : the knower of Brahman, प्रियं प्राप्य *priyam prapya* : obtaining the pleasant, न प्रहृष्येत् *na prahrishyet* : not elated, अप्रियम् च *apriyam cha* : the unpleasant and, प्राप्य *prapya* : having got, नोद्विजेत् *no dvijet* : not troubled.

Substance : The man of steady intellect, undeluded, knower of Brahman, established in Brahman, should not be elated having obtained the pleasant and should not be troubled having got the unpleasant.

Commentary : Further attributes of the *Jnani* are mentioned here. The wise and the ignorant could easily be distinguished by their conduct, in the same way as we could

distinguish a blind man by his gait. The knower of Brahman is untroubled by the occurrence of unpleasant things, nor is he elated when good things come to him. His intellect does not waver in wear and woe.

He knows by direct vision that worldly life as we see and live it with a deluded mind and confused intellect, is a dream that has no reality about it. He knows that it is a mirage, appearing to be full of water and beautiful, but only a sandy desert. Those who know the mirage are no longer deluded by its apparent attraction. In the same way, to the knower of Brahman the world is unreal (*Midhya*) from the spiritual point of view. So he is not moved by joy or sorrow by the diverse pattern of human existence.

Of steady intellect, not deluded (sthirabudhih-asammudhah:) The purified intellect of the knower of Brahman is firm and immovable, because it has transcended all fictitious notion of the world, pleasures and pains, etc. The intellect of the ignorant man is shrouded in delusion, and so, like a weather-cock it is unsteady and turns round and round by every gust of wind. The light of *Atma* illuminates the whole universe, and the wise man knows what is real and what is unreal with absolute clearness.

From this we understand that the aspirant who practises steadiness of mind, who keeps his intellect equal and balanced, unites himself with Brahman.

Question : *What are the attributes of the knower of Brahman ?*

Answer : He does not rejoice when good things happen and he is not troubled when bad things occur. He is steady in mind, and free from delusion.

21. बाह्यसंशेषवसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।

स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१

*Bahyasparseshvashvasaktatma vindatyatmanि yat sukham ।
sa brahmayaga yuktatma sukhamakshayam asnute ॥ 21*

Meaning : बाह्यस्पर्शे balyasparseshu : contact with external objects, असक्तात्मा asktatma : one whose mind is unattached,

आत्मनि Atmani : in Atma, यत् सुखम् yat sukham : which happiness, विन्दति vindati : finds, सः sah : he, ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा brahmayogayuktatma : united in mind with Brahman, सुखम् sukham : happiness, अक्षयम् akshayam : imperishable, अस्तुते asnute : enjoys.

Substance : With mind unattached to external contacts he finds happiness in *Atma* and with mind united with Brahman (*Atma*) in meditation, he enjoys imperishable happiness.

Commentary . Eternal happiness is only in the Self and nowhere else. All other kinds of happiness arising from the contact of the senses with the external world are only short-lived and mixed with pain. They come and go. They are only the reflected joys of the Self. Real joy is only in *Atma*. The course of all happiness is inside and not outside. Not believing this truth, much less knowing it, the ignorant are deluded by thinking that happiness is coming to them through external objects. The dog biting the bone bruises its own mouth and licks its own blood thinking that it is coming from the bone. So is the ignorant man who runs after the elusive pleasures of life and is constantly cheated by them. Even after repeated experience he does not change his attitude. It has become a habitual way of thinking for the common man.

The wise man who has enquired into the nature of things develops a different attitude. He comes to know that he is himself the source of all happiness, and so he has no attachment for the pleasures derived through the senses from the objective world. Knowing this, his mind naturally turns inwards into the Self. Otherwise, the mind cannot remain steady when it is pulled out by the distractions of the sense-world. So, first of all, there should be a clear understanding of the ephemeral character of sense-pleasures and the pain caused by them. Then comes dispassion (*vairagya*) – rejection of sense-pleasures. The less is sacrificed for the greater, the transitory is sacrificed for the eternal, and reflected joy is given up for real joy. From this verse we understand three important ideas :

- (1) Happiness is not outside. It is inside, in *Atma*.
- (2) External pleasures are short-lived and mixed with sorrow.
- (3) Sense pleasures are obstructing the free flow of the bliss of Brahman. He who runs after them cannot experience the bliss of Brahman.

The painful nature of sense-pleasures is explained.

22. ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेयं न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥

२२

*Ye hi samsparsaja bhoga dukhayonaya eva te ।
adyantavantah kaunteya na teshu ramate budhah ॥*

22

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! संस्पर्शजाः *samsparsajah* : born of contact of the senses with objects, भोगाः *bhogah* : enjoyments, ये *ye* : which, ते *te* : they, दुःखयोनयः एव हि *dukhayonayah eva hi* : (all) the source of pain and sorrow indeed only, आद्यन्तवन्तः *adyantavantah* : having beginning and end (short-lived), बुधः *budhah* : the wise, तेषु *teshu* : in them, न रमते *na ramate* : do not rejoice.

Substance : Those enjoyments born of external contacts are themselves indeed the source of pain only; they have a beginning and end; the wise do not rejoice in them.

Commentary : The pleasure derived from sense objects are not real and enduring. They appear to give pleasure superficially, but they contain in themselves the seeds and germs of pain and sorrow. Therefore the Lord describes them as '*dukhayonayah*', (the source of pain and sorrow). The elders say that the pleasure derived from outside is only a drop and from it arises suffering as huge as a mountain. Since these pleasures are short-lived and worthless, the wise have no relish for them.

The source of pain and sorrow : Sense-pleasures contain in their womb the seeds of sorrow and suffering. He who

indulges in them should also suffer pain and sorrow arising from them. Man's life is a bundle of pleasures and pains coming and going in an endless chain. These same pleasures have been many times in the previous births, and they will recur many times in the future also. When X rays are focussed over the body they penetrate the outer covering and photograph the inner contents of the body. So also, the purified intellect of the spiritual seeker is able to discover the unseen germs of pain and suffering in the womb of sense-pleasures. So he shuns them like poison. They do not rejoice in them (*na teshu remate budhah*). The ignorant man is attracted by the glitter and glamour of sense-pleasures, and fall into the pit of suffering. He is caught like the foolish fish that bites the flesh without seeing the hook behind.

From this verse we understand two evils arising from material pleasures (1) They contain in immense the seeds of sorrow and suffering, (2) They are short-lived, unlike that joy which is found in *Atma* by the man of Knowledge. The *Atmic* joy has not the least taint of sorrow or pain in it. It is eternal. If sense-pleasure is like a lamp, the joy of *Atma* is like the sun. The lamp is blown out at any time but the Sun shines forever. If sense-pleasures are like a pool, the joy of *Atma* is like the ocean. The pool is dried up, but not the ocean. Knowing this, the wise do not go in for material pleasures. Such one is the knowing man - (*budhah*.)

It is within the experience of every thoughtful man that the sense-pleasures corrupt the body and mind and lead to suffering and misery. The pleasures of drink, the ecstasies of lust, the adventures of gambling, the greed of accumulated wealth, the fear and glamour of position-have been the cause of ill-health, loss of vitality, bankruptcy, suicidal jealousies and hatred and all the restless passions of worldly people. Materialism, the clinging to the body as the be-all and end-all of life has destroyed mankind and deprived it of their legitimate claim to pure joy-Ananda, which is man's birth-right. The denial of spiritual values on all sides and the consequent strife in the heart of man have rendered life for millions of people a prolonged fitful fever.

Question : *What is the nature of sense-pleasures ?*

Answer : They are the source of sorrow and suffering. They are short-lived.

Question : *So what will the wise man do ?*

Answer : He rejects the sense pleasures and seeks for the joy of the spirit.

The Lord points the way to happiness in this world.

23. शक्नोतीहैव यः सोदुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।

कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥

२३

*Saknoti'hai'ya yah sodhum prak sariravimokshanat ।
kamakrodhodbhayam vegam sa yuktah sa sukhi narah " 23*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, शरीरविमोक्षणात् *sariravimokshanat* : release from the body (in death), प्राक् *prak* : before, इहैव *iha eva* : even in this world, कामक्रोधोद्भवम् *kamakrodhodbhavam* : born of desire and anger, वेगम् *vegam* : impulse, सोदुं *sodhum* : to endure, शक्नोति *saknoti* : is able, सः *sah* : नरः *narah* : that man, युक्तः *yuktah* : united, सः *sah* : he, सुखी *sukhi* : is the happy.

Substance : He who is able to endure the impulse of desire and anger even in this world before the fall of the body, is the harmonised, and he is the happy man.

Commentary : One major tenet of the Gita which is repeatedly affirmed by the Lord, is that the peace and happiness of spiritual life is to be attained here and now, even in this life, while living in the embodied state.

The Gita, as it has been pointed out in the introduction, teaches a way of life which can be practised with advantage by the individual and by the society. What is the way to secure peace and happiness ? How can man enjoy undisturbed and unbroken bliss ? This question confronts everyone. Consciously or unconsciously man is seeking for happiness every moment of

his life; The Lord states the position with absolute clarity and perspicuity. The key to happiness is placed in one's own hands. The mansion of peace is open to all. But one should understand what peace is and how it could be found.

This world and the human organism is best fitted to attain peace and Truth. This is the grandest opportunity for spiritual *sadhana*. The other worlds are only places where the effects of actions done here are experienced. No *sadhana* is possible there. This world is the '*Karmabhumi*'. So whatever progress could be claimed by individual effort should be effected here only.

Before the fall of the body : The idea 'here only' (*ihaiva*) is elaborated by this explanatory phrase. It means before the body falls (i. e.) before death. The Lord exhorts mankind to conquer lust (*Kama*) and anger (*Krodha*) before the body falls. While living and discharging the duties and responsibilities of life, one should overcome these two fatal enemies. It is foolish to postpone the issue to a future birth. Who knows what birth one is going to have, whether that of man or beast? So this wonderful opportunity should not be lost. That which perishes is called the body - '*siryate iti sariram*'. The tenure of life is uncertain. No one can say when he shall be called off from the stage of earthly life. Even if one lives upto ripe old age that will not be of much use. When the physical and mental powers are declined, what spiritual effort can one make? *Sadhana* will become impossible in old age. So when people are young, when the mind's power is at its height, when the body is capable of enduring the rigours of discipline, when weakness does not set in, when the clouds of cares and anxieties do not overcast the mind, when defeatism and frustration have not knocked out the foundation of human personality - when man is young, strong, hopeful and idealistic, *sadhana* should be done. If one fails to do so, great difficulties would overtake him.

Among the six enemies, *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada*, *Matsarya*, - the first two only are mentioned here. The rest are included in them. They are powerful enemies. The seeker should watch their movements with constant vigilence.

Impulse : The impulse of *Kama* and *Krodha* should be resisted. These impulses are roused suddenly and are highly irresistible. So the impulse should not be allowed to rise in the mind. Their seeds remain dormant in the mind and they should not be afforded any occasion to sprout and spread out and disturb the mind. These impure impulses should not come up to the surface, and thus the mind remains quiet and peaceful. When *Atma* is directly perceived, the seeds also are burnt up, and then man is perfectly free.

The result of such Self-control is happiness and absorption in the Self. There is no happiness whatever even if man possesses other acquisitions, talents and powers.

Is able : By devotion and dispassion man can conquer these enemies.

We understand three important ideas from this verse : (1) Before the fall of the body, one should conquer these enemies. (2) The most important aspect of *sadhana* is the conquest of *Kama* and *Krodha*. (3) Only after the conquest of these enemies can a man attain complete happiness.

The man who has conquered the evil forces is able to gain introspection that leads to Brahman.

24. योऽन्तः सुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तरज्योतिरेव यः
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥

२४

*Yo 'ntahsukho 'ntararamas tatha 'ntarjyotir eva yah
sa yogi brahmanirvanam brahmabhuto 'dhigacchati ॥ 24*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, अन्तस्सुखः *antahssukhah* : finds happiness within, अन्तरारामः *Antararamah* : rejoices within, तथा *tatha* : also, यः *yah* : who, अन्तरज्योतिः एव च *antarjyotih eva cha* : illumined within and even, सः योगी *sah yogi* : that sage, ब्रह्मभूतः *brahmabhutah* : becoming Brahman, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *brahmanirvanam* : the freedom of Brahman (Moksha,) अधिगच्छति *adhidgacchati* : attains.

Substance : He who finds happiness within, delights within, and illumined within, that sage becoming *Brahman* attains absolute perfection.

Commentary : The highest state of *Brahmanubhuti* and *Moksha* is mentioned here. It is evident from the previous verses that all outgoing impulses should be restricted, all external pleasures given up, and all sense-enjoyments discarded, before *Brahman* is realised. The outgoing mind should be turned inwards. Introspection, exploration of the inner regions of the mind and its source should be cultivated and developed. This is possible only when the windows of the senses are closed, and the mind is not in contact with sense-objects. If one gives up desires, the impulses of the mind for sensual enjoyments, possessions and all external things, then will he acquire the inner vision to see the Self and abide in it.

Finds happiness within : The common man cannot find the happiness of the Self within. He imagines that he is deriving happiness from external objects. The truth is that all happiness is only in the Self, and what one thinks as happiness coming from outside is only the reflected happiness (*Ananda*) of the Self. The pleasures of the senses are short-lived, and contain in themselves the germs of pain and sorrow. To know this is very difficult, and man errs repeatedly. And yet the time should come when he realises the foolishness of running after silly sensual pleasures, and then the march back to his original state begins. When he finds the inner source of untainted happiness, he never again enters the sense-world.

Rejoices within : The world is the play ground of the senses and the mind. But the wise finds that the so-called enjoyments and pleasures are unreal and short-lived. So he goes into himself and is delighted with the pure joy of the Self. There he finds the full realisations of all conceivable pleasures in the one joy of the Self. He forever delights within himself.

Illuminated within : The senses function by the external light of the Sun and the Moon. Without it, the world is a dark mass. But the Sun himself shines by the light of *Aitma*.

The whole universe shines by the light of *Atma*. The eye is illumined by the intellect, and the intellect is illumined by *Atma*. It is *Atma* that is revealing itself as the diverse manifestations of light in the universe. Knowing this, the sage is illumined by *Atma*, the source of all light everywhere. He is light, and the light is within.

In this way, abandoning all the deluded attachment for the objective world, realising *Atma* as the foundation of all bliss, and the source of all light, meditating on That, the wise man becomes one with *Brahman* and attains *Moksha*.

Question: Who can attain *Brahman* ?

Answer : He who gives up attachment to the objective world, and finds all happiness and light in *Atma* within, attains union with *Brahman*.

The qualities of the sage who has attained the supreme freedom of Brahman are stated.

25. लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकलमषाः ।

चिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

२५

*Labhante brahmanirvanam rishayah kshinakalmashah ।
chinnadvaidha yatatmanah sarvabhutahite ratah ॥ 25*

Meaning : क्षीणकलमषाः *kshinakalmashah* : (sages) whose sins are destroyed, चिन्नद्वैधाः *chinnadvaidhah* : dualities torn asunder, यतात्मानः *yatatmanah* : self-controlled, सर्वभूतहितेरताः *sarvabhutahiteratah* : rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, रिषयः *rishayah* : sages, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *brahmanirvanam* : oneness with *Brahman*, लभन्ते *labhante* : obtains.

Substance : Sages whose sins are destroyed, whose dualities are torn asunder, who are self-controlled, who rejoice in the well-being of others, attain union with *Brahman* (*Moksha*).

Commentary : Who is a Rishi ? One who has mastered the senses and mind, who is established in *Atma* is a *Rishi*. It is

a position, a title, that any one can acquire by *tapas*. It is something like a degree which young students acquire after going through a particular course of study. So, any one endowed with character and singleness of purpose can obtain the title of a *Rishi*. No one is precluded from making the attempt. The ignorant man of today may become the sage of the future. Constant *sadhana* transforms the common human being into a sage of wisdom, world-honoured and one with God Himself. (*Brahmavit brahmaiva bhavati*). Four characteristics of the sage are mentioned here.

Whose sins are destroyed : In the course of innumerable births man may have committed a number of sins prohibited by the *Sastras*, e. g – theft, drunkenness, adultery, murder etc. So the mind is full of impurities. These should be destroyed by *Nishkama Karma*, devotion and Knowledge. Then the very sinner becomes a sage.

Whose dualities are torn asunder : The illusion of manifoldness should be transcended by the perception of unity in all things. All doubts would be cleared when the Reality is seen as it is.

Self-controlled : The *Rishi* has mastered all impulses and powers of the body, mind and intellect. Perfect self-control is the only way to Self-realisation.

Rejoicing in the welfare of all beings : What is the effect of *Brahma Jnana* ? – universal love. Knowledge in action is love. The sage knows that there is only one Supreme Self, and that is manifesting as the many. The same Self that is in him is also in everything. When one realises this truth, what will be his attitude towards other beings ? – Love for all. He cannot injure others, he cannot be jealous others. He has no fear of anything. The ‘others’ do not exist for him, because he has perceived the unity of all beings, and he is himself the all. The test of man’s wisdom is here. He is full of compassion. His heart overflows with pity. When the sage moves in the world, the one attribute of the purified heart would be love. God is worshipped not only as the All-powerful but as the All-

merciful. God is love. Great sages have preached and practised universal love as the highest law for humanity.

Question : Who can attain Moksha ?

Answer : Those whose sins are destroyed, whose doubts and dualities are cleared, who have self-mastery and universal love attain Moksha.

Question : Who is a Rishi ?

Answer : One who possesses the above-mentioned qualities is a Rishi.

26. कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥

२६

Kama krodha viyuktanam yatinam yatachetasam ।
abhitah brahmanirvanam vartate viditatmanam ॥

26

Meaning : कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां kamakrodhaviyuktanam : to those free from desire and anger, यतचेतसाम् yatachetasam : who have controlled their thoughts, विदितात्मनाम् viditatmanam : who have acquired Knowledge of Atma, यतीनाम् yatinam : to the Self-controlled ascetics, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् Brahmanirvanam : Absolute freedom, अभितः abhitah : on all sides (in the embodied as well as disembodied state, वर्तते vartante : exists.

Substance : To the self-controlled sages who are free from desire and wrath, who have controlled their thoughts, who have realised the Self, absolute freedom exists on all sides.

Commentary : Three important qualities of the sage are mentioned here :—

- (1) Abdandoning of desire and anger (i. e.) destruction of all tendencies (*vasanakshaya*).
- (2) Control of mind (i. e.) destruction of the mind (*manonasa*).
- (3) Knowledge of *Atma* (*tattvajnana*). The sage with these three qualities enjoys the bliss of absolute freedom at all times, in all places, and under all

circumstances. By the Knowledge of *Atma*, all the tendencies (*samskaras*) of the mind are removed, and the mind becomes non-existent. *Moksha* is not for the idle and lethargic. Hence the word ‘*Yati*’ is used here. ‘*Yati*’ means one who sacrifices everything for a great ideal. The ideal of realisation is achieved only by a great deal of effort. So having faith in the words of the *Sastras* and the *Guru*, let the seeker strive for the speedy realisation of spiritual freedom.

Constant meditation on *Atma* – the pure and perfect, will gradually purify the mind of all its evil *samskaras*. By knowing firmly that the objective world (*drisya*) is unreal, man overcomes the temptation for sense-pleasures and the consequent agitations of desire and anger.

The mind is impure as it has absorbed all evil tendencies through a number of births in a state of ignorance. The fire of Knowledge should burn up these tendencies and purify the mind which usually functions in *tamas* and *rajas*. Pure *sattva* is to be acquired by Knowledge of *Atma*. The mind is the axle on which the vast machine of *samsara* rotates endlessly. When the mind moves, the world moves. When the mind is not, the world is not. The impure mind sees the world as a vast battle-field of conflicting passions. The purified mind sees it as *Atma*. The devotee sees the world as the Lord. So the mind should be purified and kept under control by knowing that which is beyond it. *Atmajnana* implies a deep enquiry into the real nature of man. By such internal investigation, one comes to understand that he is not the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect, but that he is the one ‘Self’, the *Drik*, pure Knowledge. The seeker should constantly hold on to the Reality, which is pure and changeless, knowing by direct experience that what changes is only the picture of the world.

It has already been said that when a man attains ‘*Brahmi sthiti*’, he does not fall into delusion again. Hence it is declared that the man who attains ‘*Brahma nirvanam*’ exists in a state of absolute freedom and bliss at all times, in all places, under all

circumstances. He is liberated when he holds the body or drops it. He lives always in freedom.

Question : Who attains Brahmanirvana ?

Answer : The man of mind-control, free from desire and anger, who has Self-knowledge, attains *Moksha*. Only men of great *sadhana* can attain that state.

Question : When is he free ?

Answer : Freedom exists for him everywhere and at all times.

The process of meditation is explained, and the everlasting freedom of the Jnani stated.

27. स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चमुच्चैवान्तरेभ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ सभौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७

28. यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिमुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८

*Sparsan kritva bahir balyams
chaksuschai'ya'ntare bhrivoh ।
pranapanau samau kritva
nasabhyantaracharinau ॥ 27*

*Yatendriya manobuddhir munir moksha parayanah ।
vigateccha bhaya krodho yah sada mukta eva sah ॥ 28*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, बाह्यान् स्पर्शात् *bahyam sparsan* : impressions coming from external objects like colour, sound etc., बहिः कृत्वा *bahih kritva* : having turned out, चक्षुः *chakshuh* eye (gaze), भ्रुवोः अन्तर एव कृत्वा *bhruvoh antara eva kritva* : in the centre of the brows only concentrating, नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ *nasabhyantaracharinau* : breath moving in and out, प्राणापानौ *prapanau* : the incoming and outgoing breath, सभौ च कृत्वा *samau cha kritva cha* : and having balanced and, यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिः *yatendriyamanobuddhah* : with senses, mind, intellect controlled, विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधः *vigatecchhabhayakrodhah* : free

from desire, fear and anger, मोक्षपरायणः *mokshaparayanaḥ* : aspiring for Moksha, मुनिः *munih* : sage (thinking of Atma), एः *saha* : he, सदा *sada* : always, मुक्त एव *muktah eva* : is free indeed.

Substance : The sage who has turned away all external impressions, fixing his gaze in the centre of the brows, controlling the incoming and outgoing breath rhythmically, keeping the senses, the mind and the intellect controlled, free from desire, fear and hatred, aspiring for the highest freedom indeed enjoys freedom always.

Commentary : The field of sense-activity is the external world. All sense-contacts are in the outside world. What right have they to enter the inner domain of man's heart? So thinking, the wise man prevents the entry of these impressions, and if they stealthily enter, they are pushed out at once. The foolish man allows them to come in and is enslaved by them. So the spiritual aspirant equipped with renunciation should put up the board 'No admission' at the gate-ways of the senses. It is like a country keeping strong border patrols on its frontiers to prevent incursions from enemy forces.

Having turned away from all sense-contacts, the sage centres the gaze of meditation in the middle of the eye-brows. This is called in *yogic* terminology the '*Khechari Mudra*'. If one meditates with eyes open, the mind may be distracted by sense-attractions. If he closes the eyes there is the danger of sinking into sleep (*tamas*). So with eyes half closed, the sage fixes the gaze in the centre of the eye-brows. In the science of *Yoga*, this spot is called '*Ajnachakra*'. Others concentrate on the tip of the nose or on the '*sahasrara*'. That practice which is agreeable to the aspirant may be followed. The aim is to prevent the mind from going out and fixing it in the Self within.

Having balanced the breath : For most people the incoming and outgoing breaths are not rhythmical and balanced. The flow of breath in and out is irregular. To make the breath regular and balanced by the practise of *Pranayama* is good for

bodily health and concentration of mind. It is one of the practices of the *Ashtanga Yoga*. The *prana* and the mind are closely interlinked. If one is controlled, the other is also controlled, without any particular effort. So control of breath is a necessary practice to bring the roving mind to a state of stillness. So the *Sastras* have prescribed breath-control as an important aspect of *sadhana*.

With senses, mind and intellect controlled : It has already been declared that *Atma* is beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect.

Aspiring for liberation : The yearning for freedom from the bonds of *samsara* is the first qualifying condition of the spiritual aspirant. If one desires *Moksha* with all his heart he will certainly have it. Is he ready to renounce the foolish pleasures of the objective world ? If so, the yearning for the Supreme gathers force and momentum. The biographies of sages and devotees reveal the intense longing they had for Truth, for God.

Free from desire, fear and anger : Freedom from desire, fear, and hatred is the hall-mark of the sage. These three are the leaders of the host of enemies in spiritual life. If they are suppressed the others are easily eliminated. The Lord emphasises the need for overcoming these weaknesses many times.

The sage possessing the above attributes is always free. He re-gains his birth-right of freedom, and gives up for ever the shameful guise of a slave which he has imposed upon himself by ignorance.

Devotion to the Lord leads to Moksha.

29. भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहर्दं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥

२९

*Bhoktaram yajnatapasam sarvaloka magesvaram ।
suhridam sarvabhutanam jnatva mam santimrcchati ॥ 29*

Meaning : यज्ञतपसम् *yajnatapasam* : of sacrifices and austerities, भोक्तारम् *bhoktaram* : enjoyer, सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् *sarvalokamahesvaram* : Lord of all the worlds, सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhuatanam* : of all beings, सुहृदम् *suhridam* : friend, माम् *mam* : Me, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, ऋच्छति *ricchati* : attains.

Substance : Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Lord and controller of all the worlds, friend of all beings, man attains peace.

Commentary : It is stated here that he who knows the Lord (*Atma*) attains peace. Three attributes of the Lord are mentioned here.

God is described as the enjoyer of the fruits of all sacrifices and austerities performed by men. God is all-pervading and so He is the inner power of all beings. Consequently he is the enjoyer of the fruits all the meritorious work done by man.

God is the supreme Lord of all the worlds. There is no power higher or equal to Him.

Friend of all beings : Though He is the Lord and Controller of all the worlds, He is the greatest friend of all beings. A friend is one who does good to another without expecting any return. What does God require of man ? Nothing. And yet He is full of love for man and acts like the greatest friend and benefactor. The very fact that He directly teaches the wisdom of the Gita to man-kind is the proof of His compassion for suffering humanity. If one enquires into the nature of man and the universe around him, he would understand the infinite compassion of the Lord and his ceaseless endeavour to do the highest good to all beings.

The seeker who understands God in this way attains peace. Every one is seeking for peace. Here is the easy path of devotion to the Lord, which leads to peace and freedom. One

should try to understand the attributes of God to know Him intimately. This confirms and strengthens his devotion. When the Lord says that He is a friend (*suhrit*) of all beings, it would be sufficient to think of him as the nearest and dearest companion, on whom one can depend for help and guidance in his *sadhana*.

Man has degraded himself by his lack of faith in the Lord. This is the main cause of unrest in the world. Men run hither and thither begging for small rewards from people holding small material authority. The Lord who is the King of Kings, who is the repository of all power and blessedness, by whose power the Sun shines and the winds blow, is forgotten by ignorant man. Saints and sages have proclaimed in one voice the immediate presence of God everywhere, and yet their words do not carry any weight with him. People have made themselves so low and weak that they put their faith in common mortals who are subject to all personal weaknesses. Let people understand that the Lord is the supreme friend of all. By devotion to Him, man attains peace.

One should note here that the whole Discourse is based on the principles of self-control, enquiry into the Self. Knowledge of *Atma* is emphasised over and over, and yet in this closing Verse the Lord strikes the note of devotion (*bhakti*) and intimacy with God as friend as the way to peace. By the grace of God alone it is possible for man to cross the mire of delusion, and establish his oneness with the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*).

Question : *What is the way to peace ?*

Answer : Understanding and worship of the Lord and meditation on Him is the way to peace.

Question : *What attributes of the Lord are mentioned here ?*

Answer : He is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities; He is the Lord of all the worlds; He is the friend of all beings.

इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासूपनिपत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
 श्रीकृष्णाञ्जुनसंवादे कर्मसंन्यासयोगो नाम
 पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
 yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Karma Yogo
 nama panchamo 'dhyayah.*

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga*, the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Fifth Discourse entitled *Karma Sannyasa Yoga*

(The *Yoga* of the Renunciation of Action.)

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ सहोऽध्यायः

Atha Sashnodhyayah

THE SIXTH DISCOURSE

आत्मसंयमयोगः

ATMA SAMYAMA YOGAH

THE YOGA OF SELF - CONTROL

The title of the Discourse :

The title of the Discourse is *Atmasamyama yoga* – the *yoga* of self-control. It is also known as *Dhyana yoga* – the *yoga* of Meditation. Here the term *Atma* refers to the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. The method of subduing these forces and bringing them under control is pointed out in this discourse and so it is entitled *Atmasamyama yoga*.

Important Points of the Discourse :

1. *Nishkama Karma*, and the attributes of the sage established in *yoga* – (1–4 Verses).
2. The characteristics of the sage of self - conquest – (5–10 Verses).
3. The method of meditation. (11–32 Verses).
4. Enquiry into mind-control. (32–36 Verses).
5. The excellence of *Dhyana yoga* and the future of the aspirant who fails to reach the ultimate goal in the life. (37–47 Verses).

How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the beginning of the Fifth Discourse, in answer to Arjuna's question, the Lord stated that both *Jnana* and *Karma* are high forms of spiritual discipline. But it was pointed out that in the early stages, *Karmayoga* is superior. Having examined the two paths, the Lord mentioned that meditation (*Dhyana*) is helpful to the aspirant. In this Discourse, the process of meditation is explained in all its details. The Discourse begins with a reference to *Karma Yoga*.

श्री भगवानुवाच

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

१

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Anasritah karma phalam karyam karma karoti yah ।
sa samnyasi cha yogi cha na niragnir na cha 'kriyah ॥* 1

श्री भगवानुवाच—*Sri Bhagavanuvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, कर्मफलम् *karmaphalam* : fruits of work, अनाश्रितः *anasritah* : not depending on, कार्यम् *karyam* : prescribed by the Sastras, कर्म *karma* : duty, करोति *karoti* : perform, सः *sah* : he, संन्यासी च *sannyasi cha* : (is) ascetic and, योगीच *yogicha* : also yogi, निरग्निः *niragnih* : one who has given up the worship of Fire, न *na* : not, अक्रियः च *akriyah cha* : one who is also inactive, न *na* : not.

Substance : He who performs the prescribed duty without depending on the fruits of work is a *sannyasi* and a *yogi*, and not he who gives up the worship of Fire and who remains without action.

Commentary : Some people think that one who wears the ochre robes is a *sannyasi*. Others think that one who lives in solitude in a mountain cave, having given up all work is a *yogi*.

These are external things only. No one can claim to be a *sannyasi* or *yogi* by these external conditions. The inner impurities of the mind should be cleared, attachment should be given up, desire for enjoyment should be relinquished. Inner purification comes first, and then only external renunciation. It is only then that one may rightly be recognised as a *Sannyasi* or *Yogi*.

The real attributes of a perfected sage are performance of prescribed duties and action without desire for the fruits of work.

Freedom from attachment of any kind is the sine quo non of a *sannyasi*. Desireless performance of good work is the mark of a *yogi*. The Lord emphatically condemns the idlers and pretenders who are neither useful citizens nor enlightened guides of the community.

Duty prescribed by the Sastras : Action is here qualified by the condition that it should confirm to the laws of *Dharma*. What is contrary to *Dharma* is not advisable (*Karyam*). Righteous deeds and these also performed without desire to enjoy the fruits, is the law of Action. Any one who acts according to this law is indeed a *sannyasi* and he attains the highest reward of liberation.

The difference in caste or *Asrama* is not mentioned here. The fulfilment of the conditions of *Dharma*, and non-attachment are the only characteristics of *sannyasa* or *yoga*.

Question : *Who is a sannyasi and yogi ?*

Answer : He who performs his prescribed duties without attachment is a *sannyasi* and a *yogi*, and not he who gives up the sacrificial Fire and leads an idle life of inaction.

The principle behind Sannyasa and Yoga is the same.

2. यं सन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं चिद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसन्यस्तमङ्गल्यो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥

*Yam samnyasamiti prahur yogam tam viddhi pandava !
na hyasamnyastasamkalpo yogi bhavati kaschana ॥ 2*

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava* : O Arjuna ! यम् *yam* : which, सन्न्यासम् इति *sannyasam iti* : as sannayasa, प्राहुः *prahuh* : is called, तम् *tam* : that, योगम् *yogam (iti)* : as yoga, विद्धि हि *viddhi hi* : know verily, असन्यस्तसंकल्पः *asannyastasamkalpah* : who does not give up desire, कश्चन *kaschana* : any one, योगी *yogi* : yogi, न भवति *na bhavati* : does not become.

Substance : O Arjuna ! That which is "called *sannyasa*, know that to be *yoga* also; no one who has not given up desire can ever become a *yogi*.

Commentary : By sharp discrimination between the Self and non-Self, the *Jnanayogi* rejects *anatma* (non-self) and establishes himself in the Supreme Reality. The *Karma yogi* acts without any feeling of doership, without desire, without the sense of 'I' and 'Mine', and surrenders his work with its fruits to God. So acting he lives in the Supreme Reality. The *Jnanayogi* follows the path of introspection into himself by eliminating the senses the mind and the external world.

- The *Bhaktiyogi* has no relish for anything in the world, and he contemplates the Lord repeating His name, singing His glories, and thus lives in bliss and blessedness. In this way whatever path man may follow – *Jnana*, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana* – the inner principle is the same (i. e.) the rejection of insentient material things. Besides this, life in the Divine is implicit in all these *yogas*. That is why the Lord teaches that *sannyasa* and *yoga* are the same in their goal and aim. No one who has not renounced desire, the ego-centric initiative (*samkalpa*) for possessing material things, can ever become a *yogi*. Without the renunciation of desire, to live an idle and aimless life is neither *sannyasa* nor *yoga*.

Question : Are *sannyasa* and *yoga* different ?

Answer : No. What is called *sannyasa* is the same as *yoga*.

Question : When does a man become a yogi ?

Answer : Only when he gives up desire and attachment does he become a Yogi.

In the initial stages of sadhana Karma (action) is necessary.

3. आरुक्षोमुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥

३

*Arurukshor muner yogam karma karanam uchyate ।
yogarudhasya tasyai'va samah karanam uchyate ॥ 3*

Meaning : योगम् *yogam* : to yoga (union with the Self), आरुक्षोः *arurukshah* : aspiring to ascend, मुनेः *muneh* : of the sage, कर्म *karma* : action, कारणम् *karanam* : means, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called, योगारूढस्य *yogarudhasya* : enthroned in yoga, तस्य एव *tasya eva* : even for the same sage, शमः *samah* : quiescence, serenity, कारणम् *karnam* : means, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said.

Substance : For the sage aspiring to ascend to *yoga*, action is said to be the means; and for the same sage enthroned in *yoga* serenity is called the means.

Commentary : To achieve success in *Jnanayoga* or *Dhyana Yoga*, action (*Nishkamakarma*) is said to be the means. When success is attained in *yoga* and the mind approaches steadiness in the Self, a quiescent state free from action (*sama*) is said to be the means for deeper union with the Self. Therefore in the early stages of meditation purity has to be acquired by the practice of *Nishkama karma*. Afterwards, as the mind becomes firm and steady by its purity, action should be gradually reduced. It means that as the aspirant approaches the Self nearer and nearer, action drops off of its own accord, even as dry leaves fall from the tree. The field of activity is thus transferred from the external world to the inner realm of the human personality. Hearing of *Atma*, thinking of *Atma*, meditating on *Atma*

(*sravana, manana, nidhidhyasa*) - the seeker is disinclined to come out of the inner pursuit to active functions of the outer world with the body and the senses. He finds supreme satisfaction in being absorbed in the Self. The turbulence of the bodily organs and the senses is quelled. The seeker has no use for them, because the mind and the intellect are turned within and the ascent towards the Self is maintained steadily. Such quietude of the physical and mental mechanism will enable him ultimately to reach the state where there are no thought-modifications, and the Self is directly realised.

Let the seekers understand the position correctly. Hasty attempts to go into meditation will be of no avail. The mind rarely falls quiet for the common man. The inherent '*vasanas*' pull him out into the external world of action. It requires great effort to purify the mind before it can attain a calm and peaceful state when meditation becomes possible. So the seeker should first engage himself in righteous and devotional acts. Otherwise, he remains dull and inactive, and dullness of brain is certainly not meditation. Meditation is an intensely active state when all the energies of man are gathered together and centred in the one thought of the Self. To stop action by force and drive the mind by violent effort would unhinge the personality and render it more restless and distracted. When the wound is healing, a layer of skin covers it, but if one scratches it away before the wound is completely cured, it causes another blister. The layer should drop off naturally. So also, all actions are reduced by a natural process when the mind gathers momentum in its inward pursuit of the Self.

The path of progress may be divided into three stages :
 (1) The aspirant who is seeking for *yoga* comes under the first stage - (the High - School Course). (2) The second stage is reached when meditation becomes possible by the purity of mind (Graduate Course). (3) Undisturbed absorption in the Self is the final stage (Post-Graduate Course). So the progress is gradual, not sudden and violent. First through *Nishkamakarma* the mind should be purified. Then the practice of meditation should start. Then meditation should become deeper and

deeper till the Self is realised. As a man reaches the third stage, all actions appear burdensome, and his only aim would be to get firmly established in the Self. He is the 'Yogarudha'.

The attributes of the Yogarudha are mentioned.

4. यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुष्ठाते ।
सर्वसङ्कल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥

४

*Yada hi ne`ndriyartheshu na karmasv anusajjate ।
sarvasamkalpasamnyasi yogarudhastado'chyate ॥*

4

Meaning : यदा हि *yada hi* : when verily, इन्द्रियार्थेषु *indri-yartheshu* : in sense-objects, नानुष्ठाते *na anusajjate* : not attached, कर्मसु *karmasu* : in actions, न *na* : not, सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी *sarvasamkalpasamnyasi* : the renouncer of all thoughts, तदा *tada* : then, योगारूढः *yogarudhah* : one who is enthroned in *yoga*, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : When the sage feels no attachment for sense-objects and actions, renouncing the ego-centric will (*samkalpa*) then he is said to be enthroned in *yoga*.

Commentary : The words 'yada' and 'tada' are used to point out the exact moment when a sage is called a 'Yogarudha'. Three conditions are to be fulfilled—

1. Non-attachment to sense-objects.
2. Non-attachment to actions.
3. Renunciation of all thoughts.

So long as the mind is attached to sense-objects, it runs outwards for the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. When the mind does not turn inwards, meditation is not possible. When dispassion develops, the outgoing tendency of the mind stops, and then it can easily be trained to look for the Self within. *Nishkamakarma* develops dispassion.

When the mind finds happiness in *Atma*, man loses all pleasure in action. Moreover as the mind is detached from the

senses no action can take place, because contact with the external world is possible only through the senses. Actionlessness occurs in the higher stages of *Sadhana*. Some great sages who have passed beyond all relative thoughts, and are established in perfect *Yoga*, come down from that supreme state to act in the world for the good of humanity.

Renunciation of the ego-centric will is the third attribute of the *Yogarudha*. First of all bad thoughts should be replaced by good thoughts and then all thoughts should be given up. When there are no thoughts, the sage is enthroned in *Yoga*, union with the Self. The common man should complete the preliminary education of the mind to give up impure and sinful thought. Noble ideals, good aims, useful activity, selfless work-all these should be assiduously cultivated. There is no otherway to purify the mind. The study of the *Sastras*, company of holy men, association with good people, are helpful to strengthen the good and eliminate the evil. Divine and devotional thoughts and feelings should become natural to the mind.

Afterwards when the mind, through intense meditation, reaches the Self and tastes the infinite bliss, good thoughts also come to an end. When the mind, merges in *Atma*, *Atma* alone exists. This is the thought-free state of the *Yogarudha*. It is not emptiness or nothingness, because in the thought-free state, the all-pervading knowledge consciousness is fully awake though there is no mind. Some great sages who come down to the relative plane of the mind work for the good of mankind.

Question : *What are the attributes of a Yogarudha ?*

Answer : Non-attachment to sense-objects and actions, renunciation of all thoughts are the attributes of a *Yogarudha*.

To reach the state of Yogarudha, each man has to lift himself i.p by his own self-effort.

5. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेऽ।
आत्मैव द्वात्मनो वन्द्युरात्मैव रिगुरात्मनः ॥

*Uddharedatmana 'tmanam na 'tmanam avasadayet ।
atmai 'ya hy atmano bandhura mai 'va ripuratmanah ॥ 5*

Meaning : आत्मना atman : by the Self, आत्मानं atmanam : the Self, उद्धरेत् uddharet : let (him) raise, अत्मानं atmanam : the Self, न अवसादयेत् na avasadayet : not let go down, हि hi : because, आत्मनः atmanah : to oneself, आत्मा एव atma eva : self only, बन्धुः bandhuh : friend, आत्मनः atmanah : to oneself. आत्मा एव Atma eva : self only, रिपुः ripuh : foe.

Substance : Let one raise the self by the self and not let the self go down, for the self is the friend of the self and the self is the foe of the self.

Commentary : The Lord declares that each individual should lift himself up by his own effort. The *Sastras* and the *Guru* point the way. Each one has to tread the path himself. He has to see with his own eyes, walk with his own legs, satisfy his hunger by feeding himself. Man is the architect of his own destiny, the pilot of his own fate. God helps those who help themselves. To think that God would take the people to the land of peace while they live a life of idleness and sensuality is utterly wrong. So also, no teacher however great he might be can take a person to freedom if he does not show grace to himself. They cannot give a passport to immortality if he does not strive to purify himself and live the life of goodness. One has to pay the price even for a small article in the market. Thus we can imagine what price a man has to pay to obtain eternal joy and peace. Will idleness purchase this immortal blessing? How much effort, struggle, striving is needed to attain freedom? So let each man work diligently by carrying out the instructions of the *Sastras* and the *Guru*. Finally it is the self that realises the Self. The Lord makes it clear to all seekers that they should not expect any sudden transformation from one state to another by any sort of miracle or jugglery. It is a hard struggle from first to last. One should be prepared for it if he wants the highest reward of life.

When one sees a *Mahatma* he wishes to be like him untouched by any woe, beyond all trouble and turmoil. But let

us understand how he reached that state, what intense 'tapas' he did, what rigours of discipline he underwent, what devotion and dispassion he practiced, how long and hard he fought the battle against the inner enemies of lust and greed, and how finally he attained the position of the *Jivanmukta*. The effort was done all by the man himself with the grace of God and *Guru*. Maharshi Vasishta tells Sri Rama that the *Guru's* teaching to the disciple is a *Vedic* tradition only. All the actual work is to be done by oneself. The sick man should take the medicine himself if he should be cured. No one else can swallow the medicine and bring him relief. The fitful fever of life in which a man lives in a delirious state is to be overcome by personal knowledge and austerity.

The Lord gives the warning that man should not degrade himself. 'Do not let yourself go down' is the Lord's command. Ascent is difficult, descent is easy. Whenever the lower instincts are provoked, man descends to the level of the beast. Reason and rational judgment seems to be powerless before the raging passions of animality. And yet, there is no man who does not believe that he is made for nobler and higher things than to live and die like a beast. It is this inner urge that should be kept up, strengthened, and brought to the foreground of man's consciousness. The aspiration to rise to a higher plane should turn bright in the heart of man. And then begins the ascent.

The human mind is a battlefield of conflicting forces-good (*Dharma*) and evil (*Adharma*). The mind is thus split into two hostile camps. With diligent perseverance man should hold on to *Dharma*. The mind should be saturated with noble aims and ideals. The lives of great men should be read and one should identify himself with their noble achievements. The good in man is thus vitalised, and the evil gradually loses its mental grip over him. That is why the Lord here says that the mind is both a friend and foe. The impure mind is the foe, and the pure mind is the friend. The mind is but a series of thoughts coming and going like the waves of the ocean. The mind is good when a good thought comes, it is evil when a bad thought comes. So one should generate as many good thoughts as possible.

continuously and cling to them at all costs. *Japa* is nothing but holding to a spiritual idea. Study of the *Sastras* and holy works create an atmosphere of purity. These are all aids to suppress the evil and neutralise its venom.

The Lord throws the whole responsibility on oneself for his salvation or domination. "Ascend, do not go down, your fate is in your own hands, strive and succeed." This is the Lord's inspiring call to mankind.

Question : *Who can save man from Samsara ?*

Answer : Man should save himself. He should not go down like a rubber ball dropped on a staircase.

Question : *Who is the friend and foe of man ?*

Answer : His own mind is the friend as well as the foe. A pure mind is a friend. An impure mind is a foe.

6. बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥

६

*Bandhuratma'tmanas tasya yena 'tmai 'va 'tmana jithah ।
anatmanastu satrutive varteta 'tmai 'va satruvat ॥* 6

Meaning : येन *yena* : by whom, अत्माना एव *atmana eva* : by the self only, आत्मा *atma* : mind, जितः *jithah* : (is) conquered, तस्य *tasya* : his, आत्मा *atma* : mind, आत्मनः *atmanah* : to him, बन्धुः *bandhuh* : (is) friend, अनात्मनस्तु *anatmanastu* : but to him who has not conquered the mind, आत्मा *atma* : mind, शत्रुवत् *satruvat* : like an enemy, शत्रुत्वे एव *satrutive eva* : In the place of an enemy only, वर्तते *varteta* : acts.

Substance : His mind is a friend whose mind is conquered by the self, but to him who has not conquered the mind, the mind itself acts like an enemy in harmful ways.

Commentary : The same idea as in the previous verse is elaborated here. Friend and foe are both inside man. The

subdued mind is a friend, and the turbulent mind is the enemy. External friend or enemies are not so loyal or persistent as the conquered mind. The mind subdued and kept under control is the greatest friend to lead one to eternal peace. Even so, the turbulent mind poisoned with lust and greed leads to destruction. So control of mind is essential for spiritual progress.

The word *Atma* in this context refers to the mind including the senses and the bodily organs.

Mind conquered by the self: Man has to conquer the lower self by the higher self.

Question : Who is a friend ?

Answer : The subdued mind is a friend unto oneself.

Question : Who is a foe ?

Answer : The turbulent mind is a foe unto oneself.

The reward of self-subdual is declared.

7. जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानावमानयोः ॥

७

*Jitatmanah prasantasya paramatma samahitah ।
sitoshnasukhadukheshu tatha manavamanayoh ॥ 7*

Meaning : जितात्मनः *jitatmanah* : of him who has subdued the mind, प्रशान्तस्य *prasantasya* : of the peaceful man, शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु *sitoshnasukhadukheshu* : in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, तथा *tatha* : similarly, मानावमानयोः *manava-manayoh* : in honour and disgrace, परमात्मा *paramatma* : the Supreme Self, समाहितः *samahitah* : is experienced.

Substance : The man who has subdued the mind and is full of peace experiences the Supreme Self under all conditions in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour. (The mind of such a man experiences the Self under all conditions).

Commentary : The ill-regulated mind of the common man is upset by the pains of opposites, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace. Proud in the hour of praise, sullen in the hour of shame, elated in the hour of pleasure, depressed in the hour of pain, the mind goes through a constant wheel of different moods and passions. Every moment of life causes a peculiar change in the mind. The ignorant man lives and dies under the sway of the turbulent and disturbed mind. He is never peaceful. Peace is the result of a restful state of mind. When the mind is in a state of restless ecstasy, there can be no taste of peace at all. But the mind of the sage is different. It is always in a state of balance, whatever changes may be happening outside, and rests in the infinite peace of *Atma*. As little waves and ripples of wind cannot shake a huge mountain, the pairs of opposites cannot move the man who has subdued the mind. He is always established in the Self and enjoys the bliss of Self. So by constant practice, the seeker has to keep the mind in a condition of immovable stability.

Question : *Who is it that remains unmoved by the pairs of opposites ?*

Answer : The sage who has conquered the mind is not affected by the pairs of opposites. His mind rests peacefully in the Self.

The attributes of the sage who rests in the Self are mentioned.

8. ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तस्त्वा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥

6

*Jnana vijnana triptatma kutastho vijitendriyah ।
yukta ityuchyate yogi sama loshtasma kanchanah ॥*

8

Meaning : ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तस्त्वा *jnanavijnanatriptatma* : One who is satisfied with the Knowledge of the Sastras and experience of Self, कूटस्थः *kutasthah* : unshaken, immovable, विजितेन्द्रियः *vijitendriyah* : one who has conqueured the senses, समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः *sama loshtasma kanchanah* : who looks equally

on mud, stone and gold, योगी *yogi* : (such) yogi, युक्तः *yuktah* : harmonised in yoga, इति *iti* : thus, उच्छते *uchate* : is said.

Substance : The *yogi* who is satisfied with the knowledge of the *Sastras* and experience of the Self, who is immovable who has conquered the senses, who looks with an equal eye on mud, stone and gold, is said to be united or harmonised in *yoga*.

Commentary : *Yoga* means union of the self with *Paramatma*. The path leading to this union is also *yoga*. The man who strives for *yoga* is a *yogi*. Though there are several *yogas*, yet very rarely we come across a *yogi* of the highest realisation. The attributes of the perfected *Yogi* are mentioned here.

One who is satisfied with Jnana and Vignana : *Jnana* and *Vignana* are mentioned separately in the *Gita*. *Jnana* is understanding of the Self by the study of the *Sastras*, the teachings of the *Guru* and elders. *Vijnana* means direct Self-realisation. It is just the difference between theory and practice. One may study the art of cooking from books, but this knowledge is not complete without practical experience. One should clearly understand the difference between the two. The scholar may imagine that he has attained self-realisation by his knowledge of the *Sastras*. No doubt the value of intellectual knowledge of Truth should not be under-estimated. But this should never be mistaken for Realisation. Realisation requires an absolute subdual of the senses, the mind, and the intellect, the elimination of all desires, and perfect peace in the Self. The words '*tripah*', '*tushtah*' are used to show that the realised *yogi* is perfectly contented in the Self. Wealth and enjoyments, fame and name, power and position, do not lead to this undisturbed contentment in the Self. Everybody knows it. There is still a feeling of incompleteness. Having attained the Self, man knows that he has nothing else to seek for. He is contented forever and ever.

Unshaken : The *yogi* remains unshaken and immovable when he rests in the Self. '*Kuta*' means the iron block used by the jeweler to shape the ornaments. Just as the iron block remains unshaken when the jeweler uses the chisel to shape

the jewels, so also the *yogi* remains unshaken and unaffected by the changes that take place in the external life. There is no change in him, because he is resting in the Self, and the Self is immovable and eternal. The word 'Kutasthah' may also be taken to refer to the Self (*Kutastho akshara uchyate*). So the *Yogarudha* is one who has attained unity with the Self.

One who has conquered the senses : Self-control is mentioned many times as the most important discipline in spiritual life. The *Yogarudha* is one who has thoroughly conquered the senses.

Who looks equally on mud, stone and gold : The *Yogarudha* looks with an equal eye, on mud, stone and gold. He sees no difference between them. How ? He knows that all natural objects—trees, rocks, the sun and stars, the clouds and rain, the body etc. — are only a combination of the five elements in varying proportions. So these objects do not appear to be different for him, in the same way as different jewels do not appear different for the gold-merchant who weighs and values the gold only minus the name and form. So these objects do not make any difference for the men of Self-realisation. They are the same to him because he sees only the spiritual substratum in all of them. So his vision is equal and balanced.

It is the mind that gives value to things. Gold is symbolic of all precious things in the world. That which is rare acquires greater value. That which is common pays less value. All this difference is caused by the mind which attributes relative value to things. The *Yogarudha* who has seen the one substance out of which all these are made finds no distinction between them. It is all infinite ocean of *Sachithananda*. What is great and what is small ? There is no special value to anything because the background for all is only the Self. If in a dream one is a King and another is a beggar, what difference does it make to the awakened man ?

For the man of self-realisation, clay and gold are equal. One who has such experience of the Self cannot see any distinction between the two,

Question : What are the attributes of a Yogarudha ?

Answer : Knowledge of the *Sastras*, experience of the Self, perfect contentment, immovable firmness in *Yoga*, conquest of the senses, equal vision, – these are the attributes of the *Yogarudha*.

The equal vision of the Yogarudha is further explained.

9. सुहृनिमत्रार्युदासीन मध्यस्थदेव्यबन्धुषु ।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिं शिष्यते ॥

९

Suhrin mitravyudasina madhyastha dveshya bandhushu ! sadhushv api cha papeshu samabuddhir visishyate ॥ 9

Meaning : सुहृनिमत्रार्युदा सीनमध्यस्थदेव्यबन्धुषु suhrinmitravyudasina madhyasthadveshyabandhushu : in the good-hearted, in friends in foes, in the indifferent, in neutrals, in haters, and in relations, साधुषु अपि sadhushu api : in the righteous also, पापेषु च papeshu cha : and in the wicked, समबुद्धिः samabuddhiḥ : one who has equal mind, विशिष्यते visishyate : excels.

Substance : He who is equal-minded towards the good-hearted, friends, enemies, the indifferent, neutrals, haters, relations, towards the righteous and also the wicked, excels.

Commentary : Different categories of men are described here. Some people help without expecting any return, others do so for mutual benefit. There are positively enemical people who may hate others and try to injure them in every possible way. Others are indifferent, and some others are neutral. Thus we come across different categories of people with different attitudes. The *Yogi* is equal-minded towards all these people. Towards the righteous and the unrighteous also he is equal-minded.

How is he able to maintain this equality of vision ? It is clear that all these distinctions arise with reference to the ego which has identified itself with the body. The ego-centric man is constantly reactionary to people according to their attitude

towards him. If they are friends, he likes them. If they are harmful foes, he hates them. It is the bodily outlook (*dehadrishti*) that is the cause of all those distinctions. For the man who has transcended the ego-idea, all that exists is only the Self and nothing else. He has realised the Self and he looks upon every thing with '*Atmic bhava*'. It is the duty of all seekers to cultivate the '*Atma-drishti*' in all things and kill the differentiation.

Question : *Who among the yogis excels ?*

Answer : The *yogi* who is equal-minded towards friend and foe, the good and the bad, excels.

Dhyanyoga by which union with the Self is attained is explained from this verse.

10. योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥

१०

*Yogi yunjita satatam atmanam rahasi sthitah ।
ekaki yatachittatma nirashir aparigrahah ॥*

10

Meaning : योगी *yogi* : the yogi, रहसि *rahasi* : in a solitary place, स्थितः *sthitah* : stationed, एकाकी *ekaki* : alone, यतचित्तात्मा *yatachittatma* : self-controlled, निराशीः *nirashih* : without desire, अपरिग्रहः *aparigrahah* : without receiving any thing from others, सततम् *satatam* : always, अत्मानम् *atmanam* : the mind, युञ्जीत *yunjita* : should unite or merge in Atma.

Substance : Alone, stationed in a solitary place, self-controlled, free from desire and not receiving anything from others, the *yogi* (*Practising Dhyanyoga*) should unite the mind with *Atma*.

Commentary : From this verse onwards, the practice of *Dhyanyoga* is explained in detail. Here the word '*Yogi*' does not refer to one who has already attained perfection. It applies to those only who are seeking *yoga* (union with the Self). Five conditions are mentioned for the practice of *Dhyanyoga*—(1) Solitude, (2) Living in a lonely place, (3) Control of mind and body, (4) Desirelessness, (5) Non-receiving.

Stationed in a Solitary place : The *yogi* should practise meditation in a lonely place. Pretenders who sit in *yogic* pose in public thoroughfares are cheats and beggars. The *yogi* practises meditation not to derive benefit or admiration from others. The aim of the *yogi* is to establish union between himself and God. So he should seek a solitary place where the mind is not distracted by the sights and sounds of worldly life. That is why the ancient sages sought for the solitude of mountain-caves and river-beds, to carry on their spiritual practice. The solitude of nature is itself a purifying influence, and the vast silence around induces the mood of meditation without much effort. The beauty of nature delights and calms the mind, and the turbulent impulses are subdued of their own accord. The house-holders can create solitude in their own homes by keeping a small enclosure for purposes of worship and *dhyana*. The images of saints and sages along with the Deity of family worship may be kept there and worshipped with flowers, incense and camphor. Such a place will indeed be solitude. This is a liberal interpretation to undertake the practice of *Dhyana* for self-advancement.

Alone : Meditation has to be practised alone and not in the company of others. In *Bhakti Yoga* 'samkirtan' and 'bhajan' could be carried with greater intensity by groups of like-minded devotees. Not so in *Dhyana Yoga*. Even the proximity of another is a disturbing factor. So in *Dhyana Yoga* the aspirant has to remain alone with his mind in communion with the Self.

Control of mind and desirelessness are again emphasised. The aspirant should not receive anything from others. If anything is offered for the bare maintainance of the body, it may be taken. Beyond this, nothing should be touched. If gifts are received, the mind begins to dwell on them, and '*Dhyana*' is thereby disturbed. Non-receiving of gifts is one of the basic virtues in spiritual life. So *dhyana* requires complete absorption of the whole self in the Supreme Being without any kind of disturbance or distraction. *Dhyana* should be continuous and unbroken. Therefore the word '*satatam*' is used here. There is no fear for the man who is ever wakeful and vigilant in

spiritual life. The hostile forces (*tamas and rajas*) cannot enter the mind when it keeps continuous vigilence. When the light is kept burning always, there is no fear of darkness.

Question : *What are the conditions for the practice of Dhyana Yoga ?*

Answer : The *Yogi* should live in solitude. He should be all alone. He should control the mind and body. He should not have any desire. He should not receive any gifts from others.

Question : *Following these conditions, what should the Yogi do ?*

Answer : He should merge his mind in *Atma*.

Further instructions regarding the practice of Dhyana Yoga are given.

11. शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११

12. तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युज्जयाद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२

*Suchau dese pratisthapyas thiram asanam atmanah ।
na 'tyucchritam na 'tinicham chailajinakusottaram ॥ 11*

*Tatrai 'kagram manah kritva yatachittendriyakriyah ।
upavisya'sane yunyyad yogam atmavisuddhaye ॥ 12*

Meaning : शुचौ देशे *suchau dese* : in a clean spot, नात्युच्छ्रितम् *natyucchritam* : not very high, नातिनीचम् *natinicham* : not very low, चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् *chelajinakusottaram* : a cloth, skin (deer's or tiger's) and holy grass one over the other, स्थिरम् *sthiram* : firm, आसनम् *asanam* : seat, आत्मनः *atmanah* : his own, प्रतिष्ठाप्य *pratishthapy* : having established, तत्र आसने *tatra asane* : there on the seat, उपविश्य *upavisy* : being seated, मनः *manah* : the mind, एकाग्रम् *akagram* : one pointed, कृत्वा *kritva* : having made, यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः *yatachittendriyakriyah* : controlling the activities of the mind and the senses,

आत्मविशुद्धये atmavisuddhaye : for self-purification, योगम् yogam: yoga (Dhyana), युज्ज्यात् yunyyat : let him practice.

Substance : In a clean spot, a firm seat should be made, neither too high nor too low, and it should be covered by cloth, skin, and holy grass one over the other.

There, being seated, having made the mind one-pointed, controlling the actions of the mind and the senses, let him practice *Dhyana Yoga* for self-purification.

Commentary : The *Gita* gives complete instruction in all matters great and small. Here the Lord gives minute details of the place and the seat where *Dhyana* should be practised.

The place selected should be a clean spot. Keep the home clean and that shall become a fit place for meditation. Even in solitude, there may be unclean spots full of worms, germs and foul smell. Such a place is not fit for meditation. Let us understand how the Lord emphasises cleanliness. Some people think that the mind is more important than the place, and it does not matter whether the place is clean or not. It is wrong to think so. In an unclean place, unclean thoughts arise in the mind. In a home which is kept in perfect order, the mind functions in an orderly manner. Of course, when the man becomes a *yogarudha*, all places are the same. He can be absorbed in the Self at all places. But till that state is reached one must see that he selects only a clean spot. We do not come across any great soul living an unclean life either in body or mind, or speech.

The seat should not be too high or too low. If it is too high, there is the danger of falling down if at anytime the man becomes unconscious in the course of meditation. If it is too low, worms and other reptiles may sting the body, causing distraction. So, to sit on a wooden plank slightly raised from the ground is best. It should be covered with cloth, skin, and Kusha-grass one above the other. On the whole, the seat should be clean, firm, and levelled. It is only when the track

is firm and levelled the engine runs safely and smoothly. No particular 'asana' is mentioned here. Each one may adopt his own *asana* - like *Padmasana* or *Siddhasana* - in which he can sit for a long time without feeling any **discomfort**. Only it should be firm (*sthiram*). Patanjali also says that the posture should be firm and comfortable (*Sthira sukha masanam*).

Being thus seated in any comfortable posture, the *yogi* should draw back the mind from the senses and the external world, and turn it inside to look into the Self. Mind acquires great power by such concentration on the Supreme Self and all forms of ignorance are burnt thereby.

This practice is intended to purify the inner organ, namely the mind.

Question : *What are the conditions prescribed for Dhvanya Yoga ?*

- Answer :** (1) One should select a clean spot. The place should be perfectly clean.
- (2) The seat should not be too high or too low.
 - (3) The seat should be covered by holy grass, skin and cloth one over the other.
 - (4) The seat should be firm, smooth and levelled.
 - (5) He can adopt a comfortable posture which he can maintain for a sufficiently long time.
 - (6) He should control the functions of the senses and the mind.
 - (7) He shall concentrate on the Self.

Question : *What is the effect of this practice ?*

Answer : The mind is purified. It is in a pure mind that the Self is reflected.

Further instructions about Dhyana Yoga are given.

13. तत्कामिति तत्त्वं विषयः ।

संश्लेष्य द्विनामि एव त्रिवृत्तोऽप्यनुकूलः ॥

14. प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीत्रिक्षचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥

१४

Samam kayasirogriyam dharayannachalam sthirah :

samprekshya nasikagram svam disas cha 'navalokayan ॥ 13

Prasantatma vigatabhir brahmacharivrate sthitah ।

manah samyamya macchittio yukta asita matparah ॥

14

Meaning : कायशिरोग्रीवम् *kayasirogrivam* : body, head and neck, समम् *samam* : erect, अवलम् *achalam* : motionless, धारयन् *dharayan* : holding, स्थिरः *sthirah* : immovable, दिशः च *disascha* : and sides, अनवलोकयन् *anavalokayan* : not looking, स्वं नासिकाग्रम् *svam nasikagran* : tip of his nose, संप्रेक्ष्य *samprekshya* : gazing on, प्रशान्तात्मा *prasantatma* : peaceful, विगतभीः *vigatabhih* : fearless, ब्रह्मचारिव्रते *brahmacharivrate* : in the vow of celibacy, स्थितः *sthitah* : established, मनः *manah* : mind, संयम्य *samyama* : having controlled, मच्चित्तः *macchittah* : Me in mind, मत्परः *matparah* : Me as the goal, युक्तः *yuktah* : united, आसीत *asita* : should be.

Substance : Let him firmly hold the body, head and neck erect, and gazing on the tip of his nose, without looking around, let him sit, serene and fearless, established in the vow of celibacy, self-controlled and balanced, thinking of Me as the Supreme goal.

Commentary : The *Sadhaka* should sit on the seat with his body, head and neck erect. By so doing, the current of energy passing up wards through the nerves of the spinal column has a free and unobstructed flow towards the brain-centre called the 'Sahasrara' in *Rajayoga*. It is in that state that high thoughts are generated and higher spiritual experiences come to the *yogi*.

During the time fixed for practice, he should not quit the seat or change the posture (*sthirah*).

Then he should not look this side or that. The mind is distracted by looking at objects around him. He should fix the gaze on the tip of the nose and start meditation. By this the mind becomes steady gradually. In the early stages, it is best to fix the gaze on the tip of the nose. The eyes are kept half-open and sleep is thereby prevented. It looks as though the Lord has provided the eyelids for this purpose only out of compassion for mankind.

Having thus fixed the gaze, he should withdraw the mind from everything else and think of the Self only, because the Self is the highest goal. The Lord is no other than the Supreme Self shining in the hearts of all beings.

The *Sadhaka* should possess four basic virtues-peace, fearlessness, celibacy and self-control. Peace, deep and limitless like the ocean should fill the mind. There should not be the least trace of fear. When the whole world is only a dream like reflection, where and what for is fear? When his own Self is everywhere what should he fear? Fear arises only when the Self is forgotten and the objective world assumes the air of reality. The *Upanishads* declare the same truth.

To some extent, the aspirant has to cultivate dispassion and devotion by spiritual enquiry into the nature of Reality, and then only *Dhyana* becomes possible. Freedom from fear comes from firm understanding of the Truth. One should know by clear rational thinking that *Atma* alone is the Reality and all the rest is only a painted picture caused by the interposition of name and form. When this truth is driven into the mind, naturally fear is eliminated, and when fear is eliminated *Dhyana* becomes easy.

Celibacy is essential for spiritual life. The body and mind acquire tremendous energy and power by celibacy. The word '*Brahmacharya*' means actually living and being in *Brahman*. Ordinarily the word refers to the control of thoughts and acts of sex and lust. The house-holders have certain principles of celibacy. What is needed is that lustful thoughts should not be

allowed to enter the mind of the aspirant. He should keep the mind and body pure. Almost all the world-movers have practised celibacy in some form or other. As the lamp cannot burn without oil, so also, spiritual life is impossible without 'Brahmacharya'. The semen turns into energy and light. We see a peculiar light illuminating the face of those who have practiced celibacy. It is said that several drops of blood becomes a drop of semen. It is energy and it is light. So the preservation of semen is essential for spiritual illumination. That is why celibacy is spoken of as a vow (*Vratam*). It is the highest vow unequalled in purity and power.

In this manner, the seeker should practise *Dhyanayoga*, thinking of the Lord (*Atma*) only, to the exclusion of everything else. Thus he should merge the mind in the Supreme.

Question : *How should the sadhaka sit for meditation ?*

Answer : With his body, head and neck erect, he should sit still and motionless till the period of practice is over.

Question : *Where should the gaze be fixed ?*

Answer : The gaze should be fixed on the tip of the nose and he should not look around.

Question : *What are the qualities required for the Sadhaka ?*

Answer : Peace, fearlessness, celibacy and self-control.

Question : *What is the aim to Dhyana ?*

Answer : Merging the mind in the Self is the aim of *Dhyana*.

The result of Dhyanayoga is mentioned.

15. युज्जनेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्ति निर्वाणपरमा मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥

२५

*Yunjannevam sada'tmanam yogi niyatamanasah ।
santim nirvanaparamam matsams:ham adhigacchati ॥ 15*

Meaning : नियतमानसः *niyatamanasah* : of controlled mind, योगी *yogi*: the yogi, (practising Dhyana) सदा *sada*: ever,
(30)

एवम् evam : in this manner, अत्मानम् atmanam : mind, युजन् yujan : held in meditation of Atma, मत्संस्थां matsamsitham : of My Being, निर्वाप्रामाण् nirvanapramam : highest bliss of Moksha, सांति॒ं santim : peace, अधिगच्छति adhigacchati : attains.

Substance : Thus the self-controlled *Yogi* holding the mind in meditation on the Self, attains peace abiding in me which culminates in the highest bliss of liberation.

Commentary : *Dhyanyoga* leads to supreme peace and liberation. It is the peace of the Self, of the very nature of the Lord. It is not like the passing delights and pleasures of worldly life. The wise men seek the highest everlasting peace only. Self-control and continuous practice of meditation are necessary to attain such peace and bliss. So the seeker should carry on the *sadhana*, by constant discrimination by the rejection of the unreal, and by fixing the mind on the eternal Self. That is the price to pay for attaining the highest bliss of liberation.

Question : What is the fruit of *Dhyana yoga* ?

Answer : Supreme peace and bliss.

Question : What is its nature ?

Answer : It is liberation, *Moksha*, which is the very nature of the Self, the supreme Lord.

Question : What should the *sadhaka* do to attain this peace ?

Answer : He should control the mind and hold it in meditation on the Self.

The Lord explains how the aspirant should discipline his life.

16. नात्यनात्यु योगोऽस्ति न चकान्तमनभातः ।
न चाति स्वप्रशीलय जाग्रतो नैव चालुन ॥

१६

*Na'tyasnatas tu yogo'sti n i chai'kantam anasnatah
na cha'tisvaprasilasva jagrato na'l'va cha'rjuna ॥* १६

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! योगः yogah : yoga, अत्यभ्रतः tu atyasnatah tu : verily of one who eats too much, नास्ति na asti : is not, एकान्तम् अनभ्रतः च न ekantam anasnatah cha na : of one who does not eat at all is not, अतिस्वप्नशीलस्य च atisvapnasilasya cha : and of one who sleeps too much, न na : not, जग्रतः च jagratah cha : and of one who is sleepless, न एव na eva : not also.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Verily, *yoga* is not for one who eats too much or who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much or who does not sleep at all.

Commentary : Moderation in food and sleep is the condition of *yoga* for all seekers whatever path they follow. In *Dhyana Yoga* particularly, it is of very great importance: Unless the body is light and strong, meditation is difficult to practise. So, regulation of food and sleep is prescribed as the first condition of *yoga*. Generally people think that spirituality is something not connected with the body and what they eat and how they work does not matter. It is not so. The body if not regulated is itself the chief obstacle for spiritual realisation. A sickly body subject to pain binds the mind to itself and its suffering, and does not allow it to rise to the plane of thought and meditation. We know that when the body is healthy and strong, the mind becomes free from the bondage of the body and becomes capable of higher thought and imagination. Regulation of the body is therefore emphasised many times in the Gita.

Moderation in sleep is also of great importance. Too much of sleep produces 'tanás' and all the demonical forces in man find free play in that state. Even so, sleeplessness causes nervous breakdown, and man becomes unfit for any kind of work, much less for *Dhyana*.

Question : *What conditions are required for yoga ?*

Answer : Moderation in food and sleep is the first condition of *Yoga*.

17. युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥

१७

*Yuktahara viharasya yukta cheshtasya karmasu :
yukta svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati duhkhaḥ ॥*

17

Meaning: युक्ताहारविहारस्य *yukataharaviharasya* : of him who is moderate in food and recreation (like working, talking etc.) कर्मसु *karmasu* : in actions, युक्तचेष्टस्य *yuktacheshtasya* : moderation in exertion, युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य *yuktasvapnavabodhasya* : moderation of sleep and warefulness, योगः *yogah* : yoga, दुःखहा *duhkhaḥ* : destroyer of all pain and suffering, भवति *bhavati* : becomes.

Substance: For him who is moderate in food and recreation, moderate in exertion in all actions, moderate in sleep and wakefulness, *yoga* destroys all pain and suffering (caused by birth and death).

Commentary: “Be moderate, avoid excess in all things” – This is the Lord’s command. *Yoga* then destroys all suffering. So if man suffers, the cause for it is the excessive indulgence in some form or other. Self-control actually means the power by which man can order the body and mind to function according to the highest spiritual laws. There is no self-control for the man whose body and mind act in their own way in defiance of the spiritual laws. This principle holds good in *Dhyanyoga*. Enthusiastic beginners, with more zeal than wisdom, overdo the *sadhana*, and consequently suffer discomfort and pain, and then they give up the practice altogether thinking that they are not fit for it. Overdoing a good thing is as harmful as indulgence in bad things. Young students burn midnight oil to prepare for the examinations, and in writing the examination, they become exhausted and their whole work goes in vain. Even if they pass the examination, the after-effects of over-exertion cause some disease or other. So also in spiritual *Sadhana* the progress should be slow, steady, and sure. Over-exertion defeats

the very purpose of *yoga*. Ascetic torture of the body by fasting too much and sleeplessness is not the way of *yoga*. A moderate way of life is *yoga*. The golden mean is *yoga*. Harmony and balance is *yoga*. It shows that a man can practice *yoga* while engaged in all the activities of life by strictly adhering to the law of moderation. In fact the body itself is made and sustained on the principle of harmony, balance and moderation. Excess of heat burns it, excess of cold stiffens it. The eyes cannot see when there is excess of light; in total darkness also they cannot see. Extremes are alike. Moderate light and warmth are necessary for the proper functioning of the body. The analogy may be extended to the realm of the mind also. Excess of study dulls the brain, and causes fatigue and nervous disorders. Excess of emotion causes insanity. The nervous system breaks down by agitation and mental conflict. So moderation and harmony are the very principles of man's existence. It is the law of nature. *Yoga* (*Dhyanyoga*) is possible only for the man who avoids excess in all activities of life. The *yogi* transcends all suffering by *yoga*.

Question : *What is the reward of Dhyana Yoga ?*

Answer : All suffering is removed by *Yoga*.

Question : *What are the prescribed conditions ?*

Answer : Moderation in food and recreation, in work, in sleep and wakefulness, are the conditions of *Yoga*.

Question : *What is the way to overcome suffering ?*

Answer : *Yoga*. (Meditation on the Self, the Lord).

18. यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥

१८

Yada viniyatam chittamatmanyeva 'vatishtate ।

nihsprah sarvakamebhyo yukta ity uchyate tada ॥

18

Meaning : यदा *yada* : when, चित्तम् *chittam* : mind, विनियतम् *viniyatam* : perfectly controlled, आत्मनि एव *atmani eva*: in Atma only, अवतिष्ठते *avatishthate* : rests, सर्वकामेभ्यः *sarva-*

kamebhyah : of all desires, निःसृष्टः *nispriyah* : free from longing, तदा स योगी *tada sah yogi* : then that yogi, युक्तः *yuktah* : united with Self, इति *iti* : thus, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said.

Substance : When the perfectly controlled mind rests in the Self free from longing of all enjoyments, then it is said that the *yogi* is united (with the Self).

Commentary : When the mind is merged in *Atma*, that very moment man attains *Moksha*, liberation from all the ills and evils of human existence. Three aspects of *Yogasiddhi* are mentioned here - (1) Desirelessness, (2) Control of mind, and (3) Union with *Atma*. The same process is stated in *Vedanta* in different terminology— (1) *Vasanakshaya*, (2) *Manonasa*, and (3) *Tattvajnana*. One is actioned by the others (i. e.) – by the elimination of all desires mind ceases to exist, and the *Atmajnana* is realised. When *Atmajnana* dawns the mind with all its propensity for material enjoyments is destroyed.

Desires are the shackles that bind man to *samsara*. When these desires disturb the mind, *Dhyana* is not possible. When by discrimination and dispassion, desires are rooted out, the pure mind automatically merges in *Atma* which is the source from which it has risen. All the desires without any reservation should be given up.

The mind should be brought to one focal point and remain steady at that point, namely the Self. The least distraction draws it away from the object of meditation.

The mind should rest in *Atma* alone, to the complete exclusion of everything else. When there are no desires and distractions, the mind by itself comes to rest in its own source—*Atma*.

Such a *yogi* who rests steadfast in *Atma* is *Yogarudha*. He is united with the supreme Self.

Question : *When is it said that man has attained unity with Atma?*

Answer : When there are no desires, when the mind is controlled and rests in the Self, then it is said that *Yogasiddhi*

is achieved. When these conditions are fulfilled, man attains liberation, (*Moksha*) freedom from every thing that binds man to earthly life.

The state of mind in samadhi is described :

19. यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङते उपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥

१९

*Yatha dipo nivatasaho ne'ngate so 'pama smrita : 19
yogino yatachittasya yunjato yogam atmanah*

Meaning : निवातस्थः *nivatastah* : kept in airless place, दीपः *dipuh* : lamp, यथा *yatha* : as, नेङते *nengate* : does not flicker, सः *sah* : that, आत्मनः *atmanah* *yogam* : the yoga of the Self, युञ्जतः *yunjatah* : practising, योगिनः *yoginah* : of the yogi, यतचित्तस्य *yatachittasya* : of controlled mind, उपमा *upama* : comparison, स्मृता *smrita* : is thought.

Substance : As the lamp in a windless place does not flicker—that is thought to be the comparison of the *yogi* of controlled mind practising union with Self through *Dhyanyoga*.

Commentary : The mind of the *yogi* in meditation is compared to a steady light kept in a windless place. The illustration is fascinating and appropriate. Like the lamp, the mind of the *yogi* is effulgent with the light of knowledge, and it is also steady. The windows of the senses through which the objective world gets into the mind causing destruction are closed by perfect self-control, and so the mind remains steady and firm in meditation. Just as the orb of the Sun is clearly reflected in a pure calm lake when there are no ripples or waves, so also the Self is clearly reflected in a pure calm mind. The impure mind is unsteady and restless due to the winds of desire blowing constantly, like the light placed in a windy place.

Question: *To what is the meditating mind of the yogi compared?*

Answer : It is compared to a lamp kept in a windless place.

The idea is, the mind of the *yogi* is steady and illumined with the light of Knowledge.

Question : How should the mind be when it is to be merged in Atma?

Answer : It should be perfectly controlled and free from any kind of disturbance resulting from the play of the senses.

The excellence of Dhyana Yoga leading to Self-realisation is declared.

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

21. सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेच्चिं यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्वलति तत्त्वतः ॥ २१

22. य लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
यस्मन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२

23. तं विद्यादुदुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसञ्ज्ञितम् ।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विणचेतसा ॥ २३

*Yatra 'paramate chittam niruddham yogasevaya'
yatra chai 'va 'tmana 'tmanam pasyann atmani tushyati ॥ 20*

*Sukham atyantikam yat tad buddhigrahyam atindriyam ।
vetti yatra na chai 'va 'yam sthitas chalati tattvatah ॥ 21*

*Yam labdhva cha' param labham manyate na'dhikam tatah
yasmin sthito na duhkhenā guruna 'pi vichalyate ॥ 22*

*Tam vidyad duhkhasamyogaviyogam yogasamjnitas
sa nischayena yoktavyo yogo 'nirvinna chetasa ॥ 23*

Meaning : योगसेवया *yogasevaya* : by the practise of yoga, निरुद्धम् *niruddham* : restrained (turned away from sense-objects), चित्तम् *chittam* : mind, यत्र *Yatra* : where, उपरमते *uparamate* : rests, यत्रच *yatra cha* : and where, आत्मना *atmana* : by the self, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the Self, पश्यन् *pasyam* : seeing, आत्मनि एव *atmani eva* : in the Self only, तुष्यति *tushyati* : is delighted, यत्र *yatra* : where, स्थितः *sthitah* : established in, अयम् *ayam* : this yogi, यत् *yat* :

which (sukham), अतीन्द्रियम् *atindriyam* : transcending the senses, बुद्धिग्राह्यम् *buddhigrahyam* : understandable by the intellect, आत्यन्तिकम् *atyantikam* : infinite, तत् सुखम् *tat sukham* : that bliss, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, च *cha* : and, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah* : from experience of Self, न एव चलति *na eva chalati* : does not even move, यम् *yam* : which, लब्ध्वा *labdhva* : possessing, अपरम् *aparam* : other, लाभम् *labham* : gain, ततः *tatah* : than that, अधिकम् *adhikam* : more, न मन्यते *na manyate* : does not think, यस्मिन् *yasmin* : in which, स्थितः *sthitah* : established, गुरुणा *guruna* : by great, दुःखेनापि *duhkhena api* : sorrow even, न विचालयते *na vichalayate* : is not shaken, दुःखसायोगवियोगम् *duhkhasyamyogaviyogam* : freedom from sorrow, तम् *tam* : that, योगसम्ज्ञितम् *yogasamjritam* : called yoga, union with Self, विद्यात् *vidyat* : (the yogi) should know, सयोगः *sah yogah* : that yoga, अनिर्विण्णेतसा *anirvinna-chetasa* : with undesponding mind, निश्चयेन *nischayena* : with determination, योक्तव्यः *yoktavyah* : should be attained.

Substance : Where the mind rests restrained by the practice of *yoga*, and where the self seeing the Self is delighted in the Self; and where established, the *yogi* knows that bliss which transcends the senses, which is understandable by the purified intellect only, and from the experience of Self does not even move; possessing which, he does not think any other gain greater than that; in which established he is not shaken even by great sorrow; that should be known by the term *yoga*, and that *yoga* which is free from sorrow should be attained by the undesponding and determined mind.

Commentary : These four verses should be taken together. The excellence of *Dhyanyoga* by which union with Self is attained and the *Atmic* state is experienced, is explained here.

When the mind merges in *Atma*, man experiences supreme peace and bliss. That is the goal of life. But the perfectly

controlled mind only can go near *Atma* and merge in it. The mind should be purified and withdrawn from the sense-objects. How to purify and control the mind? By the practice of *yoga* it should be controlled. Just as the ordinary man wastes his life in worldly pursuits (*Vishayaseva*) - the wise man spends his life usefully in '*Yogaseva*'. So let '*Vishayaseva*' be transformed into '*Yogaseva*', and let man thus attain the highest.

By the practice of *yoga*, the seeker perceives *Atma*. *Atma* is not a theoretical proposition to be comprehended by vain logic and argument. It is the Reality which can be seen (i. e.) brought into one's own consciousness. The idea is that *Atma* is not like a material object which is seen with the eyes, and yet it can be known by direct experience. Seeing means experience. Nothing else can reveal the Self except the purified mind.

Where is this *Atma*, the Lord? *Atma* is in one's own self. The searchlight of the mind should be focussed on one's own heart, because *Atma*, the Lord, is there. He is nearest to us, nearer than anything else external or internal. We are in Him and He is in us. This idea should give us invincible strength in our *sadhana*. What is it that one gains by unveiling *Atma* in himself? He comes to possess supreme joy. Having tired himself out by seeking for petty pleasures here and there, he rests himself in his own Self and then he finds the treasure for which he has been searching everywhere.

What is the nature of the joy felt in *Atma*? It is infinite and transcendental; it is to be comprehended by the purified intellect. When the intellect is purified, it discards its enveloping ignorance, and is transformed into the Self. The bliss of the Self is experienced directly. It can never be felt by those whose minds are externalised by contact with sense-objects. How can intellect comprehend the Atmic *Ananda*? Though the intellect is also an organ of the mind, yet when it attains perfect purity, it discards its material form and assumes the form of Brahman. It is just like a salt-doll merging in the sea. When the salt-doll touches the sea, does it retain its former shape? No. Similarly, the intellect, when it is purified, becomes That. There is no one

who does not possess the intellect. Only it is not pure. It is deluded by *avidya*, and many impure 'vasanas' inhere in it. What the seeker has to do is to wash it, clean it, make it sharp and bright, so that it can perceive the Reality as it is. The bliss of the Self is infinite (*atyanutikam*) because it is unlike any other joy derived from worldly objects through the senses. The seeker should learn not to hanker after wretched short-lived pleasures. Having once experienced the *Atmic Ananda*, never again does man move away from it. True. Does the bee drinking honey from a full blown lotus, leaves it and go away to some other withered flower? When a man possesses the real thing, be it a jewel or a flower, does he hanker after its image in a photograph or a picture? If he does so, it only means that he is not in possession of the real thing. When a man thinks of dream-pleasures, it only shows that he is not fully awakened from sleep.

Having attained the Self-state, the sage does not think of obtaining any other thing in this world or in any other. Even the position of Indra is nothing to him, not to speak of all the wealth, position and power of this world. Worldly things are momentary, and even if they are permanent, the human body with which they are to be enjoyed is itself subject to death at any moment. Let people cultivate faith in the Lord's teaching and stop begging for foolish pleasures which they have had through innumerable births, which are repeating themselves endlessly without their being aware of it. How many times in previous births one had wife and children? How many times was he on the crest of the wave of success, and how many times was he plunged in the depths of despair? These things have come to beings innumerable times, but they are not able to recollect them. They have been here millions of times, and gone through the endless series of births and deaths. Knowing this, does any man thirst and hunger for insipid things? No. There is only one thing that man should attain, and that is the Supreme Reality.

The sage who has reached the plane of *Atma* is not moved even by the greatest disaster. We see people who are upset even

by the slightest inconvenience or discomfort. There is the constant fear of losing the body, fear of poverty, fear of shame and disgrace, and a host of subtle fears which cause misery to man, however highly placed and powerful he may be. The sage alone is free from fear, because he has seen and known the imperishable Reality. Nothing can throw him off his balance. He will face the worst form of disease, dishonour, death without the least trace of physical or mental disturbance. He is immovable established in the Self. There is no other way by which the ills and evils of life could be overcome.

Who can attain this Self-state? It is attained by him who is undespondent and determined. The aspirant should not be deterred by any obstacle or difficulty on the spiritual path. He should have supreme self-reliance. 'I will attain That, whatever may happen,'—thus should he think always. Despondency, timidity and diffidence - these feelings should not be allowed to weaken the mind. Whatever may be the obstacles in *Sadhana*, the aspirant should not give up hope. The power of *Maya* is infinite, and yet for the determined self who has obtained the grace of the *Guru* and the Lord nothing is impossible.

Question : By what is the mind sustained ?

Answer : By the practice of *Yoga* (*Yogaseva*).

Question : Which mind is merged in Atma ?

Answer : The mind withdrawn from the senses and purified.

Question : By what is Atma perceived ?

Answer : By the purified mind and intellect.

Question : Where ?

Answer : In one's own self.

Question : What is the fruit of knowing Atma ?

Answer : Supreme bliss - *Moksha*.

Question : What is the nature of Atmananda ?

Answer : It is infinite, and it transcends the senses.

Question : If it transcends the senses how to know it ?

Answer : By the purified mind (*Buddhigrahyam*)

Question : What will the self-realised man do ?

Answer : He does not move away from it.

Question : What is the highest good for man?

Answer : The possession of *Atma* (*Atmaprapti*).

Question : What is the sign of self-realisation ?

Answer : He is not affected even by the greatest sorrow.

Question : So, what is the way to overcome sorrow ?

Answer : Attainment of *Atma*

Question : What is that Atmic state ?

Answer : It has not the slightest touch of sorrow.

Question : How can man attain it ?

Answer : By the undevoted and determined mind.

The process of Dhyana is explained.

24. सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४

25. शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २५

*Samkalpa prabhavan kamamstyaktva sarvan asheshatah ॥
manasai 've 'ndriya gramam viniyamya samantatah ॥ 24*

*Sanaih-sanairuparamed buddhya dhritigrhitaya ।
atmasamsthān manah kritva na kimchid api chintayet ॥*

Meaning : संकल्पप्रभवान् *samkalpaprabhavan* : born in the ego-centric will, कामान् *kaman* : desires, सर्वान् *sarvan* : all, अशेषतः *asheshatah* : completely, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having abandoned,

मनसा एव *manasa eva* : with the mind only, इन्द्रियग्रामम् *indriya-gramam* : the group of senses, समन्ततः *samanata* : on all sides, विनियम्य *vinyayam* : restraining, धृतिग्रीहितया *dhritgrihitya* : held firmly, बुद्ध्या *budhya* : with the intellect, शनैः शनैः *sanai sanaih* : slowly and slowly, उपरमेत् *uparamet* : attain quietude, मनः *manah* : the mind, आत्मसमस्थम् *atmasamstham* : established in Atma, कृत्वा *kritva* : having made, किञ्चिदपि न चिन्तयेत् *kimchidapi na chintayet* : at all (other than Atma) should not think.

Substance: Having abandoned all desires born of the ego-centric will, having restrained the group of senses with mind from all sides, one should attain quietude slowly and slowly by the intellect held firmly. And then, fixing the mind in *Atma*, he should not think of anything else at all.

Commentary: In the early part of this Discourse, the external aspects of meditation, like the place, the seat, and the posture, have been explained. Now, the Lord explains the internal process of *Dhyana Yoga*.

All the desires should be given up completely. What is the source of these desires ? They are born of the ego-centric will (*sankalpa*). So desires are described as born from *Sankalpa* (*sankalpa prabhavah*). When there is no *sankalpa* (thought) there is no desire. By discrimination and dispassion, it is possible to root out *Sankalpa*. All desires without reservation should be given up completely. We have to note that whenever the Lord speaks of desires, he invariably refers to 'all' of them, because he knows that one desire leads to another, and that to a third, and they would extend to infinity if they are allowed to breed. So, the instruction is that all desires should be abandoned completely. When there are no desires, the mind is calm and collected, and it can be made to rest in the Self. So for *Dhyana Yoga* abandoning all desires is essential.

The whole group of sense, should be restrained from all sides. Even here, the Lord insists on total restraint of all the

senses, not partial control of all the senses or complete control of some of the senses. The words '*indriyagramam*' and '*samanatah*' show that in *Dhyana Yoga* total control of every one of the senses is essential. The mind is the instrument of control. The senses are like wild horses, and the mind is the strong rein to check their turbulent behaviour. If the mind is pure and godly, what can the senses do? They are automatically brought under control. If the mind is impure on account of past *samskaras*, then they draw the mind away from the spiritual path. So it is said 'be controlled by purity of mind acquired through discrimination and dispassion'.

Then the aspirant should attain quietude by the intellect held firmly. This stillness or quietude is the effect of shutting out the external world by perfect sense-control. Intellect is higher than the mind (*Manastu para buddhīh*). But the intellect will be powerless to assert itself if it does not function with firmness, courage, and determination. The rebellious mind will overpower the intellect and make it dance to its tune. If the mind is like a tiger, the intellect should be like the lion. Then only the mind yields to the immovable determining will of the intellect, and turns inside to see the Self.

The process of sense-control and mind-control should be carried on slowly and slowly (*sanaih-sanaih*). Force should be avoided. The mind should be turned inwards by long slow steady practice. It should be persuaded and induced to get back to its source, from the objective world where it has wandered about for many many lives without check or control or guidance. On account of past momentum, the mind runs out inspite of one's best effort to stop it. One may hold it by violence, but it cannot be for long. Again when the control is relaxed, it runs in its old grooves. By violent repression, the inner personality may be damaged. So persuasion is the only way. Let the mind be told that what it is running after is after all a mirage, that if it turns inwards it would find a nobler and higher treasure, and that its external attachments have brought only pain and suffering. Thus thinking discriminating and reasoning the mind will gradually change its former attitude.

As it finds rest and peace within, it would be induced to rest in the Self longer and longer. The practice should be carried on day after day, and only then the mind comes to rest. Slow and steady wins the race.

The teaching of the Gita contains the essence of all *sastras* and the aim of all kinds of *Sadhana*. The mind should be fixed in *Atma*, and nothing else should be thought of. As the mind contemplates *Atma*, it is more and more absorbed in it, till finally it is dissolved like a bit of salt in the sea.

Dhyana in its highest stage is oneness with the object of meditation. So there is nothing other than *Atma* in that state. If the mind deviates from its aim even for a second, by the intrusion of some thought, *Dhyana* is interrupted. That is why the Lord declares that nothing other than *Atma* should be allowed to crop up in the mind during meditation.

This exhortation of the Gita should be remembered and thought of by all the seekers—"Establish the mind in *Atma* and do not think of any thing else," May this be practically realised by all earnest seekers on the spiritual path.

Question : *What are the conditions to be adopted by one practising Dhyana Yoga ?*

Answer : He should give up all desires completely. He should restrain the senses and the mind from all sides. He should turn the mind inwards by the control of the determined intellect and fix it in the Self. He should not think of anything other than *Atma*.

Question: *From whence do desires arise ?*

Answer : Desires arise from the ego-centric will.

Question : *What is the type of intellect needed for controlling the mind ?*

Answer : The intellect should be firm and undespondent.

Question : *How should Dhyana be performed ?*

Answer : *Dhyana* on the Self should be done slowly and slowly.

The distractions of the mind should be controlled by persistent effort.

26. यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ २६

*Yato-yato nischarati manas chanchalam asthiram ।
tatas-tato niyamyai'tad atmanyeva vasam nayet ॥ 26*

Meaning : चञ्चलम् *chamchalam* : moving, अस्थिरम् *asthiram*: unsteady, मनः *manah* : mind, यतः यतः *yatah yatah* : from whatever cause towards whichever sense-objects, निश्चरति *nischarati* : wanders away, ततः ततः *tatah tatah* : from that, एतत् *etat* : the mind, नियम्य *niyamya* : controlling, (drawing the mind back), आत्मनि एव *atmani eva* : in Atma only, वशम् *vasam*: under control, नयेत् *nayet* : (let him) bring.

Substance : Towards whatsoever sense-objects the moving and unsteady mind wanders away from them all it should be withdrawn and fixed in *Atma*.

Commentary : In the previous verse it is said that having fixed the mind in *Atma* nothing else should be thought of. If the mind wanders away from the target of meditation what should be done ? This question is answered here. The Gita is a practical science, and so every kind of difficulty which the seeker has to face is stated, and explained, and the method pointed out to overcome it.

The mind is restless and unsteady. In the beginning it is never fixed on the object of meditation. It runs away and begins to think of one thousand things of worldly life. The seeker may become despondent that it would be never able to acquire steadiness in meditation. But there is no cause for despondency. The Lord here advises the aspirant to bring back the mind again and again, and fix it in *Atma*. This practice should go on as long as the mind deviates from *Atma*. But as long as the mind is tempted by objects of enjoyment, it would

33)

naturally run after them. So, one should enlighten the mind to understand the painful nature of worldly enjoyments (*dukhadoshanudarsanam*). When the mind thus understands their worthlessness and painful character, it does not run after them. As the mind rests in the Self, it experiences the higher bliss of peace, and then it would not wander away from the 'lakshya' (*Atma*).

Therefore the aspirant has to observe the activities of the mind carefully. The ignorant man identifies himself with the mind, and so he is not able to understand how the mind is misleading him in a hundred ways. The seeker gains the knowledge that the mind is betraying him, and so he looks upon its vagaries with care and caution. By observing and examining the mind, he neutralises its evil force. Desire is a form of the mind. When desires arise they should be relentlessly scrutinised and rejected. Then *Atma* alone shines and real peace floods the heart. So the Lord here states that the mind should be trained to rest in *Atma* by ceaseless practice.

Question : *What is the nature of the mind ?*

Answer : It is restless and unsteady.

Question : *When the mind wanders away in meditation what should be done ?*

Answer : It should be brought back again and again and fixed in *Atma*.

The reward of 'Atmanishtha' is declared.

27. प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।

उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्पयत् ॥

२७

*Prasantamanasam hyena n yogina n sukha n uttanam
upaiti santa rajasam brahma bhutam akalmasam ॥ 27*

Meaning : प्रशान्तमनसम् *prasantamanasam* : of tranquil mind, शान्तरजसम् *santarajasam* : of subdued Rajasic qualities like kama and krodha, ब्रह्मभूतम् *brahmabhutam* : whoh as become one with Brahman, अकल्पयत् *akalmasham* : free from

evil, एनं योगिनम् *enam yoginam* : to this yogi, उत्तमम् *uttamam* : supreme, सुखम् *sukham* : joy, उपैति हि *upaiti hi* : comes indeed.

Substance : To this *Yogi* of tranquil mind, of subdued Rajas, who has become *Brahman*, free from evil, comes supreme joy indeed.

Commentary : The *Yogi* who enjoys supreme bliss is described here. The happiness that one enjoys in the material world is not the highest. There is no fulness of joy in the objective world. All the worldly pleasures are conditioned by time, place, and circumstances. When these change the pleasures themselves become pains. Even the joy of *Indra* has limitation and is subject to time. It comes and goes. The joy of *Atma* alone is beyond time and place and is not affected by any change of circumstances. The wise man naturally seeks for the best and the highest. The *Yogi* who is tranquil in mind, in whom Rajasic tendencies like *Kama* and *Krodha* are brought to rest, who is free from evil, enjoys supreme joy. While all the people are running hither and thither, doing this and that, in order to secure the elusive phantom of delight - and all the time missing it - to the *Yogi* who lives in *Brahman*, joy, the best and the highest, comes of its own accord and possesses him !

The mind should become pure (*akalmasham*). If anybody opens a house which has been uninhabited for a long time, he finds in it dust, cobwebs, rats, bats, scorpions and other poisonous reptiles. The whole house should be cleaned many times, and all the undesirable occupants driven out, before it is made fit for habitation. Even so, the mind of man, through several births, has been enveloped in darkness, and snakes of *Kama* and *Krodha*, rats of *Raga* and *Dvesha*, have found convenient breeding place in it. Now for the first time, the awakened man has to start the work of cleansing the whole mass of ev'l, with all its inhibitions, prejudices, superstitions etc.. When . becomes pure, *Atma*, the Lord, would manifest H' self there. By peace and purity, man realises *Brahman*. The *Jiva* becomes *Siva* himself. The *chitta* (mind) when it is

purified becomes Chit (Knowledge) (i. e.) it becomes one with *Atma*. Such a *Yogi* inherits his birth-right of *Brahmananda*.

Question : *What is the highest joy ?*

Answer : The joy of *Atma* (*Moksha*).

Question : *Who attains it ?*

Answer : The man of tranquil mind, free from evil and *Rajasic* tendencies, attains it.

Question : *What then is the way to attain the highest joy?*

Answer : To keep the mind always tranquil and calm, to eliminate desire and anger and all other evil attachments, is the way to attain that supreme bliss.

28. युज्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥

२८

*Yunjan evam sadatmanam yogi vigata kalmashah !
sukhena brahma samsparsam atyantam sukham asnute || 28*

Meaning : एवम् *evam* : thus, सदा *sada* : always, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : mind, युज्जन् *yunjan* : uniting with *Atma* (practising *yoga*), विगतकल्मषः *vigatakalmashah* : free from evil, योगी *yogi* : the *yogi*, सुखेन *sukhena* : easily, ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शम् *brahmasamsparsam* : realisation of *Brahman*, अत्यन्तम् *atyantam* : infinite, सुखम् *sukham* : happiness, अश्नुते *asnute* : attains.

Substance : Thus the *yogi* free from evil, practising *yoga* (union with *Atma*) always, attains easily the highest bliss resulting from contact with *Brahman*.

Commentary : Several people ask “What is the easiest way to attain *Brahman*? ” The Lord answers the question here. Two practices should be followed. (1) The mind should be free from evil thoughts and tendencies. (2) It should be brought to dwell in *Atma* by *Dhyana Yoga*.

The Lord emphasises the need for absolute purity of mind everywhere in the Gita. *Atmajnana* cannot dawn on an impure mind. The evil mind cannot merge in *Atma*. Attachment to material things is diametrically opposite to *Atma* which is unconditioned and uncontaminated by any other things. As the mind becomes purer and purer, it comes into contact with *Brahman* which is the source of the highest bliss. So purification of mind, and meditation on *Atma* are both mentioned here as the path to supreme joy.

The practice should be continued constantly (*sada*). That is, in whatever manner, a man may be engaged, the memory of *Atma* should not be slip out of the mind. Such a *yogi* attains *Brahmasakshatkara*. No worldly object however valuable it may be can help man to touch the Reality. How can a reflection touch the Reality ? How can matter possess the spirit ? Only the pure mind can approach *Atma*, can become united with Him. In that state one experiences indescribable bliss. It is infinite and unlike anything that is enjoyed in all the worlds. The bliss of Hiranyagarbha is also like a drop in the ocean of Brahma-nanda—so declare the *Upanishads*. Any one can attain it even in this life by following the conditions prescribed by the Lord.

Question : *What is the easy path to attain the bliss of liberation ?*

Answer : To remove all evil *samskaras* from the mind, to engage the mind constantly in the contemplation of *Atma*, is the easiest means to attain the highest bliss.

Question : *What is the nature of Atmic Ananda ?*

Answer : It is infinite and is of the same essence as Brahman.

How the yogi acts in practical life is explained.

29. सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

२९

*Sarvabhutastham atmanam sarvabhuutani cha 'tmani ।
ikshate yogayuktatma saryatra samadarshanah ॥* 29

Meaning : योगयुक्तात्मा *yogayuktatma* : he who is harmonised in *yoga*, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : everywhere, समदर्शनः *samadarsanah* : seeing the same (Atma), आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Self, सर्वभूतस्थम् *sarvabhutastham* : existing in all, सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhutani* all beings, आत्मनिच अ *atmanicha* : and in Self, इक्षते *ikshate* : sees.

Substance : The sage harmonised in *yoga* sees the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self; he sees the same every where.

Commentary : Here the word *yoga* means union with *Atma*, the merging of the individual self in *Brahman*. The sage who has attained this state of *yoga* sees everything in his own Self, and his own Self in everything. He looks upon every thing with an equal eye. Let us understand the position.

The whole of the objective universe is super-imposed on the basic universal consciousness— *Atma* or Self or *Brahman*. As the dream is superimposed on the consciousness of the wakeful man, as the snake is superimposed on the rope, so the entire universe is superimposed on *Atma*. What is superimposed cannot in reality be different from the original substance. The snake is not different from the rope. It has no separate existence. Even so, the seeker who has realised *Brahman* in himself, finds the same everywhere. This vision is possible only for the sage who has attained union with *Brahman* (*Atma*) by the practice of *Dhyana Yoga*, or any other *Yoga*. The sage has discovered that he is not the body, and so instead of limiting himself to the body and seeing everything as separate fragments, he sees the all-pervading *Atma* in himself and in all things. Separateness comes from identification with the body. As body, one is different from everything else, and everything is different from every other thing. This separateness is born of ignorance which binds man to the body. When this ignorance is dispelled, man comes to know that he is *Atma*, and *Atma* is universal. So he finds that he as *Atma* is all that exists, and all that exists is himself as *Atma*. This vision removes all conflicts and tensions everywhere.

The sage is therefore full of love and compassion for all, and he takes no credit for being generous and large-hearted because love for others is only love of Self in all things. It has been taught that selfless love for others is the highest morality, highest ethical principle. The explanation for this ethical doctrine is the spiritual concept of Self-realisation. Why do people advocate love for all ? It is because there is only one Self in all. Love reveals this oneness. The *Yogi* knows the secret of life and the human personality. He knows that a separate existence for himself and for everyone else is only a myth and a superstition. What exists in all is *Atma*, and *Atma* alone exists. This is the basis of all morality and the explanation of all love.

The seeker who believes this, though he has not attained direct vision, should cultivate an equal attitude towards all beings. He should free himself from anger, envy, jealousy and all uncharitable thoughts. He should have a large-hearted friendly feeling towards all.

Question : *What qualities should the Yogi possess ?*

Answer : He should look up on all beings with an equal eye, and see the Self in all, and all in the Self.

He who sees God everywhere and finds everything in God, is ever with God.

30. यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

३०

*Yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pasyati !
tasya 'ham na pranasyami sa cha me na pranasyati ॥ 30*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : in all beings, माम् *mam* : Me (Atma), पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, सर्वं *sarvam* *cha* : and all beings, मयि *mayi* : in Me (Atma), पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, तस्य *tasya* : to him, अहम् *aham* : I (the Lord), न प्रणश्यामि *na pranasyami* : do not vanish, स च *sah cha* : and he, मे *me* : to me, न प्रणश्यति *na pranasyah* : does not vanish.

Substance : He who sees Me in all beings and all beings in me never becomes lost to me, nor do I become lost to him.

Commentary : Lord Krishna is Paramatma in all, and so the *Yogi* of universal vision sees the Lord everywhere and every thing in the Lord. When the individual self has become one with *Atma*, the individual and the supreme Self live together. How can one be lost to the other ? Here the word ‘*pasyati*’ does not mean seeing with the physical eye. Seeing is experiencing the Self everywhere.

From the point of view of the devotee the Lord is Paramatma. It is explained here how the Lord’s grace works on the devotee. He who sees the Lord everywhere receives the fulness of his grace. The Lord is ever alive to the devotee, and the devotee is ever alive to the Lord. No doubt all are children of the Lord. But the devotee has given up his child’s play with material things, and yearns to live with the Lord. So the Lord has him ever under his loving eye and watchful care. Of what avail is it to spend a whole life-time seeking for the favour of some petty worldly person when the Lord Himself is ever near the individual, ready to confer the highest blessings of life? Why not approach Him ? Through *Jnana*, equal vision and purity the Lord’s grace could be obtained in full. Having once obtained it, never is it lost again. To see the Lord in all and the Lord in all things is the aim of *Yogi*. This is *Sarvatmadrishti*.

Question : *What is the effect of union with Atma ?*

Answer : The *Yogi* sees the Lord in all things, and lives ever with the Lord.

The Yogi of universal vision lives in the Lord, whatever he does.

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

*Sarvabhuta sthitam yo mam bhajatyekatvamasthitah ।
sarvatha varta mano 'pi sa yogi mahi vartate ॥ 31*

Meaning : सर्वभूतस्थितम् *sarvabhutasthitam* : abiding in all beings, माम् *mam* : Me, यः *yah* : who, एकत्वम् *ekatvam* : in unity, आस्थितः *asthitah* : established, भजति *bhajati* :

worship, स योगी *sah yogi* : that yogi, सर्वथा वर्तमानः अपि *sarvadha vartamanah api* : in every way remaining even, मयिः *Mayi* : in Me, वर्तते *vartate* : abides.

Substance : The *Yogi* who worships Me abiding in all beings and who is established in unity abides in me in whatever manner he is acting.

Commentary : Where is God ? What is the way to establish oneself in Him ? These questions are answered here. God exists everywhere, in all beings of the universe. Nothing exists where He is not. Like cream in milk, like honey in flowers, like sugar in sugar-cane, God is present in everything. So knowing that God is present in all, one should not harm others. One should have friendly feeling and kindness for all beings, and do service to them. This would be worship of the Lord.

The *Yogi* who has realised the oneness of all beings by perceiving the Lord as the inner reality, lives forever in the Lord. Just as the same Sun is reflected in a thousand different globules of water, just as the same man can play different parts in a drama by change of dress, just as the same gold exists in a hundred varieties of jewels, just as the same clay appears in pots of different shape and size, even so, the Lord exists in everything as the undifferentiated substratum. To worship Him and meditate on Him is the way to reach Him.

The *Yogi* does not always remain in meditation. There are times when he acts in the world. Will he then lose contact with the Lord ? This doubt is cleared here. Though the *Yogi* is engaged in a hundred practical works in the world, he lives in the Lord. This is the Lord's declaration. Like the mariner's compass whose needle always points to the North, the mind of the *Yogi* is always in union with the Lord, though he is acting in the world in a variety of ways. This becomes natural to him by long practice. So he never commits the error of thinking that he is different from others, though from a physical angle of view, every being is separate from every thing else. Absorption

in *samadhi* or work in the world are the same for him, because he sees the same Reality in both. This is the secret of all mighty works performed by the perfected *Yogi* for the benefit of mankind. Writing good books, delivering lectures, conversing and explaining the scriptures, relieving the poor and the suffering, organising people for holy purposes, moving and acting with common humanity, the perfected *yogi* lives in the Lord only, and has no idea of his being a separate individual.

In every way : The word has to be carefully understood. The Lord has not prescribed the nature of action here. But it is self-evident that wilful and sinful actions are not intended. The man who acts in evil ways is neither a *Jnani* nor a *Bhakta*. The perfected has already transcended all *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* propensities. His actions are born of *sativa guna*. So they are all pure and helpful, never impure and injurious. It is intended to suggest that the *yogi* may remain in the ecstasy of meditation or may be actively working in the world, but in both cases he sees and lives in the Lord.

Question : *Where is God ?*

Answer : He is in all beings.

Question : *What should man do to attain Him ?*

Answer : He should cultivate equal and universal vision of the Lord in all things.

Question : *How should he work in the world ?*

Answer : Whether he is absorbed in *samadhi* or works in the world, he sees the Lord everywhere and abides in him.

He who sees all beings like unto himself is the best of all.

32. आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र सम पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

३२

*Atmaupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati yo 'rjuna !
sukham va yadi va duhkham sa yogi paramo matah ॥ 32*

Meaning : अर्जुन arjuna : O Arjuna, सर्वत्र sarvatra : in all beings, सुखं वा sukham va : or happiness, यदि वा दुःखम् yadi va duhkam : or even sorrow, आत्मौपायेन् atmaupamyena : like unto himself, समम् samam : the same, यः yah : who, पश्यति pasyati : sees, स योगी sah yogi : that yogi, परमः paramah : the best, मतः matah : is thought to be.

Substance : He who judges pleasure or pain everywhere, by the same standard as he applies to himself, that *yogi* is thought to be the highest.

Commentary : The practical aspect of *Vedanta* is emphasised here. It is in action that philosophy has to be tested and proved. It may be easily said "All is Self, the Lord is all." How then should he act in the world ? That is the question. The sincere aspirant should be true to himself in word and deed. He should speak only that which he knows, and practise that which he speaks. So should religious spirit permeate all the words and actions of its votaries. Otherwise their words are of no use. It is the divergence between theory and practice that brings disrepute to a person. The man who speaks religion should be exemplary in his conduct. When it is accepted that *Atma* is the reality in all beings, what should be the practical conduct of the *yogi* ? How should he think, feel and act ? He should intimately feel that the joys and sorrows of all beings are just the same as his own. The pangs of hunger, and the bereavement of other people are of the same nature as his own. He understands the sufferings of others not only of men but of animals and other beings in the same spirit as his own suffering. He shares the gladness of others, and he suffers the pains of others. Such universality of feeling distinguishes the *yogi* of the highest perfection. This is religion brought into the field of practical action.

The Lord exhorts mankind - "Oh Ye mortals desirous of attaining me ! Love others as you love yourself, feel for others as you feel for yourself. Be full of kindness and compassion, and then only are you one with Me." Thesis like 'All is

Brahman' (*Saryam Khalvidam Brahmi*) has no meaning if the heart of man remains closed to the pains and pleasures of others. Man must be able to identify himself with others and partake of their joys and sorrows. The brotherhood of man taught in all religions is good. But here, the truth is enlarged to embrace all creation. The Gita and the Upanishads declare the unity of the whole universe by the presence of the Supreme Lord in everything. The teachings of Gita have broken up all barriers not only between man and man, but also between man and all other beings. The *yogi* should see the same *Atma* everywhere. He is the best of *yogis* who has attained this intimate identity with every being in the universe.

Arjuna confesses his inability to practise this Dhyana Yoga as his mind is restless.

अर्जुन उवाच

33. योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदनं ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥

३३

Arjuna uvacha

*Yo 'yam yogas tvaya proktah samyena madhusudana ।
etasya 'ham na pasyami chanchalatvat sthitim sthiram ॥ 33*

अर्जुन उवाच - *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : मधुसूदनं *madhusudana* : O Krishna, साम्येन *samyena* : attainable by equality of mind, यः अयं योगः *yah ayam yogah* : which this *yoga*, त्वया *tvaya* : by you, प्रोक्तः *proktah* : taught, एतस्य *etasya* : of this (*yoga*), स्थिराम् *sthiram* : firm, स्थितिम् *sthitim* : continuance, चञ्चलत्वात् *chanchalatvat* : on account of unsteadiness, of mind, अहम् *aham* : I, न पश्यामि *na pasyami* : am not able to see.

Substance : *Arjuna said* : O Krishna ! This *Dhyanyoga* taught by you and attainable by equality of mind, I am not able to see on account of unsteadiness of mind.

Commentary : Arjuna interrupts the Lord's discourse by submitting his own incapacity to attain the *yoga* which requires equanimity of mind as the condition of its practice and achievement. Evidently Arjuna is conscious of his own inadequate power of concentration on the reality. Every common human being is in the same position as Arjuna. So his question is the question of all human beings with very rare exceptions. As it is said already, Arjuna stands as a representative of the common man, though of higher culture, in his search for truth. Unsteadiness of mind is the basic problem for all seekers. If the mind is brought to a state of firmness, any *yoga* is practicable. Otherwise nothing is possible. Arjuna opens his mind to the Lord and confesses his weakness without reservation. So should the disciple place before the *Guru* his difficulties frankly. The sick man should explain his bodily condition without reservation to the doctor. Even those secrets which he would not reveal to others should be explained to the physician. Only then can the physician prescribe the correct medicine.

By equality of mind : We understand that *Dhyanyoga* demands one-pointed concentration of the entire mind in *Atma*. Unless the hand is steady one cannot pass the thread through the eye of the needle. Unless one sits steady and motionless, no photograph can be properly taken. So the object of concentration cannot become clear unless the roving mind comes to a standstill.

The word 'Samyena' may also be interpreted as equality of vision (*Sarvatmadrishti*) mentioned in the previous verse.

The fickle nature of the mind is described by Arjuna.

34. चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्णप्रमाथि बलवदृद्धम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुश्करम् ॥

34

*Chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramathi balavaddridham ।
tasya 'ham nigraham manye vayoriva sudushkaram ॥ 34*

Meaning : कृष्ण Krishna : O Krishna ! मनः manah : mind, चञ्चलम् हि chanchalam hi : restless verily, प्रमाथि pramathi :

turbulent, बलवत् *balavat* : strong, द्विषु हि *dhridham hi* : verily unyielding, तस्य *tasya* : of it (mind), निग्रहम् *nigraham* : control, वायोः इव *vayoh iva* : as the wind, सुदुष्करम् *sudushkaram* : very difficult, अहम् *aham* : I, मन्ये *manye* : think.

Substance : O Krishna ! Verily, restless is the mind, turbulent, straying and unyielding, and I think it is as difficult to control it as the wind.

Commentary : *Yoga* (Union with *Atma*) is possible only when the mind is steady. But the mind is most infirm and unsteady. The body and senses are harassed continuously by its restlessness. Peace is practically impossible when the heart is churned by the mind like the milky ocean by the *Mandara* mountain. Having fed and strengthened itself on worldly things for several births, it has acquired great power and defies all attempts to bring it under control. The nature of the mind is described here by four attributes. It is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding. Every man knows the vagaries of the mind. The elders compare it to a monkey, drunk and stung by a scorpion. Those who practice meditation know how the mind rebels and defies discipline. Arjuna compares it to the wind.

It is strong and cannot be held or directed as one wishes. 'Sudushkaram' is the word used by Arjuna, meaning that it is very difficult to control the mind.

Question : *What is the nature of the mind ?*

Answer : It is restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate.

The Lord explains the method of control.

श्री भगवानुवाच

35. असंजयं महाभाषो यतो दुनिर्ग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्युसेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृणते ॥

३५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Asamsayam mahabhiho mano du-nigrithm cha'm ।

abhyusena tu kaunteya vairagyenu cha grihyate ॥ - 35 -

श्री भगवानुवाच—Sri Bhagavanuvacha : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! मनः *mahah* : mind, दुर्निग्रहम् *durnigraham* : difficult to restrain, चलम् *chalam* : restless, असंशयम् *asamsayam* : doubtless, कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! अभ्यासेन तु *abhyasena tu* : But by practice, विराग्येण *vairagyena cha* : and by dispassion, गृह्यते *grihyate* : (mind) is controlled.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Doubtless the mind is restless and difficult to restrain, but by practice and dispassion it is controlled.

Commentary : The Lord accepts here that the task of restraining the mind is very difficult because of its restless nature. But there is no need to despair. It can be controlled by practice and dispassion. The great teachers point out that there are ways and means of overcoming the difficulties in the control of the mind. The Lord while admitting the mind's restlessness, encourages Arjuna that there is a way to control it, and the way is practice and dispassion. One need not fear the strength of an enemy, provided he arms himself with a mightier weapon. What if the elephant is strong, it is enough if one holds the iron rod. Lions and tigers are strong, but what of it? A powerful gun is enough to overpower them. Thus the Lord wants his disciple not to become panicky and submit to the *tyranny* of the mind. Though difficult, it is not impossible. It is not difficult to conquer Mount Everest ? And yet man has set his foot on the snowy peak. Is it not difficult to land on the moon? And yet man stepped on the moon. The achievements of man prove that things difficult are not things impossible of attainment. So the nature of the mind, be it what it is, is not impossible to overcome.

This part of the *Gita* is of the greatest importance for all those who wish to tread the spiritual path. Enslaved by which man from time immemorial is undergoing torments of earthly existence, that which has been the cause of the endless series of births and deaths, that which stands as the mighty barrier.

between man and the realisation of his real Self—the mind and its conquest are explained here by the Lord. The inspiring message of the Lord should encourage every seeker to gird up his loins and pull himself together for the conquest of the apparently impossible obstacle on his way to spiritual glory.

The Lord answers that the mind can be controlled by (1) practice (*abhyasa*), and (2) dispassion (*vairagya*). Patanjali also expressed the same view.

Dispassion (*Vairagya*) means a loathful attitude to the objective world arising out of a knowledge of its short-lived, painful and foul nature. Why should man seek for illusory painful pleasures, when there is eternal *Brahmananda* awaiting him as his birth-right? Human life is short and splits like a bubble. Why should man undergo all the ills and pains of life when perennial joy is his divine inheritance? Why should he yield to the temptations of wealth and luxury, when he knows that they are the very source of fear and suffering? All men long for peace. All men know that peace is not to be found anywhere in the outside world, and cannot be purchased by the weight of gold or height of position. Man really seeks for a purer joy and higher peace. To give up the lower pleasures is easy enough, if the aim of the higher life is strong and convincing.

In the world everything causes fear, and in dispassion alone is fearlessness. When dispassion develops, the mind immediately stops thinking of the external world and it is immediately drawn into the Self. The joy of *vairagya* is real, unobstructed and perennial, because it is the joy of the Self, pure and uncontaminated.

Practice (*Abhyasa*) is the key-note of the Lord's message for all spiritual aspirants. The baby learns to walk by practice, the child learns to read and write by practice, the architect, the painter, the poet, the musician, the sportsman, the athlete—men of all professions acquire perfection by practice. Where practice is less, the achievement is also less. Idleness wins

nothing, and on the spiritual path idleness is the greatest enemy. All worldly gains have been acquired by hard work and constant application. The man who feels shy of labour remains where he is. Men of ordinary talents have risen in life by systematic practice in their professions or skill. That being so, is not practice necessary for attaining the highest *Brahmananda*? Therefore 'practice' says the Lord.

Dispassion aids spiritual *sadhana*, and practice aids to strengthen dispassion. The body and the mind function by habit. If the habits are bad, man ruins himself, if the habits are good, man saves himself. So one should practise and develop good habits. If a man is accustomed to visit a wine bar at a particular time in the day, at that exact hour, the body and mind run for the bottle and nothing can stop him. In the same way, if a man practises meditation at a particular time for a particular period, the body and mind run for it, and nothing can stop him. It is practice. When it is performed systematically and regularly, it becomes automatic, and afterwards no effort is needed to coax the mind and body to do it. As meditation becomes deeper and deeper, the joy felt at that time is so precious that man does not care to think of anything else. He is absorbed in it. So 'practise' says the Lord.

Arjuna is here addressed as mighty-armed (*Mahabaho*). Arjuna is a mighty warrior, a great hero and the Lord suggests that he should be able to control the mind without fear and despondency.

Question : What is the nature of the mind ?

Answer : It is unsteady and difficult to control.

Question : What is the way to control it ?

Answer : Practice and dispassion.

The need for mind-control is emphasised.

36. असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप्य इति मे मतिः ।

वस्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायः ॥

३६

Asamyatatmana yogo duhpriapya iti me matih ।
vasyatmano tu yatata sakyo 'vaptumupayuktah ॥

36

Meaning : असंयतात्मनः *asamyatatmanah* : by him whose mind is not controlled, योगः *yogah* : yoga (union with Self), दुष्प्रापः *dushprapah* : not attainable, इति *iti* : thus, मे *me* : My, मतिः *matih* : idea, वश्यात्मना तु यतता *vasyatmana tu yatata* : but by one of self-control striving, उपायतः *upayatah* : skilfully, अवाप्तुम् *Avaptum* : to obtain, सक्यः *sakyah* : (yoga) is possible.

Substance : It is my idea that *yoga* is not attainable by one whose mind is not controlled; but by one who strives skilfully with controlled mind, *yoga* is possible.

Commentary : The Lord makes it clear that without self-control union with *Atma* is impossible. Only the sage of controlled mind can attain the supreme Being. Whoever desires the highest should control the mind by every means available to him according to his mental predisposition. The mind should let go the fatal embrace in which man is held by the objective world. The bonds should be loosened. Whether it is by discrimination or devotion, by study of the *sastras*, by the teaching of the *Guru*, by personal experience, by observation of other people's lives, in some way or other, the mind should detach itself from the kind of bondage to the external world. Only then, will it be able to turn inwards to look into its own source, the *Atma*, and *yoga* becomes possible.

The Lord has already declared that by practice and dispassion the mind could be controlled. Here again by using the word 'striving' (*yatata*), he is emphasising the need for practice. The weak, the dull, the idle, the negligent can never hope to achieve anything even in worldly matters, much less in spiritual life. Sincere and steady practice is absolutely necessary. The Lord here gives another important idea - 'skilful proceeding' (*Upayatah*). One should be clever and skilful in dealing with the mind. Mere dry discipline may not yield good results. Firmness may not always succeed, and so skill becomes necessary in dealing with a powerful enemy. One should be a good strategist

in spiritual life also. The great commanders advance or withdraw their forces for strategical reasons, and gain ultimate victory. So one should deal with the mind as a deadly foe who should be conquered by firm action or by force or skill. The seeker should have only one aim and that is to understand the peculiar propensity of his own mind, and get it to a state of restfulness in whatever way he considers best.

Let people have faith in the words of the Lord. Let there be no doubt about the success in the attempt, as the Lord is with the aspirant in this holy attempt. By His Grace, discrimination and dispassion will certainly be attained by the *Sadhaka* and self-realisation will be rendered possible for every seeker even in this life.

Question : Who can attain yoga ?

Answer : The man of self-control who strives skilfully attains yoga. For others it is not possible.

Arjuna's doubt about the future of the yogi who dies before attaining the goal.

अर्जुन उवाच

37. अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाचलितमानसः ॥
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥

Arjuna uvacha

*Ayatih sraddhayo 'peto yogachalitamanasah !
apravya yogasamsiddhim kam gatim krishna gacchati ॥ 37*

अर्जुन उवाच - *Arjuna uvacha*-Arjuna said,

Meaning : कृष्ण Krishna : O Krishna ! श्रद्धया sraddhaya : with faith, उपेतः upetah : possessed, अयतिः ayatih : uncontrolled, योगात् yogat : from yoga, चलितमानसः chalitamanasah : having fallen away in mind, योगसंसिद्धिम् yogasamsiddhim : perfection in yoga, अप्राप्य apāpya : not having attained, काम् गतिम् kam gatim : what end, गच्छति gacchati : meet.

Substance : Arjuna said : Though possessing faith, yet uncontrolled, what end does the *yogi* whose mind falls away from *yoga*, meet ?

Commentary : Another doubt, quite natural to all the aspirants, crops up in Arjuna's mind. He presents the case of an aspirant who has faith in the *Guru's* teaching, who is practising self-control, but who passes away before perfection is gained in *yoga*. What will happen to that man ? Where does he go ? Has he any future, or should he start everything afresh ? Will all his struggle and effort go to waste ? This is a very natural doubt, for, most of the aspirants have a deep-seated doubt that they may not be able to attain perfection in this life. Very rarely do we come across the intense type of *yogi* who is determined to get the highest even in this life. So from the point of view of the vast majority of seekers, Arjuna's question has an undisputed relevancy.

Question : *What is Arjuna's question ?*

Answer : The aspirant possessing faith, yet failing to attain perfection in *yoga*, what will happen to him when he dies ?

38. कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥

३८

*Kacchinno'bhayavibhrastas chinnabhramiva nasyati ।
apratistho mahabaho vimudho brahmanah pathi ॥*

38

Meaning : महाबाहो *Mahabaho* : O Krishna ! ब्रह्मणः पथि *brahmanah pathi* : in the way of Brahman, अप्रतिष्ठः *apratisthi-*
shthah : not established in *yoga*, विमूढः *vimudhah* : deluded, उभयविभ्रष्टः *ubhayavibhrashtah* : fallen from both, छिन्नाभ्रमिव *chinnabhramiva* : like a rent cloud, न नश्यति कच्चित् *nasyati kacchit* : not perishes, is it that.

Substance : O Krishna ! Not established in *Yoga*, and deluded in the path of *Brahman*, does he not perish like a rent cloud, fallen from both ?

Commentary : 'Fallen from both' - Both may interpreted as *Svarga* and *Moksha*, or differenlly as *Karma* and *Dhyana*. Arjuna's question is relevant from the stand point of all the aspirants. They have given up all worldly things on the one side, and on the other they have not attained *Moksha*. So, apparently such a man has lost both the worlds. Having given up *Vedic* rites and rituals, he cannot go to *Svarga* and having failed in *Yoga*, he cannot attain *Moksha*. Again it is loosing both the worlds.

The simile 'rent cloud' is appropriate, for no one can trace the existence of the cloud when it is dispersed in the sky. It is lost. Will the *Yogi* who dies imperfect, perish like the cloud and go to nothing ? - is Arjuna's Question.

Arjuna appeals to the Lord to enlighten him.

39. एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेतुमर्हस्याशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥

३९

*Etan me samsayam krishna chettumarhasyaseshatah ।
tvadanyah samsayasya 'sya chetta na hyupapadyate ॥ 39*

Meaning : कृष्ण Krishna : O Krishna ! मे me : my, एतत् etat : this, संशयम् samsayam : doubt, अशेषः Aseshatah : completely, छेतुम् cchettam : to dispel, अर्हसि arhasi : (you) ought to, अस्य asya : of this, संशयस्य samsayasya : doubt, छेता chetta : dispeller, त्वदन्यः tvadanyah : other than you, न उपपद्यते हि na upapadyate hi : I cannot get indeed.

Substance : O Krishna ? You ought to dispel my doubt completely; I cannot get indeed another like you fit to clear it.

Commentary : Arjuna reveals his deep faith and devotion to the Lord in this verse. Arjuna's humility is exemplary. He speaks in the true spirit of a disciple seeking for enlightenment from a great master. Pride and arrogance are utterly objectionable in the presence of God, *Guru*, and elders, Lord

Krishna is Himself the Supreme *Paramatma*; He is omniscient. He alone knows the past, present and future of all beings in all the worlds. So He alone is fit to clear Arjuna's doubt-about the future of the imperfect *Yogi*. Arjuna appeals to the Lord that except He there is no one to dispel his doubt.

The Lord's answer :

श्री भगवानुवाच

40. पर्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिर्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥

४०

Sre Bhagavan uvacha

*Partha nai 've 'ha na 'mutra yinasas tasya vidyate ।
na hi kalyanakrit kaschiddurgatim tata gacchati ॥* 40

श्री भगवानुवाच—*Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord Said,—

Meaning : पर्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna ! तस्य *tasya* : to him, इह *tha* : in this world, विनाशः *yinasah* : destruction, विद्यते न एव *vidyate na eva* : verily is not, अमुत्र न *amutra na* : nor in the next world, तात *tata* : O My son ! कल्याणकृत् *kalyanakrit* : who does good, कश्चित् न *kaschit na* : any one not indeed, दुर्गतिम् *durgatim* : bad state, न गच्छति हि *na gacchati hi* : goes not indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Neither in this world, nor in the next is there destruction for him; O my son ! Never indeed any one who does good ever comes to grief or bad state.

Commentary : The Lord blesses all those who are engaged in good work. Though the aspirant fails to achieve perfection, yet he does not suffer destruction either in this world or in the next. That is the Lord's promise to all seekers. It is like life-giving elixir to all people who are doing good in some form or other. People may doubt whether any good comes to them by being and doing good. In fact, to the ignorant, the world presents the curious spectacle of bad people enjoying more

material comforts than the good and the righteous. But a closer look into the facts of life show that the wicked and the evil-minded are daily undergoing destruction in their own heart of hearts, and they shall be hurled into lower and lower planes of existence. The good live and thrive in the sun-shine of God's grace, though material riches they may not possess. They need have no doubt about their present or future because the Lord here declares that they will never come to a bad state. Let this promise of the Lord be remembered, whenever doubt or fear enters one's heart.

"Do good, your future is assured." This is the Lord's call to all seekers. Though Arjuna's question pertains to the votaries of *Dhyanyoga*, the Lord gives a general answer which embraces all those who are working on the spiritual path in different ways. So the general term (*Kalyana krit*) (Who does good) is used. It is implied that the evil-doers shall suffer a terrible doom here and here-after. So let nobody indulge in sinful activities. The Lord gives the hope that whatever is left undone by the seeker shall be completed by him in a latter life to come.

The Lord addresses his disciple in the most endearing term as 'O my son' (*Tata*). The Lord has a paternal attitude towards all *sadhakas*, and will always take care of them here and here-after. The love and compassion of the Lord for the devotee is revealed here.

Question : *What is the future of Yogabhrashta?*

Answer : He shall not perish either in this world or in the next.
He will attain what is good.

Question : *What is Lord's view about the good ?*

Answer : Whoever does good will never come to woeful end.

The future life of the Yogabhrashta is explained.

42. प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगब्रह्मोऽभिजाप्ते ॥

*Prapya punyakritam lokan ushitva sasvatih samah
suchinam srimatam gehe yogabhrasto 'bhijayate* ॥ 41

Meaning : योगभ्रष्टः *yogabhrastah* : one who has fallen from *yoga*, पुण्यकृतान् *punyakritan* : attainable by the good, लोकान् *Lokan* : worlds, प्राप्य *prapya* : having attained, शाश्वतीः *sasvatih* : many, समाः *samah* : years, उषित्वा *ushitwa* : having lived there, सुचीनं *suchinam* : of the pure, श्रीमतां *srimatam* : of the wealthy, गेहे *gehe* : in the house, अभिजायते *abhijayate* : he is born.

Substance : The *yogi* fallen from *yoga* attains to the worlds of the good, and having lived there many years is born in the house of the pure and prosperous.

Commentary : The Lord traces the life-course of *sadhakas* who die without attaining perfection in *yoga*. They go to the worlds of the good, live there for many years, and then they take birth in a pure and prosperous home. They take up the thread of *sadhana* that was snapped by death in the middle. They enjoy life in the highest worlds, and when they come to the earth again, they are prosperous. Let it not be misunderstood that they revel in gold and destroy themselves by abusing their wealth. The Lord states '*Suchinam*' (of the pure) first, and next '*Srimatam*' (of the wealthy). Purity first and prosperity next. They do not suffer the pains of poverty and at the same time their home is full of sanctity and purity. Such a spiritual home, free from the torments of poverty, is most congenial for *sadhana*. If he is poor he has to fritter away part of his life and energy for eking out his livelihood. If he is wealthy, he may lose himself in material pleasures. Pure and prosperous homes provide the best training ground for spiritual practice. If however, one is asked to choose between the two, he has to choose the pure in preference to the wealthy.

The theory of re-incarnation (*Punarjanma*) has already been stated in the second Discourse. Verses like '*Dekino*' '*smin yathadehe*' etc. and here '*Prapya punyakritam lokan etc.*'

prove that there is a continuity in the life of man from birth to birth.

Question : *What is the state of the Yogabrashta after death ?*

Answer : He goes to the higher worlds, and after enjoying there for many years, is reborn in a pure and prosperous home. He continues the *sadhana* from the point where he left in his previous life.

The future of the dedicated yogi is explained.

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

42

*Athava yoginameva kule bhavati dhimatam ।
etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadidrisam ॥*

42

Meaning : अथवा athava : or, धीमताम् dhimatam : of the wise, योगिनाम् yoginam : of yogis, कुले kule eva : in the family only, भवति bhavati : is born, ईदृशम् idrisam : this kind of, जन्म janma : birth, यत् yat : what (is), एतत् हि etat hi : that (birth) indeed, लोके loke : in this world, दुर्लभतरं durlabhataram : more difficult.

Substance : Or he born in the family of the wise yogis. This kind of birth is indeed very difficult to attain.

Commentary : The verse refers to aspirants who have reached higher levels of *yoga*. They are superior to the common *yogabrashta*. And hence, they are born in the family of the wise yogis. Such a birth, says the Lord is very difficult to attain, because they are men of knowledge having reached the Atmic state, and being born as children of the wise provides the best opportunity for self-realisation. We find that mighty spiritual men were born to parents who had done a great 'tapas'. The atmosphere in such homes is saturated with divine fragrance. They breathe the atmosphere and feel the very presence of God. What more does the aspirant require to complete his *yoga* and attain perfection ?

People wish to be born in the lineage of kings, princes and millionaires. Of what avail is it except to get further entangled in the meshes of *Maya*, and suffer the inevitable penalties of earthly life ? The wise man desires to be born in the line of *yogis*, so that he could attain perfection in the shortest possible time. The Lord declares here that birth in the family of *yogis* is very difficult to attain (*durlabhataram*).

Question : *What is the future of the yogi of high calibre ?*

Answer : He is born in the family of the *yogis*. The idea is that even from childhood he practises *yoga* and attain perfection more easily and more quickly than others.

Question : *What is the best birth for an individual ?*

Answer : Birth in the family of *Jnanis* and *Yogis* is the best.

The Lord explains how he would live and What he would do, being born in the family of yogis.

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

46

*Tatra tam buddhi samyogam labhate paurva daihikam ।
yatate cha tato bhuyah samsiddhau kuru nandana ॥ 43*

Meaning : कुरुनन्दन Kurunandana : O Arjuna ! तत्र tatra : there (in the family of the yogi), पौर्वदैहिकम् paurva daihikam : pertaining to previous birth, तम् tam : that, बुद्धिसंयोगम् buddhi-samyogam : contact with the yogic intellect, लभते labhate : gets, ततः tatah : by that, भूयः bhuyah : again, संसिद्धौ samsiddhau : for perfection in yoga, यतते च yatate cha : and (he) strives.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Being born in the family of *yogis*, he gets the yogic intellect transmitted from his previous birth, and again strives for perfection in *yoga*.

Commentary : The theory of re-incarnation is explained in greater detail here. Though the body is dead and gone, yet the mind, with all the impressions acquired in previous births, live on, and when the *Jiva* takes another body, the former mental endowment comes to him. So he continues the *sadhana* exactly from the point where it came to an end when the body fell. Nothing is lost in death except the fleshy tabernacle. There is a continuity from birth to birth, and the chain continues till the moment when liberation is attained, and the mind with all its *samskaras* is destroyed. This view of rebirth is the only possible explanation for the disparity in the mental make-up of different individuals as we see them. The good thoughts, feelings, and actions of the past create a natural propensity for good things in this life. Even so, the bad thoughts and deeds done in the past produce a natural inclination to evil in this life. So, it is a warning to all to be careful of what force they are generating at the present moment. They should realise that they are accumulating *samskaras* and giving a special direction to their future life by their thoughts and actions at the present moment. Let no one complain that he is bad because society or circumstances made him bad. He has himself created the bad in and around him, and he should shoulder full responsibility for what he is in the present birth. He is the maker of his own destiny. He reaps what he sows.

From this we understand that good and bad, knowledge and ignorance follow every being like his shadow from birth to birth. When the entire *karma* is destroyed in the fire of *Jnana*, then there is no more any shadow because there is no more any separate individual as such. So, even before the body falls, man should enlighten his intellect and give it perfect knowledge. By several kinds of spiritual practices, he should instil divine tendencies. Those alone follow man after death. All other things, the dearest and the most precious are left behind. The wise man should therefore purify the subtle body and instil divine flavour and knowledge. As nothing that is done goes to waste, the little *japa*, *tapas*, knowledge, *Dana* and *Dharma*, will bear fruit in the next life and make the spiritual journey easier and quicker.

Question : *Being born in the family of yogis what should man do?*

Answer : He should complete and bring to perfection the yogic practice which he kept unfinished in the previous birth.

Question : *How does he acquire yogic samskara from the moment of birth?*

Answer : His past *sadhana* preserved in the mind is reborn with him, and so he obtains it as his natural endowment.

The power of the yogic samskara is stated.

44. पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव हि गते शब्दब्रह्मोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥

44

*Purvabhyasena tenai 'va hriyate hyavaso 'pi sah ।
jignasurapi yogasya sabdabrahma'tivartate ॥*

44

Meaning : सः *sah* : he, अवशःअपि *ayasaḥ api* : even without his volition, तेन *tena* : by that, पूर्वाभ्यासेन *एव purvabhyasena eva* : by former practice verily, हि गते *hi* : is drawn (to yoga) indeed, योगस्य *yogasya* : of yoga, जिज्ञासुरपि *jignanasuh api* : though desirous of knowledge, शब्दब्रह्म *sabdabrahma* : the Vedas (the fruits of Vedic rites and rituals), अतिवर्तते *ativartate* : (he) transcends.

Substance By the force of practice in the previous birth, he is drawn to *yoga* without his volition. Though desirous only of the Knowledge of *yoga* he transcends the *Karma Kanda* of the *Vedas*.

Commentary: From this we understand the force of *samskaras* acquired in previous births. Even without any volition on his part, he is drawn to *yoga*. This is due to the mysterious power of nature acting through past experience. As the fish takes to water, as the bird takes to the air, he, the *yogabhrashta* takes to *yoga*. Past thoughts and habits of life, whatever they may be, fulfil themselves in the present birth.

We come across persons who are born with *vairagya*, whom no temptations can draw down into the mire of *samsara*. Just so, we find persons steeped in *samsara* in spite of all the disasters and calamities of life. So, past *yogic* practice drives him to take to *yoga* without his being aware of any special effort on his part. He cannot remain idle. It is the duty of all seekers to do as much of spiritual *sadhana* as he can, so that when he takes a new birth he can rise to higher and higher planes of Self-realisation.

The second line of the verse reveals the transcendental power of *yoga* (union with Self). Even by thinking of the law of *yoga*, he transcends all the *Vedic* lore and *sastric* leaning, and directly rises to the supreme state. Here 'Sabdabrahm' may mean either the fruits of *Vedic* rites and rituals, or indirect knowledge arising from the study of the *sastras*. From this we understand the power of *yoga* which leads to union with *Brahman*. If by merely thinking of *yoga* he can transcend the lower level, what reward he would get by actual practice can be imagined.

Question : *How does the yogabhrashta take to yoga ?*

Answer : He is drawn to it even without his volition by the power of past experience.

Question : *What is the excellence of yoga ?*

Answer : It enables him to rise above all *sastras* and *Vedic* lore.

The Yogabhrashta attains Moksha by the continuity of yogic practice.

45. प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

४५

Prayatnad yatamanastu yogi sansuddhakilbishah ।

aneka janma samsiddhastato yati param gatim ॥ 45

Meaning : प्रयत्नात् *prayatnat* : assiduously, यतमानः *yatamanah* : striving, योगी तु *yogitu* : but the yogi, संशुद्धकिल्बिषः *samsuddhakilbishah* : purified of all sins,

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः *anekajanmasamsiddhah* : perfected through many births, ततः *tatah* : then, परं *param* : supreme, गतिम् *gatim* : state (Moksha), याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : Practising assiduously, the *yogi* having acquired perfection through many births attains the supreme state (*Moksha*) purified of all sins.

Commentary : The *yogi* reaches the highest state by assiduous practice through several births. Three factors are mentioned here - (1) Assiduous striving, (2) Continued practice, (3) Purity.

The weak and the cowards cannot reach the goal. "The weak cannot realise *Atma*. The heroic man realises the Supreme self" - Thus the *Upanishads* declare that strength and courage are essential for spiritual realisation.

If the *yogi* acquires such strength, courage, and perseverance in *yoga*, it is the result of continued practice through several births. Birth as man, desire for liberation, are the reward of good work done in the past. It does not mean that one has to wait for a long series of births to attain freedom. No. It can be achieved even in this birth, nay even in this hour, if the will is strong and the effort adequate. When the Lord speaks of several births, it is only to emphasise that the good work done in the past never goes to waste. He does not want man to postpone the glorious consummation even by a second. Since no one knows what he has done in the past, let him have faith that the best would bear fruit now and take him to the highest state.

Purity of mind has been mentioned as essential for Self-realisation in many places in the *Gita*. By *Nishkama Karma*, devotion, discrimination, and knowledge, man should purify his inner self, before he could experience any spiritual enlightenment.

Supreme state : *Moksha* is the highest state. There is nothing higher than that, because it is the state of absolute

freedom. All other states are conditioned by time, place and other limiting adjuncts. *Moksha* is beyond all relative values. The law of causation which binds every thing is transcended by the *yogi*, when he reaches the highest state. Freedom is the birth-right of man, the one urge prompting him in all that he does, though he is not conscious of it. *Yoga* is the direct path to freedom.

Question : *What is the highest state ?*

Answer : Self-realisation, *Moksha* ?

Question: *How does man attain it ?*

Answer : By continued practice, ardent striving, and purity man realises the supreme state.

The superiority of the yogi is declared.

46. तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।

कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

४६

*Tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogi jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah ।
karmibhyascha 'dhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhava 'rjuna ॥ 46*

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! योगी *yogi* : the yogi, तपस्विभ्यः *tapasvibhyah* : than ascetics, अधिकः *adhikah* : greater, ज्ञानिभ्यः *jnanibhyah* *api* : than even the learned, अधिकः *adhikah* : greater, मतः *matah* : is thought, योगी *yogi* : yogi, कर्मिभ्यः च *karmibhyah cha* : than men of action and, अधिकः *adhikah* : greater, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, योगी *yogi* : yogi, भव *bhava* : be.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The *yogi* is thought to be greater than the ascetic, greater than the learned, and greater than the man of action; therefore be a *yogi*.

Commentary : The superiority of *Dhyana yoga* is declared here. It is superior to ascetic practices mentioned in the *Vedas* like fasting etc. It is superior to knowledge acquired from the

study of *sastras*. It is superior to works mentioned in *Vedic Karmakanda*, like the worship of the sacred Fire etc. That is, meditation on *Atma* is superior to knowledge acquired through the study of the *sastras*. The knowledge attained in *Dhyana* is direct and conclusive since the aim of spiritual *sadhana* is Self-realisation. Whatever brings the aspirant directly into contact with *Atma*, and lifts him to that plane, should be considered superior. *Dhyana* has that power of taking the *yogi* nearer and nearer to *Atma*.

n

Be thou a yogi : This is the Lord's command to Arjuna. Having explained the process and excellence of *yoga*, the Lord commands his disciple to train himself as a *yogi*. The convincing arguments behind the command show how the *Gita* follows the rational path of judging first and decision next. Every thing is examined on its own merits, and conclusions are drawn after thorough understanding of the subject. So it is not blind faith that the Lord is expecting from his disciple. It is faith born of knowledge, judgment and decision. The command applies to all people who are awakened from the delusion of life, and who are eager to overcome the infinite ills of life by knowing the truth. '*Yoga*' and '*Bhoga*' are both open to man. The one who chooses the first rises to the supreme state. The one who chooses the latter gets stuck up in the bog of *samsara*. Therefore one should strive to be a *yogi* and not a *bhogi*. He is not a *yogi* who merely puts on the ochre robes. He is a *yogi* who has withdrawn his mind from sense-pleasures, who keeps the senses under control, who looks inwards into the Self and there comes to rest in peace. All human beings are qualified for this noble and grand aim.

Question : *What is the superiority of a yogi ?*

Answer : He is superior to ascetics, to men of *sastraic* learning and to those who are engaged in performing the *Vedic* rites and rituals.

Question : *What is Lord's command ?*

Answer : Be a *yogi* is the Lord's command.

The Lord states whom he considers the best of yogis.

47. योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान्भजते यो भां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

४७

Yoginamapi sarvesham madgatena 'ntaratmana ।

sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatamo matah ॥ 47

Meaning : सर्वेषां *sarvesham*: of all, योगिनाम् *अपि* *yoginam api*: yogis even, यः *yah* : who, मद्गतेन *madgatena* : fixed in Me, अन्तरात्मना *antaratmana* : with mind, श्रद्धावान् *sraddhavan* : with faith, माम् *mam*: Me, भजते *bhajate*: worship, सः *sah* : he, युक्ततमः *yuktatamah* : most devout, मे *मतः* *Me matah* : by Me is deemed.

Substance : Even among all the *yogis*, he who worships Me with mind fixed in Me, full of faith, is deemed by me to be the most devout.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the superiority of the *yogi* to the ascetics, the learned men, and men of *Vedic* works is declared. In this verse, the Lord states that the *yogi* who worships Him, the Absolute, with faith, is the greatest of all *yogis*. Lord Krishna is himself the supreme in-dwelling Self of all, and so when the Lord says "Worship Me," it is taken to mean "be united with Me, the Self, the Absolute." Or from the point of view of the devotee (*Bhakta*), the Lord as the divine form of Krishna may be taken as the object of worship. In any way, the *yogi* who worships the Lord, the Absolute, is greater than those who worship the *Devas*.

The purpose of all *sadhana* is to free the mind from impure tendencies binding it to the material world. In this process, devotion to the Lord is of primary importance. It is the Lord's grace that leads man to success in any *yoga* - *Karma yoga*, *Jnana yoga* or *Dhyana Yoga*. That seed which is watered sprouts into life and grows. Devotion to God is the water that soaks the mind of the aspirant and bears fruit in the ultimate success of all his endeavours. Is the conquest of *Maya* an easy task? What is man before the power of *Maya*? With weak and troubled mind filled with all the filth of sensual

pleasures, how can man hope to conquer *Maya*? Can he hope to do so by his own efforts? He cannot, except with the support of the Lord. The worship of the Lord is the only guarantee of success in any *yoga*. Therefore, all great spiritual gaints who come to teach mankind have taken refuge in Him and have worked as His instruments. It is to be noted that whatever the subject of the particular Discourse, the Lord does make a reference to devotion, to remind the seeker to have faith in Him and perform his work. devotion thus forms the final note in this Discourse on *Dhyana Yoga*.

God, the Absolute, should be worshipped with faith. The Gita emphasises faith in many places. What is done without faith does not bear fruit. It is as good as not having done anything at all. Along with 'Sama' and 'Dama', *Sraddha* (faith) is the chief ingredient in spiritual practice.

The mind should be merged in Him. Possessing faith, the seeker should turn the mind inwards and become united with the Absolute. Such a *yogi* is most devout (*Yukta tamah*).

The Lord declares that this is His doctrine. From this we can understand the importance of faith and devotion to Him, as the foundation of all *Yogas*.

Question : Who according to the Lord is the best of yogis?

Answer : He who is full of faith, who worships the Lord, the Absolute, and merges his mind in Him, is the greatest of yogis.

इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासूपनिपत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाञ्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंगमयोगो नाम
षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavid�ayam yogastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Atmasamyama Yogo
nama sas ho 'dhyayah.*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga*, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Sixth Discourse entitled *Atmasamyama Yoga*
..... (The *Yoga* of Self-control).....

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ सप्तमोऽध्यायः

Atha Saptamodhyayah

SEVENTH DISCOURSE

विज्ञानयोगः

VIJNANA YOGA

THE YOGA OF WISDOM

I. Title of the Discourse :

Vijnana means Knowledge through direct experience, contrasted with the understanding of the Scriptures by intellectual study. The word may also mean Knowledge of that which is to be known (i. e.) *Atma*. The Lord's command is that man should not be satisfied with mere theory but should attain direct Knowledge by personal experience. The aspirant should not only possess the qualities of a Jnani like humility and righteousness, but also knowledge of *Atma*. As this Discourse deals with such direct Knowledge derived from experience, it is entitled Vijnana Yoga.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1. Mention of experienced knowledge. (1-3)
2. Qualities of the transoendental (*Para*) and phenomenal (*apara*) nature. (4-7)
3. Immanence of *Atma* in the entire objective world. (8-12)

4. Condemnation of demonical qualities and
commination of divine qualities, and the
four types of devotees. (13-19)
5. Worship of the Gods. (20-23)
6. The nature of the ignorance and excellence
of the wise who know the Supreme Lord. (24-30)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the end of the previous Discourse (*Atmasamyama yoga*) the Lord declared that he is the greatest *Yogi* who worships Him, the Absolute with faith. But such faith and one-pointed concentration is possible only by knowing the nature of the Lord, His all-pervasive character, and all-including infinity. So, in this Discourse, the Lord explains the excellence, the supremacy and significance of the Self, the Absolute.

श्री भगवानुवाच

१. मर्यासक्तमनाः पार्थं योगं युज्जन्मदाश्रयः ।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञात्यसि तच्छृणु ॥

१

Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :

*Mayyasaktamanah partha yogam yunjan madasrayah ।
asamsayam samagram mam yatha jnasyasi tacchrinu ॥*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! मयि *mayi* : in Me, आसक्तमनः *asaktamanah* : with mind intent, मदाश्रयः *madasrayah* : taking refuge in Me, योगं *yogam* : Yoga, युज्जन् *yunjam* : performing, माम् *mam* : Me, असंशयं *asamsayam* : without doubt, समग्रं *samagram* : wholly, यथा *yatha* : how, ज्ञात्यसि *jnasyasi* : you shall know, तत् *tat* : that, श्रुगु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said; O Arjuna ! With mind absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, practising *yoga*, how you shall know Me wholly and doubtlessly, that hear.

Commentary : Few people are eager to know the Lord, and among those who are eager to know, only few are able to know Him in essence. Indeed, very rare are those who could know him fully and without any doubt. Three conditions are prescribed.

- 1) He should be attached to the Lord.
- 2) He should consider the Lord as His sole refuge.
- 3) He should practise *yoga*.

The mind is like a powerful search-light. When it is turned aside, the objective world is seen; when it is turned inwards, the Self is seen. The mind thinks only of that to which it is attached. As the ignorant man is attached to the material world, his mind rambles continuously among sense-objects and is satisfied with sense-pleasures. Such a man cannot know the Lord - *Paramatma*. The wise man, turning away from the objective world, thinks of the Reality understands the Truth, and enjoys peace and bliss. Therefore the Lord speaks of the *yogi* as one who is attached to the Lord and for whom the Lord is the sole refuge.

The *yoga* of Devotion and *Dhyana* are both aids to know the Lord, and become one with Him.

Moreover, in this verse, the doubt is cleared how the Lord is to be known. He could be known by devotion to Him, by seeking refuge in Him, and by meditating on Him.

Question : *What is the way to know the Lord ?*

Answer : Devotion, meditation, single-minded aspiration are the means of knowing the Lord.

2. ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्यन्यशेषतः ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ञातवप्राप्तिष्ठो ॥ २

*Jnanam te'ham savijnanamidam vukshiy anyaseshaatah ।
yajjnatva ne'ha bhuyo 'nyaj jnatavyamavasisyute ॥ 2*

Meaning : यत् *yatah* : which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, इह *iha* : in this world, भूयः *bhuyah* : more, ज्ञातव्यम् *jnatavyam* :

that which is to be known, अन्यत् *anyat* : any other, न अवशिष्यते *na avashishyate* : does not exist, इदम् *idam* : this, सविज्ञानम् *savijnanam* : combined with direct experience of Atma, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, अशेषतः *aseshatah* : in full, ते *te* : to you, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyam* : I will tell.

Substance : Knowing which there shall not be any other to be known in this world, that Knowledge combined with experience, I will tell you.

Commentary : The Lord's love for the devotee is infinite. He wants to reveal everything to his disciple, make him understand the Supreme, so that his mind shall not wander in ignorance at any time thereafter in the world. Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the highest wisdom associated with personal and direct experience.

There are several arts and sciences in the world. Though a man may know many or most of them, his knowledge is not complete. Something still remains to be known. But if the Lord is known, not merely by speculation or argument, but by direct experience, then man feels that there is nothing else to be known in the world.

The Lord's statement here agrees with the Upanishadic declaration. So the aim of the aspirant is not to know this or that or a hundred things, but to know that, knowing which the essence of all is fully realised. All search for knowledge ends here. There is nothing else to be known. When the base of the plant is watered, it is the same as watering the branches, blossoms, and fruits of that plant. We do not pour water on every leaf and flower. Even so, when the supreme *Brahman* is realised, all the experiences in the world are comprehended by that knowledge. When Lord Siva asked his sons Vighneswara and Kumaraswamy to go, and make a circuit of the world, Kumaraswamy took the pain of flying all the way round the world, whereas Vighneswara went round Lord Siva and received the reward of circuiting the whole world as Lord Siva himself is the whole world. Even so, *Brahmagnana* comprehends

the knowledge of everything else. Man's life-time is short and many are the sciences and arts, and no one can hope to know them all. The best way to know them all is to know the Divine essence immanent in all of them. What is the basic truth behind the whole of the phenomenal world? That question can be answered only by self-realisation, and not by the study of any number of sciences for any length of time. Out of compassion for his friend and disciple, Lord Krishna offers him that supreme knowledge.

Here two words are used *Jnana* and *Vijnana* - *Jnana* means knowledge derived from the study of *Sastras*. It is 'Sabda-brahma'. *Vijnana* means realisation of *Atma* i. e. 'Parabrahma'. Supreme peace and bliss is the reward of realisation, and not of indirect knowledge born of Sastraic learning. The Lord declares that he will teach the truth fully and completely. Verily nothing is left out. Another interpretation of the words *Jnana* and *Vijnana* may also be given. *Jnana* may be understood as the quality of the *Jnana*, like humility etc. mentioned in the 13th Discourse. *Vijnana* may be taken to mean knowledge of the Supreme *Brahman*.

Rare are those who know the Lord in essence.

3. मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्नां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

३

Manushyanam sahasreshu kaschid yatati siddhaye ।

yatatamapi siddhanam kaschinnam vetti tattvatah ॥ 3

Meaning : मनुष्याणां *manushyanam* : of men, सहस्रेषु *sahasreshu* : among thousands, कश्चित् *kaschit* : some one, सिद्धये *siddhaye* : for perfection, यतति *yatati* : strives, यतताम् *yatatam* : among the striving, सिद्धानाम् अपि *siddhanam api* : of the successful ones even, कश्चित् *kaschit* : some one, माम् *mam* : Me, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah* : in essence, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows.

Substance : Among thousands of men, one strives for perfection and even among those who strive and succeed, one knows Me in essence.

Commentary : Very few people have the inclination to know the truth. Those who enter the field of action in pursuit of their aim are indeed less in number. Among those, some rare and exceptional man attains perfection. In a running race, many are found at the starting point, but some drop off on the way, and two or three strive to reach the goal, and only one wins the race. The blossoms of a huge tree are innumerable. But only a few develop fruits. All the others drop off. Among those that bear the fruit, many fall away before the fruits become ripe. And at last we can pick only a few ripe fruits. It is the same with spiritual aspirants. Devotion, intimate contact with the Lord, is the reward of much good done through several births.

As millions are carried away in the flood of *Maya*, some one strong and heroic soul, by virtue of the good *samskara* stands firm, and strives to know the truth, and attains God.

Tattvatah : The Lord here emphasises the need for knowing Him in essence, fully and entirely. Shadowy knowledge is not enough. Distant understanding is not enough. Close and direct knowledge without any doubt or darkness should be attained for ultimate perfection.

It is not to discourage the seeker when it is said that a rare man alone can understand Him. The difficult nature of the task, and the need for firm determination and unyielding perseverance are emphasised. The seekers should understand the long distance they have to traverse to reach the destination. No one can jump to the goal. The process is slow and the path is hard. But there is always the inspiring hope that what little is achieved will not be lost, will help him to overcome great fear.

The Lord explains His phenomenal and transcendental nature, and starts with the phenomenal first.

4. भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरस्तथा ॥

8

*Bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhireva cha ।
ahamkara iti 'yam me bhinna prakrtirastadha ॥*

4

Meaning : भूमिः *bhumih* : Earth, आपः *apah* : water, अनलः *analah* : fire, वायुः *vayuh* : air, खम् *kham* : ether, मनः *manah* : mind, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : intellect, अहंकार एवच *ahamkara eva cha* : egoism and also, इति *iti* : thus, मे *me* : My, प्रकृतिः *इयम् prakritih iyam* : nature this, अष्टधा *ashtadha* : eightfold, भिन्ना *bhinnah* : divided.

Substance : Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason, and also egoism - these are the eightfold divisions of My nature.

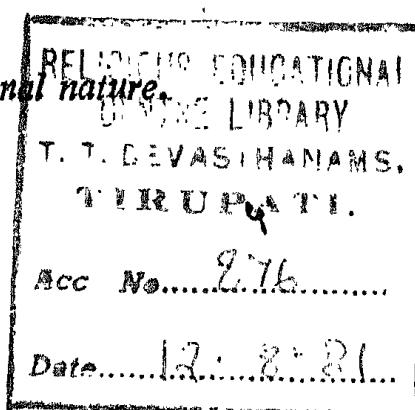
Commentary : The five elements, the mind, reason and egoism together constitute the phenomenal aspect of the Lord's nature. *Prakriti* (phenomenal nature) is gross and so it is *Jada* (insentient). *Purusha*, *Atma*, or *Brahman*, is the life-principle. *Prakriti* is the objective universe (*drisya*) and *Purusha* is the seer (*drik*). *Prakriti* is liable to destruction, but *Purusha* is eternal. Mind, reason and egoism are also included in *Prakriti* along with the grosser elements. The elements are insentient and so the modifications of internal nature are also insentient. When it is known that the mind is insentient, its power and virulence are lost. It is held and controlled like any other material object. The insentient can never have power over the sentient. Those who do not know this secret come under the power of the mind and dance to its tune. So to control the mind, one should clearly distinguish between the gross and the sentient, and between that which is '*Jada*' and that which is '*Chit*'.

Question : What are the different modifications of the Lord's phenomenal nature ?

Answer : Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and egoism - these constitute the inferior nature (*apara prakriti*).

The Lord explains His transcendental nature.

5. अपरेयमितस्तत्त्वां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे परम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो यगेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥



*Apare 'yam itastvanyam prakrtim viddhi me param !
jivabhutam mahabaho yaye 'dam dharyate jagat || 5*

Meaning : महाबाहो *Mahabaho* : O Arjuna ! इयम् *iyam* : this nature, अपरा *apara* : (is) inferior, इतःतु *itah tu* : but from this, अन्याम् *anyam* : other : यस्य *yaya* : by which, इदम् जगत् *idam jagat* : this universe, धार्यते *dharyate* : is sustained, जीविभूताम् *jivabhutam* : the very life-element, मे *me* : My, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : nature, पराम् *param* : superior, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! This is the inferior (described in the previous verse), Know My other nature, the Higher – *Para Prakriti*, the life-element by which the universe is upheld.

Commentary : The Lord now explains the ‘*Para Prakriti*’ the Higher Nature. It is the life-element by which the whole universe is upheld. Even this, like the ‘*apara prakriti*’ is under the control of the Lord, the Purusha. Let us understand the distinction between the *para* and *apara Prakriti* by means of an illustration. There is a pot filled with water, and the orb of the Sun is reflected in it. Here the pot and water are *apara prakriti*-inferior nature, and the reflected orb of the sun shining in the water is *para prakriti*, Higher nature. The pot stands for the body, the water for the mind, and the reflected sun for the individual self (ego) by which man is deluded into thinking that he is a distinct and real personality. The real sun shining in the sky is *Atma*, *Purusha*, the Lord. When the pot and water are destroyed, the sun is not at all affected by it. He shines in his own pristine glory. So the falling away of the body does not make any difference to *Atma* which is Eternal. Sankaracharya in the *Viveka Chudamani* explains this idea very clearly.

The wise man leaves the pot, water and the reflection, and looks at the real self-luminous Sun. So also the man of knowledge does not attach himself to the body and mind and egoism, which appears as his individual self. He takes refuge in *Atmi* which is distinct from all these three, in the same way

as the Sun in the sky is absolutely separate from that which is reflected in the water.

All the changes pertain to the pot water and the reflection in it. The real Sun does not change. The pot may be big or small, the water pure or muddy. This does not affect the sun. So also the changes that take place in the body and mind of man does not affect *Atma*. The *para* and *apara prakriti* of the Lord undergo all sorts of modifications, but the Lord, *Purusha*, is not touched by them at all. The elements (*apara prakriti*) are insentient. According to the Advaitic concept, both the *Prakritis* are unreal. What is real is *Atma*. The seeker has to give up both the lower and higher *Prakriti* in order to reach *Atma*. Of course the life element, the personality state, is superior to the gross insentient matter. But it is also a component part of nature and cannot claim the attribute of Reality. The man in a dream may be superior to the rocks and trees of the dream, but to the awakened man both the dream-man and dream world are utterly unreal. Thus we arrive at the one supreme Reality in which all this *para* and *apara Prakriti* dwell, subject to the control of the *Purusha*. Knowing that the individual ego and the world are both unreal, the seeker has to take refuge in the Supreme *Brahman*.

Question : What is Para Prakriti ?

Answer : It is the life-element. By it the universe is sustained
It is superior to the *apara prakriti*.

The Lord declares that He distinct from Prakriti is the final cause of the Universe.

6. एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणि त्युपधारय ।

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥

6

*Etad yonini bhutani sarvani' tyupadharaya !
aham kritsnasya jagatah prabhavah pralayastatha || 6*

Meaning : सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, एतद्योनीनि *etadyonini* : have these two prakritis as their womb, इति *iti* : thus, उपधारय *upadharaya* : know, अहम् *aham* : I

(the Lord, Purusha), कृत्सनस्य *kritsnasya* : of the entire, जगतः *jagatah* : universe, प्रभवः *prabhavah* : the cause of creation (through Prakriti), तथा *tatha* : in the same way, प्रलयः *pralayah* : the cause of dissolution.

Substance : Know this (*Prakriti*) to be the womb of all beings; I am the source of the outcomeing of the whole universe, and like-wise the source of its dissolution.

Commentary : *Prakriti* in its two aspects, *para* and *apara*, is the womb of all beings. *Purusha* is the *Master* and cause of all creation, sustenance, and destruction of the entire universe. *Prakriti* is the instrument with which he creates, maintains, and destroys the whole universe. Therefore tracing backwards to the root cause of all things, we find that the whole manifested universe and the unmanifested, will be found to come out of *Brahman* and got dissolved in *Brahman*. The Omnipotent, Omniscient *Brahman* is the material and efficient cause of the universe. According to the Advaitic concept, the Supreme Self is just the witness of all creation and destruction and is not affected by them.

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : *Prakriti.*

Question : *Who is the ultimate cause of the entire universe ?*

Answer : The Supreme Lord, *Purusha*, is the cause of the creation and destruction of the entire universe.

The Lord is the Highest, and He is Omnipresent.

7. मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय !

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥

७

*Mattah parataram na 'nyat kimchidasti dhanamjaya !
mayi sarvamidam protam sutre manigana iva ॥* 7

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna ! मत्तः *mattah* : than I, परतरम् *parataram* : higher, अन्यत् *anyat* : another, किञ्चित् *kimchit* : anything, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, does not

exist. सूते *sutre* : on the thread, मणिगणाः इव *maniganah iva* : clusters of gems, like, इदम् *idam* : this, सर्वम् *sarvam* : all, मयि *mayi* : in Me, प्रोतम् *protam* : is threaded.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There is nothing what-so-ever higher than I; all this is strung on Me, as clusters of gems on a string.

Commentary : Where is God ? How does He exist ? These questions are answered in this verse. Like the string that holds together the garland of gems, the whole universe is strung on the Lord. There is no place where He is not. There is nothing what-so-ever higher than He.

The string holds the clusters of gems together, without which they fall off like disintegrated elements. Moreover, though the gems are of different shapes, sizes and colours, the string that holds them together is the same. Thus, different beings, races, classes, types of beings, different religions and creeds, and all things sentient and insentient are held together by the indwelling presence of the Lord. The naked eye could see only the gems and not the string behind. So also, the eye of the common man can see only the outer form of the universe and not the unifying existence of the Lord behind.

Any rational human being can understand the presence of the string behind the gems, though he does not see it with his naked eye. To deny the existence of the string on the ground that he cannot see it is sheer ignorance. Such talk of the unwise carries no conviction, even as the denial of the existence of the sun by a blind man. It is not the naked eye but the eye of knowledge that can perceive the Lord as the eternal substratum and sustaining power behind the universe.

He who sees the sentient in the midst of the insentient, the eternal in the midst of the perishable, the changeless in the midst of the changing, is the wise man. It is the eye of Knowledge. The *Upadhi* (i. e.) the body-vehicle is insentient. But pervading the whole universe, there is the Omniscient Lord and He could be perceived only by the eye of Knowledge. The naked eye is made to see the outer form, and recognises it by its 'name' and

'rupa'. But when the eye of knowledge is opened by the grace of the Lord, His presence is recognised every where. Then will man understand that He is the final cause of the universe, that He is in everything, creating, sustaining, and destroying everything by the power of His *Prakriti*. He who sees the body is the ignorant man, he who sees the *jiva* is the partially wise; but he who sees *Atma* is the sage.

Let the seeker take refuge in this thought that the Lord is in all, and that there is nothing other or higher than He. The illustration of the string of pearls is explained below :

Gems : objects,

String : Paramatma,

Gems of different forms } the manifold
and colours : } universe.

Without the string the gems do not hold together - without *Paramatma* the manifold universe cannot be sustained.

The naked eye cannot see the string - the eye of the ignorant man cannot see the basic Reality.

A deeper look discovers the string behind the gems - So also penetrating knowledge reveals the Lord.

Question : *What is the real nature of the universe ?*

Answer : There is nothing in it other than or higher than the Lord.

Question : *How does the Lord maintain the universe ?*

Answer : Like the string in the garland of gems the Lord is all - pervading and holds the universe together.

Question : *How can man perceive the Lord ?*

Answer : By the purified eye of knowledge.

The Lord declares His Omnipresence in four verses.

8. रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि चशिष्वत्योः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥

Raso'hamapsu kauntey. pr abha'smi casisurvyayoh !

pranavah sarvavedeshiu sabdah khe paurusham nrishu ॥ 8 ॥

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! अहम् *aham* : I, अप्सु *apsu* : in water, रसः *rasah* : taste, sapidity, शशिर्षयोः *sasisuryayoh* : in the moon and sun, प्रभा *prabha* : light, सर्ववेदेषु *sarvavedeshu* : in all Vedas, प्रणवः *pranavah* : the syllable OM, खे *khe* : in ether, शब्दः *sabdah* : sound, नृषु *nrishu* : in men, पौरुषम् *paurusham* : virility, अस्मि *asmī* : am.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I am the sapidity in waters; I am the radiance of the moon and sun; I am the syllable OM in all *Vedas*; I am sound in ether; I am virility in men.

Commentary : In the previous verse, it is declared that the Lord is present in the whole universe, like the string in the garland of gems. To show this truth, the Lord takes certain objects and explains how He is present in them. He is in the form of taste in water, light in the sun and the moon, *Pranava* (OM) in the *Vedas*, and virility in men. Thus His presence is to be realised in all things. Taste and water, light and the sun, are inseparable. There is light where there is sun. We cannot conceive the sun without his light. Since it is difficult to conceive the universal presence of the Lord in the beginning, He illustrates the idea with reference to certain objects.

He is the syllable OM in all the *Vedas*. The essence of the *Vedas* is to be found in OM. No man can possibly study all the *Vedas* completely. Human life is too short for that purpose. So, if the syllable OM is understood and contemplated, man obtains the very essence of all the *Vedas* and fulfills his life. So repeating the syllable OM, contemplating the meaning of that sacred sound, thinking of the Lord as *Pranava*, man attains the highest.

The Lord is virility in men. Virility, strength, courage and determination are all divine qualities. Timidity, weakness, dullness are all unmanly qualities. We see the Lord Himself when we come across bold and courageous men, who readily sacrifice their life for a righteous cause. We see the Lord in the

great sages and *Rishis*, who have overcome insuperable obstacles with courage and determination. The supreme manifestation of the Lord is magnificently described in the Ninth Discourse. The seeker should cultivate courage, enthusiasm, strength and resolution in his spiritual life.

Question : How does the Lord explain His presence in the Universe.

Answer : He is taste in water, light in the sun and moon, OM in the *Vedas*, sound in Ether, and virility in men.

9. पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवने सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥

9

*Punyo gandhah prithivyam cha tejascha 'smi vibhavasau
jivanam sarva bhuteshu tapascha'smi tapasvishu* 9

Meaning : पृथिव्याम् *prithivyam* : in earth, पुण्यः *gandhah* : च *punyah* *gandhah cha* : pure fragrance and, विभावसौ *vibhavasau* : in fire, तेजः च *tejah cha* : brilliance and, अस्मि *asmi* : I am, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings, जीवनम् *jivanam* : life, तपस्विषु *tapasvishu* : in ascetics, तपः च *tapah cha* : austerity and, अस्मि *asmi* : I am.

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

Commentary : We cannot imagine the earth without smell, fire without brightness, living beings without life, ascetics without austerity ! So the essence, the ruling principle, the characteristic quality of every thing is the Lord Himself.

10. बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थं सनातनम् ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामास्मि तेजसेजस्विनामहम् ॥

10

*Bijam mam sarvabhutanam viddhi partha sanatanam!
buddhir buddhimatamasmi tejas tejasvinamaham* 10

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna ! मां *mam* : Me, सर्वभूतानम् *sarvabhutanam* : of all beings, सनातनम् *sanatanam*:

eternal, बीजम् *bijam* : seed, cause, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, बुद्धिमतम् *buddhimatam* : of the wise, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : intelligence, तेजस्विनाम् *tejasvinam* : of the splendid, तेजः *tejah* : splendour, अस्मि *asmi* : I am.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Know me as the seed of all beings, eternal; I am the intelligence of the wise, I am the splendour of the splendid.

Commentary : *Bijam* – The Lord declares that He is the seed, the cause of all beings. From Him, the seed, all beings have come, and unto Him they return. The tree is only another form of the seed. The life-force of the whole tree is already involved in the seed. The seed manifests its life-force in the new form of the tree. Even so, the Lord is the seed of all beings. It is He who is manifesting Himself in different forms. The essence is He in every thing. Thus knowing the wise man transcends all separateness that appears to exist between one thing and another. Whoever he may be, to whatever caste or creed he may belong, high or low, the seed for him is God Himself. He is the cause of all. He is the father of all. So all beings in essence are God, for there is nothing else but He in the whole universe. He is the cause, and He is also the effect, and the effect is actually the cause in a different form. Knowing this, let no man imagine himself to be weak, neglected, forlorn and wretched. He is God Himself. By ignorance, he has misunderstood himself to be a limited body and a limited personality. Inspired by the words of the Lord let man throw away the veil of ignorance, and know himself as he really is (i.e.) the Supreme *Brahman*.

The inspiring message of *Gitacharya* is that He is Himself the seed and cause of all beings. He is present in all. This should give tremendous courage to all because it affirms the divine birth-right of each individual. Even the lowest would acquire Himalayan strength when he contemplates this truth. There is nothing low or wretched. The teacher of the Gita says, "I am the underlying principle behind you... It is from Me you

have come." Such words would lift up the sinking hearts of thousands of house-holders caught in the whirlpool of *samsara*. What if the wave is small or big ? It has behind it the mighty ocean. It subsists and is sustained by the infinite ocean. So let no man consider himself weak, mean and downtrodden. Let him contemplate the mighty ocean of purity and blessedness with which he is one, even as the ripple is one with the sea. The source of every man is not either his father or grand-father, but the supreme *Paramatma*. Generally man claims his lineage from some ancient sage. The Lord here wants him to go a step higher and realise that He is the seed out of which he has grown. He is the *Mulapurusha*.

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : *Paramatma*.

Question : *What is His nature ?*

Answer : He is Eternal.

11. बलं बलवतामस्मि कामरागविवर्जितम् ।

धर्मविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतषभ ॥

११

*Balam balavatam asmi kama raga vivarjitam ।
dharmaviruddho bhuteshu kamo 'smi bharatarshabha ॥ 11*

Meaning : भरतषभ *bharatarshabha* : O Arjuna ! अहम् *Aham* : I, बलवताम् *balavatam* : of the strong, कामरागविवर्जितम् *kamaragavivarjita* : free from desire and passion, बलम् *balam* : strength, भूतेषु *bhuteshu* : in all beings, धर्मविरुद्धः *dharma viruddhaḥ* : not contrary to Dharma, कामः *kamah* : desire, अस्मि *asmi* : I am.

Substance And I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and passion; and in all beings I am desire not contrary to *Dharma*.

Commentary : Strength is the glory of man, but it should be free from desire and passion. Strength should not be abused to satisfy sensual desires and greedy acquisition of worldly possessions. It should be expressed in doing good and bene-

volent acts, in worship of the Divine, and the pursuit of spiritual illumination. Whether it is intellectual or physical strength, if it is employed for selfish purposes to serve the lower impulses, it is wretched. In such cases, it is only demonical might, an asuric force, leading to self-destruction. The might of *Ravana* was impure by *Kama*, and it lead to his destruction and that of his people. So purity in strength, nobility in might, is what the Lord wants people to cultivate. His presence is felt in such strength.

The Lord is also 'desire' (*kama*) unopposed to *Dharma*. The desire to maintain one's family in a good condition, to live in society without becoming a burden on others, to relieve the suffering of others – such desire, though it is *kama*, is the divine aspect of the Lord. There is no evil in such desire.

There are three distinct stages in the development of man. In the first stage, man's desires instinctly run after sense-enjoyments and the gratification of lust and greed. In the second stage, desire becomes ennobled to the higher plane of selfless acts of service, generosity, and benevolence. It is then purified of its former evil. In the third and last stage, desires disappear from the mind when man realises the true Self. Then there are no desires, good or bad. It is true that Self-realisation is not possible without giving up all desires. But man's development is traceable from bad to good, and from good to the free state of *Moksha*. Here the Lord speaks of the second stage. Desires which agree with the *Sastras*, which do not run counter to *Dharma*, produce no evil effects. Gradually, man should rise to the '*nirvikalpa*' state of mind. Give up bad desires, and then give up all desires, and be thoroughly contented in the Self. This is the significance of the Lord's statement here.

12. ये चैव सत्त्विकाभावा राजसास्तामसाथ ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्वि न त्वं तेषु ते मयि ॥

१२

*Ye chai'va sattvika bhava rajasas tamasas cha ye ।
matta eye'ti tan viddhi na traham teshu te mayi ॥*

12

Meaning : सत्त्विकाः sattvikah : pure, भावाः bhavah : objects, ये ye : whatever, राजसाश्च rajasah cha : and active, तामसाश्च tamasah cha : and inert, ये चैव ye chaiva : and also what-so-ever, तान् tan : them, मत्त एव इति mattah eva iti : proceed from Me only, विद्धि viddhi : know, तु tu : but, तेषु teshu : in them, अहम् aham : I am, न na : not, ते te : they, मयि mayi : (are) in Me.

Substance : Whatsoever objects that are pure, active or inert, know that they all proceed from Me; but I am not in them, they are in Me.

Commentary : The Lord has already declared that He is the sustaining power behind the universe. What is sustained cannot be without the power that sustains it. So the existence of *Paramatma* makes the existence of every thing possible. Minus *Paramatma*, nothing can exist. The universe as we see it with all its panoramic changes is the creative power of the Lord. In the same way as the snake in the rope is sustained by the rope itself, the Lord is the cause of the illusory universe, and just as the rope is really a rope even during the time of one's illusion, so also the Lord is Himself the universe whether one realises it or not. Just as the snake depends upon the rope, and the rope does not depend upon the snake, so also all beings are dependent upon the Lord, but the Lord is not dependent on them. The wave depends on the ocean, but the ocean does not depend on the wave.

When the Lord says that all the qualities (*sattva, rajas, tamas*) are caused by Him, it is certainly not to encourage *tamasic* or *rajasic* temperments. The point to note is that the Lord is the final cause of all that exists as objects or qualities.

The Lord explains why man does not know Him.

13. श्रिभिगुणपूर्वभावरेभिः सर्वगिर्द जगत् ।

मोहितं नाभिजानामि मामेव्यः परमद्युयम् ॥

*Tribhir gunamayair bhavairebhih sarvamidam jagat ।
mohitam na'bhijanati mamebhyah paramavyayam ॥ 13*

Meaning : एभिः *ebhih* : by these, त्रिभिः *tribhīḥ* : three, गुणमयैः *gunamayaīḥ* : composed of Gunas, भावैः *bhavaiḥ* : natures, सर्वभिर्दं जगत् *sarvamidam jagat* : all this world, मोहितम् *mohitam* : is deluded, एव्यः *ebhyah* : from these qualities, परम् *param* : higher, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, मां *mam* : Me, नाभिजानाति *rābhijanati* : does not know.

Substance : Deluded by nature composed of these three qualities (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*) the whole world does not know Me, the Higher and Imperishable.

Commentary : When the clouds spread over the sky one cannot see the Sun, who is above the clouds. Even so, when the mind is deluded by the three qualities, one cannot see *Atma*, who is transcendental. Enveloped by these qualities, man remains like a worm in a fruit. It can move inside the fruit, but it cannot come out unless the rind is broken. So long as the qualities agitate the mind, the real Self cannot be perceived.

It is necessary first of all to understand the cause of ignorance and know that one is bound. Then only does he make the attempt to regain his freedom. The spiritual aspirant is on a higher plane because he has become conscious of his bondage and is eager to know the truth. This itself is a great step in evolution. The majority of people do not even know that they are slaves to their own lower nature. The aspirant is awakened to his present position as a bound soul, and so he strives to get himself free from the shackles that bind him. Except the *jivanmuktas*, all the others – rich and poor, great and small, learned and illiterate – are bound by *Maya*. The eye cannot see objects when there is a cataract. It should be removed by surgical operation. Then the eye becomes clear and sees things distinctly. Such an operation should be conducted by the spiritual seeker. In this verse, the cause of ignorance is explained. In the next, the way to freedom is pointed out.

The power of Maya, and the way to cross over are stated.

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

१४

*Daivi hyesha gunamayi mama maya duratyaya ।
mameva ye prapadyante mayametam taranti te ॥ 14 ॥*

Meaning : हि *hi* : verily, दैवी *daivi* : (is) divine, of transcendental power, गुणमयी *gunamayi*: composed of the three qualities, एषा *esha* : this, मम *mama* : My, माया *maya* : cosmic illusion, दुरत्यया *duratyaya* : difficult to cross over, माम् एव *Mam eva* : Me only, ये *ye* : those who, प्रपद्यन्ते *prapadyante* : take refuge, ते *te* : they, एताम् मायाम् *etam mayam* : this Maya, तरन्ति *taranti* : cross over.

Substance : This divine illusion of Mine caused by the qualities, is difficult to cross over; those who take refuge in Me alone, cross over this illusion.

Commentary : This verse is of very great importance to all seekers. What is this *Maya*? What is the way to go beyond it? These two are fundamental questions. The entire universe is under the power of *Maya*, cosmic illusion. Its true nature should be understood first, then the seeker has to follow the way suggested by the Lord to go beyond it.

Four attributes are mentioned to describe the nature of *Maya*:

1) *Daivi* : This cosmic illusion *Maya* is divine, possessing transcendental power. *Maya* is of inscrutable, infinite power. Man and the *Devas* also are deluded by its power, and plunged in the flood of *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death. Material power, intellectual subtlety, artistic genius, wealth and glory, are all inadequate even to understand it, much less to cross over. Since it is divine, the Divine alone could deal with it.

2) *Gunamayi* : This *Maya* is made of the three qualities - *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Maya* has no form. The qualities

themselves constitute *Maya*. If these qualities are removed from the mind, *Maya* disappears. The whole world is possessed by those qualities and is deluded.

3) *Mama*: *Maya* is the supreme power of the Lord. It is under His control and acts according to His command. He may withdraw the power into Himself or project it outside at His will. Though *Maya* has power to delude the whole universe, yet it is just an instrument in the hands of God. Like servant before the master *Maya* obeys the Lord. It is inscrutable, mysterious, and wonderful to those who are under its power. To the Lord and the perfected *yogis*, it is only a non-existent reality. That which is not, that is *Maya*. That which is non-existent and yet creates the illusion of Reality is *Maya*. The world is not, yet it appears to exist. The individual self 'ahamkara' is not, yet it appears to exist. The reality is covered up and what is unreal is made to appear as the real. Such is the mystery of *Maya*. But to the wise, it is nothing. The ocean may be difficult to cross for the ordinary man, but to *Garutman* it is no more than a small canal. He flies over it by the superior power of his wings.

4) *Dura:yaya*: It is difficult to cross over *Maya*, but it is not impossible. Those who yield to the temptations of sensual pleasures, who are attached to material things cannot cross the ocean of *Maya*. All spiritual *sadhana* is intended to eliminate the temptations of the flesh and the delusions of the mind.

Having described the power of *Maya* in the first line, the Lord points the way to cross over it in the second line. Those who take refuge in the Lord transcend *Maya*. Devotion to the Lord, surrender to the Lord is the way to overcome *Maya*. 'Surrender to Me. I will take you beyond *Maya*'. This is the Lord's command. *Sankara* says that devotion to the Lord's lotus feet is the strong boat that will carry people beyond the ocean of *samsara*.

Human skill and intelligence is indeed capable of many worldly victories and achievements. Inventions are made,

empires are built, battles are fought and won by human intelligence and skill. But when man stands confronted with the cosmic illusion, he is by himself powerless. Only by surrender to the Supreme Lord, and by His grace alone, can man cross the frontiers of *samsara*, and enter the land of bliss and blessedness.

Service of the sages and *Rishis* who had already gone beyond *Maya* is also of greatest help to the spiritual aspirant. Having crossed the mire of delusion, they help mankind to do so.

The Lord is perfectly clear in his declaration '*mam eva*'.— Me only – is His command. Nothing else, no one else, can work the miracle. If one surrenders to the objective world he will suffer endless misery. If he surrenders to the Lord, he will obtain the highest rewards of freedom and bliss. The choice lies in man. Each one has to take the decision himself. No one can decide for another. The Lord's promise that he would take man beyond *maya*, should give infinite strength to man. This verse should be read and re-read, and the divine light by which the enveloping darkness will all be dispelled will flow.

Devotion to the Lord means to have unswerving faith in Him, to perform sacred works, to meditate on the Self, to cultivate virtues, and such other practices that purify the mind.

Question : *What is the nature of Maya ?*

Answer : It is divine, composed of the three gunas, subject to the Lord and difficult to cross over.

Question : *What is the way to cross over Maya ?*

Answer : Surrender to the Lord and devotion to Him is the way to go beyond *maya*.

The Lord explains why some men do not worship Him.

15. न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥

*Na mam duskritino mudhah prapadyante naradhamah :
mayaya 'pahritajnana asuram bhavamasritah ।* 15

Meaning : दुष्कृतिनः dushkritanah : evil-doers, मूढाः mudhah : the deluded, मायया mayaya : by Maya, अपहृतज्ञानाः apahritajnanah : of deluded understanding, आसुरं भावं asuram bhavam : demonical nature, आश्रिताः asritah : having taken to, नराधमाः naradhamah : the lowest of men, माम् mam : Me, न प्रपद्यन्ते na prapadyante : do not seek.

Substance : Evil-doers, the deluded, the lowest of men, deprived of knowledge by *Maya*, having taken to demonical nature, do not take refuge in Me.

Commentary : It is declared in the previous verse that those who surrender to the Lord go beyond *maya*. But do all people surrender ? No. The Lord here describes those who do not come to Him. They are ignorant because their understanding is deluded by *maya*. They are the lowest of men. They have taken to demonical nature and act like vile and wretched beings. *Maya* acts like a thief. If it is allowed to enter the heart, all that is precious - the discrimination, the superior intelligence, the virtue, the *sadhana* - are stolen in a trice, and people are left helpless and wretched. Man is degraded into a demon. The wise man is transformed into a fool. What is *maya* ? The bad *samskaras*, lust, and anger, greed, arrogance, pride and egoism—all these taken together is *Maya*. Therefore by discrimination, devotion, dispassion and sacred thoughts and acts, one should guard his inner self from the powerful onslaughts of *maya*.

Question : Who are those who do not seek the Lord ?

Answer : Evil-doers, deluded men, the lowest of human beings, whose discrimination is stolen by *maya*, who have taken to demonical nature, and who do not take refuge in the Lord.

Question : Who steals man's understanding ?

Answer : *maya*.

The Lord mentions four types of His devotees.

16. चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरथर्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

१६

*Chaturvidha bhajante mam janah sukritino 'rjuna !
artho jijnasurartharathi jnani cha bharatarshabha ॥*

16

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : Lord of the Bharatas! अर्जुन *arjuna* : O Arjuna ! आर्तो *arthah* : the distressed, जिज्ञासुः *jijnasah* : the knowledge-seeker, अर्थर्थी *artharathi* : the wealth-seeker, ज्ञानी च *jnani cha* : and the wise, चतुर्विधा: *chaturvidha* : four kinds, सुकृतिनः *sukritinah* : virtuous, जनाः *janah* : men, माम् *mam* : Me, भजन्ते *bhajante* : worship.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me – the distressed, the knowledge-seeker, the wealth-seeker, and the wise.

Commentary : The devotees of the Lord are classified into four types. All of them worship the Lord. But their aim and purpose are different. They are all righteous people (*sukritanah*) as distinguished from the opposite type of demonical natures described in the previous verse.

1) *Artah* : Men in distress remember the Lord and pray to Him for the removal of their difficulties and sorrows. Men suffering from painful diseases cry for the mercy of the Lord to save them. So also, when attacked by dacoits or wild animals, when harassed by wicked people, men call on the Lord to protect them. These form the largest majority of the devotees in the world. They seek refuge in various *Devas* for help and protection. Whatever their nature may be, they remember the Lord sometimes or other, and recognise Him as the Higher power, and so, they are all virtuous – ‘*sukritanah*’. Gajendra cried for the protection of the Lord when he was caught by the sea-monster. Draupadi did so when she was about to be stripped naked in the Royal Court of Dhritarashtra. The Lord did come down to protect them.

2) *Jijnasuh* : These are people who are eager to know and understand the Lord. Great research is carried on into the objective world, and people are spending their high intelligence and energy in these material pursuits only. Here and there we come across a research-worker in the field of the Divine. They study the *sastras*, examine their own nature, seek the guidance of the *Guru*, and try to find out the ultimate cause of creation, and the basic secret of their own personality. The Lord has already declared that the knowledge-seeker (*jijnashu*) transcends *sastric* knowledge and *Vedic* ritualism. Such intense yearning to know the truth is the effect of the good done in several births.

3) *Artharathi* : Men who seek for prosperity are the third type of devotees. Their object is to enjoy worldly prosperity in the various fields of human life. Naturally they seek the benevolence of the Lord to confer prosperity on them. They are also the devotees of the Lord.

It is to be noted that the infinite compassion of the Lord is also open for people who desire material comforts, unopposed to the law of *Dharma*.

4) *Jnani* : The man of knowledge knows the real nature of the Lord, and is able to discriminate between the true and the illusory. He has attained to the Self-state and lives in constant absorption in *Atma*. Unlike the '*arta*' and '*artharathi*' he has no fears and no desires. He loves the Lord because he knows that He is the only Reality in the universe, that He is the repository of all wisdom and bliss. He has nothing to gain for himself, and so his devotion to the Lord is a spontaneous act of oneness with Him.

Thus the four classes of men are included among the Lord's devotees. They are all righteous men. Among '*arta*' *bhaktas* we have the example of Gajendra and Draupadi; among the '*jijnasu*' *bhaktas* Parikshit, Uddhava, and others; among the '*Artharathi*' *bhaktas* Sugriva, Dhruva, and others; and among the '*jnani*' *bhaktas* Suka, Narada, Bhishma, Prahlada and others.

The Lord says 'among these, the Jnani is the best'.

17. तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।

प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥

१७

Tesham jnani nityayukta ekabhaktirvisishyate ।

priyo hi jnanino 'tyarthamaham sa cha mama priyah ॥ 17

Meaning : तेषाम् *tesham* : of them, नित्ययुक्तः *nityayuktah*: ever united with Atma, एकभक्तिः *ekabhaktih* : devoted only to Me, ज्ञानी *jnani* : the sage of knowledge, विशिष्यते *visishyate*: execls, ज्ञानिनः *jnaninah* : of the wise, अहम् *aham* : I, अत्यर्थम् *atyartham* : exceedingly, प्रियः हि *priyah hi* : dear verity, सःच *sah cha* : and he, मम *mama* : to me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : Of these, the wise constantly harmonised, devoted to the One, is the best; I am exceedingly dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

Commentary : The *jnani* is declared to be the highest of the Lord's devotees, because he possesses two qualities not found in the other types. Firstly, he is constantly absorbed in the Self, and secondly he is devoted to the Lord only and nothing else in the world.

1) *Nitya yukta*-The *Jnani* who has realised the Self is always in contact with the Lord. The others think of the Lord now and then. They are part-time devotees; they think of the Lord for some time and then go back to their daily activities of life. But the *Jnani* has no worldly activities to divert his mind from the Self. So he is ever united with the Lord '*Nityayuktah*'. Though in the early stages, the devotee's mind vacillates between the Lord and worldly life, yet it is quite possible gradually to develop constant devotion and since the *Jnani* has achieved this, he is declared to be the best of the devotees.

2) *ekabhaktih*-The *Jnani* is devoted only to the Lord. He has no attachment for anything else in the world. The others

have desires and fears, because they are attached to the world, and think of the Lord for help and protection. The *Jnani* on the other hand has already found out the illusory nature of the world, and so he has no attraction for anything like wealth or family, name or glory which usually tempt the ignorant. He knows the One Supreme Reality, and his mind is absorbed in it. The Lord is dear to him, and he is dear to the Lord. The closeness of the relationship between the Lord and the devotee is indicated here. Nothing can stand in between the two. In fact the world stands between man and God. The *Jnani* has removed this mighty obstacle from his way and has come so close to the Lord that he and his Master become one. When the Lord is pleased with his devotee, what more does he want? The reward of God's love is *moksha*.

In the ultimate analysis there can be no difference between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. That is what is implied in the single-minded devotion of the *Jnani*. It is only in the early stages of *Sadhana* that *Jnana* and devotion appear to be different, but as man rises to higher and higher spiritual planes, he discovers the truth, that the Supreme Lord of the devotee and the *Brahman* of the *Jnani* are only two different names for the same One.

Question : *Who is the best of the devotees?*

Answer : *Jnani*.

Question : *Why?*

Answer : He is always absorbed in the Lord, and loves only the Lord and nothing else.

Question : *Whom does the Jnani love most?*

Answer : The Lord.

Question : *What is the duty of man?*

Answer : He should try to acquire Lord's love by his single-minded devotion.

The oneness of the Jnani with the Lord is declared.

18. उदारः सर्वे एवैते ज्ञानीत्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।

आस्थितः स द्वि युक्तस्या प्राप्येषात्मजा परिम् ॥

*Udarah sarva evai'te jnanitvatmai'va me matam ।
asthitah sa hi yuktatma mameva'nuttamam gatim ॥ 18*

Meaning : एते सर्वे etc serve : all these (four types of devotees), उदाराः एव udarah eva : verily noble, ज्ञानी तु jnani tu : but the wise, आत्मा एव atma eva : very Self, मे me : My, मतम् matam : creed, हि hi : because, सः sah : he, युक्तात्मः yuktatma : harmonised in mind, माम एव mam eva : Me only, अनुत्तमाम् anuttamam : (as) supreme, गतिम् gatim : goal, आस्थितः asthitah : is established.

Substance : Noble are all these; but I hold the wise verily as Myself; because he, Self-united, is established in Me the supreme goal.

Commentary : It is declared here that the *jnani* is verily God himself, because he considers the Lord to be the only supreme goal, and is established in Him with steadfast mind. But the other devotees are also noble, because they have faith in the Lord and worship Him sometime or other. These are certainly superior to the rest of mankind who have no faith in the Lord.

The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. So is the *jnani*, the Lord Himself. The others are dualistic in their attitude. They think of themselves as separate from the Lord and worship Him as a superior Being. This is quite natural in the early stages of *Sadhana*. When the aspirant is enthroned in *yoga* he knows that he is not separate from the Lord. That is why the *jnani* is described as harmonised in mind, 'yuktatma'. The *jnani* knows that the Lord is his supreme goal. He has no desire and attachment for anything else. He has discovered the illusory nature of the world. And so, the Lord is the only Reality for him. With an unswerving mind he thinks, lives, moves and has his being in the Lord. That is why the *jnani* is worshipped as the Lord Himself. Vyasa is described as Vishnu Himself with two arms. Though such men dwell in a mortal body, they are verily God. Where is God to be found? The

answer definitely is that God is found in His devotee, the *jnani*. Whatever path is followed—*karma*, *bhakti*, *jnana* or *dhyana*—the final goal is union with the Supreme Being. All *Sadhana* finds its ultimate fulfilment in the realisation of oneness with the Lord.

Question : *Why is the jnani superior ?*

Answer : He is superior because there is no difference between him and the Lord. The *jnani* is God Himself.

Question : *How does the jnani acquire that position ?*

Answer : With a steadfast mind, he thinks of the Lord as His supreme goal and is established in Him.

Such men of knowledge are rare and exceptional.

19. बहुनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

१९

*Bahunam janmanamante jnanavan mam prapadyate ।
vasudevah sarvamiti sa mahatma sudurlabhah ॥*

Meaning : बहुनाम् *bahunam* : of many, जन्मनाम् *janmanam*: births, अन्ते *ante* : at the end, ज्ञानवान् *jnanavan* : the wise, सर्वम् *sarvam* : (is) all, वासुदेवः *Vasudevah* इति *iti* : thus the Lord, माम् *mam* : Me, प्रपद्यते *prapadyate* : realises, सः *sah* महात्मा *mahatma* : such a man—great soul, सुदुर्लभः *sudurlabhah* : (is) very rare.

Substance : At the end of many births, the *jnani* realises Me, knowing that all is God. Such a great soul is indeed very rare.

Commentary : From time immemorial, man has passed through innumerable births. From worms and germs, reptiles, birds, and beasts, man at last attains the human birth. Several births pass away in a state of ignorance. And then, the desire to know the truth is born in the heart of man. Even then, several births pass away in the ups and downs of spiritual *Sadhana*. Ultimately man realises the truth, that everything is God. So long as there is the slightest trace of differentiation,

knowledge is imperfect. Perfection of *jnana* is the discovery that there is only One and that is God, and there is nothing but He in the whole universe. Sages of such realisation are indeed very rare.

But it would be foolish to be lazy and dull in spiritual *sadhana*, because realisation can come only after many births. On the other hand, knowing full well that he has passed through millions of births, man should strive for liberation even in this very birth. The test of knowledge is the recognition of God every where. So long as the objective world '*drisya*' dominates the mind causing contradictory feelings of attraction and repulsion, there is no knowledge. The aspirant should intensify his *sadhana* till he comes to know without any doubt that what has been appearing as the objective world is nothing but the Lord Himself.

The verse does not mean that only after many births man realises God. It means that man acquires knowledge after many births and he then realises God. That auspicious moment when such realisation takes place is the end of all births. If one makes himself fit for realisation, knowledge may dawn on him this moment. There is no time-limit. Ripeness of mind is all that is needed.

The Lord confers the title '*mahatma*' on such realised souls.

Question : *When does man attain moksha ?*

Answer : When he acquires *jnana*.

Question : *When does he acquire jnana ?*

Answer : After many births.

Question : *What is the realisation of a jnani ?*

Answer : That God is every thing.

Question : *Are such men common ?*

Answer : No. Very rare.

Question : *What is the test of a jnani ?*

Answer : The realisation that everything is God.

The Lord explains the position of those who worship the Devas.

20. कामैस्तैस्तैहृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्ते अन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २०

*Kamaistais-tair hritajnanah prapadyante 'nyadevatah ।
tam-tam niyamamasthaya prakritya niyatah svaya ॥ 20*

Meaning : स्वया *svaya* : by one's own, प्रकृत्या *prakritya* : by nature, नियताः *niyatah* : led, तैः तैः कामैः *taih taih kamaih* : by whatsoever desires, हृतज्ञानाः *hritajnanah* : men of lost discrimination, तं तं नियमम् *tam tam niyamam* : this and that rite, आस्थाय *asthaya* : having followed, अन्यदेवताः *anyadevatah* : other Devas, प्रपद्यन्ते *prapadyante* : worship.

Substance : Those whose wisdom is rent away by desires approach other *Devas*, resorting to various external rites according to their own natures.

Commentary : Without thinking of the supreme Being, some people worship other *Devas* for the purpose of acquiring some worldly benefit. Their wisdom is rent away by their desires, and so they perform various external rites and rituals for desire-gratification. They have no idea of the Supreme *Paramatma*.

There are some people whose aim is to realise the Self but who are deprived of understanding by the deluding power of *maya*. There are some others who entertain desires and who seek for their gratification by worshipping various other *Devas*. The former have faith in the Supreme Lord; the latter do not have such faith in the Supreme.

Question : *What steals away man's understanding ?*

Answer : Desires.

Question : *How do they arise ?*

Answer : By past *samskaras*.

Question : *What does man do in consequence ?*

Answer : He forgets the Supreme Lord, and worship other *Devas* for the gratification of his desires.

The reward of worshipping other Gods is explained in two verses.

21. यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव पिदधाम्यहम् ॥

२१

*Yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhaktah
sraddhaya 'rchitum icchati ।
tasya-tasya 'chalam sraddham
tameva vidadhamyaham ।*

21

Meaning : यः यः भक्तः *yah yah bhaktah* : who-so-ever worshipped, यां यां तनुम् *yam yam tanum* : what-so-ever form (of Devas), श्रद्धया *sraddhaya* : with faith, अर्चितुम् *architum* : to worship, इच्छति *icchati* : desires, तस्य तस्य *tasya tasya* : to such and such, तां श्रद्धां एव *tam sraddham eva* : that faith only, अचलाम् *achalam* : firm, अहम् *aham* : I, विदधामि *vidadhami* : make.

Substance : Whosoever worshipper desires to worship whatsoever form of *Devas* with faith, to such and such (devotees) I make his faith unswerving.

Commentary : The Lord here declares that He confirms the faith of those people who worship different Gods for different purposes. The love of the Supreme Being is infinite. He is present in all these different *Devas*. So when man worships them with faith, his faith is made unswerving by the Lord Himself. The point to note is that if there is faith in some form or other, such faith is strengthened by the Lord.

This is the unique feature of the Hindu concept of God. Each man is free to worship the Divine in any form. There is no restriction or compulsion in the choice of the object of worship. The path may be different. Whatever path one may

follow, he has to come ultimately to the One Supreme Being. Since this universal vision is hard to acquire, men are given infinite choice to worship any form which appeals to their imagination, according to their past *samskaras*. The only condition is that there should be faith in the worship. Progress should be maintained whether the pace is slow or quick. And also, the destination should be kept in view, and there should be no deviation or back-sliding. Such men are blessed by the Lord with increased faith and stronger devotion to their respective Gods. So it is man's duty to start worship of his chosen Deity. Faith and devotion are conferred on him by the Lord Himself.

Question : *What is the chief quality of worship ?*

Answer : Faith.

Question : *How does the Lord help such men ?*

Answer : By confirming their faith in worshipping their chosen Deity.

The rewards of such worship are conferred by the Lord Himself.

22. स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ॥

२२

*Sa taya sraddhaya yuktastasya 'radhanam ihatे ।
labhate cha tatah kaman mayai'va vihitānhi tan ॥*

22

Meaning : सः *sah* : he (the desire-prompted devotee), तया श्रद्धया *taya sraddhaya* : with that faith, युक्तः *yuktah* : possessed, तस्य *tasya* : of it, आराधनम् *aradhanam* : worship, इहते *ihatे* : engages in, मया एव *maya eva* : by Me only, विहितान् *vihitānhi* : ordained, तान् कामान् हि *tan kaman hi* : those desires verily, ततः *tatah* : from those Gods, लभते *labhate* : Obtains.

Sub-tance : Endowed with faith, he engages in the worship of his chosen Deity and from that obtains his desires, these being ordained by Me alone.

Commentary : Whatever rewards the devotee obtains by faithful worship of the *Devas*, all of them are ordained by the

Lord Himself. So, though the rewards appear to flow from any particular Deity, they have their source in the Lord and are determined by Him alone. The Lord is the highest authority in this universal Government. Indra, Varuna, Vasu, Agni and other *Devas* are functionaries occupying different positions and wielding different powers. All these are determined by the Lord Himself. These elemental forces act according to His will. They derive their power, position and authority from Him. Their field of work, the nature and extent of their power, what they can do – the whole system is ordained by the Lord. So, any gift received from any *Deva* (Indra, Varuna or Kubera etc.) comes from the Lord and is ordained by Him. The wise man approaches the Lord Himself, and the partially wise seek fulfilment from other *Devas* who are but agents of the different powers of God Himself.

Question : *What does the devotee do ?*

Answer : He worships the *Devas* with faith ?

Question : *What does he obtain by it ?*

Answer : The fulfilment of his desires.

Question : *Who ordains the law of worship and reward ?*

Answer : The Supreme Being – So, it is from Him that the devotee receives the rewards of his worship through the medium of different *Devas*.

The rewards of other Devas are perishable; Moksha is the reward of the Supreme Lord.

23. अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्लमेधसाम् ।

देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति भासपि ॥

२३

*Antavattu phalam tesham tadbhava yalpanedhasam
devan devayajo yanii madbhakta yanti mamapi ॥*

23

Meaning : अल्पमेधसाम् *alpimedhasam* : of little wisdom, तेषाम् *tesham* : of them, तत् फलं तु *tat phalam tu* : that fruit verily, अन्तवत् *antavat* : finite, having an end, भासि *bhavati* : is,

देवयज्ञः *devayajah* : the worshippers of the Devas, देवान् *devan* : to the Devas, यान्ति *yanti* : go, मद्भक्तौः *mad bhaktah* : my devotees, मामपि यान्ति *mam api yanti* : go to Me also.

Substance : The fruit of these men of little wisdom is finite indeed; those who worship the *Devas* go to the *Devas*, and my devotees go to Me verily.

Commentary : Those who worship other *Devas* are men of little intelligence, because their exertion yields only very temporary and perishable rewards, like wordly prosperity, wealth, power and position. It is only the unawakened dull brains that can think of those finite things, letting go the infinite benefit of true knowledge and devotion. He who seeks a small pond when the sacred *Ganges* is flowing by, he who leaves the wish-fulfilling plant of Heaven and goes to a small tree, tempted by its half-sweet half-bitter fruits – such is the man who forgets the Supreme Lord and devotes himself to the worship of the lesser Deities for the purpose of enjoying small gifts and pleasures.

High or low, whatever is seen (*drisya*) perishes, be he Indra or Vasu. What does not perish is *Atma*, the seer (*Drik*). All else is subject to death. Therefore the wise seek for the imperishable. The object of worship determines the goal of the devotee. The worshippers of the *Devas* go to the *Devas*, of the *Rakshasas* to the *Rakshasas*, of the *Pitris* to the *Pitris*. So the seeker has to make his choice after careful discrimination. The Teacher of the Gita declares that those who worship Him go to Him, the Supreme Lord.

Question : *What is the reward of those who worship the Devas?*

Answer : Finite – Having an end.

Question : *Who are those that seek for it ?*

Answer : Men of small intelligence.

Question : *To whom do they go ?*

Answer : To the *Devas*.

Question: Who reaches the Supreme Lord?

Answer : Those who worship the Supreme Lord reach Him.

The ignorant do not understand the Lord's higher nature.

24. अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥

२४

*Avyaktam vyaktima pannam manyante mama buddhayah
param bhavamajjananto mama'vyayam anuttamam ॥ 24*

Meaning : अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, अनुत्तमम् *anuttamam* : supreme, परम् *param* : transcendental, मम *mama* : My, भावम् *bhavam* : nature, अजानन्तः *ajanantah* : not knowing, अबुद्धयः *abuddhayah* : men devoid of reason, अव्यक्तम् *avyaktam* : the unmanifested, unknowable by the senses and mind, माम् *mam* : Me, व्यक्तिमापन्नम् *vyaktim aparnnam* : as possessing separate name and form, मन्यन्ते *manyante* : think.

Substance : Those devoid of knowledge think of Me, the unmanifested, as having name and form, not knowing My imperishable supreme and transcendental nature.

Commentary : The Lord is really formless and universal. He is transcendental, beyond *maya*, infinite and eternal. For the purpose of protecting the righteous and punishing the wicked, and establishing *Dharma*, He takes birth in this world. As *Maya* is under His control the power of adopting or discarding His form is in His own power.

When the Lord thus incarnates Himself as a separate individual, His immortality is not at all affected. The separate form as Krishna or Rama is His own creation, and when the purpose of His *Avataras* is fulfilled, the form is dissolved and He remains the Eternal. The devotees are blessed by such *Avataras*. But unfortunately, the ignorant men of little intelligence consider the name and form of the Lord as His real nature, and so, they do not find Him different from other

mortals. No doubt the devotees are endowed with faith and devotion when they see the manifestation of the Lord as Rama or Krishna. But they should know the higher nature (*Parambhavam*) of the Lord, and should not get confused.

Four attributes are mentioned about the higher nature of the Lord. (1) He is unknowable (*Avyakta*). (2) He is transcendental (*Param*). (3) He is imperishable (*Ayyayam*). (4) He is supreme (*Anuttaran*). He is unknowable by the senses and the mind. The phenomenal world is visible to the senses and comprehensible by the mind. If the Lord also is a composition of the elements, he would dissolve like any other mortal form. But he is imperishable. He is subtler than any other. The material sky (*Akasa*) is itself invisible and so how can the Lord whose nature is more subtle (*Chidakasa*) be an object of perception? He is the whole universe, but he is at the same time not bound by physical laws, because He is transcendental. Since He is beyond time and place, and is uncontaminated by material elements, since He is not subject to dissolution like other things, He is described as Supreme, most excellent (*Anuttama*).

It should be clearly understood that this verse is not a disparagement of the worship of the different manifestations of the Lord in temples and images. The common devotee must go through this process of fixing some form of the Lord in the mind and worshipping Him in that manner. But he should not stop there. As his vision enlarges and his devotion deepens he will naturally evolve towards the transcendental perfection of the Lord. Devotion of this type is commendable.

What is condemned here is to attribute mortality to the Lord and regard Him to be no more than a man. Sisupala could see Lord Krishna as a cowherd-boy and nothing more. It was Bhishma who could understand the transcendental nature of the Lord, while he appeared in the beautiful form of Krishna. Bhishma could worship the Lord as Krishna, and at the same time know that He is the imperishable *Paramatma*. Ravana could think of Sri Rama only as a mortal, subject to death like

any other. But sages like Vasishta and others could understand that Sri Rama is the Lord Himself appearing as the Prince of Ayodhya. It is this understanding which is suggested in the verse for the guidance of all seekers. (Vide 4-6).

Question : *What is the real nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : It is unmanifest, transcendental, imperishable and supreme.

Question : *Who thinks of the Lord as a mortal ?*

Answer : The ignorant, with deluded understanding.

The Lord explains why He is not comprehended by the common man.

25. नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।

मूदोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥

२५

Na'ham prakasah sarvasya yogamayayasamavritah ।

mudho'yam na'bhijanati loko mam ajamavyayam ॥

25

Meaning : योगमायासमावृतः *yogamayayasamavritah* : veiled by My Yoga Maya, अहम् *aham* : I, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : to all, प्रकाशः न *prakasah na* : do not manifest, मूढः *mudhah* : deluded, अयं लोकः *ayam lokah* : this world (People), माम् *mam* : Me, अजम् *ajam* : unborn, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, न अभिजानाति *nabhijanati* : does not know.

Substance : Enclosed by My *Yogamaya* (cosmic illusion) I am not manifest to all; this world, deluded, knows Me not, the unborn and imperishable.

Commentary : If God is Omnipresent, why does He not manifest to all. This question is frequently asked by many. The answer is here. He is veiled by his own power (*Sakti*), the cosmic illusion, and so He is not seen by all. To those for whom the veil is drawn off by intense discrimination He becomes visible. Between man and God, there is the veil of cosmic illusion. It is *Maya* composed of the three qualities (*Sattva*,

Rajas and *Tamas*). The veil of '*Tamas*' is dark, that of *Rajas* is red, and that of *Sattva* is pure white. Thus the threefold veil covers up the effulgent *Paramatma*. As the devotee tears away veil after veil by intense *sadhana*, the Reality behind manifests itself as the final Truth. All the spiritual practices are intended to remove the obstruction that stands between man and God, and not to produce or create God ! He is already there, the eternal conscious principle in all. The problem simply is to clear off the veil of *Maya*. The power of *maya* and how to cross over it has already been declared by the Lord (6-14).

When a dark pot is placed over the lamp, light is not seen. When the pot is taken off, the light is visible. When one covers his eyes with his hands, he cannot see the Sun. When he takes off his hands, he sees the Sun. Therefore, though the Lord is present in all, He is not seen. It is true to say that what one sees as the objective world is also the Lord, but such is the power of the cosmic illusion that he is confused and thinks of the world only as matter and nothing more. When the mind is cleared of the illusion he sees every thing as the Lord. (*Vasudevas sarvamiti*).

The ignorant are strengthening *maya* and forging strong shackles to bind themselves. Lust and sensuality, indulgence in sense-pleasures, greed and hatred – these are haunting the mind of humanity, and purity and self-control are at a discount. The unrest in the world is due to the clouded intelligence of men who are not able to understand the secret of peace and blessedness. Spiritual life and inner freedom have practically become impossible for many, because the atmosphere in which people live is poisoned with sense-attractions and distracting elements. Blessed are the few who, in the midst of this uproar and agitation, have set their aim on perfection, and strive for it with discrimination and dispassion. They shall see the higher nature of the Lord.

The word '*sarvasya*' (to all) here should refer only to the ignorant. That the Lord is veiled by *maya* is from the dualistic point only. *Paramatma* has no veil by which He is covered.

He is unclouded pure Supreme Intelligence. The veil is for the individual *Jiva* only. The clouds cannot at any time effect the sun. He is always bright and glorious. The covering of the clouds is from the view-point of those who are below the clouds. The same is the case with the Supreme Lord.

A different interpretation for the phrase “*Yogamaya-samavritah*” (Veiled by *Yoga Maya*) is given by some commentators. It is taken as a qualifying adjective to ‘*mudhah*’ (the deluded). Then the meaning would be – the ignorant world veiled by the deluding power of *Maya* is not able to see the eternal nature of the Lord.

Question : *Why is the Lord not visible to all ?*

Answer : Since he is veiled by the *Yoga Maya*.

Question : *What is the real nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : He is birthless and eternal.

Question : *Who is not able to understand His real nature ?*

Answer : The ignorant.

Question : *Why ?*

Answer : Because they are not able to penetrate the veil of *Maya*.

Question : *What should the wise man do ?*

Answer : He should strive by intense spiritual *sadhana* to remove the obstructing veil and realise the Lord even in this very life.

The Omniscience of the Lord is declared.

26. वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥

27

Veda'ham samatitani vartamanani cha'rjuna'

bhavishyani cha bhutani mam tu veda'na kaschana॥ 26

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! अहम् aham : I, समतीतानि *samatitani* : the past, वर्तमानानि च *vartamanani cha* ; and the

present, भविष्याणि॒च् bhavishani cha : and the future, भूतानि॒
bhutani : beings, वेद् veda : know, मां तु॑ mam tu : but Me,
कश्चन् kaschana : any, न वेद् na veda : not knows.

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

Commentary : The Omniscience of the Lord is here declared. All beings are in the womb of time, and time as the cosmic illusion, is in the Lord. As the whole universe from creation to dissolution is functioning in the Lord, there is nothing that He does not know. His eye is on all beings, past, present and future. Knowing this, how can man commit sin ?

By contrast with the Ominiscience of the Supreme Iswara, we understand the limited character of the individual *Jiva*. He is controlled by time. He is subject to death and change. He does not know the past or the future. His understanding is limited to very small things around him. Whereas the Lord is 'Sarvajna' (omniscient) the individual *Jiva* is 'Kinchijna' (of little knowledge). The Lord is eternal, beyond time, all-knowing. What is man after all in the presence of the Lord ? And yet this little man is proud of his strength, position, wealth, beauty and knowledge. He thinks that he is everything and thus has no thought of the Lord. This is the illusory power of *Maya* working on the human mind. He who knows the truth sings the infinite glory of the Lord with a hundred tongues. He prostrates himself before the Lord with deep faith and devotion. When a common mortal exhibits some ray of genius, people honour him and pay homage to him. That being so, what is the homage that man should pay to the Omniscient Lord with all His infinite power. It is the primary duty of man to contemplate the transcendental glory of the Lord, His omniscience, omnipotence, and His imperishable nature. Pride and egoism cannot have any place in the heart of the spiritual aspirant.

Mam tu Veda na Kaschana-No one knows me. This should refer to men of demonical nature who have no faith in the Lord,

who have no Self-knowledge and who are devoid of devotion. It is true that the Lord alone knows His full glory. The rest, the highest of his devotees, men of perfect knowledge, are one with Him. Standing at the screened window of his high palace, the King can see the crowds below, but not one of the crowd can see the King in the palace. So also, the Lord knows all beings, but very few know Him. Therefore it is the duty of man to understand his limitations and the unlimited power of the Lord, to have faith in Him, and to cross the ocean of *samsara* by His grace. As the rain drop merges in the ocean, so should the individual self merge in Him. This is *Moksha*, perfect freedom. Till then like the animal bound to the tether, man's life is limited by a thousand restricting influences.

Question : *What is the power of the Lord ?*

Answer : He knows the past, present and future. Few know him.

Ignorance causes attraction and revulsion (raga and dvesha) and by the pairs of opposites man is deluded.

27. इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।

सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्ग यान्ति परंतप ॥

२७

Iccha dvesha samutthena dvandva mohena bharata ।

sarvabhotani sammoham sarge yanti paramtapa ॥ 27

Meaning : परंतप *Parantapa* : O Arjuna ! भारत *Bharatha* : O Arjuna ! सर्ग *sarge* : from birth (in this world), इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन *icchadveshasamuthena* : arising from attraction and revulsion, द्वन्द्वमोहेन *dvandvamohena* : by the delusion caused by the pairs of opposites, सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhotani* : all beings, सम्मोहं *sammoham* : to delusion, यान्ति *yanti* : are subject.

Substance : O Arjuna ! By the delusion of the pairs of opposites caused by desire and aversion, all beings are subject to illusion in the world.

Commentary : All people are enveloped in ignorance from the time of birth. The Lord's *Yogamaya* casts her veil round the new-born baby in the cradle. It is deep and impenetrable darkness that shrouds the human being, preventing him from seeing the light of *Atma*. What is this delusion? It is the delusion of the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc., arising from desire and aversion. Freedom from attraction and revulsion (*raga* and *dvesha*) will eliminate the pairs of opposites. When there is no desire to enjoy a particular object, there cannot be any pain resulting from the non-possession of that object, nor the hatred against those who stand in the way of such enjoyment. Desire agitates the mind and makes it restless, and a restless mind is far away from peace which is the only condition for Self-realisation. Even if the desire is fulfilled, the desire itself will not die with its gratification. It seeks for more and more enjoyment and there is no end to desires. So this subtle and powerful enemy should be fought with discrimination and dispassion and rooted out of the mind.

Dislike towards an unpleasant object is common to all. The mind constantly fluctuates between likes and dislikes. When a pleasing thing comes to a person he is happy, but soon after when something unpleasant occurs, he is pained. Thus the whole world is divided into two opposite extremes for the common man. So long as there is pleasure, there will be pain also. So long as there is joy there shall be unhappiness also. After very long experience, man discovers that he cannot have the one without the other, and his search for a painless pleasure is the fool's search for the hare's horn which does not exist. Then will he seek for that joy which is self-existent, which does not arise from external objects, the source of which is the very Self of man. There he finds a bliss which is uncontaminated; there he finds the light that has no shadow; there he finds the peace which nothing can disturb. This state must come to all sooner or later.

The cosmic illusion overtakes man even from the time of birth. As man grows, the illusion takes stronger hold on him. It is true that in childhood, desire and aversion are less powerful

and so spiritual *sadhana* should start even from childhood, before the mind is poisoned by worldly desires, ambitions, enjoyments and so on. All great *Mahatmas* have practised spiritual discipline from their childhood when the mind is not positively attached to worldly things.

Arjuna is addressed as the 'scorcher of enemies' for he has destroyed many of the powerful enemies, and so he should strive hard to root out the invisible foes who had taken possession of his heart.

All beings are under delusion at birth, but some awakened souls transcend the illusion by devotion and knowledge.

Question : *What is the source of the pairs of opposites ?*

Answer : Desire and aversion (*Raga* and *Dvesha*).

Question : *When does delusion overtake all beings ?*

Answer : Even at the time of birth.

Delusion cases when sin is destroyed.

28. येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां धृद्व्रताः ॥

२८

*Yesham tvantagatam papam jananam punyakarmanam ।
te dvandvamohanirmukta bhajante mam dhridhavratah ॥ 28*

Meaning : पुण्यकर्मणाम् *punyakarmanam* : who do good work, येषां जनानाम् *yesham jananam* : of those people, पापम् तु *papam tu* : but sin, अन्तगतम् *antagatam* : is destroyed, ते *te* : they, द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ताः *dvandvamo'havinirmuktah* : freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, धृतिः *dhridhavratah* : steadfast in vows, माम् *mam* : Me, भजन्ते *bhajante* : worship.

Substance : But those men of good works whose sin has come to an end, worship Me steadfast in vows, freed from the delusive pairs of opposites.

Commentary: Only the man who is steadfast in his vows can worship the Lord and understand His higher nature. Vows of silence, fasting, celibacy, study and others are practised by many for self-perfection. But to acquire steadfast discipline is difficult. The reason is that the mind is impure by accumulated sins of several births. This is the chief obstacle in spiritual life. As the dirty cloth cannot be dyed, as no seed grows in waste land, so also spiritual illumination does not arise in the heart of the sinful man. Sin is the manifestation of 'rajo guna' and this does not allow man to remain still in the contemplation of the Self. The mind is turned outward to wander in the wilderness of the world.

So the mind should be washed pure. And this is possible by performing good deeds, 'Do Punya karma and destroy sin' - that is the Lord's command. The seeker should do good deeds continuously. Some charity, some service to suffering-humanity, some self-sacrifice for the sake of others, some *japa* and some kind of spiritual discipline should be done by him. This is the only way to eliminate sin. It is foolish to say that even good *Karma* binds. Bad can be removed only by good, and in the final stages of Realisation, both bad and good are left behind. But even after Realisation the Lord has ordained that good works should be continued for the sake of setting an example for humanity. The man of good deeds shall never fall to a low state says the Lord.

Those who have destroyed sin by good deeds, are freed from the delusive pairs of opposites, and worship the Lord with unswerving devotion. Thus they realise the Self and attain *Moksha*.

Vows firmly held and practised with a resolute spirit are necessary for progress. A weak and vacillating mind cannot achieve anything. The obstruction of *Maya* cannot be easily removed. The *Sadhaka* should fix the discipline and follow it. - "I will not touch food till I complete some *Japs*, and read a chapter of the *Gita* or *Ramayana* or some other sacred work." Thus he should determine and act.

Question : Who can worship the Lord with steadfast vows ?

Answer : The sinless.

Question : How can sin be destroyed ?

Answer : By performing good works.

Question : What are the rewards of destroying sin ?

Answer : The removal of the delusive pairs of opposites, and firmness in the contemplation of the Self.

The reward of firm faith and devotion to the Lord is declared.

29. जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥

२९

*Jara marana mokshaya mamasritya yatanti ye ।
te brahma tad viduh kritsnamadhyatmam karma*

cha'khilam ॥ 29

Meaning : ये ye : those who, जरामरणमोक्षाय *jaramarana-mokshaya* : for freedom from old age and death, माम् *mam* : Me, आश्रित्य *asritya* : having taken refuge in, यतन्ति *yatanti* : strive, ते *te* : they, कृत्स्नम् *kritsnam* : the whole, अध्यात्मम् *adhyatmam* : Self-knowledge, अखिलम् कर्मच *akhilam karmacha* : and all action, तत् ब्रह्म *tat brahma* : to be That, Brahman, विदुः *viduh* : know.

Substance : Those who strive for liberation from old age and death, taking refuge in Me, realise in full that *Brahman*, the entire Self-knowledge and action.

Commentary : The individual strives for liberation from the ills and sorrows of life and for obtaining that bliss which is perfect. All spiritual practices and surrender to the Lord, have this freedom and perfection as the goal. As the seeker continues his practice, and as his *sadhana* becomes ripe, (i. e.) as he becomes a *Yogarudhah*, he will discover that all beings, all knowledge, all action, to be *Brahman*.

and that there is nothing else but That. They see the whole life and universe as the Self, *Atma*, or *Brahman*.

The knowledge of *Brahman* does not come to all. Those who are awakened to the ills of life, who seek for liberation, who strive for it, who take refuge in the Lord, they alone understand the highest Truth—that the Self is *Brahman* and every thing is only That and nothing else. Man realises that his limited self is only a fiction, a myth and mirage, and what exists is only *Brahman*, and he is That (*Aham Brahmasmi*)

Asritya, yatanti : These two are the key-words of the verse. They go together, striving for liberation and surrendering to the Lord. Both these are necessary for *Brahma-Jnana*. When man strives for knowledge, God's grace helps him to know the right path and reach the goal.

Question : *For what should man take refuge in the Lord?*

Answer : For releasing himself from the bondage of age and death.

Question : *How does man realise God?*

Answer : By his effort in the practice of spiritual *sadhana*.

Question : *What is his reward?*

Answer : By his own *sadhana* and by surrender to the Lord he realises *Brahman* the culmination of all knowledge and action.

30. साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥

३०

*Sadhibhutadhidaiyam mam sadhiyajnam cha ye viduh
prayanikale 'pica mam te viduryuktachetasah ॥* 30

Meaning : ये *ye* : who, साधिभूताधिदैवम् *sadhubhutadidaivam* : with the Adhibhuta and Adhidaiva together, साधियज्ञं च *sadhiyajna n cha* : and with Adhiyajna together, माम् *mam* : Me, विदुः *viduh* : know, ते *te* : they, प्रयाणकालेऽपि च *prayana-*
30

kalepi cha : even at the time of death also, युक्तचेतसः *yukta chetasah* : steadfast in mind, माम् *Mam* : Me, विदुः *viduh* : know.

Substance : Those who know Me with the *Adhibhuta* (pertaining to elements, the world of objects), *Adhidaiva* (pertaining to the Gods) and the *Adhiyajna* (pertaining to the sacrifice) know Me even at the time of death, having self-control.

Commentary : When the seeker attains *Brahmajnana*, he understands that everything pertaining to the elements, the Gods, and the sacrifices, is all comprehended by *Brahman*. He retains that experience even at the time of death. All indeed is *Brahman* and the Self is *Brahman*. Such knowledge is acquired through a whole life-time of *sadhana*, and that experience 'I am *Brahman*' is remembered at the moment of death also. If one fills the mind with worldly thoughts, those very thoughts occur at the time of death. If he is merged in the highest realisation, that memory will be powerful at the time of the dissolution of the body.

That is why it is declared here that the man of self-control 'Yuktachetasa' alone can retain that knowledge at the time of death. It does not mean that the memory of the Lord should be held only at the last moment. When man is healthy and strong, when the body is fresh and vigorous, all spiritual *sadhana* should be done and realisation attained. It is only then that the memory of the blissful experience remains fresh in the mind even at the last moments. As the moment of death is unknown, it follows that spiritual life should be completed when the body is in a fit condition. The Lord gives no concession to the idlers and the negligent. Besides this the responsibility is placed fully on the personal effort of man for self-realisation. Otherwise, man is likely to live in a fool's paradise, that some great experience would come to him of its own accord. Every seeker should understand clearly that his own effort will bring down God's grace to help him towards final realisation.

The terms *Adhibhuta*, *Adhidaiva* and *Adhiyajna* are explained in the next Discourse.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाजुनसंवादे विज्ञानयोगो नाम
सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ । । ।

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Vijnana Yogo
nama saptamo'dhyayah.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga*, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends

The Seventh Discourse entitled

Vijnana Yoga
(The *Yoga* of wisdom)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ अष्टमोऽध्यायः

Atha Ashtamodhyayah

EIGHTH DISCOURSE

अक्षरपरब्रह्मयोगः

AKSHARA PARABRAHMA YOGA

THE YOGA OF IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN

I. The title of the Discourse :

'Kshara' means that which perishes. 'Akshara' means that which does not perish, the Imperishable. Since the Discourse deals with the Imperishable Brahman it is entitled 'Aksharaparabrahma Yoga.'

II. Main Points of the Discourse :

- 1) Arjuna's questions and the Lord's answer. (1-5)
- 2) The practice of *Pranava* and its wonderful effects. (9-16)
- 3) Explanation of creation and dissolution. (17-19)
- 4) The universal form of the Lord and how the devotee attains it. (20-22)
- 5) The paths of the dark and light - fortnights of the moon. (23-26)
- 6) The power of the Yogi. (27-28)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the end of the previous Discourse, the Lord said that those who take refuge in Him and strive for liberation from old age and death would even at the time of death know all of *Brahman* which comprehends the *Adhyatma*, *Adibhuta*, and *Adhiyajna*. Arjuna wanted to know what was meant by *Adhyatma*, *Adibhuta* etc., and so this Discourse starts with seven separate questions put by him to the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. किं तद्ब्रह्मं किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तमं ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदेवं किमुच्यते ॥ १
2. अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसुदनं ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २

Arjuna uvacha

*Kim tad brahma kim adhyatmam
kim karma purushothama
adhibhutam cha kim proktam
adhidaivam kim uchyate* 1

*Adhiyajnah katham ko'tra dehe'smin madhusudana!
prayanakale cha katham jneyo'si niyatatmabhih* 2

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna Uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : पुरुषोत्तम् *Purushothama* : O best among men! तत् ब्रह्म *tat Brahma* : that Brahman, किम् *kim* : what, अध्यात्मम् *adhyatmam* : Adhyatma, किम् *kim* : what, कर्म *karma* : action, किम् *kim* : what, अधिभूतम् *adhibhutam* : Adhibhuta, किंच *kim cha* : and what, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is said, अधिदैवम् *adhidaivam* : Adhidaiva, किम् *kim* : what, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, मधुसुदन *Madhusudana* : O Krishna! अस्मिन् देहे *asmin dehe* : in this body, अधियज्ञः *Adhiyajnah* : Adhiyajna, कः *kah* : who, अत्र *atra* : here, कथम् *katham* : how, प्रयाणकालेच

prayanakalecha : and at the time of death, नियतात्मभिः
niyatatmabhih : by the self-controlled, कथम् *katham* : how,
ज्ञेयः *jneyah* : knowable, असि *asi* : are you.

Substance : Arjuna said : What is that *Brahman* ? What is the *Adhyatma* ? What is action ? What is declared to be the *Adhibhuta* ? And what is *Adhidaiva* said to be ? O best among men ?

O Krishna ! Who and how is *Adhiyajna* here in this body ? And how at the time of death are you to be known by the self-controlled ?

Commentary : The Lord answers the first six questions briefly and elaborates His answer to the last in this Discourse.

- 1) What is *Brahman* ?
- 2) What is *Adhyatma* ?
- 3) What is *Karma* ?
- 4) What is *Adhibhuta* ?
- 5) What is *Adhidaiva* ?
- 6) What is *Adhiyajna* ?
- 7) How and in what manner is the Lord known by the self-controlled at the time of death ?

श्री भगवानुवाच

3. अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्मसुच्यते ।

भूतभावोऽद्वयकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥

३

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Aksharam brahma paramam svabhavo'dhyatmam uchyate
bhutabhabavodbhavakaro visargah karmasamjnitaḥ ॥ 3*

श्री भगवानुवाच – *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : परमम् *Paramam* : supreme, अक्षरम् *aksharam* : imperishable, ब्रह्म *brahma* : (is) *Brahman*, स्वभावः *svabhavah* :

its nature, अध्यात्मम् *adhyatmam* : self-knowledge, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called, भूतभावोद्भवकरः *bhutabhabodbhavakarah* : the emanation that causes the birth of beings, विसर्गः *visargah* : act of sacrifice, oblation to the Gods in sacrifice, कर्मसंज्ञितः *karmasamjnithah* : is named karma.

Substance : The blessed Lord said : *Brahman* is supreme, imperishable. Its essential nature is called *Adhyatma* (Self-knowledge); the act of sacrifice that causes the birth of beings is named *karma* (action).

Commentary : Three questions are answered in this verse. First, what is *Brahman*? The Supreme and the imperishable is *Brahman*. Two attributes are mentioned here - supreme (*Paramam*) and imperishable (*Aksahram*). There is nothing other than or superior to *Brahman*. The One above and beyond which there is nothing else is *Brahman*. That is why it is described to be supreme *Paramam*. *Brahman* is imperishable, deathless. Since it is deathless it cannot be said to be born. The whole universe is constantly changing and going through the process of creation and dissolution in an endless chain. Birth and death is the law of nature, and there is only One that is birthless and deathless and that is *Brahman*. It is the seer (*Drik*), and so is indestructible. Destruction is only spoken of the seen (*Drisya*), and not of the seer (*Drik*). *Brahman* is indivisible, unaffected by time, space and causation.

To the second question-'What is *Adhyatma*?'-the answer given is nature (*svabhava*). One's nature is *svabhava* (i. e.) the real Self of man, distinct from the superimposed body, mind, and senses. Out of ignorance, man thinks that he is the body and the mind, and that is his real nature. It is an error. When knowledge dawns, one knows that he is the Self, *Atma*, uncontaminated by the body, mind and the senses. So long as man identifies himself with the elements, which are subject to change and death, he cannot be happy. True happiness is only in the Self, pure, perfect, and imperishable.

The third question is 'What is *Karma*?' The answer is 'an act of sacrifice', which is the cause of the birth of beings. This is *yajna*. By *yajna*, rains are produced and from rains, food and from food all beings are born. The word '*Visarga*' here means that which is given away or that which is offered as sacrifice to the Gods in the sacred Fire of the *Yajna*. In charity (*Dana*), wealth is sacrificed. Service to mankind in any form is an act of sacrifice. This also is *Yajna*, and it leads to *Moksha*.

Question : What is *Brahman* ?

Answer : The indestructible and the supreme Being is *Brahman*.

Question : What is *Adhyatma* ?

Answer : The true Self of man.

Question : What is *Karma* ?

Answer : That act of sacrifice which causes the emanation of beings is *Karma*.

4. अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभूतां वर ॥

4

*Adhibhutam ksharo bhavah purushascha'dhidaivatam ।
adhiyajno'ham eva' tra dehe dehabhritam vara ।* 4

Meaning: देहभूतांवर *dehabhritamvara* : O best of embodied beings Arjuna ! क्षरः *ksharah* : perishable, भावः *bhavah* : element, अधिभूतम् *adhibhutam* : Adhibhuta, पुरुषश्च *purushah* : the creative energy (Hiranyagarbha or Virat), अधिदैवतम् *adhidaivatam* : (is) Adhidaiva, अत्र देहे *atra dehe* : here in this body, अहमेव *aham eva* : I Myself (Paramatma), अधियज्ञः *adhiyajnah* : (called) Adhiyajna.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The perishable element is *Adhibhuta*; *Hiranyagarbha* or *Viratpurusha* is *Adhidaiva*, and here in the body I Myself am the *Adhiyajna*.

Commentary : As the Lord declares that He dwells in the body as *Adhiyajna*, He is most near to every being. The Lord is not far away either in the sky or in the underworld. He permeates the body with his invisible presence. So it is man's duty to discover Him by close self-examination. As the Lord is very near to all, no one should be hated or looked down with contempt. The divinity of man is thus declared by the Lord.

Arjuna is addressed here as '*dehabhritamvara*' implying that man holds the body, but he is certainly not the body.

Question : *What is Adhibhuta ?*

Answer : The perishable element, all the objective universe is called *Adhibhuta*.

Question : *What is Adhidaiva ?*

Answer : Viratpurusha or Hiranyagarbha.

Question : *What is Adhiyajna ?*

Answer : Lord Krishna-Paramatma is Himself the *Adhiyajna* in this body.

The Lord now elaborates the theme of God-Consciousness at the time of death.

5. अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेबरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥

५

Antakale cha mameva smaran muktva kalebaram ।

yah prayati sa madbhavam yati na'styatra samsayah ॥ 5

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, अन्तकालेच *antakalecha* : at the moment of death also, मामेव *mam eva* : Me only, स्मरन् *smaran* : thinking, कलेबरम् *kalebaram* : body, मुक्त्वा *muktva* : leaving, प्रयाति *prayati* : goes, सः *sah* : he, मद्भावम् *madbhavam* : My Being, याति *yati* : attains, अत्र *atra* : in this, संशयः *samsayah* : doubt, नास्ति *na asti* : is not.

Substance. He who casts off the body at the time of death, and goes forth remembering Me only, attains My Being; there is no doubt in this.

Commentary: The Lord here explains how He is remembered by the self-controlled *yogi* at the time of death.

Antakalecha: It is declared that whoever thinks of the Lord at the moment of death also, attains His being. The word 'also' ('cha') has to be carefully understood. 'Cha' means 'also'. The seeker has to think of the Lord not only during his life-time but at the moment of death also. The Lord did not say that He should be remembered 'only' at the time of death. That would be quite encouraging to all idlers and wicked men. Of course, even to remember the Lord at the time of death is also an act of merit. But such memory is impossible to retain at the moment of death, unless by long and steady practice, the mind is saturated with divine thoughts. Mostly people die thinking of their property, wife or children, because their minds were filled with those thoughts during a long life-time. So the Lord emphasises the idea of rembering Him at all time, both in life and in death.

Those who have spent a whole life-time in spiritual *sadhana* can retain the memory of the Lord at the last moment. The exceptions are very rare. If a man wants to play some role in a drama, he goes through months of training, memorising his part. To pass an examination, a long period of preparation is necessary. It is within one's own experience that what he thinks of intensely in the waking state comes up as a dream in sleep. In old age, at the moment of death, the functions of the body and mind will be at a low ebb and most people pass away in an unconscious state. So intense *sadhana* during a whole life-time is essential for attaining the Lord by fixing the mind on Him at the time of death.

The power of *Maya* is inscrutable. At any time it may overtake the person if he is negligent. So till the last breath one has to be vigilant. To sink in the ocean having come within a few yards of the shore or to fall off from the ladder

having touched the last rung, would be a disaster. Having kept away delusion for long, but yielding to it at the last moment is foolish. So the Lord exhorts all mankind to keep the light of knowledge bright till the moment of death.

In the *Yogavasishtha*, the sage Vasista advises Rama to be watchful and vigilant.

Lust (*Kama*) easily devours the mind of the distracted man. But the demon can do nothing to the man whose mind is gathered up in *Yoga*.

Me only : "Think of Me only" is the Lord's command. Nothing can save man from the bonds of *samsara* except the one-pointed absorption in the Supreme Lord. If man wants peace and perfection let him seek refuge in the Lord only. He gives *Moksha*.

The reward of devotion to the Lord at the last moment is that he attains union with the Lord. This is liberation, self-realisation, *Moksha*. He does not come again under the power of *samsara*. He reaches the Eternal. The Lord says, out of infinite compassion, "Have faith in Me. I will save you from all the ills and perils of *samsara*." So, having full faith in the Lord, and abandoning all small gains and profits in this or other worlds, let the seeker aim at the highest perfection and reach it by continuous devotion to the Lord.

Question : *What should be the attitude of man at the time of death ?*

Answer : He should think of the Lord and nothing else.

Question : *What is the result ?*

Answer : He attains the Lord.

Question : *What then is man's duty ?*

Answer : To remember the Lord in life and in death.

The future path of man is determined by what he thinks at the moment of death.

6. यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेबरम् ।

तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥

६

*Yam-yam ya'pi smaran bhavam tyajatyante kalebaram !
tam-tamevai'ti kaunteya sada tadbhavabhadvitah ॥ 6*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! अन्ते *ante* : at the last moment, यं यं वापि भावं *yam yam vapi bhavam* : what-so-ever thought or form even, स्मरन् *smaran* : thinking, कलेबरम् *kalebaram* : body, त्यजति (सः) *tyajati (sah)* : leaves (he), सदा *sada* : always, तद्भावभावितः *tadbhavabhadvitah* : conformed to that thought in nature, तं तमेव *tam tam eva* : to that object, or form, or thought only, एति *eti* : goes.

Substance : O Arjuna! Who-so-ever leaves the body thinking of what-so-ever object, form, or being at the end, to that only he goes, conformed in nature to that.

Commentary : Whatever a man thinks and contemplates frequently, that becomes a tendency—*samskara* which holds the mind enslaved by ill-power and momentum. So it is said that whatever form or object the dying man thinks, that he will obtain when he takes a new birth. The sage Jadabharata in spite of his great *tapas* was attached to a fawn which he protected and when he passed away, the thought of the fawn filled his mind. Consequently he was born as a deer. As one thinks so he becomes (*Yadbhavam tadbhavati*). This being the law, every thoughtful man should be extremely careful to choose and select only noble and spiritual thoughts to fill the mind. This should be practised throughout one's life, so that they should be uppermost in the mind at the time of death. As all other things in the world are pain-causing, sorrow-breeding, the wise man naturally thinks of the Blessed Lord as the be-all and end-all of his life. Thus man attains the supreme state. Devotion, *Dhyana*, study, company of the wise, charity, all these should be practised truthfully and by so doing, divine thoughts permeate the mind and determine the future birth of man.

That is why spirited *sadhana* is prescribed from childhood when the mind is pure and free from the poisonous ugliness of worldly life. Every man is himself responsible for his freedom or bondage. "If one thinks that he is free, free he is this moment. If he thinks he is bound, bound he should be." Either high birth or low birth or freedom from birth and death, all these depend on man's mental frame. And this frame of mind is forged by long practice throughout life. The good *samskaras* would re-assert themselves in the next birth and lead him to the goal.

Question: *What shall be the nature of the future birth for man?*

Answer : It is determined by that idea or object which dominates the mind at the time of death.

Question: *How can man retain spiritual thought at the last moment?*

Answer : By a whole life-time of *sadhana*.

The need for constant remembrance of the Lord is declared?

7. तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मर्यपितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यसंशयः ॥

६

*Tasmat sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhya cha
mayyarpita manobuddhir mamevai'shyasyasamsayah ॥ 7*

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, सर्वेषु कालेषु *sarveshu kaleshu* : at all times, माम् *mam* : Me, अनुस्मर *anusmara* : remember, युध्यच् *yudhya cha* : and fight (perform your duty), मयि *mayi* : in Me, अर्पित *arpita* : surrendered, मनोबुद्धिः *manobudhih* : mind and intellect, मामेव *mam eva* : Me alone, एष्यसि *eshyasi* : you shall attain, असंशयः *asamsayah* : undoubtedly.

Substance : Therefore, remember Me at all times and fight, surrendering your mind and intellect in Me. You shall attain Me alone, without doubt.

Commentary : This verse seems to be a commentary on the previous one in which it is declared that the devotee who shall think of Him at the moment of death will attain Him. Here the Lord clarifies the declaration by stating that it is the duty of the devotee to think of Him at all times. It is implied that unless a man thinks of Him always, he cannot retain that blissful memory at the time of death.

It is the lamp that keeps away darkness. When the lamp is put out, darkness envelopes everything. The darkness of ignorance is ready to possess the heart of man if the lamp of knowledge is not kept burning continuously. It is only the thought of the Lord that keeps away delusion. When that thought is not there, delusion immediately seizes man. Therefore remember Me at all times—is the Lord's command.

Anusmara: Continuous thought of the Supreme should be kept up. Hearing of the Lord, thinking of Him, meditating on Him, the seeker should not let go his hold of the Lord at any time. Such a man need not bother whether death comes sooner or later. Having purchased the ticket, it does not matter when the train comes! Let death come when it will, the seeker is ready with the Lord's name on his lips and His thought in the mind.

If all the time the seeker is thinking of the Lord, how can he get on in the world? When does he find time to look after the practical duties of life? This question is asked by many people. Most people also make it an excuse that they are not able to think of God because of pressing domestic duties. To such people the Lord here gives the advice. "Think of Me and perform your duties." Arjuna's duty on the battle-field was to fight. For each man as he is placed in the various stations and circumstances of life, there will be particular duties and they should be performed while keeping the thought of the Lord in the mind.

The declaration of the Lord proves that the *Gita Sastra* is not the philosophy of mendicants, escapists, idlers and cowards. It is the doctrine that unites practical life with the

highest realisation'. Reamember me and do your duty ("Mam anusmara yudhya cha.")—This is one of the central teachings of Gita.

The mind generates thought and intellect approves and confirms it. So one should think of the Lord both with mind and intellect. These two faculties of the mind should be fixed in or surrendered to the Lord.

Asamsayah : The Lord affirms His declaratian and excludes all doubts and fears from the mind of his devotees. So it is the duty of all aspirants to have faith in the Lord's command, do spiritual *sadhana* and attain Him.

Question : *When should one think of God ?*

Answer : Always and ever.

Question : *What about man's worldly duties ?*

Answer : He should perform them and at the same time think of the Lord.

Question : *What is the way to attain the Lord ?*

Answer : Surrendering the mind and intellect to Him.

The way of meditating on the Supreme is explained.

8. अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पृथगुचिन्तयन् ॥

6

*Abhyasayogayuktena chetasa na'nyagamina
paramam purusham divyam yati partha'nuchintayan*॥ 8

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna! अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन abhyasyoga-yuktena : harmonised by practice of yoga, नान्यगामिना nanyagamina : not going towards other objects, चेतसा chetasa : with mind, दिव्यम् divyam : divine, परमम् paramam : supreme, पुरुषम् purusham : Lord (Atma), अनुचिन्तयन् anuchintayan : meditating, याति yati : attains.

Substance : O Arjuna ! With mind not going towards other objects, harmonised by the practice of *yoga*, meditating constantly, one reaches the Supreme Resplendent *Purusha*.

Commentary : In this verse three definite practices are mentioned to reach the Supreme Lord.

1. The practice of *yoga*.
 2. The mind should not swerve from the Lord, as the supreme goal.
 3. One should meditate on the Lord continuously.
- 1) The Lord has elevated 'practice' (*abhyasa*) to the state of a *yoga*, like *Karma yoga*, *Jnana yoga* etc. No other *yoga* can bear fruit without being supported by *abhyasa yoga*. In the 6th Discourse the Lord has already referred to practice ('*Abhyasa*') as the primary method of controlling the mind.

In the practical field of work we understand the need for systematic practice. In sport and art, practice is essential for perfection. In fact, practice is nothing else than the repetition of the mode of thought or act. Any act repeated many times becomes a habit. All the bad habits have been the accumulated effect of wrong practice. If practice is done in the right direction, good thoughts and acts become natural and spontaneous. When one comes across a person who is pure in thought, word and deed, he admires him, and sometimes wonder how he could be so pure. But he should realise how he had laid the foundations of purity by long *abhyasa yoga*. All the impurities and weaknesses arising from previous births are overcome by steadfast practice of goodness and purity in this life. Whatever may be the *yoga* that the seeker chooses to follow, it should be first and last combined with '*abhyasa yoga*'. Then alone it would yield good results, just as purifying powders work on the human body only when they are mixed with water.

2) The second thing is that the man should not move away from the ideal. The aim is *Aatma*, and the mind should

therefore be centered in the *Atma*, and not allowed to move out towards material objects. Whatever appears ('*anatma*') perishes. Knowing this, through discrimination one should hold fast to *Atma* alone. As the mind by its nature can only hold on some form it should be given some divine object or form which it can easily cling to. So it is said here that one should meditate on the Supreme Divine Lord (*Paramam Purusham Divyam*).

Anuchintayan : "The Lord commands the disciple to think of Him (*Atma*) again and again, and yet again. So thinking continuously, man reaches the supreme state. Having full faith in the teaching of the Lord, may all the spiritual aspirants fulfil their life's purpose.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is Supreme, Self-effulgent, and Divine.

Question : *What is the way to reach Him ?*

Answer : Restraining the mind from going out towards sense-objects; remembering Him continuously is the way to reach Him.

Question : *How should the mind be restrained ?*

Answer : It should remain steadfast in *Atma* alone, and not turn away from it.

The object of meditation, the method of meditation, and its results are described.

9. कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेयः ।
सर्वस धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९

10. प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगधलेन चैव ।
भृषोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपति दिव्यम् ॥ १०

*Kavim puranam anusasitaram
anoraniyamsam anusmaredyah ।
saryasya dhataram achintya rupam
adityavarnam tamasah parastat ॥*

*Prayanakale manasa'chalena
 bhaktya yukto yogabalena chai'va |
 bhruvormadhye pranam avesya samyak
 sa tam param purusham upaiti divyam ॥ 10*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, भक्त्युक्तः *bhaktyayuktah* : with devotion, प्रयाणकाले *prayanakale* : at the time of death, योगबले । *yogabalena* : by the power of yogic practice, प्रणम् *pranam* : vital breath, भृगोर्मध्ये *bhruvah madhye* : "in the centre of the brows, सम्यक् *samyak* : well, आवेश्य *avesya* : established, च *cha* : and, कविम् *kavim* : the omniscient, पुराणम् *puranam* : ancient, अनुशासितारं *anusasitaram* : the controller of all, आगोः *anoh* : than atom, अणीयांसम् *aniyamsam* : more subtle, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all, धातारम् *dhataram* : supporter (nourisher, protector,) अचिन्त्यरूपम् *achintyarupam* : inconceivable form, आदित्यवर्णम् *adityavarnam* : self-effulgent like the sun, तमसः *tamasah* : from the darkness, परस्तात् *parastat* : beyond, पुरुषम् *purusham* : Paramatma, अचलेन मनसा *achalena manasa* : with immoveable mind, अनुस्मरेत् *anusmaret* : thinks continuously, सः *sah* : he, दिव्यम् *divyam* : self-illuminating, परम् *param* : supreme, ते एव *tam eva* : that only, उपैति *upaiti* : attains.

Substance : Who, at the time of leaving the body, by the power of yogic practice, fixes the vital breath in the centre of the brows, and thinks continuously of the Omniscient, the Ancient, the controller of all the worlds, subtler than atom, supporter of all, of inconceivable form, self-illuminated like the sun, beyond darkness - he attains the self-illuminated *Paramatma*.

Commentary : The Lord describes the different aspects of *Paramatma* and points the way of meditation. It is necessary to know the attributes of the Supreme for strengthening and confirming one's faith in Him. Naturally people can only think of that about which something is known. So in the 9th verse eight attributes of the Supreme are mentioned.,,

1) The Lord is Omniscient, the poet of poets; to know Him is the highest poetic experience.

2) He is the Ancient, without a beginning. All other beings have a beginning and so they have an end also. *Paramatma* is Eternal.

3) He is the Lord and Controller of all the worlds. What should be one's devotion to Him compared with the respect that one has for small princes of earthly states !

4) The Upanishads declare that he is smaller than the atom and bigger than the biggest. Therefore knowing that the Lord is present in every thing big and small, one should have a devotional attitude to every thing in the world.

5) He is beyond the senses and cannot be comprehended by the mind. But the purified mind, by contemplation becomes one with Him, even as the rivers when they merge in the sea lose their separateness and become one with the ocean. The purified mind knows Him by being united with Him. There is no other way to know the Lord.

7) He is Light. It is his Light that illumines the sun and everything else.

8) He is beyond the darkness of ignorance, beyond *Maya*.

Man when he leaves the body, should contemplate *Paramatma* by understanding Him through these eight attributes. Here death is described as travel to a distant place (*Prayana*). Just as man secures all necessary things before he starts on a travel, even so he should provide himself with all the best qualities before he leaves the body.

Thus during the last moments also man should contemplate *Paramatma* with *Bhakti* and *Yoga*. Both are essential for *Dhyana*. *Bhakti* is necessary to destroy egoism and secure the grace of God. *Yoga* is necessary to restrain the senses and mind for the purpose of meditating on the Supreme. Also, the mind should be immovable and the meditation continuous.

The reward for this is absolute freedom - *Moksha*.

Question : *What attributes of Paramatma are mentioned here ?*

Answer : He is Omniscient, ancient, the Controller of all the worlds, subtler than atom, supporter of all, inconceivable in form, self-illuminating like the Sun, shining beyond all darkness.

Question : *How should one meditate on Him at the time of leaving the body ?*

Answer : With steady mind, with devotion, and with yogic power holding the vital breath in the centre of the brows, one should meditate.

Question : *What is the result ?*

Answer : He attains the state of *Paramatma*.

Question : *So what is the way to attain Him ?*

Answer : Devotion and *Yoga*.

The excellence of the Supreme state is declared.

11. यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागः ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११

*Yad aksharam vedavidoh vadam
visanti yadyatayo vitaragah ।
yadicchanto -rahmacharyam charanti
tatte padam samgrahena pravakshye ॥ 11*

Meaning : वेदविदः *vedavidah* : the knowers of Vedas, यत् *yat* : which, अक्षरम् *aksharam* : imperishable, वदन्ति *vadanti* : declare, वीतरागः *vitaragah* : freed from desire, यतयः *yatayah* : the Self-controlled ascetics, य (*yat* : which, विशन्ति *visanti* : enter, यत् *yat* : which, इच्छन्तः *icchantah* : desiring, ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacharyam* : the vow of celibacy, चरन्ति *charanti* : practise, तत् *tat* *padam* : that state, goal, ते *te* : to you, संग्रहेण *sangrahena* : in brief, प्रवक्ष्ये *pravakshe* : I will declare.

Substance : Which the knowers of Vedas declare imperishable, which the self-controlled ascetic freed from desire enter, desiring which men practise the vow of celibacy, that goal I will declare to you in brief.

Commentary : The Lord says that He would declare the Supreme briefly. The Supreme has no end and as no words can fully describe it, so the Lord gives the very essence of the Vedas, and the worship of the Supreme as the simple single syllable OM - *Pranava*.

The Vedas declare that *Brahman* alone is Eternal. Everything else is transitory and changing. It is this Reality that man has to understand and realise. Knowledge of all other things cannot confer the bliss of immortality. In Hinduism every child when he starts his education, begins with the sacred word OM, which is *Brahman*. So whatever else a man may learn and understand, he should not neglect the knowledge of the Imperishable *Brahman*. The knowers of Vedas, after a great deal of thought, have arrived at the highest goal *Brahman*, and thus attained absolute peace and bliss.

Who can enter this state ? This question is also answered here. Only those who are free from attachment and desire, free from lust and hatred, can enter the *Brahmi* State. Let no man complain that he cannot attain that state. The key to this consummation is in his hands. It is purity. Let the mind be purged of all impure tendencies, and that very moment *Brahman* is realised.

Those who practise severe austerities, restraining the senses and controlling the mind are qualified and fit to realise *Brahman*.

Celibacy is the bedrock for all spiritual development. Those who aspire for the highest should be free from sensuality in thought, word and deed. They should live and move in *Brahman*, the pure and blessed untainted by anything else.

The Lord uses the emphatic term '*Pravakshye*' to indicate the importance of *Brahma-Vidya* which he teaches to His disciple and through him to all mankind.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is imperishable.

Question : *Who knows Him ?*

Answer : The knowers of *Veda*.

Question : *Who enters that state ?*

Answer : Those who are freed from desire and who practise celibacy.

Question : *Then, What is the way to attain Him ?*

Answer : Destruction of the *Vasanas* and the practice of *Brahmacharya*.

The Lord explains the process of meditating on Pranava-OM.

12. सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुद्ध्य च ।
मूर्धन्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२

13. ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३

*Sarvadvarani samyamya mano hridi nirudhya cha
murdhnyadhaya'tmanah pranam asthito yogadharanam ॥ 12*

*Aum ityekaksharam brahma vyaharan mam anusmaran ।
yah prayati tyajan deham sa yati paramam gatim ॥ 13*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, सर्वद्वाराणि *sarvadvarani* : all the gate-ways of the senses, संयम्य *samyamya*: having restrained, मनः *manah* : mind, हृदि *hridi* : in heart, निरुद्ध्य च *nirudhya cha*: and held, मूर्धि *murdhini* : with head (Brahma Randhra), प्राणम् *pranam* : vital breath, आधाय *adhaya* : having placed, आत्मनः *Atmanah* *yogadharanam* : practice of concentration of the self, आस्थितः *Asthithah* : established (in), ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, ओम् *इति aum iti* : OM thus, एकाक्षरम् *ekaksharam* : one-syllabled, व्याहरन् *vyaharan* ; uttering, माम् *mam* .

Mam : Me, अनुस्मरन् *anusmaran* : remembering, देहम् *deham* : body, त्यजन् *tyajan* : leaving, प्रयाति *prayathi* : departs, सः *sah* : he, परमां गतिम् *paramam gatim* : highest goal, याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : Who having restrained all the gates of the senses, fixing the mind in *Atma*, holding the vital breath in the heart, concentrating on *Atma* by yogic practice, repeating the sacred syllable OM which is *Brahman*, remembers Me at the time of leaving the body, he attains the supreme goal.

Commentary : The process of meditating on OM and attaining final liberation is explained here. It does not mean that one should follow it only at the time of death. It means that one should practise this method throughout life and remain in that state even at the time of death.

Without closing the gateways of the senses, the mind cannot be turned inwards to concentrate on *Atma*. The frame of knowledge may easily be put out by the winds of sense-attractions if the gateways are kept open. Here it is said that 'all' the senses should be restrained. The restraint should be complete and perfect. It should be understood that without sense-restraint, no other *sadhana* is possible.

Already the Lord has declared—“First restrain the senses.” As the tortoise withdraws all its organs into its shell, so should the *yogi* withdraw all the senses from their usual external activities in the objective world.

Then the mind should be centred in the heart, in *Atma*. The heart, *Atma*, is the source from which the mind arises. So the mind should be turned back to its own source. When the senses are controlled, the mind naturally loses its roving nature and sinks into its own source.

The mind should think of *Paramatma* in a continuous stream of unbroken consciousness.

What is the ‘*mantra*’ for meditation? The one-syllable OM, which is *Brahman*. OM is *Pranava*. It is the essence of the

Vedas. It is not enough merely to utter the word OM but one should think of the Lord. It means that the idea symbolised by the word OM should be thought of. Mere verbal repetition of a 'mantra' without thinking of its meaning, will not yield the best results. If a cannon is filled with powder without the shell, it will cause a noisy explosion only, but the target is not reached because there is no shell. Similarly, when *Pranava* is uttered with its meaning in mind, it will lead to the goal. Ceaseless thought of the Lord is the way to *Atmajnana*.

The following points are revealed through these two verses.

1. Repetition of a 'mantra' (*Japa*) is not enough. There should be concentration on the thought of the formula.
2. Among all the *mantras*, *pranava* is the highest. It leads to *Brahman*.
3. It is not enough to think of the Lord now and then. Continuous memory is essential.
4. All the senses should be restrained, not merely one are two.
5. The heart is the source of the mind. The mind rises from the heart (*Atma*) and sinks into the heart.
6. Any one without distinction of race, caste or creed can attain *Moksha* by the above-mentioned method of repeating *Pranava*.

Question : *What is the highest state ?*

Answer : *Paramatma* – the state of *Brahman*.

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : He who can restrain the senses, fix the mind in *Atma* hold *Prana* in the *Brahmarandhra* by *yogadharana*, repeat *Pranava* understanding its significance, attains *Brahman*.

The Lord is easily attainable by one who thinks of Him with single-minded devotion continuously.

14. अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थं नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

१४

Ananyachetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah ।

tasya'ham sulabhah partha nityayuktasya yoginah ॥ 14

Meaning : पार्थं Partha : O Arjuna ! यः yah : who, अनन्यचेताः ananyachetah : with single-minded devotion, माम् mam : Me, नित्यशः nityasah : ever, सततम् satatam : always, स्मरति smarati : remember, नित्ययुक्तस्य nityayuktasya : ever united with Me, तस्य tasya : of him, अहम् aham : I, सुलभः sulabhah : am easily attained.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Who thinks of Me with single-minded devotion, continuously and ever, by him who is ever united with Me, I am easily attained.

Commentary : The easy way to attain God is here explained. People think that it is very difficult to attain Him. But practising in the right way, He is easily attained. He who thinks of Him continuously and always attains Him.

The mind should be free from any other thought except the thought of God. Usually the mind is attached to various things and gets entangled in the meshes of the objective world through the senses. That is why it is said here that one should be filled to the brim with the thought of God continuously and for ever. It is not enough to think of Him now and then. Always and every day the thought of God should be present in the mind. Of course by steady practice day after day, the mind could be trained to think of God more and more. So practising, after a long time, the mind gets fixed and does not turn away from Him. Then the Lord is attained.

The seeker should be vigilant and try his best not to yield to the temptations of *Maya*. The wakeful and watchful man has no fear of falling away from the goal.

Question : Who can attain God easily ?

Answer : Those who worship God with single-minded devotion day after day and for ever attain Him.

Question : What is the easy path to realise God ?

Answer : (1) Single-minded devotion and (2) Constant contemplation of the Divine.

Those who attain God do not again enter Samsara.

15. मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमश्चतम् ।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५

*Mam upetya punarjanma dukhhalayam asasvatam ।
napnuyanti mahatmanah samsiddhim paramam gatah ॥ 15*

Meaning : परमां *paramam* : highest, संसिद्धिम् *samsiddhim* : perfection, गताः *gatah* : having reached, महात्मानः *mahatmanah* : great souls, माम् *mam* : Me, उपेत्य *upetya* : having attained, पुनः *punah* : again, दुःखालयम् *dukhhalayam* : abode of sorrow, अश्चतम् *asasvatam* : impermanent, जन्म *janma* : birth, नाप्नुवन्ति *na apnuvanti* : do not get.

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

Commentary : It is declared here that those who attained God do not enter *samsara*. So long as realisation does not come to man he is whirled about in the flood of birth and death. When truth is known there is no birth, and hence no pain or sorrow. The need for perfect freedom is stated here. Freedom is to be attained for the purpose transcending pain and sorrow.

The Lord makes it clear that the place where man takes birth is the abode of sorrow and is non-eternal. Birth is subject to those two evils. Even if a person feels that he is

enjoying something here it is only a shadowy joy, which is mixed with pain. We see that joy is inevitably followed by sorrow as its own shadow. That is why the wise men are not tempted by these reflected pleasures. The world is the abode of sorrow. It is the place where sorrow rules. Out of ignorance and delusion, man imagines that he is enjoying this or that pleasure. But the Lord who knows the truth warns mankind out of infinite compassion—"O ye mortals, do not be deluded, this world is the very abode of pain and sorrow. Seek for that which is true joy and eternal and ~~transcend~~ all sorrow.

'*Avidya*' is the power which deludes man to think of non-eternal as eternal, the impure as pure, and *anatma* as *Atma*.

So the way to transcend is to attain God. Let everyone take refuge in God in every way, through devotion, knowledge and dispassion.

Union with God is the highest state of freedom and perfection. As many enlightened sages have attained that state, it is suggested that every man can achieve it with adequate will and discrimination. Those who take refuge in God with a pure heart are *mahatmas*. Those who are entangled in worldly objects are '*alpatmas*',—little minded men. *Mahatma* is a title. To reject the false and hold on to Truth, to reject the ephemeral and hold on to the Eternal, to reject *anatma* and hold on to *Atma*, is the way to attain the highest state of *Mahatma*. Such enlightened sages do not return to the world which is characterised by pain and sorrow. Those who are desirous of eternal joy should strive with faith and devotion to reach that state.

Question : *What is the nature of this world ?*

Answer : It is full of sorrow and non-eternal.

Question : *Who do not enter the world ?*

Answer : Those who have attained God.

Question : What is that God-state ?

Answer : It is the state of highest perfection.

Question : What is the way to transcend sorrow ?

Answer : Not to enter the world (take birth) is the way to transcend sorrow.

Question : What is the way to become birthless ?

Answer : Attaining the highest perfection-*Paramatma*.

All the worlds upto Brahmaloka are not ultimate; they come and go.

16. आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

१६

*Abrahmabhuvanallokah punaravartino'rjuna ।
mam upetyatu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate ॥*

16

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! आब्रह्मभुवनात् लोकाः abrahmabhuvanat lokah : up to Brahmaloka worlds, पुनरावर्तिनः punaravarthinah : subject to return, कौन्तेय kaunteya : O Arjuna ! माम् mam : Me, उपेत्यतु upetyatu : but having attained, पुनर्जन्म punarjanma : re-birth, न विद्यते na vidyate : is not.

Substance : O Arjuna ! All worlds upto *Brahmaloka* are subject to return; having attained me there is no re-birth.

Commentary : In the universe there are several places of existence-gross, subtle, yet more subtle etc. All these do not touch the ultimate. They are all in the realm of the phenomenal-the difference being in their gross or less gross nature. So those who reach the subtler worlds like *Svargaloka* or *Brahmaloka* have to return again. They come and go in the same way as this world. But those who have attained *Paramatma* have no re-birth. This is *Moksha*. The reason is that all the worlds up to *Brahmaloka* are objective and so they repeat themselves endlessly. Only *Atma* which is the

'Drik' is not subject to the modifications of time and place. It is imperishable. Having attained it there is no *karma*, and so there is no birth *Janma*.

Question : *What is the way to transcend birth ?*

Answer : Attaining *Paramatma* is the way.

Question : *What is the nature of the worlds upto Brahma-loka ?*

Answer : They return again and again.

The time-scheme of Brahma (the Creator) and the non-eternal nature of Brahma-loka are explained.

17. सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्विदणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥

१७

*Sahasrayugaparyantam ahar yad brahmano viduh ।
ratrim yugasahasrantam te 'horatravidah janah ॥*

17

Meaning : जनाः *Janah* : people, ब्रह्मणः *brahmanah* : of Brahma (Creator), यत् अहः *yat ahah* : which day, सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तम् *sahasrayugaparyantam* : ending in a thousand yugas (aeons), विदुः *viduh* : know, रात्रि॑ं *ratrim* : night, युगसहस्रान्तां *yugasahasrantam* : ending in a thousand yugas (aeons), ते *te* : they, अहोरात्रविदः *ahoratravidah* : knowers of day and night.

Substance : Those people who know the length of the day of Brahma which ends in a thousand *yugas* and night which also ends in a thousand *yugas*, know day and night.

Commentary : In the previous verse it was stated that all the worlds upto *Brahmaloka* are non-eternal, subject to change, and they come and go. Here the Lord gives an estimate of the duration of day and night of Brahma (Creator) and thereby suggests that even Brahma is limited by time. The day of Brahma is thousand *yugas* and night another thousand *yugas*. So one complete day and night for Brahma endures two thousand *Mahayugas*. The following table shows the duration in years:

Kaliyuga	:	432000 years
Dvaparayuga	:	864000 years (Twice Kaliyuga)
Tretayuga	:	1296000 years (Thrce Kaliyuga)
Kritayuga or Satyayuga.	}	1728000 years (Four times Kaliyuga).
Total :		4320000 (1 Mahayuga.)

One thousand such *Mahayugas* make a day, and another one thousand such *Mahayugas* make a night for Brahma. Three hundred and sixty five such days make a year, and one hundred such years constitute the life-time of Brahma. What one should understand is that even this astronomical duration of life of Brahma is limited by time. The sage is not interested in anything circumscribed by time, and the transitory pleasures derived by living in such worlds. He aspires to go beyond time, to realise the immeasurable *Paramatma*. Whereas every thing is conditioned by time, the Lord alone is eternal. In Him all time, space, and all the worlds are created by the power of His *Mayasakti*. The wise man takes no thought of the unreal, but aspires for the Eternal. He knows what time is, and how time destroys all things, and how he can transcend time by taking refuge in *Paramatma*.

Question: *What is the time-scheme of Brahma (Creator) ?*

Answer : One thousand *Mahayugas* constitute a day and another one thousand *Mahayugas* a night for Brahma.

Question: *What is the conclusion drawn from this ?*

Answer : Brahma (Creator) is also limited by time. *Paramatma* is alone beyond time. So the idea is that the wise man should seek for the Eternal.

The origin and dissolution of the worlds are explained.

18. अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥

१८

Avyaktadvyaktayah sarvah prabhavantyaharagame ।

rairyagame pralyante tatrai'ya 'yyaktasa.njnake' ॥ 18 ।

Meaning : अहरागमे *aharagame* : at the coming of day, अव्यक्तात् *avyaktat* : from the unmanifested, सर्वाः *sarvah* : all, व्यक्तयः *vyaktayah* : the manifested, प्रभवन्ति *prabhavanti* : proceed, रात्र्यागमे *ratryagame* : at the coming of night, अव्यक्तसञ्जके *avyakta samjnake* : termed unmanifested, तत्रैव *tatra eva* : in that only, प्रलीयन्ते *praliyante* : dissolve.

Substance : At the coming of day all the manifested proceed from the unmanifested and the coming of night everything dissolves in that only which is termed as the unmanifested.

Commentary : Except the Supreme, all else is subject to birth and death. All the manifested proceed from and dissolve in *Maya (Prakriti)* which power is in the Lord Himself. From the darkness of sleep stream forth the wonderful dream-world and all that dissolves in the darkness of sleep. The awakened man has nothing to do with the dream-world. So also *Paramatma* has no contact with the manifested which proceeds from and dissolves in the unmanifested (*avyakta*). But He remains as the supporter of all.

Question : *From what does the manifested proceed ?*

Answer : From the unmanifest.

Question : *When do they come out ?*

Answer : At the coming of day of Brahma (Creator).

Question : *When do they dissolve and where ?*

Answer : At the coming of night, and into the Avyakta they dissolve.

All things stream forth again and again, and dissolve again and again.

19. भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थं प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥

१९

*Bhutagramah sa eva 'yam bhutva-bhutva praliyate ।
ratryagame 'vasah partha prabhavatyaharagame ॥*

Meaning: पर्थि Partha : O Arjuna ! स एवायं भूतग्रामः sa eva 'yam bhutagramah : that multitude of beings, अवशः avasah : helpless, भूत्वा भूत्वा bhutva bhutva : being born again and again, रात्र्यागमे ratryagame : at the coming of night, प्रलीयते praliyate : dissolves, अहरागमे aharagame : at the coming of day, प्रभवति prabhavati : comes forth.

Substance: O Arjuna ! That multitude of beings coming forth again and again is dissolved at the coming of night; it streams forth again at the coming of day.

Commentary: The multitude of beings comes forth again and again at the beginning of every *Kalpa*, and is dissolved again and again at the end of every *Kalpa*. Thus birth and death go on repeatedly. Till knowledge dawns the cycle continues endlessly for the multitude of beings. As man is conditioned by his *Karma*, he is helpless to stop the wheel. As he is bound by his own desires, he is not free. Therefore man should strive for freedom. He has already passed through millions of births. By some good fortune, he has acquired a human birth. Without wasting it in useless pursuits, he should strive for liberation.

Question: What is the fate of all *Jivas* till *Karma* is worked out ?

Answer : They take birth and they die repeatedly.

Question: By what is the bondage of *Karma* broken ?

Answer : By knowledge of *Atma*.

Paramatma is higher than the unmanifested.

20. परस्तस्मातुभावोऽन्यःऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्ततानातनः ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥

२०

*Parastasmaitu bhavo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktat sanataanah ।
yah sa sarveshu bhuteshu nasya su na vinasyati ।* 20

Meaning: यः भावः yah bhavah : which existence, तस्मात् अव्यक्तात् तु tasmat avyaktat tu : than that the unmani-

fested (the night of Brahma) but, अन्यः *anyah* : another, परः *parah* : higher, अव्यक्तः *avyaktah* : unmanifested, सनातनः *sanatanah* : eternal, सः *sah* : that, सर्वेषु भूतेषु *sarveshu bhuteshu* : all beings, नश्यत्सु *nasyatsu* : dying, न विनश्यति *na vinasyati* : not destroyed.

Substance : But verily there exists, higher than that unmanifested, another unmanifested, the Eternal, which is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the nature of the unmanifested (*Prakriti*) was explained. Here it is declared that there exists another unmanifested, the Eternal, (*Paramatma*) which is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed. The distinction between *Paramatma* and all other beings born of *Prakriti* is explained below.

<i>Beings.</i>	<i>Paramatma.</i>
1) Subject to Maya.	1) Lord of Maya.
2) Of little separate forms.	2) Cosmic Intelligence, all pervading and all sustaining.
3) Drisya – Visible to the senses.	3) Drik – the Witness.
4) Having a beginning.	4) No beginning and no end.
5) Subject to death.	5) Imperishable.

From this we understand why we should worship the Lord. All that is non-eternal can only hold on to the eternal as its last refuge and support. So leaving of all non-external things of pleasure and profit in this transitory and sorrowful world, man should meditate on the ever glorious and imperishable Self. By such meditation, the death-striken *Jiva* acquires immortality by union with That which does not perish.

Question: *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer : (1) He is distinct from the unmanifested *Prakriti*.

(2) He is Supreme. (3) He is Eternal. (4) He transcends the senses. (5) He exists when all beings perish.

Those who are united with Paramatma have no re-birth.

21. अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्वाम परमं मम ॥

२१

*Avyakto'kshara ityuktastamahuh paramam gatim'
yam prapya na nivartante taddhama paramam mama ॥ 21*

Meaning : अव्यक्तः *avyaktah* : unmanifested, अक्षरः *aksharah* *iti* : imperishable thus, उक्तः *uktah* : is called, तम् *tam* : that, परमम् *paramam* : highest, गतिम् *gatim* : goal, आहुः *ahuh* : (they) say, यम् *yam* : which, प्राप्य *prapya* : having reached, न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante* : not return, तत् *tat* : that, मम *mama* : My, परमम् *paramam* : the highest, धाम *dham* : abode (state).

Substance : What is called the unmanifested and the imperishable, that they say, is the highest goal; they who reach it return not; that is my highest abode.

Commentary : All the *Vedas* and *Sastras* declare that *Paramatma*, the Imperishable, is the highest state. Reaching it man does not return to the perishable body. There is no *samsara* again for the sage who attains the highest goal. Having lived in the world, it becomes clear that every thing is vanishing like a dream. The child of today is the old man of tomorrow. Pleasures turn into pains. Joys lead to sorrow. Life ends in death. The whole scheme of existence is only a troubled dream. Time passes and death takes away all. Knowing this fully from experience the wise man is not at all interested in this child's play. He has no relish for these insipid things. He knows that

the dream life is utterly unbecoming of him, who has the eternal Self as his real Being. So he aims high, aims at Truth, aims at the lion rather than catch a jackal. So the Lord's inspiring call to mankind is to give up the foolish little self, and ascend to Him, and be one with Him.

Reaching Him, there is no re-birth. Why should man wish to be born in the cage of flesh ? Is it to taste the ditch-water of several worldly pleasures again ? Why does he crave for such wretched things when he is really the immortal bliss and blessedness. The man of Self-realisation rejects the body as a dirty tattered robe. He does not wish to wear it again. Immortality, bliss and blessedness, he enjoys when he attains the highest abode of the Lord.

Question : *What is the highest state ?*

Answer : The unmanifested, imperishable state of *Paramatma*.

Question : *What happens when man attains it ?*

Answer : He attains immortality and is not reborn again.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is imperishable, beyond the senses and the mind.

The way to attain Paramatma is explained.

22. पुरुषः स परः पार्थं भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥

२२

*Purushah sa parah partha bhaktya labhyastvananyaya ।
yasya'ntahsthani bhutani yena sarvam idam tatam । 22*

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, यस्य *yasya* : of whom, अन्तःस्थानि *antasthani* : dwelling within, येन *yena* : by which, सर्वमिदम् *sarvamidam* : all this, ततम् *tatam* : pervaded, सः परः पुरुषः *sah parah purushah* : that highest Purusha, अनन्यया *ananyaya* : unswerving, without any other object, भक्त्यातु *bhaktyatu* : verily with devotion, लभ्यः *labdhah* : attainable.

Substance : O Arjuna ! That highest Purusha is attainable by unswerving devotion to Him alone, within whom all beings dwell, and by whom all this is pervaded.

Commentary : That which is to be attained and the way to attain it are both explained here. Where does the world with all the crores of beings reside ? What sustains it ? These questions are answered here. On *Paramatma*—as the snake is super-imposed on the rope—the whole universe with all the worlds in it is created as a wonderful illusion. As the rope is the basis, *Paramatma* is the basis, the foundation, the Reality behind all this illusion. Where is the dream world ? It is in man and no where else. So also, all this world is in *Paramatma*. Like the cream in milk, *Paramatma* pervades the whole of creation.

Unswerving devotion to the Lord is the only way to attain Him. Intense devotion and one-pointed concentration are essential for Realisation. Dispassion, *vairagya*, towards the whole of the objective universe, and faith in the Lord as the only refuge—this is intense (*ananya*) *bhakti*. The perfect does not think of anything else. He attaches no value to the enjoyments, pains, and sufferings of life. He finds that there is only one Reality and in that he takes refuge. Such *bhakti* leads to the Lord.

It is to be noted that the Lord emphasises devotion (*bhakti*) in every Discourse, whatever may be the *yoga* taught in it. This shows that devotion is the common ingredient in every type of *yoga*. All *yogas* have for their life-element devotion to the Lord.

The Lord is *Parama Purusha*. The *Jiva* attains that state by devotion, knowledge, and dispassion. That is the aim of human life.

Question : *On whom is the world based and by whom is it pervaded?*

Answer : *Paramatma.*

Question : *How can he be attained ?*

Answer : By single-minded devotion.

In four verses the Lord explains the path leading to liberation and the path leading to re-birth.

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

२३

*Yatra kale tvanavrittim avrittum chai'va yoginah ।
prayata yanti tam kalam vakshyami bharatarshabha ॥ 23*

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : O best of the Bharatas ! यत्र काले *yatra kale* : in what time, प्रयाताः *prayatah* : departing, योगिनः *yoginah* : yogis, अनावृत्तिष् तु *anavrittum tu* : verily no return, आवृत्तिष् च एव *avrithim cha eva* : and also return, यान्ति *yanti* : go to, तम् कालम् *tam kalam* : that time, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyami* : I will tell.

Substance : Now O Arjuna - the best of Bharatas ! departing at what time *yogis* never return, and departing at what time *yogis* return, those times I will tell you.

The Lord explains the non-return path of light leading to liberation.

24. अग्निज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥

२४

*Agnir jyotir ahah suklah shanmasa uttarayanam ।
tatra prayata gacchanti brahma brahmavidah janah ॥ 24*

Meaning : अग्निः *agnih* : fire, ज्योतिः *jyotih* : light, अहः *ahah* : day, शुक्लः *suklah* : the bright fortnight, षण्मासः *shanmasah* : six months, उत्तरायणम् *uttarayanam* : the northern path of the sun, तत्र *tatra* : there, प्रयाताः *prayatah* : departing, ब्रह्मविदः *brahmavidah* : the knowers of Brahman, जनाः *janah* : people, ब्रह्म *brahma* : to Brahman, गच्छन्ति *gacchanti* : go.

Substance : Fire, light, day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice-following this path, the knowers of *Brahman* go to *Brahman*.

Commentary : Knowledge (*Jnana*) is light; ignorance (*Ajnana*) is darkness. He who possesses the effulgence of *Brahmajnana* goes to *Brahman*.

The bright state comes only to the knowers of *Brahman* and not to others. The word 'Janah' shows that the realisation of *Brahman* is open to all without any distinction of caste, sex, religion or race.

Since *Brahmajnana* is light, five light-causing things are mentioned here. (1) Fire, (2) Light, (3) Day, (4) The bright fortnight, (5) The northern solstice (*Uttarayana*). The fifth points the way to the higher worlds of light and knowledge. The *Jiva* should find his abode in the light of *Brahmajnana*, the imperishable Self. So he moves upwards into light and not downwards into darkness. The upward look (*urdhvadrishti*) is absorption in the light of *Atma*, and the downward look (*adhodrishti*) is in the contemplation of the insentient material-world. Thus the light-producing things are indication of knowledge and the ascent of man towards Self-realisation. From this state there is no return.

Question : What is the path taken by the knowers of *Brahman* ?

Answer : Fire, light, day, the bright fortnight, the northern-solistice, – this is the path taken by the knowers of *Brahman* ?

Question : Who attains *Brahman* ?

Answer : The knowers of *Brahman* attain *Brahman*.

The path leading to rebirth is explained.

25. धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः पश्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चाद्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥

२५

*Dhumo ratristatha krishnah sharmasa dakshinayanam ।
tatra chandramasam jyotir yogi prapya nivartate ॥* 25

Meaning : धूमः *dhumah* : smoke, रात्रि : *ratrik* : night, स्तथा *tatha* : also, कृष्णः *Krishnah* : the dark fortnight, पश्मासा :

shanmasah : six months, दक्षिणायनम् *dakshinayanam* : the southern path of the sun, तत्र *tatra* : there, योगी *yogi* : the yogi, चान्द्रमसम् *chandramasam* : lunar, ज्योतिः *jyothih* : light, प्राप्य *prapya* : having attained, निवर्तते *nivartate* : returns.

Substance : Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, also the six months of the southern solstice, – attaining by these to the lunar light, the *yogi* returns.

Commentary : As knowledge is light, so ignorance (*avidya*) is darkness. He who takes the later path is reborn again and again. Here the *yogi* is one who has performed actions with a desire to enjoy the fruits. As he has not understood the secret of *Brahmajnana*, he is subject to birth after birth. Here, smoke, night, the dark fortnight, stand for the enveloping darkness of ignorance. The *Dakshinayana* shows the downward path. The *yogi* who is devoid of *Brahmajnana*, reaching the lunar sphere, return to the world again according to the nature of his *Karma*. The path of *avidya* is indicated by the southern solstice.

It is also necessary to understand the significance of *Uttarayana* and *Dakshinayana*. We find that many great souls have passed away in *Dakshinayana* and many deluded souls have passed away in *Uttarayana*. If the external meaning alone is taken, it would lead to the absurd conclusion that the ignorant attain the Light and the wise fall into darkness. The wise always take the upward path of light, whatever may be the time when the body falls. The deluded take the path of darkness, whatever may be the time when the body falls. The upward path signifies *Jnana*, and the downward path *Ajnana*.

Question : *What is the path taken by the man of desires ?*

Answer : He takes the path of darkness, indicated by smoke, night etc.

Question : *Does he take birth again ?*

Answer : Yes.

Question : *What is the implication ?*

Answer : Only by *Atmajnana*, man takes the upward path, and attains *Brahman*, the birthless and deathless state.

The former idea is further explained.

26. शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥

२६

*Suklakrishne gati hyete jagatah sasvate mate ।
ekaya yatyanavrittima anyaya'vartate punah ॥*

26

Meaning : शुक्लकृष्णे *suklakrishne* : bright and dark, ह्येते गतीः *hyete gathi* : verly these two paths, जगतः *jagatah* : of the world, शाश्वते मते *sasvate mate* : eternal are thought, एकया *ekaya* : by one, अनावृत्तिम् *anavrittima* : to non-return, याति *yati* : (he) goes, अन्यया *anyaya* : by the other, पुनः *punah* : again, आवर्तते *avartate* : he returns.

Substance : The path of light and darkness are both thought to be eternal. By the one man does not return, by the other he returns again.

Commentary : It is declared here that these two paths of light and darkness, of liberation and bondage, of knowledge and ignorance, are eternal and fixed for all mankind. Those who acquire *Atmajnana* do not return again into the cage of flesh and blood. The others return again and again into the body, till they attain perfection. The two paths are open to man. Which to choose depends on the discrimination of man. If a man ascends into light, he is blessed; if a man descends into darkness, he suffers all the ills of human life. Let all the seekers resolutely set their face against ignorance, and look upward for the Light of *Atma*.

Question : *What are the two paths open to the world ?*

Answer : The path of light and knowledge (*Uttarayana*) and the path of darkness and ignorance (*Dakshinayana*).

Question : *What should the wise man do ?*

Answer : He should eliminate ignorance and follow the path of light.

The Lord commends the yogis who understand these two paths and exhorts Arjuna to be a Yogi.

27. नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुद्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥

२७

*Nai'te sriti partha janan yogi muhyati kaschana ।
tasmat sarveshu kaleshu yogayukto bhaya'rjuna ॥* 27

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! एते सृती *ete sriti* : these two paths, जानन् *janan* : knowing, योगी *yogi* कश्चन *kaschana* : any yogi, न मुद्यति *na muhyati* : is not deluded, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, अर्जुन *Arjuna* : Arjuna ! सर्वेषु *sarveshu* कालेषु *kaleshu* : at all times, योगयुक्तः *yogayuktah* भव *bhave* : steadfast in Yoga be (you).

Substance : O Arjuna ! Knowing these two paths, no *Yogi* is deluded; therefore at all times, be steadfast in *yoga*.

Commentary : It is stated here that the *yogi* who understands the two paths of light and darkness is not deluded. It means that he would never go into darkness and delusion, but always rest in the light of knowledge and truth. Having seen what is poison and what is nectar, the wise man rejects the poison and takes the nectar. So also, knowing clearly – this is *Atma*, that is *Anatma*, this is light and that is darkness, this is immortality and that is death – who will go into darkness and death ? No. He would never allow delusion to come near him. He has understood the secret of life and death, by his discriminatory reason. Therefore the Lord says :— “O Arjuna ! Be established in *yoga*; have your being always in the light of *Brahman*.” The Lord’s command is to hold the knowledge firm at all times because negligence even for a second would give way for *Maya* to work evil in the heart of man.

The moment when the Lord is forgotten, that very moment causes danger, delusion, harm, and wrong action. The absence of light is darkness. Forgetfulness of Truth is itself the empire of *Maya*. The moment when man begins to enquire after truth, *Maya* disappears. When such enquiry lapses even for a moment, *Maya* enters, declaring 'I am here'. When people pursue the thief determined to catch him, he runs away and disappears. Such is *Maya*. It is always in and around the people but when they pursue the enquiry after Truth, it disappears. So the enquiry should be kept up continuously. Man then lives in the light of Truth.

Yogayukto bhava : *Yoga* means union with *Paramatma*, through knowledge, devotion, or *dhyana* or by any and every means pointed out in the *Sastras*. To be established in such *yoga* is what is taught here.

Question : *Who is not deluded ?*

Answer : He who knows light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, does not fall into error and delusion.

Question : *What is the duty of the aspirant ?*

Answer He should always be established in *yoga*.

Question : *Is it not enough to be in *yoga* for a short time ?*

Answer : No. To forget light, to forget Truth, is to fall into darkness and untruth. So one should always be established in *yoga*.

*The supreme state of the yogi, and the excellence of *yoga* are stated.*

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

Vedeshu yajneshu tapahsu chai'va
daneshu yat punyaphalam pradistam ।
atyeti tat sarvam idam veditva
yogi param sthanam upaiti cha'dyam ॥ 28

Meaning : योगी *yogi* : the yogi (meditator on Atma), इदम् विदित्वा *idam veditva* : having known this, वेदेषु *vedeshu* : in the Vedas, यज्ञेषु *yajneshu* : in sacrifices, दानेषु *daneshu* : in gifts, तपःसु च *tapasu cha* : and in austerities, यत् *yat* : what, पुण्यफलम् *punyaphalam* : fruit of merit, प्रदिष्टम् *pradishtam* : is declared, तत् सर्वम् *tat sarvam* : all that, अत्येति *astyeti* : goes beyond, आद्यम् च *adyam cha* : and primeval, परम् स्थानम् *param sthanam* : supreme abode, उपैति *upaiti* : attains.

Substance : Whatever fruit or merit is declared (in the scripture) to arise from the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities, and the offering of gifts, beyond all these goes the *yogi* who knows the Imperishable *Brahman*, and attains the supreme primeval state.

Commentary : The excellence of *Brahma jnana* is declared here. The knower of the Imperishable *Brahman* attains the highest state, far beyond any of the meritorious rewards springing from the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices and austerities, and the offering of gifts. *Brahman* is the only Truth, and having reached it, man attains the Supreme state.

It is true that several meritorious rewards come to man through the performance of sacrifices etc. But they are all in the realm of *Maya*; they have an end; they are not eternal. Therefore the *yogi* aspires to attain that state in which all the rewards of all the good works are comprehended and fulfilled. And that state is the realisation of *Brahman*, the only Reality.

Brahmajnana transcends all the merits derived from the study of the *Vedas*, or sacrifices or other good works. Fifty is included in the hundred. So the person who attains the hundred includes the fifty and transcends it also. *Brahmajnana* is 'mahapunya'. The lesser fruits of other meritorious deeds are included in it. Whereas all other rewards end in time, the *yogi* of *brahmajnana* lives in eternal bliss.

There are many illiterate people who cannot study the *Vedas*. There are many people who are physically weak and so cannot perform austerities. There are poor people who cannot offer meritorious gifts. What shall be the fate of all these people ? Is there no way of liberation for them ? The Lord here declares that by the contemplation and understanding of *Brahman*, they shall attain the highest state, and obtain all the rewards of all the meritotrious acts done by others. Purity of mind and heart, purity in devotion are the only things needed. The study of the *Vedas*, *tapas*, and *dhyana*, if they are performed without attachment, purify the heart of man and enable him to attain *Brahmajnana*.

Brahmajnana is the highest state. The seekers in the beginning may undertake all the good works enjoined in the *Sastras*. But let them not stop there, for, the goal is Self-realisation, and no one should stop at any intermediate stage. With *Brahmajnana* the quest for the Supreme stops, and man is eternally satisfied.

Question : *What is his merit who understands the imperishable Brahman ?*

Answer : He attains all the rewards of (1) Vedic study, (2) Sacrifices, (3) Austerities, and (4) *Dana* and transcends all these.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahman ?*

Answer : It is the primeval cause of all and the highest state (*Param sthanam*).

Question : *What is the highest state ?*

Answer : *Paramatma*.

Question : *What should a person do who aspires to attain the Highest ?*

Answer : With a pure heart, he should take refuge in *Paramatma*. As by watering the roots of a tree, all the branches, fruits and flowers are watered, so also the man who attains *Brahman*, derives all the merits of all the good works done in the world.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
 श्रीकृष्णाजुनसंवादे अक्षरपरब्रह्मयोगो नाम
 अष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
 Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Aksharaparabrahma Yogo
 nama ashtamo'dhyayah.*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends The Discourse entitled - Aksharaparabrahma Yoga

(The *Yoga* of Imperishable *Brahman*)

—

श्री भगवद्गीता

(SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ नवमोऽध्यायः

Atha Navamodhyayah

NINTH DISCOURSE

राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

RAJAVIDYA RAJAGUHYA YOGA

THE YOGA OF ROYAL KNOWLEDGE
AND ROYAL SECRET.

I. The title of the Discourse :

“*Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yoga.*” The word ‘*raja*’ (King) indicates supremacy. So ‘*rajavidya*’ means royal knowledge. ‘*Rajaguhya*’ means ‘royal secret.’ It means supreme knowledge and the supreme secret. It may be taken to mean also knowledge which Kings in former ages possessed and practised. ‘*Atmajnana*’ which is declared in this Discourse is the highest knowledge, and the greatest secret. So the Discourse is entitled ‘*Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yoga*’.

II. Main Points of the Discourse :

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. The excellence of <i>Atmavidya</i> . | (1-3 Verses) |
| 2. The form of the Lord. | (4-6 Verses) |
| 3. The Origin of the Universe. | (7-10 Verses) |
| 4. Qualities of man of Divine and demonical nature. | (11-15 Verses) |

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 5. The Universal form of the Lord. | (16–19 Verses) |
| 6. The rewards of <i>Nishkama Karma</i>
and <i>Sakama Karma</i> . | (20–25 Verses) |
| 7. The supreme power of devotion
and self-surrender to the Lord
through <i>Nishkama Karma</i> . | (26–34 Verses) |

III. How the Discourse is connected with the previous one :

This is a continuation of what the Lord stated in the eighth Discourse in answer to the seven questions put by Arjuna regarding *sadhibuta*, *sadhidaiva* etc. The Lord declared that the Imperishable *Brahman* (*Akshara Parabrahma Yoga*) includes the supreme (*nirguna*) and the manifestation (*saguna*). This Discourse starts with '*Jnana* and *Vijnana*' and we find a fuller explanation of the knowledge and secret of the Divine in this Discourse.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Idam tu te guhyatamam pravakshyamyanasuyave ।
jnanaṁ vijnanasahitam yajnatva mokshyase'subhat ॥ 1*

श्री भगवानुवाच – Sri Bhagavan Uvacha : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यत् *yat* : that which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, अशुभात् *asubhat* : from evil, मोक्ष्यसे *mokshyase* : you are freed, तत् *tat* : that गुह्यतम् *guhyatamam* : most secret, विज्ञानसहितम् *vijnanasahitam* : combined with realisation, इदं ज्ञानम् तु *idam jnanam tu* : this knowledge indeed, अनसूयवे *anasuyave* : to one who is free from cavil, ते *te* : to you, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami* : I will declare fully.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : To you, free from malice and cavil, I shall declare this profoundest secret, knowledge with experience combined, which having known, you shall be freed from all evil.

Commentary : The Lord now teaches the highest knowledge (*Atmajnana*) and the profoundest secret (*rajaguhyaham*) combined with direct practical experience. The word '*guhyatamam*' indicates that the knowledge is the highest secret, beyond which there is nothing else to be known. The teaching of *Brahmajnana* is usually done to those who are qualified to receive it, or even to hear of it. What is that quality which entitles a person to hear and understand *Brahmatatvam*? The Lord answers it here by stating that Arjuna is free from malice (*asuya*). He is pure in heart and has the four qualities mentioned in the *Sastras* (*sadhana chatushtaya*). So the Lord reveals the supreme knowledge. Those who are eager to receive the knowledge from a *Guru* should first of all examine themselves and know fully well whether they are established in virtue and self-control. *Brahmajnana* will never reveal itself in the impure heart, whatever other things one may possess, power or position. These things do not qualify any one to understand the Truth. The pure soul knows the secret and attains *Brahman*.

He who does not indulge in misrepresenting good to be bad, who commends even low forms of goodness in others, who does not delight in thinking of the evil in others is *anasuya*. Of all the host of bad qualities, envy is the leader. Like a poisonous cancer, it permeats the whole mind, and pulls down the *sadhaka* from any merit which he might have acquired by austerity. Several aspirants have fallen on account of this evil. The Lord understands human nature so well that he fixes attention on that one evil which is the source of all other evils. He knows that the disciple is free from this evil, and so, he reveals the profoundest secret to him in perfect confidence. Every disciple should impress his *Guru* about the purity of the heart, and only then would the *Guru* teach the highest knowledge. The purer you are, the greater would be the confidence of the *Guru* in you. Such mutual understanding is necessary for transmitting *Atmajnana*.

Jnanam Vignanasahitam : The word *jnanam* stands for knowledge obtained by the study of the *Sastras*. This knowledge is indirect (*paroksha*). *Vijnana* means direct experience (*aparoksha*). When one hears of a country from a friend or read of it in a book, his knowledge of the country is indirect. (*Paroksha*) but when he visits the country and sees it for himself his knowledge is direct (*Aparoksha*). Such is the difference between *Jnana* and *Vijnana*.

What is the fruit of *Vijnana*? The Lord says he who knows the truth directly is freed from all evil. What is this evil? It is *samsara* the cycle of birth and death, with all the ills and sorrows of one's ignorant life. Whatever is *anatma* comes under the delusive power of *Maya*. It is transient, incomplete, insipid, and appears to exist without any reality in it. *Atma* alone is *subha* (without evil). It is deathless, birthless, ever blessed, and blissful. So every seeker should follow the teaching of the Lord and rise to the plane of *Atma*.

Question : What is Brahmavidya ?

Answer : It is the highest knowledge and the highest secret.

Question : Who receives the knowledge ?

Answer : The man who is free from evil.

Question : What is the qualification for Brahma Vidya ?

Answer : Purity in heart.

Question : What is this samsara ?

Answer : It is Asubha (evil).

Question : How can man escape from samsara ?

Answer : By possessing knowledge of *Atma* combined with experience.

2. राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् । १
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

*Rajavidya rajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam !
pratyakshavagamam dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam !*

Meaning : इदम् *idam* : this (Brahmajnana), राजविद्या *rajavidya* : royal knowledge, राजगुह्यम् *rajaguhyan* : royal secret, उत्तमम् *uttamam* : supreme, highest, पवित्रम् *pavitram* : purifier, प्रत्यक्षावगमम् *pratyakshavagamam* : to be realised directly by intution, धर्म्यम् *darmyam* : righteous, कर्तुम् *kartum* : to perform, सुसुखम् *susukham* : very easy, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable.

Substance : This *Brahmajnana* is royal knowledge, royal secret, purifier, supreme, realisable by direct intutional knowledge, according to *Dharma*, very easy to perform and imperishable.

Commentary : All other sciences cannot bestow peace and bliss on mankind. Worldly knowledge can only deal with material things which are perishable. The profound mystery of life and death and immortality can be understood only when *Brahman* is realised. All other things are '*anatma*', '*jada*', insentient. They are impure. *Atma* the self, *Brahman* alone is pure and perfect. So this knowledge which reveals the ultimate Truth is declared to be royal knowledge and royal secret.

This royal knowledge is to be attained by direct intution. Its fruit is direct and immediate. All other works take time to bear fruit. But *Brahmajnana* bears fruit at once and the sage of realisation becomes *Brahman*, is *Brahman* immediately.

It is declared here that the practice of *Brahmajnana* is very easy. When the mind is purified by self-effort of all its impurities like *raga* and *dvesha*, *tamas* and *rajas*, no further effort is needed for the realisation of *Brahman*, because *Brahman* is self-existent and self-luminous. There is no effort needed to realise the truth. So it is said in the *sastras* that *Brahmajnana* is easier than to crush the tender flower, or easier than ordinary respiration. This is not only very easy to practice but it is also the source of all *Dharma*, eternal, and imperishable.

Question : What is the nature of *Brahmajnana* ?

Answer : It is royal knowledge, royal secret, pure, supreme, realisation by intution, righteous, very easy to practice, and imperishable.

Those who do not attain this knowledge return to the path of samsara.

3. अश्रद्धानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।

अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥

*Asraddadhanah purusha dharmasya'sya paramata
apravya mam nivartante mrityu samsara vartmani ॥*

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

Meaning : परन्तप *paramatpa* : O Arjuna ! अस्य धर्मस्यैः
asya dharmasya : of this Dharma (Atmajnana), अश्रद्धानाः
asraddadhanah : without faith, पुरुषाः *purushah* : people,
माम् *mam* : Me, अप्राप्य *apravya* : not attaining, मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि
mrityusamsaravartmani : in the path of this world of death,
निवर्तन्ते *nivartante* : return.

Substance : People without faith in this *Dharma* (self-knowledge) not attaining Me, return to the path of the world of death.

Commentary : Whether in worldly or spiritual life, faith and devotion to an ideal is the key to success. The degree of success depends on the intensity of one's faith. Man becomes that which he aims at, the time taken depending on the intensity of the effort, and the strength of the obstructing forces. Sooner or later, it is certain that man achieves what he yearns for with single-minded devotion.

The Lord declares here that without faith no one could attain Him, and without attaining Him no one can get immortality. Let the seekers understand that much diligence is needed even in small things and common affairs of life. This being so, one can understand what care and caution are needed to realise the highest state. So, the Lord emphasises the efficacy of faith throughout His teaching.

According to the Lord, this *Samsara* is a world of death. Death is stalking every where and yet blinded by the veil of *avidya*, man imagines that life is beautiful and pleasant. He has missed the true end of life. He has bartered away his birth

right of immortality and eternal bliss to a mess of pottage. The Lord knows this, and out of compassion he warns mankind not to come under the shadow of death and destruction. Without understanding the Truth, whatever other enjoyments man may try to have, all these are only the decoration of a corpse. The wise shall strive to know the Lord and transcend the ills of life and death.

The word *nivartante* may also be interpreted as *Nitaram Vartante* (i. e.) assuredly pass through the path of death.

Question : *Who can attain Paramatma ?*

Answer : Those who have faith in *Brahmajnana*.

Question : *What is the fate of those who have no faith ?*

Answer : Without attaining the Lord, they are caught in the whirlpool of *samsara*.

Question: *What is the nature of this samsara ?*

Answer : It is death.

The Lord explains how He pervaded the whole Universe.

4. मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४

*Maya tatam idm sarvam jagad avyakta murtina ।
matsthani sarva bhutani na cha'ham teshvavasthitah । 4*

Meaning : इदम् सर्वम् *idam sarvam* : all this, जग् *jagat* : universe, अव्यक्तमूर्तिना *avyaktamurtina* : of form inconceivable by the senses, मया *maya* : by Me, ततम् *tatam* : is pervaded, सर्वभूतानि *sarva bhutani* : all beings, मत्स्थानि *mat sthani* : (are) in Me, तेषु *teshu* : in them, आहं *aham* : I, न च अवस्थितः *na cha avasthitah* : and am not placed.

Substance : By Me all this Universe is pervaded in the unmanifested form; all beings are in Me, and I am not placed in them.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is inconceivable by the senses and the mind. Even the elemental ether is not visible to the senses. How then can the *chidakasa*, the intelligence-consciousness (God) be an object of sense-perception? Just as the material world is pervaded by the elemental ether, even so by that supreme intelligence (chit) all beings are pervaded. So the whole universe is in *Paramatma*.

The Lord is not placed in the world, because when closely examined, the world has no existence like the snake which is superimposed on the rope. How can *Paramatma*, the reality, exist in that unreality—the so called world as we see it? So, it is said that all beings are in *Atma* (the Lord) and He is not in them.

As the Lord pervades all beings, material and mental the seeker should cognise His existence everywhere. He should not do evil deeds, should have love for all, and devotion to the Supreme.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer : He is most subtle and inconceivable by the senses and the mind.

Question : *Where is Pramatma?*

Answer : He pervades all beings and the whole universe.

Question : *Where do all beings exist?*

Answer : In *Paramatma*.

5. न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।

भूतभूतं च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥

५

*Na cha matsthani bhutani pasya me yogamaisvaram ।
bhutabhrunna cha bhutastho mama'tma bhutabhavanah । 5*

Meaning : भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, मत्स्थानि न च *matsthani* : are not dwelling in Me, मे *me* : My, ऐश्वर्य *aisvaram* : Divine, योगम् *yogam* : yoga, पश्य *pasya* : behold,

मम mama : My, आत्मा atma : Self, भूतभृत् bhutabhrīt supporting the beings, भूतभावनःच् bhutabhavanah cha : and bringing forth beings, न च भूतस्थः na cha bhutasthah : and not dwelling in the beings.

Substance : Nor are beings placed in Me; behold my Divine *yoga*. I am the support of all beings, their efficient cause, and yet I am not rooted in them.

Commentary : There appears to be an apparent contradiction. In the previous verse, it was declared that all beings are in the Lord. Here it is stated that the beings also are not in Him. The contradiction is only apparent and not real. From the point of view of the ignorant, the world has an existence, as it is touched and confirmed by the senses. So it is said to exist in, and sustained by *Paramatma*. From the Advaitic plane, the world does not exist at all, in the same manner as water does not exist in the mirage. So it is said here that the beings also do not exist in Him. This is from the pure Advaitic point of view, where there is only one undifferentiated eternal *Brahman*, and nothing else. The Lord's declaration means that *Drisya* the seen world does not exist in Him, nor He in *Drisya*. The man who has awakened from the dream comes to know that he never existed in the dream nor the dream in him. It is nothing. The man who saw the snake in the rope, when he comes to know the form of the rope, knows that snake did not and does not exist. Thus, there are no beings in the Lord, nor He in them. What existed, exists, and shall exist is *Paramatma* alone. This is the sovereign *yoga* of the Lord. The cosmic illusion appears to exist but really does not exist. So the world while appearing to exist, does not exist. All this is *Brahman* and nothing else. This is the royal secret.

Question : *What is the sovereign yoga of the Lord?*

Answer : While *Paramatma* seems to create and sustain all beings, really they do not exist in Him and He does not exist in them. This is the royal secret of this *Yoga*.

Question : In the perfect Advaitic state, where is the world?

Answer : In that state the world does not exist. *Brahman* alone is.

From the dualistic point of view, the position of the world is explained.

6. यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रणो महान् ।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥

६

Yatha'kasasthito nityam vayuh sarvatrago mahan ।

tatha sarvani bhutani matsthani'tyupadharaya ॥

6

Meaning : यथा *yatha* : just as, सर्वत्रगः *sarvatragah* : moving everywhere, महान् *mahan* : mighty, वायुः *vayuh* : wind, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, आकाशस्थितः *akasasthitah* : rests in ether, तथा *tatha* : so also, सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, मत्स्थानि इति *mat sthani iti* : (are) in Me, thus, उपधारय *upadharaya* : know.

Substance : Just as the mighty wind moving everywhere is placed in ether, even so know that all beings are in Me.

Commentary : The Lord gives a beautiful simile to explain what He has said in the previous two verses. Just as the mighty wind rests in ether which has no contact with the wind, so also all beings rest in *Brahman*, who is not contaminated by them at all. The objects cannot produce any effect on Him. The mighty wind rests in some part of the elemental ether. So also, the whole universe is in some spot in the supreme *Brahman*. The wind may carry good or foul smell, may be gentle or strong, but ether is not affected by it. So also, the good and bad in man or the actions taking place in the world do not effect *Brahman*. Ether cannot be seen, so also *Paramatma*; ether is subtle, *Paramatma* is more subtle; ether pervades all, so also, *Paramatma* pervades all beings. This illustration of ether and the wind resting in it is intended for the understanding of the common people only. In fact, ether cannot be compared to *Paramatma*,

because ether is insentient, and *Paramatma* on the otherhand is supreme consciousness.

The immediate and direct presence of *Paramatma* is to be realised everywhere and in everything. He is in every particle of the universe. Knowing this, can man commit sin? *Paramatma* is the eternal witness of all. The supremacy of *Paramatma* is clearly to be understood, because in Him is the whole of this wonderful universe. Let not man be imbued with pride and arrogance for the little strength or power or position or beauty or talent that he may possess for a short while.

Question : *Where are the beings placed ?*

Answer : In *Paramatma*.

Question : *How ?*

Answer : Like the wind in elemental ether.

The Lord declares that He is the final cause of creation and dissolution of the universe.

7. सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥

७

*Sarvabhutani kaunteya prakritim yanti mamikam ।
kalpakshaye punastani kalpadau visrijamyaham ॥*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhutani* : all beings, कल्पक्षये *kalpakshaye* : at the end of a Kalpa, मामिकाम् *mamikam* : Mine (under My control), प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : to prakriti (Maya-sakti,) यान्ति *yanti* : go, कल्पादौ *kalpadau* : at the beginning of a Kalpa, तानि *tani* : them, पुनः *punah* : again, अहम् *aham* : I, विसृजामि *visrijami* : bring forth.

Substance : O Arjuna ! All beings at the end of a *Kalpa* go into My *Prakriti*; and I bring them forth again at the beginning of a *Kalpa*.

Commentary : All beings are under the power of *Maya*, and *Maya* is under the control of the Lord. So the Lord declares that *prakriti* is His, (i.e.) under His, control. Therefore, one should seek the help and support of the Lord if he should come over *Maya*.

Just as grass grows on earth, and withers away in the earth, just as waves rise in the ocean and disappear in the ocean itself, just as dreams rise in the mind and melt away in the mind itself, even so all beings come out of *Prakriti* and melt into *Prakrit*. When the beings are brought forth it is creation *srishti* and when the beings are withdrawn, it is dissolution *Pralaya*.

Question : Under whose control is *Maya* ?

Answer : Under the control of *Paramatma*.

Question : What is the fate of those who are under the power of *Prakriti* ?

Answer : They are subject to birth and death, creation and dissolution.

8. प्रकृति स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।

भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेवशात् ॥

C

*Prakritim svam avastabhyo visrijami punah-punah :
bhutagramam imam kritsnam avasam prakritervasat* ॥ 8

Meaning : प्रकृते: *prakriteh* : of nature, वशात् *vasat* : by force, अवशम् *avasam* : helpless, इमम् *imam* : this, कृत्स्नम् *kristnam* : all, भूतग्रामम् *bhutagramam* : multitude of beings, स्वाम् *swam* : my, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : nature, अवष्टभ्य *avashtabhyo* : having animated, पुनःपुनः *punah punah* : again and again, विसृजामि *visrijami* : I bring forth.

Substance : Animating Nature (*Prakriti*) which is Mine own, I emanate again and again all this multitude of beings who are helpless by the force of Nature.

Commentary : The difference between *Jiva* and *Isvara* is clearly brought forth here. The *Jiva* is helpless by the force

of Nature. *Isvara* is the controller of Nature. The *Jiva* is bound by the actions which he does by the force of Nature. All beings come under the power of nature, except those who have gone beyond Nature and reached the ultimate *Paramatma*. The *Jivanmuktas* have gone beyond *Maya*. Nature has no power over them. All other beings come out and go back into Nature endlessly and suffer all the ills and troubles of life and death.

So, it is the duty of every man to purify his own nature which expresses itself in different sensual thoughts and acts by the force of the *gunas* - *tamas* and *rajas*. Slavery to the *gunas* continues till one transcends them and rises to the plane of pure *sathva*. As the Lord has declared already, those who take refuge in Him easily cross over *Maya* and reach Him.

As persons sitting in the wheel that rotates, rotate till the owner of the wheel stops it, so also, all men are bound to the wheel of life and death, till God stops the wheel for those who seek for His grace.

Question : *To what are all beings bound ?*

Answer : To Nature - (and the works done by them by the force of Nature).

Question : *What should man do to regain his freedom ?*

Answer : He should be devoted to the Lord who takes him beyond *Maya* (beyond the senses and mind and *Karma*).

The Lord declares His non-attachment to the actions of beings.

9. न च मां तानि कर्मणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय !
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥

९

*Na cha mam tani karmani nibadhnanti dhananjaya !
udasinavadasinam asaktam teshu karmasu "*

9

Meaning : धनञ्जय *Dhananjaya* : O Arjuna ! च *cha* : and, तेषु कर्मसु *teshu karmasu* : in those actions, असक्तम् *asaktam* :

unattached, उदासीनवत् *udasinavat* : like one indifferent, आसीनम् *asinam* : being, माम् *Mam* : Me, तानि कर्माणि *tani karmani* : those actions, न निबध्नन्ति *na nibadhnanti* : do not bind.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Nor do those actions bind Me, who remain indifferent and unattached to those actions.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is not attached to anything. He is only a witness. In the light of the Sun, all beings carry on various types of activities good and bad. One may read or work, another may commit murder and so on. But these actions do not affect the Sun at all. He is just the witness, that is all, and no more. So also, the Lord is not concerned with the tremendous activity of *Prakriti*. He is unattached, perfectly indifferent to all that is done or not done. Such freedom comes to those who have Self-realisation. Is not that freedom worth having ? Why should man be a slave ? Let one approach the Lord and pray to Him to free him from the shackles which he has forged for himself in a state of ignorance.

The Lord declares that Prakriti creates the universe under His supervision.

10. मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सृयते सचराचरम् ।

हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥

१०

*Maya'dhyakshena prakritih suyate sacharacharam¹
hetuna'nena kaunteya jagad viparivartate¹*

10

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! अध्यक्षेण *adhyakshena* : as supervisor, मया *maya* : by Me, प्रकृतिः *prakritih* : Nature (Maya), सचराचरम् *sacharacharam* : the moving, and the unmoving, सृयते *suyate* : produce, bring forth, अनेन हेतुना *anena hetuna* : by this cause, जगत् *jagat* : the universe, विपरिवर्तते *viparivartate* : revolves.

Substance : O Arjuna ! By me as supervisor *Prakriti* brings forth the moving and unmoving; by this cause, the world revolves.

devotees and they have to be honoured as such. Sisupala and Duryodhana never understood the Divine nature of Lord Krishna. It was only Bhishma and a few others who recognised the Divinity of Krishna.

Those who are engaged in spiritual practise should be careful about the wrong view and opinions expressed by the common people. Honour and dishonour come to them, honour from the wise and dishonour from the unwise. In such situations, the seeker has to be firm and steady, and not yield to the common reactions of elation and anger. Let the seeker avoid the company of those who deny God, and abuse sages and saints. By his own elevated thoughts and actions, he should set an example of purity and godliness to others.

Question: *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is the (1) controller of all human beings and (2) assumes human form for establishing *Dharma*.

Question: *What is the nature of the ignorant ?*

Answer : They disregard the Lord, thinking Him to be only a common mortal.

Question: *From this, what is it that we understand ?*

Answer : One should try to understand the true state of God and avoid abuse of saints, *Bhaktas* and other Godly men.

12. मोघाशः मोघकर्मणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं च व प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं थ्रिता ॥

१२

*Moghasa moghakarmano moghajnana vichetasah
rakshasim asurim chai'va prakritim mohinim sritah ॥ 12*

Meaning : मोघाशः *moghasah* : of vain hopes, मोघकर्मणः *moghakarmanah* : of vain actions, मोघज्ञानाḥ *moghajnanah* : of vain knowledge, विचेतसः *vichetasah* : devoid of understanding, मोहिनीम् *mohinim* : deluding, राक्षसीम् *rakshasim* :

devilish, आसुरीम् च *asurim cha* : and undivine, प्रकृतिम् एव *prakritim eva* : verily nature, श्रिताः *sritah* : (are) possessed of.

Substance : Of vain hopes, of vain actions, of vain knowledge, and senseless, they verily are possessed of the deluding nature of the devilish and the undivine.

Commentary : Human nature is divided into two types (1) the Divine (*Daivi Prakriti*) and (2) the undivine (*Asuri-prakriti*). The Lord is here referring to the latter men of undivine nature. Their hopes are vain, empty, their actions are vain, producing nothing good or permanent. Their knowledge is also vain, because it is confined to the senses and the perishable world. Such knowledge viewed from the spiritual plane is empty, vain and useless. They are devoid of understanding and so they have no thought of anything beyond the body. Such men are possessed of the devilish and undivine nature. The *Tamasic Guna* or the dark quality of *Prakriti* characterises the beings here spoken of as *rakshasic* and *asuric*. *Rakshasas* are semi-human beings, brutal and blood-thirsty. The *asuras* are the opponents of the *Devas*. The *Devas* have *sattvaguna*. The *asuras* possess *rajoguna*. They have evil desires and use their powers in evil ways. Their life is useless. That is why the word useless (*mogha*) is repeated three times in this verse. The point is that all those people live in the empty world of *Maya*. So whatever they do or think or hope is empty nothing, signifying nothing.

The seekers have to understand the sharp distinction between the real and unreal. *Atma* alone is real. Nothing else. Knowing this, they should move towards the Reality, giving up all foolish and vain hopes and actions. They should cultivate the good qualities like self-control, sense-restraint, discrimination and humility. They should become the instruments of the Divine. They should be the servants of the Lord. Their thoughts and actions should follow the divine law.

Question : What is 'asuric' nature ?

Answer : It deludes man and plunges him in ignorance.

Commentary : *Prakriti* is *Jada* insentient; *Paramatma* consciousness. By the immediate presence of *Paramatma* *Prakriti* produces the entire universe. In the vicinity of magnet the iron needle moves. The magnet has no particular agency in this. It is just where it is. This *Paramatma* is in the universe like an unconcerned entity *Udasina*. But His immediate proximity enables *Prakriti* to create things. The word *adhyakshena* is used here to indicate the non-attachment and the consciousness-Principle of the Lord. An assembly, so to say, has no life till the president takes the chair. A Court, so to say, has no life till the judge takes his seat. When he takes the seat the whole assembly is animated with life and goes into action. So also, *Prakriti* remains inert till it is animated by the presence of the Lord and brings forth the whole universe. Without Him, the universe would simply be inert matter and nothing more.

We may take the illustration of the Sun. As the Sun rises in the east, each man wakes up and carries on his work whatever it may be. Good people do good work and bad people do bad work. The Sun has nothing to do with the nature or their actions.

The material world is inert. It has no life or activity by itself. What gives life to it is the Supreme Consciousness Principle of the Lord Himself. This is not visible to the gross vision. It is the eye of knowledge that sees it. That is *Paramatma*. The whole world is super-imposed on the Lord who is the basic *adhishthana* (support). What is super-imposed (*aropitam*) cannot be different from the original (*adhishthana*). All the powers that we see exhibited in the universe are derived from the Lord. And yet the Lord is in no way concerned with or affected by the actions of people in the world. The physical and the mental forces are only the grosser manifestation of the *Atmic* power of the Lord, which is the one power from which all others are produced by *Prakriti*. The wise man should not be deceived or destroyed by the temptations of the little force or power that he may have in him. He should know that, small or great, the power is the Lord's and not his own. All the

various forms of *Cosmic* energy, such as matter, thought, force, intelligence and so forth, are simply the manifestations of the *Cosmic* intelligence the Supreme Lord.

Question : *What is the supervising intelligence of the world ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *How is the world brought forth ?*

Answer : It is produced by *Prakriti* being animated by the power of the Lord.

Men of demonical nature deny the existence of the Lord.

11. अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥

११

Avajananti mam mudha manushim tanum asritam ।

param bhavam ajananto mama bhuta mahesvaram ॥ 11

Meaning : मम mama : My, परंभावम् param bhavam : higher nature or state, अजानन्तः ajanantah : not knowing, मूढः mudhah : the ignorant, भूतमहेश्वरम् bhutamahesvaram : the Lord of beings, मानुषीं तनुम् manushim tanum : human body, आश्रितम् asritam : refuged in, माम् mam : Me, अवजानन्ति avajananti : disregard.

Substance : The ignorant disregard Me, not knowing My higher nature as the Lord of all beings, refuged in human body.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is the controller of all beings. He is the Lord, Isvara. He has already declared that, though he has no birth, he appears to be born in the world for the purpose of establishing *Dharma* and protecting the righteous. When he assumes the human form, the deluded disregard Him as no more than other mortals. There are some people proud of their position and wealth, ill-treating and abusing saints and *sadhus*. As the saints and *sadhus* are devoid of worldly goods like wealth and position, some people show no respect for them. The *Bhakta* and *Bhagwan* are one. The Lord is present in His

Question : How do such people act ?

Answer : Their hopes, actions and knowledge are vain.

Question : What should be the conduct of rational men ?

Answer : They should abandon the Asuric force and seek refuge with the Lord, think and act in accordance with His law.

In two verses the Lord describes men of Divine nature.

13. महात्मानस्तु मां पाथ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।

भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥

१३

*Mahatmanastu mam partha daivim prakritim asritah ।
bhajantyananya manaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam ॥ 13*

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! महात्मानः *mahatmanah* tu : but great souls, दैवीम् *daivim* : divine, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : nature, आश्रिताः *asritah* : possessed of, माम् *mam* : Me, भूतादिम् *bhutadim* : origin of all beings, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : knowing (Me), अनन्यमनसः *ananyamanasah* : unswerving minds, भजन्ति *bhajanti* : worship.

Substance : O Arjuna ! But great souls possessing divine nature worship Me, knowing Me to be origin of all beings, and imperishable.

Commentary : In the 16th Discourse, *Asura Prakriti* and *Daivi Prakriti* are explained in full detail.

Those who take refuge in Divine nature are described as great souls (*mahatmanah*). They worship the Lord with unswerving minds, because they identify the Lord with two great attributes. (1) The Lord is the final cause of all beings. (2) He is imperishable. These two attributes are not to be found in any other thing or person. The Lord is the Ancient, beyond birth and death, an universal. Thus the great souls distinguish the Lord from all other material or superficial things. They are able to see clearly how every thing is going through a process

of change, whereas the eternal Lord remains changeless. Therefore their mind is ever contemplating the Lord with unswerving devotion.

Ananyamanasah: When the mind stops its wandering habit and rests in the Self, it is declared as unswerving mind (*ananyamanash*). When the mind fully understands the transitoriness of the world and the eternal bliss of *Atma*, it ceases to run out towards sense objects. That is why the word knowing (*Jnatva*) is used here. One has faith in that which he knows. Then only the mind comes to rest there. It is dispassion (*Vairagya*). It is single-minded devotion to the Lord.

Whoever takes refuge in the Divine nature and understands the Lord as the imperishable, final cause and is devoted to him, is a *mahatma* (great soul). The title *mahatma* has no reference to caste, race or religion. Those who yield to the undivine and asuric nature are *alpatmas* (little souls).

Generally the mind of the common man is like a fly which sits on pure sweetmeats for sometime and then settle on some other filthy objects. The mind should be trained to sustain itself on Divine thoughts always. Mind thus being purified, takes the form of 'chit' (knowledge). That state is *Moksha*.

Question : *How do those people who follow divine nature act?*

Answer : Knowing the Lord to be imperishable and the final cause of all objects and beings, they worship Him with single-minded devotion.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer : (1) Imperishable, (2) final cause of all objects and beings.

Question : *Who is a Mahatma?*

Answer : He who takes refuge in Divine nature, understands the Lord's state, and worships Him, is a *Mahatma*.

Question : *How can one cultivate single-minded devotion to God?*

Answer : By understanding His real nature—that He is the origin of all beings, the imperishable. He develops faith in

Meaning : अस्य जगतः *asyajagataḥ* : of this world, अहम् एव *aham eva* : I only, पिता *pita* : father, माता *mata* : mother, धाता *dhata* : the dispenser of the fruits of actions, पितामहः *pitamahah* : grand-father, वेद्यम् *vedyam* : one to be known, पवित्रम् *pavitram* : purifier, ओंकारः *Omkarah* : OM Pranava, ऋक् साम यजुः च *rik sama yajuh cha* : Rigveda, Sama Veda and Yajurveda.

Substance : Of this world I am the father, mother, the dispenser, grand-father, the One to be known, the purifier, *Pranava* (OM.), and also *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Samaveda*.

Commentary : One's relationship with mortals is very temporary. So long as the body lasts, the relationship exists, and soon after the body falls, it is all over. This is experienced by all every day. The Lord is the eternal Father, Mother and Grand-father. At all times whether in this life or beyond, He is with us always. When one is under the protecting power of the Divine Parents, there cannot be any fear in life or death. So the love that one has for his earthly relations should be sublimated into divine love for the Lord who confers *Moksha* as the highest reward of devotion.

The one thing to be known in this world is the Lord. All other knowledge is of no use if it does not lead to an understanding of the Lord. Knowing *Paramatma*, man knows everything. Not knowing Him, man knows nothing even if he has read all the books in the world.

***Omkarah* :** It has already said that the syllable OM (*Pranava*) is most sacred and contains the very essence of all the *Vedas*.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is the father, mother and grand-father of the world.

Question : *What is the one thing to be known ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *What is the purest ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *What are the other manifestations of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is *Pranava*, He is all the *Vedas*.

18. गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥

१८

*Gatir bharta prabhuh sakshi nivasah saranam suhrit
prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam bijam avyayam : 18*

Meaning : गति: *gatih* : the goal, भर्ता *bharta* : the supporter, प्रभुः *prabhuh* : the Lord, साक्षी *sakshi* : the witness, निवासः *nivasah* : the abode, शरणम् *saranam* : shelter, सुहृत् *suhrit* : the friend, प्रभवः स्थानम् प्रलयः *prabhavah sthanam pralayah* : the origin, the foundation, the dissolution, निधानम् *nidhanam* : the treasure-house, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, बीजम् *bijam* : the seed.

Substance : I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the shelter, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the treasure-house, and the seed imperishable.

Commentary : *Bharta*: The Lord is the supporter of all beings, men and women. He is *Jagat Bharta*. People should consider the Lord as their supporter and worship Him with all their heart and soul.

He is the Lord of all the world. All other positions of power are nothing before Him. So the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak alike should surrender to the Lord, as He is the Supreme controller of all the worlds.

He is the witness of everything that is being done in the world. The good and bad done by man are directly seen by the Lord. So one should be very careful in his doings.

He is the abode of all the world. Man lives and moves in the Lord. It is a gross error to say that one lives here and

Him as the only Reality, and by such faith his mind naturally comes to rest in Him only.

14. सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥

१४

*Satatam kirtayanto mam yatantas cha dridha vratah ।
namasyantah cha mam bhaktya nityayukta upasate ॥ 14*

Meaning: सततम् *satatam* : always, माम् *mam* : Me, कीर्तयन्तः *kirtayantah* : glorifying, दृढव्रता *dridha vratah* : firm in vows, यतन्तश्च *yatantah cha* : and striving, भक्त्याः *bhaktya* : with devotion, नमस्यन्तश्च *namasyantah cha* : and prostrating, नित्ययुक्ताः *nityayuktah* : always steadfast, माम् *mam* : Me, उपासते *upasate* : worship.

Substance : Always glorifying Me, striving firm in vows, prostrating before Me with devotion, always steadfast, the men of divine nature worship Me.

Commentary : In the previous verse it is declared that the *mahutmas* worship the Lord with single-minded devotion. Here the manner of worship is explained. They think, sing and speak of the Lord's glory always. Such adoration comes through constant striving. The striving is not intermittent but continuous. They are steadfast in vows.

The Lord emphasises firmness many times. The mind is saturated with powerful past *samskaras*, impurities of *raga* and *dvesha*, acquired through several births. They cannot be eliminated except by firmness and steadfast striving. The seeker has to practice certain vows to purify the body and mind (fasting, silence, *japa*, *dhyan*, *brahmacharya*). These vows should be followed with cheerfulness, courage and determination. Otherwise progress on the spiritual path is obstructed and the seekers are drawn away from the goal by the force of ignorance (*avidya*). Firm vows are strong weapons with which *avidya* could be defeated and overcome.

Nitya yuktah : They are always attached to the Lord, with devotion. Their worship is illumined by devotion. It is noteworthy how the Lord emphasises devotion to Him at every step. It is not merely intellectual understanding but deep emotional realisation which lead to the Lord. Patanjali says :

'Devotional acts of *Dhyana* continued for a long time without any break leads the aspirant to the firmly established state in God.'

Question *How do the mahatmas worship God ?*

Answer : They glorify Him, steadfast in vows they strive, they worship Him with devotion, they keep the mind steady in Him.

Question: *From this, what do we understand as the way to God-realisation ?*

Answer : (1) Continuous memory of God, (2) firmness in vows, (3) devotion, (4) concentrated thought of God.

Question: *How should one remember God?*

Answer : Always.

Question: *How should the vows be practised ?*

Answer : Firm and steadfast.

Question: *How should one worship God ?*

Answer : With devotion.

The Lord declares that men worship Him in many ways.

15. ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मासुपासते ।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वोमुखम् ॥

१५

*Jnanayajnena cha'pyanye yajanto mam upasate !
ekatvena prithaktvena bahudha visvatomukham ॥*

15

Meaning : अन्ये अपि *anye api* : also others, ज्ञानयज्ञेन च *jnanayajnena cha* : by knowledge sacrifice, यजन्तः *yajantah* : sacrificing, एकत्वेन *ekatvena* : with oneness (Advaitabhava),

पृथक्त्वेन *prithaktvena* : as different (worshipping various Devas as Brahma etc.) (Dvaitabhava), बहुधा *bahudha* : in various ways, विश्वतोमुखम् *visvatomukham* : universal in form (Sarvatmabhava), माम् *mam* : Me, उपासते *upasate* : worship.

Substance : Others also sacrificing with ‘knowledge-sacrifice’, worship Me the universal, as one, as distinct, and as manifold.

Commentary : It is declared here that men worship Him in various ways, some as one Reality, identifying themselves with the One, others making a distinction between the Lord and themselves, and yet others in manifold forms. All these seekers finally reach the goal through different paths. The point to note is that the manner of worship may take any form provided that it is done with complete and immovable faith.

What is *jnanayajna* ?

‘*Brahman* is real, the world is illusion. The *Jiva* is *Brahman* and not distinct.’ – This knowledge is *jnana*. To hold on to this is knowledge-sacrifice (*Jnana Yajna*). This is the *Advaitic* realisation. This is ‘*tat tvam asi*’ thought. This is ‘*so ham*’ experience. When Lord Krishna completes the Gita Sastra, He declares that he who studies and tries to understand the spirit of the Gita is said to have worshipped the Lord through Knowledge-sacrifice (18-70). All people whatever their activities and styles of worship may be, shall have to understand at last that there is only One Reality and that Reality is nothing other than his own Self. This is the only way to liberation and this is *jnanayajna*.

Viswatomukham : The Lord is universal, existing everywhere and in each and every thing. He is *Paramatma* and there is nothing else but He in all that one sees and experiences in all the worlds. This universal concept is the highest law of religion, and perhaps the easiest way to God-Realisation. Let this law be remembered by all, at all times, in all places and under all circumstances.

Question : How do people worship the Lord ?

Answer : Some people worship Him with Advaitic attitude and others with dualistic attitude, each man according to his *samskara* worship Him in different ways.

In four verses the universal presence of the Lord is declared.

16. अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमयिरहं हुतम् ॥

१६

*Aham kratur aham yajnah svadha'ham aham aushadham
mantra'ham aham eva'jyam aham agnir aham hutam ॥ 16*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, क्रतुः *kratuh* : a kind of vedic sacrifice, अहम् *aham* : I, यज्ञः *yajnah* : the sacrifice, अहम् स्वधा *aham svadha* : I, the offering to Pitrис (ancestors), अहम् औषधम् *aham aushadham* : I, the medicinal herbs or plants, अहम् *aham* : I, मन्त्रः *mantrah* : the sacred syllables, अहमेव *aham eva* : I also, आज्यम् *ajyam* : the ghee, अहम् *aham* : I, अग्निः *agnih* : the sacred fire, अहम् *aham* : I, हुतम् *hutam* : the offering.

Substance : I am Kratu, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering (food) to the Pitrис, the ancestors; I am the medicinal herbs and plants, I am the *Mantra*, the clarified butter, the Fire, and the offering.

Commentary : The universality of the Lord is declared by a number of illustrations. The seeker has to understand that the Lord is All, and everything. The false notion that man is separate should be destroyed in the contemplation of the universal presence of the Lord in all objects and acts.

17. पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥

१७

*Pita'ham asya jagato mata dhata pitamahah
vedyam pavitram omkara rik sama yajur eva cha ॥ 17*

there. The true address of man is always *Paramatma* in whom the whole universe resides.

He is the refuge and shelter of all beings. It is from Him that man obtains the largest reward of *Moksha*.

He is the friend of friends, ever present and never failing.

He is the cause, the origin and dissolution of all beings. By His presence, the universe goes into action like the iron rod in the nearness of the magnet.

He is the origin of all beings. So whatever may be the birth of man, he should remember that his ancient ancestor, his 'gotra', his home, is God Himself. Originating from *Paramatma*, how can man think of himself as vile, weak, wretched and miserable? To be true to oneself man should know clearly that he is of the same nature as God Himself, because He is the true origin of all beings.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma?*

Answer : He is the goal, supporter, Lord, witness, abode, refuge, friend, dissolution, foundation, treasure-house, and the seed imperishable of all beings.

19. तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युसूजामि च ।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥

१९

*Tapamyaham aham varsham nigrihnamyutsrijami cha
amritam chai'va mrityus cha sadasacha'ham arjuna ॥ 19*

Meaning : अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! अहम् aham : I, तपामि tapami : cause heat, अहम् aham : I, वर्षम् varsham : rain, उन्सूजामि च ucchrijami cha : and send forth, निगृह्णामि nigrihnami : withhold, अमृतं च amritam cha : and immortality, मृत्युश्च mrityuh cha : and death, सत् sat : existence, असत् च asat cha : and non-existence, अहम् एव aham eva : I also.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I cause heat (as Sun) and I am rain; I withhold and send forth (rain), I am immortality and also death, I am existence and non-existence.

Commentary : The Lord is the cause for the origin of the world and all the activities taking place in it. As an illustration, the phenomena of rain is explained here. The Sun causes heat and absorbs water and then again releases it in the form of rain. The whole of the natural phenomena as we understand is the work of the Lord Himself. If we extend the analogy, we will find that every force, small or great, is nothing but the manifestation of the Lord.

When the rope is mistaken for the snake, the rope, as the foundation, has not in any way changed. So also, what appears as the universe is in reality *Brahman*. So everything in the world like death and immortality, like existence and non-existence relatively is nothing but *Brahman*.

The fruit of sacrifices performed with desire is explained.

20. त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्टा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकम्
श्वन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ २०

*Traividya mam somapah putapapa
yajnairishva svargatim prarthayante ।
te punyam asadya surendralokam
asnanti divyan divi devabhogan ॥*

20

Meaning : त्रैविद्या: *traividya*: the knowers of the Vedas, सोमपाः *somapah*: the drinkers of Soma, पूतपापाः *putapapah*: purified of sins, यज्ञैः *yajnaih*: by sacrifices, माम् *mam*: Me, इष्टा *ishtva*: worshipping, स्वर्गतिम् *svargatim*: the way to Heaven, प्रार्थयन्ते *prarthayante*: pray for, ते *te*: they, पुण्यम् *punyam*: happy, सुरेन्द्रलोकम् *surendralokam*: the world of Indra, असाद्य *asadya*: having attained, दिवि *divi*: in Heaven,

दिव्यान् *divyan* : divine, देवभोगान् *devabhogan* : pleasures of the Devas, अशन्ति *asnanti* : enjoy (eat).

Substance : The knowers of the *Vedas*, the drinkers of *Soma*, purified of sins, worshipping Me by sacrifices, pray for the way to Heaven. They having attained the world of Indra, enjoy the heavenly pleasures of the *Devas*.

Commentary : The Lord here describes the attitude of some aspirants who seek for the pleasures of Heaven by performing sacrifices. They are learned men who have studied the *Vedas*; they are purified by sacrifices; but they are attached to sense-pleasures, and so they desire for the finer and subtler enjoyments of the Gods. Their prayer is for heavenly joys. And they get them by the merit of their *Yajnas*. They are evolved beings no doubt, but they are imperfect because they have not realised the Brahmananda arising from Self-realisation. Whatever world it is, however rich and exhilarating the pleasures of the Gods may be, they are subject to death and birth. They have to return.

What if the shackles are made of gold? They are still bonds which limit the immeasurable joy of self-realisation. That cannot be the goal. The cycle of birth and death should be stopped by knowing the truth, which alone brings freedom to man. To be a slave to sense-pleasures either here or in Heaven cannot satisfy the true aspirant. He should aim at the highest, the Atmic state, attaining which he is forever in bliss and blessedness.

Therefore the wise man should strive for the Eternal state of *Brahman*, and not the transitory enjoyments of Heaven or any other world. The *Vedas* deal with sacrifices and other forms of worship which lead to enjoyment, but that is not the end of the *Vedas*. The end is *Brahma-jnana*, and all people should have to come up to this goal. Sacrifices purify the mind, if they are performed without any desire for the fruit thereof. But if man performs these things with attachment he cannot derive the necessary purity to remain steadfast in the contemplation of the Self.

The deluded soul thirsting for enjoyment prays to the Lord for Heavenly joys through the performance of sacrifices. How unwise it would be to stand before the Supreme Lord and pray for such meagre pleasures of Heaven ? Is not the Lord the very source of all bliss and blessedness ? Why not pray for union with Him ? Why not pray for the bliss of liberation ?

If liberation is the goal of mankind, the question may arise why the Vedas have so elaborately described the *Yajnas* yielding various worldly and other-worldly benefits ? What is its purpose ? The answer is that man has to be weaned away from lower sinful pleasures by presenting before him the purer and more lasting joys of Heaven. The *Vedas* have done this. Man is partially rescued from the clutches of earthly things and sinful activities. Then after many many births, the same man would find out for himself that he has no rest wherever he might go, and that he has to fall back to the earth again and again. When he realises the uselessness of these enjoyments, then he would naturally seek for a joy that would not come to an end, and that joy cannot be had anywhere else except in the Self *Atma*.

Question : *What is the reward of performing sacrifices ?*

Answer : Enjoyment of Heaven.

21. ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्मेनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥

21

*Te tam bhuktva svargalokam visalam
kshine punye martyalokam visanti ।
evam trayidharmam anuprapanna
gatagatam kamakama labhante॥*

21

Meaning: ते te : they, तं विशालम् *tam visalam* : that spacious, स्वर्गलोकम् *svargalokam* : heaven world, भुक्त्वा *bhuktva* : having enjoyed, क्षीणे पुण्ये *kshine punye* : merit being

exhausted, मर्त्यलोकम् *martyalokam*: world of mortals, विश्वनिति *visanti* : enter, एवम् *evam* : in this way, त्रयीधर्मम् *trayidharmam* : the law of Vedas, अनुप्रपन्नाः *anuprapannah* : abiding by, काम कामाः *kama kamah* : desiring desires, गतागतम् *gatagatam* : going and returning, लभन्ते *labhante* : get.

Substance : They having enjoyed the vast Heaven-world, the merit being exhausted, enter the world of mortals; thus, those who desire enjoyments, abiding by the law of the *Vedas* have to go and return endlessly.

Commentary : The Lord explains very clearly how the desire-prompted men do not find rest either here or in Heaven. They have to go through the painful process of birth and death. Dying here, they go to Heaven and from there, after exhausting the fruits of merit (*punya*) they fall back again to the earth, and take birth as mortals. Such is the fate of men yielding to desire, however rich and vast it might be. From this one understands that human life is the only opportunity for Self-realisation. All the other worlds are worlds of enjoyment, good or bad. This world is the world of action and *jnana*. Let us hear the exhortation of Swami Vivekananda—"Man therefore according to *Vedanta* philosophy is the greatest being that is in the universe, and the world of work is the best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and best chance for him to become perfect. Angels or Gods, whatever you may call them, have all to become men, if they want to be perfect. This is the greatest centre, the wonderful poise, and the wonderful opportunity—this human life."

The *Vedas* follow a rational order with reference to human life and man's progress and perfection. The first part is *Karma Kanda*, the second *Upasana Kanda*, and the third *Jnana Kanda*. We see how man develops gradually and reaches perfection. The *Karma Kanda* deals with the desire-fulfilling actions of man. When man discovers that these desires and their fulfilment do not give him rest or peace, he discards them and rises a step higher, and finally, remains at perfection in the realisation of God. He comes to the *Jnana Kanda*.

Karma is no doubt good in itself, but it should be free from desire and attachment. Otherwise man has to undergo the painful process of being born again and again either here or in the other worlds. In the *Samkhya-yoga* and in many other places, the Lord emphasises the need for the elimination of desire as the only way to perfection. Desire implies imperfection. The perfect man cannot have any desires.

The desireless state of perfection should be the goal of all spiritual aspirants.

Question: *What is the reward of yajnas ?*

Answer : Enjoyment in Heaven.

Question: *How long ?*

Answer : Till the merit (*punya*) is exhausted.

Question: *What happens then ?*

Answer : He returns to the world of mortals.

Question: *What is the fate of those who have desires ?*

Answer : They are subject to birth and death.

Question: *What is the nature of Heaven ?*

Answer : It is a vast place of enjoyment, and has an end.

How the Lord takes care of the true devotee is declared.

22. अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्ते मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्यभियुक्तानां योगक्षेत्रं वहाम्यहम् ॥

२२

Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate ।

tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham । 22

Meaning : ये जनाः *ye janah* : those who, अनन्याः *ananyah* : without other thoughts, माम् *mam* : Me, चिन्तयन्तः *chintayantah* : thinking, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : worship (Me) continuously, तेषाम् *tesham* : of them, नित्यभियुक्तानां *nityayuktam* : ever united with Me, योगक्षेत्रम् *yogakshemam* : yoga and kshema, अहम् *aham* : I, वहामि *vahami* : carry.

Substance : Of those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, ever united with Me, I carry their *yoga* (securing things which they do not possess) and *kshema* (preserving what they possess.)

Commentary : This is one of the most important verses in the Gita. As it occurs in the middle of the Gita, we may describe it as the most precious gem in the Gita-diamond-garland. This is the Lord's promise of protection for the devotee. He takes upon Himself the responsibility of the devotee who is ever united with Him. *Yoga* means securing things which are not already possessed by the devotee. *Kshema* means preservation of things already possessed. Nothing can cause fear to the true devotee about his welfare, as the Lord Himself has taken over the entire responsibility. Let him be true to Him, and the never-failing hand of God is always there to protect him. The Lord knows full well that His devotees have given their all to Him, and have nothing of their own. Such things as the devotee needs, are supplied by the Lord Himself, under all circumstances. What should be the attitude of the true devotee ? He should have no other thought except that of the Lord.

Ananyah : 'Not other' is *ananyah*. That is, the devotee has nothing other than the Lord, and his mind does not move away from the Lord towards any other thing. This type of devotee is far different from others who desire enjoyments in Heaven, or in other worlds. The latter also worships the Lord, but his mind is attached to enjoyments. This is not '*ananya-bhakti*.' The devotee mentioned in this verse has no relish for anything except the Lord. All other things upto *Brahmaloka* are trash for him. He discards them all as loathsome stuff. Such a devotee is the Lord's own. To have such devotion distinguishes the true *Bhakta* whose responsibilities are taken over by the Lord Himself.

What infinite compassion ! What assurance of protection ! Arjuna gave away the reins into the hands of the Lord. So should the devotee surrender himself to the Lord, and the result

of such surrender is the protection of the Lord under all circumstances. What is needed by the devotee—either some worldly goods for the maintenance of the body or *Atma-jnana*—both are provided by Him.

The devotee has nothing else to do except to devote himself to the Lord's worship and all else is looked after by the Lord.

The devotee may be in a desert or a mountain-cave or a forest, the Lord follows him like a calf following the mother-cow. The biographies of saints and *sadhus* show how the Lord at every step was with them, in them, and around them. Their life-stories should give courage to the solitary seeker, who is treading the holy path of Self-realisation in the middle of the tremendous dangers and distractions of worldly life.

God's grace is like the wind, and sun-light. Without distinction of caste or creed, age or sex, His grace pervades all. He is the friend of all. Let one be sincere and truthful. Let one's devotion be honest and straight-forward. Let one have faith, and the Lord's promise is there to protect him.

The Lord should be worshipped continuously and always.

Atmajnana is the greatest boon that the Lord could confer on His devotee. Whatever little *sadhana* one does sincerely is protected and strengthened by the Lord.

Steadfast and ceaseless memory of the Lord is emphasised here.

Question : *How to meditate on the Lord ?*

Answer : The devotee should give up all other thoughts and think of the Lord. He should not have any attachment for any worldly things.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He receives God's grace. God Himself takes over his responsibilities both secular and spiritual.

Question : What then should man do to obtain God's grace ?

Answer : He should worship the Lord with single-minded devotion.

Those who worship other Devas worship the Lord only, though by a wrong method.

23. येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः ।

तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥

२३

Ye'py anyadevata bhakta yajante sraddhaya'nyitah ।

Te'pi mam eva kaunteya yajantyavidhipurvakam ॥ 23

Meaning : कौन्तेय Kaunteya : O Arjuna ! येऽपि yepi : even those who, अन्यदेवताभक्ताः anyadevata bhaktah : devotees of other Devas, श्रद्धयान्विताः sraddhayanvitah : endowed with faith, यजन्ते yajante : worship, तेऽपि tepi : they also, मामेव mam eva : Me only, अविधिपूर्वकम् avidhipurvakam : by the wrong method, यजन्ति yajanti : worship.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Even those devotees, who endowed with faith, worship other Gods, worship Me only by the wrong method.

Commentary : Some devotees worship, not the formless *Brahmam* but other Gods with name and form. If their devotion is sincere, they, in a sense, worship the supreme who is the foundation for all Devas. This form of worship is a wrong method. They are not worshipping the Supreme directly. So there is a difference in the fruits of merit. The various Devas may confer different rewards of health and wealth, children and prosperity in worldly life, but the worship of the Supreme confers the highest reward of *Moksha* (liberation). Whatever may be the object of worship, faith is essential. With such faith if the Lord is worshipped the devotee obtains liberation.

Question : How should man worship God ?

Answer : With faith.

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

*Aham hi sarvayajnanam bhokta cha prabhur eva cha!
Na tu mam abhijananti tattvena'tascchyavanti te!*

Meaning : हि *hi* : verily, सर्वयज्ञानाम् *sarvayajnanam* : of all sacrifices, भोक्ता च *bhokta cha* : and enjoyer, प्रभुः एव च *prabhuh eva cha* : and Lord also, अहम् एव *aham eva* : I alone, माम् तु *mam tu* : but me, ते *te* : they, तत्त्वेन *tattvena* : in essence, न अभिजानन्ति : *na abhijananti* : not known, अतः *atah* : hence, च्यवन्ति *chyavanti* : fall.

Substance : I am alone the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices; but they do not know Me in reality, hence they fall.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is the Lord of all sacrifices. Not possessing this knowledge, the worshippers of other Gods fall down into the mire of *Samsara* again and again. So long as this knowledge of the universal presence of the Lord is not understood, man falls into *Samsara*. That there is only One essential Reality should be understood and realised in essence. This knowledge promotes man from any kind of fall. Therefore it is the duty of the aspirant to rise to the highest plane from whence there is no fall (*Chyuti*). The Lord is known as *Achyuta*, for, attaining Him, there is no 'Chyuti' (fall) for man.

Question : *Who is the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices?*

Answer : *Paramatma.*

Question : *Why does man fall into samsara?*

Answer : Because he does not possess the knowledge of the Supreme.

Question : *What then is the way to transcend samsara?*

Answer : The understanding and direct knowledge of the Supreme.

The worshippers of the Devas go to Devas, and the worshippers of the Lord go to Him.

25. यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्तिरूपान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मध्यजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ २५

Yanti devavrata devan pitrin yanti pi'rvratah ।

bhu:ani yanti bhutejya yanti madyajino'pi mam ॥ 25

Meaning : देवव्रताः *devavratah* : worshippers of the Devas or Gods, देवान् *Devan* : to the Devas, यान्ति *yanti* : go, पितृव्रताः *pitrivratah* : the worshippers of ancestors, पितृः *pitrin* : to the ancestors, यान्ति *yanti* : go, भूतेज्याः *bhutejyah* : the worshippers of the Bhutas, भूतानि *bhutani* : to the Bhutas, यान्ति *yanti* : go, मध्यजिनः अपि *madyajinah api* : and my worshippers, माम् *mam* : to me, यान्ति *yanti* : go.

Substance : The worshippers of the *Devas* go to the *Devas*; the worshippers of the ancestors go to the ancestors; the worshippers of the *Bhutas* go to the *Bhutas*; and the worshippers of Me go to Me.

Commentary : The Lord states the universal law that the object of one's worship will determine the goal that he reaches. No one gets anything other than what he thinks intensely. Naturally the wise man chooses the imperishable goal of *Paramatma* who liberates him from all bondage and gives him complete freedom and perfection. Of what use is to worship this or that *Deva* or *Pitri* or *Bhuta*, who can only give some perishable things and once again throws man down into *Samsara*? Let the aspirant think clearly of the goal he has to reach. Let him not be content with lesser things which have brought misery and death endlessly. Let him aspire for the highest perfection by worshipping the Supreme Lord. Let the 'Devavrata' (worshipper of the Devas) transform himself into 'Atmavrata'—(worshipper of *Atma*). Then he reaches the blissful state of *Paramatma*, and all his wishes and desires shall find fulfilment in that Realisation.

Question : Where does the worshipper go ?

Answer : He goes to the object of his worship—Devas or Pitrīs etc.

Question : Where shall he go who worships Paramatma ?

Answer : He reaches Paramatma, the Supreme Lord.

The Lord accepts any little thing offered to Him with devotion.

26. पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्वामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

२६

*Patram pushpam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktya prayacchati ।
tad aham bhaktyupahritam
asnami prayatatmanah ॥*

26

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, मे *me* : to Me, भक्त्या *bhaktya* : with devotion, पत्रम् *patram* : leaf, पुष्पम् *pushpam* : flower, फलम् *phalam* : fruit, तोयम् *toyam* : water, प्रयच्छति *prayacchati* : offers, प्रयतात्मनः *prayatatmanah* : of that pure-minded man, भक्त्युपहृतम् *bhaktyupahritam* : offered with devotion, तत् *tat* : that (leaf, fruit etc.), अहम् *aham* : I, अश्वामि *asnami* : eat (accept).

Substance : Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a fruit, a flower, or water, that I accept of the pure-minded man offered with devotion.

Commentary : This verse is very important for all the aspirants. In the previous verse, it was stated that the worshipper invariably goes to the object of his worship. If the Lord is the objective, the worshipper reaches Him. The same discipline and devotion needed for the worship of other *Devas* is enough to please the Lord. This being so, why should he have a lesser and lower objective than the Lord Himself ? The Lord explains the very easy nature of His worship. No elaborate sacrifices are needed, no large charities are needed, no

great offerings are needed. A leaf, a flower or a fruit or even water, is enough to please the Lord, and when the Lord is pleased, all the *Devas*, *Pitris* and *Bhutas* are pleased. All the rewards which the worshippers hope to derive from the worship of the *Devas* are derived by the worship of *Paramatma* and His worship is absolutely within the reach of every human being. Two conditions are stated here :

- 1) The giver should be pure-minded.
- 2) The offering should be made with devotion.

Kingdom, treasures and empires do not satisfy the Lord, when there is no purity and devotion; where these are, even a leaf or a fruit is enough to draw the grace of God. He is pleased and satisfied with such offerings when the worshipper is a true *Bhakta*. Lord Krishna did not accept the hospitality of the proud Duryodhana, but dined with the humble Vidura. The dried corn offered by Kuchela was accepted by the Lord with great pleasure, and the reward which he received is well known to all.

What is required is (1) purity of heart, and (2) true devotion. Even the humblest and the most ignorant man receives God's grace by purity and devotion. The richest and the most powerful shall have to go without it, if they are arrogant and self-indulgent. That is why one comes across some learned scholars plunged in the mire of *samsara* in spite of their Sastric learning. That is why kings and emperors have sought refuge at the feet of sages in their troubles and sorrows. The pure man alone is happy. The devotee alone is fearless.

The Lord is the King of Kings. He is the maker and unmaker of all the worlds. Love and devotion are the only things by which the Lord is pleased. If he is pleased, all the world and all the beings are pleased.

We recall to mind the wonderful episode in the *Mahabharata* when the Pandavas were in exile, sage Durvassha came with all his disciples to the hermitage of Pandavas and wanted to be fed. Draupadi had nothing in the pot except a few bits of ~~cooked~~

food. She thought of the Lord and he came and tasted the few bits of cooked food, and lo, the miracle ! The sage and his disciples felt surfeited and could take no more food; even when they were requested by Pandavas to accept their hospitality. Please the Lord, and all other beings shall be pleased.

Those who worship Him with single-minded devotion are God's own children. God's mercy is on them at all times, and in all places. They receive *Atmajnana*. The Upanishads declare the same truth.

Draupadi and Vidura offered a leaf; Gajendra offered a flower; Sabari offered a fruit; Ranti Deva offered water. With their purity and devotion these great devotees attained the Lord by simple offerings.

Question : *What pleases the Lord ?*

Answer : Any simple offering given with purity and devotion pleases the Lord.

Question : *What then are the conditions to receive God's grace ?*

Answer : Purity and devotion.

The Lord teaches Arjuna to offer all he does to Him.

27. यत्करोषि यदश्वासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

२७

*Yat karoshi yad asnasi yaj juhoshi dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurusva madarpanam ॥ 27*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! यत् *yat* : whatever, करोषि *karoshi* : you do, यत् *yat* : whatever, अश्वासि *asnasi* : you eat, यत् *yat* : whatever, जुहोषि *juhoshi* : you offer in sacrifice, यत् *yat* : whatever, ददासि *dadasi* : you offer as gifts, यत् तपस्यसि *yat tapasyasi* : whatever you perform as austerity, तत् *tat* : that (all), मदर्पणम् *madarpanam* : as offering unto me, कुरुष्व *kurushva* : do.

Substance : Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give as charity, whatever you perform as austerity, that (all) do as offering unto Me.

Commentary : The Lord teaches Arjuna to cultivate the basic attitude of mind which enables him to offer whatever he does, to the Lord alone. Every thing should be offered to the Lord, the food eaten, the sacrifice made, and the austerity performed. In fact all the activities of life should be offered unto the Lord, without the expectation of any personal reward. The actions and the fruits of actions should be surrendered to the Lord with a loving heart.

Yat Karoshi : This does not mean bad actions.

Yadasnasi : This does not mean prohibited food.

Man has to do some work in the world, and instead of binding himself with that, the Lord instructs that it should be surrendered to Him, in the spirit of '*Krishnarpanamastu*' or '*Brahmarpanamastu*'. By such surrender, man escapes the bondage of *karma* and also acquires God's grace. This indeed is an easy path to liberation. To the house-holders particularly this method is of great help in their spiritual advancement.

The devotee should make self-surrender to the Lord whatever he is doing.

Question : *How should man work ?*

Answer : Whatever he does, should be surrendered to the Lord.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He is freed from the bondage of *karma*, and obtains God's grace.

The effect of surrender to the Lord is declared.

28. शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥

२८

*Subhasubhaphalair evam mokshyase karmabandhanaih
sannyasa yoga yuktaatma vimukto mam upaishyasi ॥ 28*

Meaning : एवम् evam : in this way, संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा sannyasayogayuktatma : with steadfast mind in the yoga of renunciation, शुभाशुभफलैः subhasubhaphalaiah : from good and evil fruits, कर्मबन्धनैः karmabandhanaih : from the bonds of karma, मोक्ष्यसे mokshyase : you shall be freed, विमुक्तः vimuktah : being freed. माम् mam : Me, उपैष्यसि upaishyasi : you shall attain.

Substance : Thus you shall be liberated from the bonds of actions yielding good and evil fruits; with steadfast mind in the *yoga* of renunciation, you shall come to Me by being set free from *karma*.

Commentary : It is clear that the Lord is teaching the renunciation of the fruits of actions and not the renunciation of actions. *Sanyasa* here means renunciation of the fruit of action. Such a man who practices renunciation of the fruit of action (*Karmaphalatyaga*) is freed from all the bonds of *Karma*.

The term *Moksha* is frequently used by all people. What does it mean ? Where is the *Moksha* ? Here is the meaning for it. Freedom from bondage is *Moksha*. What is this bondage : The bondage of *karma* done by men with a sense of personal doership and desire for its fruits. To give up the fruits of *karma* to God is *Moksha*. It is *Sanyasa*. From the point of view of self-realisation, both good and evil are in the realm of the unreal. But the seeker has to release himself from evil first and then give up good also. Then he reaches the *Nirvikalpa* state. This is the surest way to liberation and union with the Lord.

Question How can man free himself from the bond of *karma*?

Answer : By surrendering all actions to the Lord, man is freed from *Karma* and obtains God's grace.

The Lord declares that He is the same to all.

29. समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ २९

Meaning : सुदूराचारः अपि suduracharah api : even a very wicked person, अनन्यभक्त् ananyabhak : with devotion to non else, माम् mam : Me, भजते चेऽ bhajate chet : worships, सः sah : he, साधुः एव sadhuh eva : righteous verily, मन्तव्यः mantavyah : should be regarded, हि hi : indeed, सः sah : he, सम्यक् samyak : rightly, व्यवसितः vyavasitah : has resolved.

Substance : Even if the most sinful person worships Me with undivided heart, he should be regarded righteous, for he has rightly resolved indeed.

Commentary : Though the most wicked of men, if he takes refuge in the Lord with faith and devotion, striving to give up his wickedness, he should be regarded as a righteous and holy person. The Lord uses the superlative term (*suduracharah*) to indicate the worst forms of sin and evil. Even such a person should be known as holy by virtue of his absolute self-surrender to the Lord. The reason is that he has come to the right decision that *Paramatma* is the only Reality and he has obtained a glimpse of this ultimate truth. He has realised the illusory nature of the world, and so he has taken final refuge in the only Reality—*Paramatma*. His decision is right and his salvation is then assured by the Lord.

He is ceaselessly contemplating the Lord and does not touch anything other than *Atma*. The evil pertaining to such a person is burnt up in the flame of knowledge. A heap of straw lying for several years can be reduced to ashes by fire. So the accumulated evil of past births is destroyed by the fire of knowledge. The darkness existing in a remote mountain-cave for thousands of years is destroyed immediately when a match is lighted. So the evil in man however ancient it might be is destroyed by the flash of knowledge. The *asadhu* becomes a *sadhu*, the demon becomes a God. What brings about this wonderful transformation ? Pure devotion and right knowledge.

Therefore, let no sinner be disheartened that the weight of sin is too much for him to bear. Let him decide aright.

Let him take refuge in the Lord, with faith and devotion. He is freed from all sin. He is then a righteous man (*sadhu*). Instead of condemning people as sinners, it is necessary to rouse the divinity in them and this is the greatest act of goodness which the realised man can do humanity.

The point to remember is that nothing good can come out of dull contemplation of one's own weaknesses, past and present. He should act positively and try to understand what is true and what is false. He should surrender himself to God, and that very moment he transcends all evil.

Whatever evil clings to man in the state of ignorance, that is cleared off by right decision, and determination.

The path of God is the right path. The path of the world (*drisya*) is the wrong path.

The word 'sadhu' refers to the righteous man who is leading a truly spiritual life.

Question : How can the wicked man become a sadhu ?

Answer : By single-minded devotion to God.

Question : What is the right decision ?

Answer : To have faith in the Lord as the only Reality is the correct decision.

The Lord's promise that His devotee never perishes.

31. क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्चच्छान्ति निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

३१

*Khsipram bhavati dharmatma sasvacchanti nigacchati ।
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati ॥ 31*

Meaning : क्षिप्रम् *kshipram* : quickly, धर्मात्मा *dharmaatma* : righteous man, भवति *bhavati* : becomes, शश्च *sasyat* : eternal, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, निगच्छति *nigacchati* : attains, कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! (सः *sah* : that man), मे *me* : My,

*Samo'ham sarvabhuteshu na me dveshyo'sti na priyah !
ye bhajanti tu mam bhaktya mayi te teshu cha'pyaham ! 29*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings, समः *samah* : the same, मे *me* : to Me, द्वेष्यः *dveshyati* : hateful, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, प्रियः *priyah* : dear, न *na* (*asti*) : is not, ये तु *ye tu* : those who but, माम् *mam* : Me, भक्त्या *bhaktya* : with devotion, भजन्ति *bhajan'i* : worship, ते *te* : they, मयि *mayi* : in Me (are), तेषुचापि *teshu cha api* : and in them also, अहम् *aham* : I (am).

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

Commentary : This declaration of the Lord that He is the same to all beings should be carefully noted by all aspirants. The Lord does not hate any being, nor is any being dear to Him. His grace is overflowing for all people. To make Him responsible for the good and evil things that come to man in the course of this life is utter nonsense. And yet even learned people are so deluded that they complain against God in moments of crisis and calamity. The Lord has nothing to do with the ups and downs, losses and gains, pleasures and pains of all beings. Each one reaps the fruits of his own thoughts and actions. One reaps what he sows. The law is universal and eternal. Let the seeker realise the full responsibility for the good and bad that comes to him. Let him never shift the blame to any one else.

Though the Lord is the same to all beings, they are not all the same to Him. Hatred and malice lead people into evil and this evil causes sorrow and misery. Some enlightened souls avoid such thoughts and feelings and cultivate an attitude of love and friendliness, and so they enjoy life better. They come nearer to God and experience bliss and blessedness.

Let no one imagine that God's grace has not come to him. God's grace, like the wind, is blowing everywhere. Intrepid

sailors spread the sails and make rapid progress on the ocean of spirituality, where as the lazy remain where they are.

The devotee is assured that the Lord is in them and they are in Him. This is due to the devotion of the aspirant. The Lord is like the fire in the cold season. The nearer one moves towards it, the warmer he feels. The farther away he is, the colder does he feel. This is the natural law. The Lord states very clearly that he lives in the hearts of his devotees who worship him with love and devotion. Such a man is the very temple of God. They are God Himself because the Lord is directly manifest in them.

Single-minded devotion leads man to the Supreme Lord, who is present in all beings and who manifests Himself in the heart of the true devotee.

Question : *How does God look upon all beings ?*

Answer : He is the same to all beings.

Question : *Why then do some people suffer and others enjoy life?*

Answer : It is the result of their own actions. Those who worship the Lord enjoy life, others suffer.

Question : *How is God to be worshipped ?*

Answer : With devotion.

Question : *Where does God manifest Himself ?*

Answer : He manifests Himself in the hearts of the true devotees. In all beings, the Lord exists as 'sat' but to those of devotion He reveals Himself and gives them *Moksha*.

The greatness of devotion is explained.

30. अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥

३०

*Api chet suduracharo bhajate mam ananyabhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah ॥ 30*

भक्तः *bhaktah* : devotee, न प्रणश्यति *na pranasyati* : is not destroyed, प्रतिजानीदि *pratijani* : know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Soon he becomes righteous and attains eternal peace; know you for certain, My devotee will never suffer destruction.

Commentary : The effect of the right decision is declared here. The wicked man quickly becomes a righteous man ('*Dharmatma*'), and attains eternal peace.

This point should be carefully understood, because all progress in spiritual life depends on correct and firm decision. One may read all the *sastras* in the world, and yet cling desperately to the ephemeral things of the world. Such a man has not come to the right decision in spite of his learning and erudition. The decision that *Paramatma* alone is Real, and that He alone is the ultimate refuge should be reached. But doubt and darkness cover up the mind, and the truth, though repeatedly heard, does not sink into the mind and illumine the heart.

But, when the correct decision is reached, accepted and confirmed by one's own heart, he immediately becomes a righteous man, whatever his former sins might be. Not only does he become righteous, but he enjoys supreme eternal peace. The *Upanishads* declare "Unto them comes peace and to none else."

The second line of the verse is the Lord's proclamation to the world. "My devotee never perishes." This is a '*maha-mantra*' for all mankind. Whenever one feels dispirited, dull and desperate, let this line be repeated, shouted at the highest pitch, so that the clouds of doubt and despair might be cleared, and the Lord becomes manifest in his own heart. How can a man suffer from thirst when the holy Ganga is flowing by ? How can a man become desperate when the loving Lord is standing by ? No. Let there be no doubt about it. The Lord throws a challenge to all doubters—"Have faith in Me, thou shall not be destroyed." Let the feeble and infirm doubters feel the warmth of this declaration. The compassionate Lord wants Arjuna to

proclaim to all mankind that His devotees shall never suffer destruction. Remembering this promise, may all aspirants move forward on the glorious path of Self-realisation.

Question : *How shall the wicked man change ?*

Answer : By having faith in the Lord. He becomes *Dharmatma* very soon.

Question : *What shall be his reward ?*

Answer : Supreme peace.

Question : *What then is the way to attain peace ?*

Answer : Undivided faith and devotion to the Lord.

Question : *What is the Lord's promise ?*

Answer : His devotees shall never perish.

The Lord declares that even the low-born reach the highest state by devotion to Him.

32. मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ ३२

*Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye'pi syuh papayoniyah ।
striyo vaiyas tatha sudraste'pi yanti param gatim ॥ 32*

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna ! ये ye : those, पापयोनयः अपि papayonayah api : even of sinful birth, स्युः syuh : may be, ते अपि te api : they even, स्त्रियः striyah : women, वैश्याः vaisyah : Vaisyas, तथा tatha : also, शूद्रः sudrah : Sudras, माम् mam : Me, व्यापाश्रित्य vyap asritya : taking refuge in, परां गतिम् param gatim : the Supreme goal, यान्ति हि yanti hi : verily attain.

Substance : O Arjuna! Taking refuge in Me even those of sinful birth, as well as women, Vaisyas and Sudras also, attain the supreme goal.

Commentary : It is declared that even those of sinful birth attain the Lord by taking refuge in Him. Even they transcend *samsara* by faith and devotion to the Lord.

Moreover women and people belonging to all castes attain the Supreme goal by taking refuge in the Lord.

Verily no one is debarred from the highest realisation, provided he has decided aright and knows the Lord to be the One Reality. How hopeful and inspiring! No one need feel disheartened on account of the low birth, if he has developed true devotion to the Lord. Caste and creed is of no concern at all for any one to attain *Brahmajnana*. This open secret is free for all. Women also are qualified for *Brahma Vidya*. The universality of Gita is thus proclaimed to the whole world. The all-inclusive and all-embracing character of the Gita distinguishes it from other sectarian scriptures which deny the right of liberation to certain section of people on account of race, or creed or religion. Merit is the only consideration. All other artificial barriers between man and man are shattered once for all by the teaching of the Gita.

Purity of mind is the real test of *jnana*. When the mirror is pure, one can see the reflection clearly. The mirror makes no distinction between the rich and poor, or high and low. Such is *Brahmajnana*, the birth-right of every being in the universe.

Among women Sabari and the milk-maids of Brindavanam, and a host of women-saints have attained the Supreme. Among Vysyas Samadhi and others may be mentioned. The story of Samadhi is found in Markandeya Purana.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma?*

Answer : It is the Supreme state. There is nothing higher than that.

Question : *Who can attain it?*

Answer : Those who take refuge in the Lord attain it.

Question : Is any one prohibited from this knowledge ?

Answer : No. Caste, creed, sex, low-birth these do not stand in the way of a person realising the Supreme.

The unreal and sorrowful nature of the world and the need for devotion to the Lord are declared.

33. किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥

३३

*Kim punar brahmanah punya bhakta rajarshayas tatha ।
anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam ॥ 33*

Meaning : पुण्याः *punyaḥ* : holy, ब्राह्मणाः *brahmanah* : Brahmins, तथा *tatha* : also, भक्ताः *bhaktah* : devoted, राजर्षयः *rajarshayah* : royal saints, किं पुनः *kim punah* : how much more, अनित्यम् *anityam* : impermanent, असुखम् *asukham* : unhappy, इमम् लोकं *imam lokam* : this world, प्राप्य *prapya* : having entered, माम् *mam* : Me, भजस्व *bhajasva* : worship.

Substance : How much more easily then the holy Brahmins and the royal saints attain the goal ; having entered this world impermanent and unhappy, worship Me.

Commentary : If people of sinful birth, as well as women and *sudras* are competent to attain *Brahmajnana*, how much more easy it should be for the holy Brahmins and royal saints ? The attributes ‘*punyaḥ*’ and ‘*bhaktah*’ are used to emphasise the need for the possession of these qualities which alone entitle a man to reach the highest state. Mere birth cannot take any man anywhere. It is not a passport to God-realisation. Purity and devotion are absolutely essential.

Rajarshayah : Self-control is the attribute of a saint (*Rishi*). Kings who attained self-mastery are Rajarshis. Entangled in the day to day complications of earthly rule, if the Kings could acquire purity and perfection, will it not be possible for humble house-holders who have lesser burdens and greater freedom to attain the supreme goal ?

Anityam asukham lokam : This world or this birth or the body is impermanent and unhappy. Unless a man is blind or demented, he would naturally realise by observation and experience that the Lord's description of the world is perfectly true. The impermanent nature of the world is an every day fact, and all that is matter shall disintegrate, sooner or later. The earthen pot shall go back to the earth. The bodies made up of the five elements shall go back to the elements. Nothing can stop it. What then ? The wise man should hold on to the Lord. "Worship Me" is the Lord's command. Since death is stalking in the world the immediate need for the worship of the Lord is explained. Before the body falls, the Lord should be realised. This is the most urgent aim. All other things come and go according to one's *karma* (*Prarabha*). Worship of the Lord is the very essence of life.

The world is not only momentary but it is full of misery, devoid of happiness (*asukham*).

There is no real joy in little earthly things, Joy is only in the infinite *Atma*. Man discovers this truth after long experience. The pain that poisons all earthly enjoyments is slowly and gradually understood by discrimination, observation and experience. Then man turns away from the world and takes refuge in the Lord.

"Worship Me" is the Lord's command. The world is impermanent and painful. Worship of the Lord who is real and who is the very ocean of bliss is the only way to rise above the painful dream of the world. The unreal is rejected by taking refuge in the Real, and the unhappy should be given up by discovering that which is truly the embodiment of joy (i. e.) the Lord. Therefore let no man be tempted by the superficial attractions of the shadowy world, but let him seek for the source of all that is Truth, Beauty, and Peace, (*Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram*).

Question : *What qualities are needed for God-realisation ?*

Answer : Purity and devotion.

Question : *What is the nature of the world ?*

Answer : It is unreal and unhappy.

Question : *What is the way to overcome samsara ?*

Answer : Devotion to the Lord.

The Lord points the way to reach Him.

34. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥

३४

*Manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji mam namaskuru ।
mamevaishyasi yuktvai'vamatmanam matparayanah ॥ 34*

Meaning : मन्मना: *manmanah* : mind filled with Me, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : My devotee, (भव *bhava* : be you), मद्याजी *madyaji* : My sacrificer, भव *bhava* : be you, माम् *mam* : to Me, नमस्कुरु *namaskuru* : bow down, एवम् *evam* : thus, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the Self, युक्त्वा *yuktva* : being united, मत्परायणः *matparayanah* : taking Me as the Supreme goal, मामेव *mam eva* : to Me only, एष्यसि *eshyasi* : you shall come.

Substance : On Me fix your mind, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, bow down to me, harmonised thus in the Self, you shall come to Me, having Me as the supreme goal.

Commentary : The way to reach *Paramatma* is clearly stated here. The seeker should converge all his activities towards that one Supreme Goal. He should think of the Lord, be devoted to Him, offer sacrifice to Him, and worship Him with all faith and humility. In word, thought and deed, he should worship the Lord. Generally, the mind wanders in the realm of the sensuous. It should be withdrawn from the world and centred in *Atma*. This is possible by contemplating the glorious attributes of the Self. Such contemplation develops love and adoration for the Lord. Thus thinking constantly of the blissful and ever-glorious Self, man unites himself with the Supreme. He worships Him with all devotion and humility.

The mind becomes that which it constantly contemplates. This is the law. Having for long contemplated worldly objects, the mind has become the world; if the mind is trained to contemplate *Paramatma*, it becomes that according to the same law; that is, the union of the individual self with the universal Self. This state is realised by constant contemplation and meditation on the Self, the Lord.

Let the seekers put themselves these questions — On what is their mind resting ? Is it on the world or on *Paramatma* ? To what are they devoted ? Is it to the world or to the Lord ? What do they worship ? Is it the world of name and form or *Paramatma* ? Where do they live and have their being ? Is it in the world of the senses or in the seat of *Atma* ? The Lord points the way, the only way to peace and bliss.

Question : *What is the way to reach the Lord ?*

Answer : Fill the mind with Him, be devoted to Him, sacrifice unto Him, prostrate before Him. In this way, continuously live and have your being in the Lord.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतावृपनिषत्तु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णर्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो नाम
नवमोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavid�ayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yogo
nama navamo'dhyayah.*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends The Ninth Discourse entitled - Rajavidya Raja Guhya Yoga

(The *Yoga* of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secret.)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ दशमोऽध्यायः

Atha Dasamodhyayah

TENTH DISCOURSE

विभूतियोगः

VIBHUTI YOGA

THE YOGA OF DIVINE GLORIES

I. The title of the Discourse :

'Vibhuti' means glory, sovereign power. This entire Universe is the manifested form of the Lord. So all this is His glory, the extension of His wonderful power, the play of His Divine Intelligence. As this Discourse deals with the manifold forms of the Supreme Lord, it is entitled 'Vibhuti Yogah.'

II. Important Points of the Discourse :

- 1) The sovereign yogic powers of the Lord, and the effect of knowing them. (1-7)
- 2) The power and fruit of Bhakti Yoga (8-11)
- 3) Arjuna's appeal to the Lord to describe His miraculous power and manifestation. (12-15)
- 4) The Lord speaks of His infinite glories. (19-42)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the 7th, 8th and 9th Discourses the Lord has briefly referred to His miraculous glories. In order to enable His devotees to worship Him easily, He declares His Sovereignty in various ways in this Discourse. Such knowledge of Divine manifestations develops the devotee's universal understanding of the Lord's presence everywhere. His devotion is strengthened and he will then be able to carry out the Lord's command at the end of the previous Discourse—'manmana bhava...'. Thus the understanding of *Paramatma* is realised by the contemplation of His Divine Glory, as it is manifesting in the Universe in various shapes and forms.

श्री भगवानुवाच

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

१

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Bhuya eva mahabaho sruṇu me paramam vachah ।
yat te'ham priyamanaya vakshyami hitakamyaya ॥* 1

श्री भगवानुवाच — *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! प्रीयमाणाय *priyamanaya* : delighting in My words, ते *te* : to you, हितकाम्यया *hitakamyaya* : wishing you welfare, भूय एव *bhuyah eva* : verily again, यत् *yat* : that, परमम् *paramam* : highest, वचः *vachah* : words, अहम् *aham* : I, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyami* : will declare, मे *me* : My, शृणु *sruṇu* : hear.

Substance : The blessed Lord said—O mighty-armed Arjuna ! Again listen to my supreme words which, as you find delight in My words, I will declare unto you, wishing your welfare.

Commentary : The Lord was pleased to find that Arjuna, like a true disciple, was diligently listening to His words, most delighted with the teaching of the Divine Master. So

the Lord proceeds to declare more and more of his divine power even before he asks for it. Such would be the love of the Master of a true disciple. As the Master finds the disciple in a receptive mood, full of faith and diligence, he reveals more of the Royal Secret out of the fulness of His heart. That is why the Lord says "delighting in my words" ('Priyamanaya'), referring to Arjuna's absorption in His teaching. Arjuna's doubt and grief were disappearing fast as the Lord continued to speak. The Lord knew it. So he speaks with a mightier accent, and reveals more of His Divine *Yoga*. Again (Bhuyah) the Lord repeats and emphasises His universality and the hearer understands it, thinks of it and meditates on it. Repeated hearing of the Truth, constant thinking of it, and continuous meditation on it—this is the only way to absorb the Truth and make it one's own. Vivekananda says: "This *Atman* is first to be heard of. Hear day and night that you are that Soul. Repeat it to yourself day and night till it enters into your very veins, till it tingles in every drop of blood, till it is in your flesh and bone." Such should be the immovable firmness of conviction in the Divine Truth. So the Lord repeats, expounds, declares and proclaims His Divine Glory.

The Lord wishes to do good to His disciple. What is the greatest good that man can obtain ? Not certainly wealth and enjoyments, but Knowledge of *Paramatma*, by which man realises his blissful and blessed Self.

Paramam vachah : The Lord's teaching is wonderful for it removes the veil of ignorance, dispells all darkness from the human heart. Let mankind hear the Lord's Supreme word.

Question : *How is the Lord's word ?*

Answer : It is Supreme.

Question : *Why does the Lord repeat what He has already said ?*

Answer : To do good to Arjuna who was delighting in the Lord's teaching.

Question : *What is the greatest good ?*

Answer : Knowledge of the Supreme.

The Lord proclaims His power-'Yogamaya' in the five verses.

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

२

*Na me viduh suraganah prabhavam na maharshayah ।
aham adirhi devanam maharshinam cha sarvasah ॥* 2

Meaning : मे *me* : my, प्रभवम् *prabhava* : origin (the secret of His incarnation, power), सुरगणाः *suraganah* : hosts of Devas, न विदुः *na viduh* : do not know, महर्षयः *maharshayah* : the great sages, न विदुः *na (viduh)* : do not know, अहम् *aham* : I, देवानाम् *devanam* : of the Devas, महर्षीणांच महर्षिनाम् *maharshinam cha* : and of the great sages, सर्वशः *sarvah* : in every way, आदिः हि *adi hi* : am the cause, orgin indeed.

Substance : Neither the hosts of *Devas* nor the great sages know my origin; I am in every way the cause and source of all *Devas* and *Rishis* indeed.

Commentary : The Lord is the Ancient Purusha, the ultimate cause and source of all the worlds and beings. From Him proceed all the *Devas* and *Maharshis*. Even they are not able to understand the infinite mystery of the Lord. Endowed with wisdom, if these great souls fail to know the Lord fully, what to speak of other mortals? No one can measure the infinitude of the Lord with his finite mind. So, what man can aspire for, is simply to surrender to Him, and obtain His grace, by which he merges in and becomes one with him.

Question : What is the power of Paramatma ?

Answer : He is the cause and origin of all the *Devas* and *Maharshis*, and all beings.

Question : What is man's duty ?

Answer : He should worship the Lord and merge in Him.

He who knows the Lord as the final cause, and worships Him is freed from sin.

3. यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असंमूढः स मत्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥

३

*Yo mam ajam anadim cha vetti lokamahesvaram !
asammudhah sa martyeshu sarvapapaih pramuchyate ॥ 3*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, माम् *mam* : Me, अजम् *ajam* : the unborn, birthless, अनादिं च *anadim cha* : and without beginning, लोकमहेश्वरम् *lokamahesvaram* : the Lord of all the worlds, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, सः *sah* : he, मत्येषु *martyeshu* : among men, असंमूढः *asammudhah* : without delusion, सर्वपापैः *sarvapapaih* : from all sins, प्रमुच्यते *pramuchyate* : is freed.

Substance : Who knows Me as the birthless, without a beginning, the Lord of all the worlds, he among mortals is freed from all sins.

Commentary : Among living beings of the world, man is the highest incarnation and among mortals he who knows the Lord as unborn and beginningless is the greatest. *Paramatma* is unborn (*ajah*) and He has no beginning (*anadi*). All other beings have a beginning and end. They are born in time and die in time. Knowledge of *Paramatma* alone confers immortality on man. He becomes free from delusion. This indeed is the highest reward which man can get by his devotion to the Lord. All other worldly benefits are impermanent and illusory. They lead to sorrow and death. So it is the primary duty of all seekers to hold on to the Lord and transcend delusion with His grace. When delusion is gone, man is at once freed from all sin. When man becomes sinless he becomes one with *Paramatma*. Though a man is burdened with all the sins in the world, yet, like fire burning up a vast forest, God's grace destroys the entire sin. So, devotion to the Lord is what is most essential. And his devotion is cultivated, strengthened and developed by understanding the infinite Glory of the Lord. As man thinks

constantly of the inscrutable power of the Lord, his adoration increases and his worship becomes truer, deeper and broader.

Question : *Who is the best of men ?*

Answer : He who knows the Lord to be unborn, without a beginning, the ruler of the world, is the best of men.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He is freed from all delusion and sin.

Question : *How then to become the best of men ?*

Answer : To know the nature of the Lord in essence.

Question : *What is the way to be free from sin ?*

Answer : To know the Lord as unborn and eternal is the way (By this devotion is cultivated, by devotion *Dhyana* and by *Dhyana* the actual perception of God, and by that vision *purity* from all sin, and from that liberation is attained).

4. बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।
सुखं दुःखं भवेऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ४

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

*Buddhir jnanam asammohah
kshama satyam damah samah
sukham duhkham bhavo'bhavo
bhayam cha'bhayam eva cha* ॥ 4

*Ahimsa samata tustis tapo danam yaso'yasah
bhavanti bhava bhutanam matta eva prithagvidhah* ॥ 5

Meaning : बुद्धिः *buddhih* : reason (capacity to understand subtle things), ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, असंमोहः *asammohah* : freedom from delusion, क्षमा *kshama* : forbearance, सत्यम् *satyam* : truthfulness, दमः *damah* : control of external organs,

शमः *samah* : control of internal organs, सुखम् *sukham* : happiness, दुःखम् *duhkham* : suffering and sorrow, भवः *bhavah* : birth or existence, अभावः *abhavah* : non-existence, भयम् च *bhayam cha* : fear, and, अभयम् एव च *abhayam eva cha* : and also fearlessness अहिंसा *ahimsa* : non-injury, समता *samata* : equal-mindedness, तुष्टि: *tushtih* : contentment, तपः *tapah* : austerity, दानम् *danam* : charity, यशः *yasah* : fame, अयशः *ayasah* : ill-fame, भूतनाम्यु *bhutanam* : of beings, पृथग्विधाः *prithagvidhah* : of different kinds, भावाः *bhavah* : (these) qualities, मतः एव *mattah eva* : from Me alone, भवन्ति *bhayanti* : arise.

Substance : Reason, knowledge, non-delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, self-restraint of external and internal organs, calmness, pleasure, pain, existence, non-existence, fear, fearlessness, non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, ill-fame — these different qualities of beings arise from Me alone.

Commentary : Sixteen good qualities and four bad qualities are mentioned in these two verses. All these qualities proceed from the Lord Himself. What does this mean? It does not mean that God gives good qualities to some people and bad qualities to some others. He has already declared "There is no one hateful or dear to Me." This being so, the qualities exhibited by different people are the result of their own thoughts and actions. Men who contemplate the righteous become good, possessing all divine qualities and others who think and act in the opposite direction become bad, possessing undivine qualities. It is by the Lord's power that these qualities, good and bad come to man, though the Lord is just a witness only and is not affected by them. The Lord does not cause *karma*. He is not the doer of *karma*, ('*karmakarta*'). He is the dispenser of the fruits of action—(*karmaphalapradata*). It is in this sense that we have to understand the Lord's declaration.

Moreover the mind is in itself insentient, and it is animated by the life-force of the Lord. As the iron-needle moves by the nearness of the magnet, the presence of *Atma* makes the mind active according to its own nature. Therefore the Lord here says that from Him arise all the different qualities of mortals. Indeed *Atma* (the Lord) does not cause them nor prompt them. The Sun has nothing to do with the actions of mortals in the world, nor has the theatre-light anything to do with the actions performed on the stage.

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

६

*Maharshayah sapta purve chatvaro manavastatha :
madbhaya manasa jata yesham loka imah prajah* ॥ 6

Meaning : लोके *loke* : in the world, इमाः *prajāḥ*: *imah prajah*: these beings, येषाम् *yesham* : whose progeny, पूर्वे *purve* : ancient, महर्षयः *maharshayah* : the great sages, सप्त *sapta* : seven, तथा *tatha* : thus, चत्वारः *chatvarah* : the four (Sanaka and other Devarshis), मनवः *manavah* : Manus (fourteen), मद्भावाः *madbhavah*: possessed of powers like Me (devoted to Me and meditating on me), मानसा जाताः *manasajataḥ*: are born from My mind.

Substance : The seven great *Rishis*, the ancient four *Devarshis*, the fourteen Manus, were born of My nature from My mind; and from them have come forth all these beings in the world.

Commentary : The Lord declares that the Seven great *Rishis*, the four ancient *Devarshis*, the fourteen Manus, were all born of the divine *samkalpa*, partaking of His nature. These indeed are the original ancestors and the creators of this world. They are all devotees of the Lord, possessing perfect *Atmajnana*.

The inscrutable power of the Lord is proclaimed here, for, by a wish of His mind, came forth these beings of the highest order. And from them originated all the beings of the

world. The mysterious power of the Lord should inspire the deepest reverence in the heart of every man. Man's duty is to bow down before God and remember Him forever and ever.

The great sages, the *Devarshis* and the *Manus* are of the nature of the Lord. They are the highest devotees and perfected beings, (i. e.) they are *jnanis* of the highest order, who possess direct knowledge of Brahman. They know the highest Truth. All the beings of the world, are the progeny of these great souls. They partake of the nature of God, and all others partake of the nature of these Divine manifestations. Should not people then be full of devotion and wisdom? Is it not a denial of one's heritage and birthright to entangle himself in the bonds of the objective world and get lost in the wilderness of *Samsara*? People remember their sage-ancestors when they perform their morning and evening ablutions (*Sandhyavandanam*). It is a reminder to all that like their ancestors they should rise to the plane of the spirit. Ancestral property, wealth, power and possessions, do not save men from destruction if they forget the Divinity in them and sink in the mire of ignorance and delusion. It is the ancient wisdom alone that could save man from sorrow and death.

Let people be filled with this great idea that they have for their ancestors the great sages, *Devarshis* and *Manus*. Let them share the devotion and wisdom of their Divine fore-fathers. No one should think that he is low-born and weak. The blood of the Divine fore-fathers is flowing in everybody's veins, irrespective of his caste and faith. So let one demand his birthright of devotion and knowledge. It is not the personal possession of any one. All beings have right over that Divine knowledge. The outcastes as well as people of the highest rank and position, possess the same right for wisdom and perfection. The Lord has proclaimed the Divine birth-right of all men. So if one should be asked to declare his ancestry, let him say boldly that he is the child of the great *Rishis* and *Manus*. If anybody thinks he is low-born, he degenerates into a vile man. If he thinks that he is pure and perfect, he does become the real child of the ancient Masters. Therefore, may all

beings remember their holy fore-fathers every day, and by acquiring their great qualities, break the shackles of bondage and enjoy perfect peace and joy.

Among the above-mentioned, the *Devarshis* (Sanaka Sanandana, Sanatkumara, Sanatsujata) taught the path of the withdrawal from worldly life (*Nivrittimarga*). The fourteen *Manus* taught the path of *Dharma*, righteous conduct of life (*Pravrittima*^१rga). The first belong to the line of the *Gurus* and the second to the line of the ancestors. All these are brought forth from the Supreme Being, by a wish (*samkalpa*) of His mind. So ultimately all are the children of the Lord and He is the father of all. Since Sanaka and others are born-celibates, to say that people are born of them implies that they are their disciples (*Sishyas*), the children of their wisdom.

Question : *Who are the ancestors of the human race ?*

Answer : The seven Rishis, the Four Devarshis, and the fourteen Manus.

Question : *What is their nature ?*

Answer : They partake of the nature of the Lord.

Question : *How were they brought forth ?*

Answer : By a wish of the Lord.

The excellence of Vibhuti Yoga is stated.

7. एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥

७

*Etam vibhutim yogam cha mani yo vetti tattvatah ।
so'vikampena yogena yujyate na'tra sansayih ।*

7

Meaning : मम *mama* : My, एताम् *etam* : these, विभूति *vibhutim* : manifold manifestations, योगं च *yogam cha* : ar yogic power, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah* : in essence, यः *yah* : wh वेति *vetti* : knows, सः *sah* : he, अविकम्पेन *avikampena* : wi

unshakable, योगेन *yogena* : Yoga, युज्यते *yujyate* : united with Me, अत्र *atra* : in this, न संशयः *na samsayah* : there is no doubt.

Substance : Who knows in essence this sovereignty and *yoga* of mine, he, harmonised with unfaltering *yoga*, unites with me. In this there is no doubt.

Commentary : To know the wonderful manifestation of the Lord's creative power in essence, (i. e.) to understand that the whole universe has issued forth from Him, is the surest way to be firmly fixed in Him with unswerving devotion. The Lord is the only Reality. All the worlds and beings have come forth from Him. To realise this Truth is to know Him in essence. The faith of such a devotee is unshaken, and so he is fully absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord. His faith is immovable because he has traced the origin of everything to the Lord. So whatever he sees, he discovers it as the Lord. Both internally and externally he sees the Lord and nothing else. The Lord assures that he is united with Him undoubtedly.

Question : *Who attains unfaltering union with the Lord ?*

Answer : He who truly understands the sovereign power and *yoga* of the Lord attains Him beyond all doubt.

The devotee who understands the Lord's sovereignty worships Him with pure devotion.

8. अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।

इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥

*Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate ।
iti mattva bhajante mam budha bhavasamanvitah ॥ 8*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all, प्रभवः *prabhavah* : the origin, मत्तः *mattah* : from Me, सर्वम् *sarvam* : everything, प्रवर्तते *pravartate* : evolves, इति *iti* : thus, मत्वा *matva* : knowing, बुधाः *budhah* : the wise, भावसमन्विताः

bhavasamanvitah : endowed with deep devotion, माम् *mam* : Me, भजन्ते *bhajante* : worship.

Substance : I am the source of all; from Me everything evolves; thus understanding, the wise worship Me with pure devotion.

Commentary : There are many who repeat God's name, serve Him, and meditate on Him. But very few are capable of pure devotion born of true realisation that He is the source of all things. Pure devotion is therefore the result of real understanding of the creative power of the Lord and His wonderful manifestation. Without understanding how the Lord is present in the universe, it is difficult to cultivate true faith, and without faith pure devotion is not possible. When man knows that the Lord is the final cause of everything, and that there is nothing else but He in all things, he spontaneously offers worship to Him. Such an act of devotion and surrender will be deep-felt, sincere and true. The devotee's surrender is deep, firm, unalterable and unconditional, for the very reason that he knows the real presence of the Lord in everything and all that takes place in the universe.

This thought ('*bhava*') of the devotee is like the shell in the cannon. Mere powder without the shell can only produce smoke and fire, but the target cannot be shattered. Similarly, unless the devotee combines the thought ('*bhava*') with the *japa* or meditation or worship, he cannot reach the goal. This point should be carefully noted. Though many people practice *Japa* and *Dhyana*, some are not able to make any progress towards the goal, because they are lacking in '*bhava*'. To experience '*bhava*', pure devotion is essential; for pure devotion there should be true understanding of the Lord and His wonderful manifestation. All these ideas are revealed in this verse.

Question : Who is the source of all this Universe, and how does the latter work ?

Answer : *Paramatma* is the source, and by His power, it works.

Question : How should a man worship the Lord ?

Answer : With faith and devotion.

Question : How can one acquire these qualities ?

Answer : By understanding the true nature of the Lord, and His miraculous power and yoga, man acquires true faith and devotion.

The Lord describes that the devotees spend their life thinking of Him.

9. मच्चित्ता यद्रत्प्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९ ॥

*Macchitta madgata prana bodhayantah parasparam
kathayantascha mam nityam tushyanti cha ramanti cha ॥ 9 ॥*

Meaning : (ते te : the devotees), मच्चित्ताः mat chittah : with minds wholly absorbed in Me, यद्रत्प्राणाः madgata pranah : with their life absorbed in Me, माम् mam : Me, परस्परम् parasparam : mutually, बोधयन्तः bodhyantah : enlightening, कथयन्तश्च kathayantah cha : and speaking of (Me), नित्यम् nityam : always, तुष्यन्ति च tushyanti cha : are also satisfied, रमन्ति च ramanti cha : and are delighted.

Substance : With their minds wholly absorbed in Me, their life absorbed in Me, enlightening one another and always speaking of Me, they are satisfied and delighted.

Commentary : The life of the true devotee is beautifully described in this verse. The life and mental functions of the ignorant are wholly devoted to the world, and they live and die entangled in the meshes of *samsara*. But the real devotee consecrates his body, mind and life to the Lord. His mind thinks of the Lord; his limbs do the work of the Lord; his eyes see the Lord; his reason understands the presence of the Lord everywhere. His whole life is thus absorbed in the Lord. His whole life is a continued worship. When the devotees meet

together, they talk only of God, His power and *Yoga*. God's glory is infinite. Everywhere, in every thing, God's power is manifesting itself. So the devotee goes on thinking and speaking of God's Glory. Such holy company is the highest spiritual education that man can get. All doubts are cleared by mutual enlightenment. There is a powerful current, spiritual thought and emotion, circulating among them. The very air they breathe is full of knowledge and bliss.

Do we not see how worldly people talk of worldly matters endlessly? That is their *samskara*. If any one mentions the name of God in such a company he is ridiculed and condemned. The true aspirant should not mix in such company.

The devotee is like a ripe fruit full of sweet juice. Sweet juice comes out of it always. The devotee is again like a full-blown flower. Sweet fragrance envelopes the whole flower. So also, the whole life and thought of the devotee is blessed with divine contemplation and action.

A group of devotees thinking of God and His ways and exchanging intimate thoughts and experiences, is verily a Heaven on earth. They receive knowledge from one another, derive inspiration and encouragement, test and confirm their views, attitudes and angles of vision. Such mutual enlightenment increases one's faith in God, and draws him nearer the Truth.

The devotees feel satisfied and delighted. The contemplation of the Divine is an end in itself, and joy derived from it is pure and perfect. When a person begins to feel this joy which is unlike any other sensual pleasure, he finds no attraction for any thing else. He sings the name of the Lord in ecstatic joy, he laughs, he speaks out of the fullness of joy, and gets himself lost in divine intoxication. For him the whole world is transfigured and deified. He sees the Lord everywhere and he sees nothing other than the Lord anywhere.

The devotee's life is dedicated and consecrated to the Lord. His one and only aim is to know the Lord and be with Him. He is ready to sacrifice his life for realising his aim.

Such resolute spirit is necessary for God-realisation. Life is nothing if God is not realised. We find great idealists giving up every thing for attaining their ideal. So also the believers in God are ready to give up their life in their effort to reach Him. Lukewarm-faith does not lead to the goal quickly. The sacrifice should be complete and unconditional. Then the Lord is pleased, and immortality is attained. That is why it is said—“*tyagennike amritatvamanasuh.*”—by sacrifice alone, immortality is obtained. Great souls surrender their all to the Lord.

This verse gives a vivid picture of the daily life and work of the devotee dedicated to the realisation of the Supreme.

Question: *How does the true devotee live ?*

- Answer :** (1) His mind, senses and life are fixed in the Lord.
 (2) The devotees enlighten one another in mutual company.
 (3) They are thus satisfied and delighted.

Question : *In what does the devotee find pleasure and delight ?*

Answer : In talking of God, and being absorbed in Him.

Question : *What should the true devotees talk of ?*

Answer : They should talk of God alone and mutually enlighten one another.

Question : *In what should the mind be fixed ?*

Answer : In the contemplation of *Paramatma*.

In two verses, the Lord declares that He confers Atmajnana on such devotees.

10. तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
 ददामि बुद्धियोगं सं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

90

*Tesham satatayuktanam bhajatam priti purvakam ।
 dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayan: ॥ 10*

Meaning : सततयुक्तानाम् *satatayuktanam* : steadfast in their devotion to me, प्रितिपूर्वकम् *priti purvakam* : with love, भजताम् *bhajatam* : worshipping Me, तेषाम् *tesham* : to them, येन *yena* : by which, ते *te* : they, माम् *mam* : to me, उपयान्ति *upayanti* : come, reach, तम् *tam* : that, बुद्धियोगम् *buddhiyogam* : the yoga of knowledge, ददामि *dadami* : I give.

Substance : To these ever steadfast in worshipping Me with love, I give the *yoga* of discrimination by which they come to Me.

Commentary : This is one of the key verses in the Gita, in which the link between *bhakti* and *jnana*, devotion and knowledge, is clearly stated. *Bhakti*, *Jnana*—that is the natural order of evolution in Self-realisation. The Lord declares that to those who are ever devoted to Him in love, He gives '*buddhi yoga*'—the yoga of discrimination and wisdom by which they come unto Him.

Brahmajnana is the gift of the Lord. The realisation of the *Jiva* that Brahman alone is and that he is no other than Brahman, is *Brahmajnana*. This knowledge is in the hands of God, and it can be obtained by means of loving and faithful worship. When the Lord is pleased with His devotee, He bestows *Brahmajnana* which unites the devotee and the Lord forever and ever. So *Bhakti* is the first step in spiritual evolution for all seekers. When we come across rare men who are born with *Brahmajnana*, it should be understood that they have spent many many lives in pure and loving devotion to the Lord.

Here two great qualities of the devotee are mentioned
 (1) steadfastness in devotion (2) worshipping with love.

(1) Continuous memory of the Lord is essential. How can the devotee have continuous memory of the Lord? This Discourse shows the way. The manifold manifestations of the Lord are vividly presented to fill the imagination of the devotee. Wherever he turns, the Lord is there in one form or

other. If one recalls to his mind the verses 7 to 11 in the Seventh Discourse, and verses 16 to 19 in the Ninth Discourse, and the whole of the *Vibhuti yoga*, he understands the universal manifestation of the Lord everywhere. So the devotee should recognise the Lord's presence everywhere and thus the devotion becomes continuous in course of time.

(2) Loving worship of the Lord is another attribute of the true devotee. Is not the Lord the friend of all beings? Though he is the sovereign of all the worlds He is at the same time a friend of all. He declares Himself to be a friend again and again. Does He not say to Arjuna 'you are dear to Me'? What then should be man's love and affection for the Lord? Such love is needed, and since God's love is infinite, no one should feel that His grace has not descended on him. Knowing full well from experience and observation that the foolish little things to which one is desperately clinging are vanishing into nothing, let the seeker have love for the Lord who is the only saviour from all the sorrows and miseries of life.

Buddhiyogam : What is Buddhiyoga? It is reason (*vichara*), the path of uncompromising discrimination between the Real and the unreal, between *Atma* and *Anatma*. Such analytical reasoning ultimately leads the seeker to the tremendous conclusion that his limited self manifesting as 'I' is nothing else but the Supreme Brahman. The 'I' dissolves in Brahman, even as a waterdrop merges in the ocean. Such discriminative reason is the gift of God. Reason (*vichara*) leads man step by step to the ultimate Reality. He who is firmly established in this *Yoga* holds on only to the essence of things (*asti, bhati, priva*) and does not recognise name and form (*nama, rupa*).

Several doubts crop up in the mind of the devotee in the course of his daily worship. "When shall I get true knowledge of *Atma* which is said to be within the five sheaths (*panchakosa*)? I am only worshipping the external image, a picture or idol. Is this God? God is said to be Sachidananda. Of what use is it to offer fruits and flowers at the altar of a mute earthen or metal image? When shall my worship bear fruit in the reali-

sation of God ? When shall the mind turn within and see the Lord in essence in my heart ?" Such questions arise in the mind of all worshippers. The answer is given in this verse. The Lord says, "O mortal being ! continue your worship of Me in the image or idol which pleases you most. Think of My form, beautiful and perfect, love Me as the repository of all noble qualities, as the Lord of the world. Let your mind be saturated with My thoughts and feelings. Give up all foolish thoughts of 'I' and 'mine' which bind you to the body and the world. Be devoted to Me. Then I will bestow on you the light of knowledge which will lead you directly to *Brahmajnana*. Your spiritual quest ends there." So says the Lord to all sincere and eager devotees.

Thus *Bhakti* evolves into *Jnana*. If *Bhakti* is the flower, *jana* is the fruit.

God with form (*Sakara*) is also God without form (*Nirakara*). God with attributes (*Saguna*) is also God without attributes (*Nirguna*). The transition from the *Sakara* to the *Nirakara* takes place spontaneously by the will of the Lord. The Lord silences all foolish talk about the superiority of *Bhakti* or *Jnana*. "My *Bhakti* is superior to your *jnana*—or my *Jnana* is superior to your *Bhakti*."—Such half-digested nonsense should be given up once for all. The *Bhakta* turns automatically into a *Jnani* and the *Jnani* takes to *Bhakti* when the mind is externalised. Who can be a greater *Jnani* than Adi Sankaracharya, and at the same time who can be a greater devotee ? Do not his devotional songs, hundreds and thousands, breathe the very fragrance of *Bhakti* of the highest type ? Taking any devotional song of his, one feels the thrill of *Bhakti*, of self-surrender, of ecstatic devotion, of perfect self-sacrifice. And on the other hand, his Vedantic proclamations—"I am Siva and not Jiva" show perfect oneness ! There is no difference of God and devotee; it is all one undifferentiated ocean of *Sachitananda*. There 'dasoham' dissolves in 'soham.'

The point to note is that Self-realisation is the free gift of God, when he is pleased with the love of the devotee. He knows the opportune moment when this *Atma jnana* can flash in

the mind of the devotee. Till the field is ready, no intelligent farmer sows the seeds. The Lord who is Omniscient can see the ripeness of His devotee's heart, and that very moment Self-realisation dawns on the human heart. The Lord says, 'dadami' (I will give) making it perfectly clear that the devotee has to keep his heart pure and ready to receive the *yoga* of Knowledge. The price of knowledge is devotion to the Lord. All the aspirants have to pass through these stages of development till perfection is attained. And perfection is the reward of God to His humble devotees.

Question : *How can man attain Moksha ?*

Answer : By Buddhi yoga (i. e.) enquiry into the nature of the real and the unreal.

Question : *How can man acquire the power of discrimination?*

Answer : By loving devotion to the Lord, man receives Buddhi-yoga as a divine gift.

Question : *What are the qualifications of the devotee to receive the gift of knowledge ?*

Answer : Continuous and loving worship of the Lord.

11. तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११

*Tesham eva'nukamparthaḥ aham ajnanajam tamah !
nasayamyatmabhavastho jnanadipena bhasvata ॥ 11*

Meaning : तेषाम् *tesham* : for them, अनुकूलपार्थम् *anukam-partham* : out of compassion, अहमेव *aham eva* : I alone, आत्मभावस्थः *atmabhavasthah* : dwelling in their heart, भास्वता *bhasvata* : luminous, ज्ञानदीपेन *jnanadipa* : with the lamp of Knowledge, अज्ञानजम् *ajnanajam* : born of ignorance, तमः *tamah* : darkness, नाशयामि *nasayami* : I destroy.

Substance : Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their heart, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the effulgent light of Knowledge.

Commentary : The Lord's compassion for His devotees is revealed here. The Lord is pleased with their undivided devotion, and wishes to confer an eternal gift on them. The Lord knows that wealth, power, position and children, are not eternal reward. They pass away in time. So He wishes to bestow on them the everlasting gift of *Brahmajnana*. We understand from this that no one can reach that state without God's grace, and that God's grace is to be attained by pure and perfect devotion to the Lord.

Knowledge derived through *Buddhiyoga* is compared to a lamp that dispels darkness as soon as it is lighted. The light of knowledge thus shatters all darkness of ignorance. Nothing else but light can dispel darkness. One may struggle with darkness eternally with all his weapons, and yet it will not go, till by striking a match he brings in light. Such also is ignorance. One may do everything - *Japa*, *Tapa*, *Pranayama*, or *Karma* - and yet ignorance cannot be removed except by the flash of intutional knowledge of Self. All other practices are intended to purify the mind and render it capable of perceiving the Truth (Brahman). They are means of Self-purification.

Who causes this flash of knowledge ? Who confers this *Buddhiyoga* ? The Lord. Where is He seated ? He is seated in the human heart. It is He who kindles the light of knowledge. Without His grace, this cannot happen. And this lamp of knowledge (*Jnanadipa*) is luminous (*bhasvata*). It is self-luminous, it is luminosity itself. Its effect is immediate. The darkness of ignorance which is enveloping man for ages and ages is shattered at one stroke, once for all. No more does he wander in the wilderness of *samsara*. No more does he think of quenching his thirst in the waters of a mirage. He now knows the sharp distinction between the real and the unreal. He is now a *Jivanmuktah*. The bound soul who was thinking of himself as a body, subject to birth and death and all the thousand shocks of earthly existence, now realises in a flash that He is the immaculate and perfect *Atma*. He will realise that all those former thoughts of himself as a mortal, man and woman, weak and strong, happy and unhappy, lucky or unlucky, were mere

superstitious hallucinations, and delusions. He will realise that at no time was he bound, that he is free at all times, but imagined himself to be bound and enslaved by ignorance (*Avidya*). He regains his freedom which is his birth-right, which he thought he had lost but which he never really lost. This knowledge comes to the devotee by the grace of the Lord.

"I destroy the darkness born of ignorance is the exhortation of the Lord." The Lord has declared that *Maya* is difficult to cross, but those who take refuge in Him cross over His *Maya* which is Divine and composed of qualities. As this is the Lord's promise, the aspirants have the duty to put faith in Him and worship Him with all their heart and soul. Then they will receive *Brahmajnana*, as the highest reward of their devotion. It comes at the proper time when the aspirant is ripe enough to receive it. So, no one need be disheartened that he has not yet received the light. Let him carry out the command of the Lord and wait with absolute trust and faith in the Divine will.

Question : *When does man attain Moksha ?*

Answer : When the darkness born of ignorance is removed.

Question : *How is it removed ?*

Answer : By the light of knowledge.

Question : *How is the light obtained ?*

Answer : It is the gift of God.

Question : *To whom ?*

Answer : To the one who receives God's compassion.

Question : *On whom does His compassion descend ?*

Answer : On him who worships Him with love and faith.

Question : *How does the Lord know the heart of the devotee ?*

Answer : Because the Lord is present in the hearts of all.

Question : *Where from delusion arise ?*

Answer : From ignorance (*avidya*).

Question : What is knowledge ?

Answer : It is luminous, destroys ignorance and lights the path to liberation.

Arjuna adores the Lord and prays to Him to reveal His manifold Glory.

अर्जुन उवाच

12. परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभूम् ॥ १२

13. आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिनरदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३

Arjuna uvacha

*Param brahma param dhama
pavitram paramam bhavan ।
purusham sasvatam divyam
adidevam ajam vibhum ॥ 12*

*Ahustvam rishaya sarve devarshir naradas tatha
asito devalo vyasah svayam chai'va bravishime ॥ 13*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna Uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : भवान् *bhavan* : Thou, परंब्रह्म *parambrahma* : Supreme Brahman, परंधाम *paramdhama* : Supreme Abode, परमं पवित्रम् *paramam pavitram* : Supreme purifier, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, शाश्वतम् *sasvatam* : Eternal, दिव्यम् *divyam* : Divine, पुरुषम् *Purusham* : purusha, आदिदेवम् *adidevam* : primeval God, अजम् *ajam* : unborn, विभूम् *vibhum* : Omnipresent, सर्व ऋषयः *sarve rishayah* : all sages, देवर्षिः नारदः *devarshih naradah* : the Devarshi Narada, असितः *asitah* : Asita, देवलः *devalah* : Devala, व्यासः *vyasah* : Vyasa, आहुः *ahuh* : (they) declared, स्वयंच *svayam cha* : and Thou, तथा एव *tatha eva* : also even, मे *me* : to me, ब्रवीषि *bravishi* : say (the same).

Substance : Arjuna Said : Though art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme abode, the Supreme purifier, Eternal Divine Purusha, Primeval God, unborn and Omnipresent.

Thus have all the Rishis acclaimed Thee, so also Devarshi Narada, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa; and now, Thou Thyself sayest (the same) to me.

Commentary : When the Lord spoke of His compassion for the devotees, and how he confers knowledge on them who worship Him with love and faith, Arjuna was lifted up by a mighty upsurge of devotional fervour. His adoration for the Lord reaches the peak point. His love and worship attain the highest state. His joy knows no bounds. From that fulness of heart proceeds Arjuna's ecstatic adoration as revealed in these two verses. Such devotion to the *Guru* is needed to receive enlightenment. The blossoming of the heart through devotion makes the disciple fit to understand the Truth propounded by the Master.

Question : *What is the nature of Krishna Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is Supreme Brahman, Supreme Abode, purifier, primeval God, Eternal and Divine Purusha, unborn and Omnipresent.

Question : *Who spoke of the Lord thus ?*

Answer : The Seven Rishis, Devarshi Narada, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa, and the Lord Himself has declared the same truth to Arjuna.

14. सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।

न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥

१४

Sarvam etad ritam manye yan mam vadasi kesava !

na hi te bhagavan vyaktim vidur deva na danayah ॥ 14

Meaning : केशव *kesava* : O Krishna ! यत् *yat* : what, माम् *mam* : to Me, वदसि *vadasi* : Though sayest, एतत् सर्वम् *etat sarvam* : that all, ऋतम् *ritam* : (is) the truth, मन्ये *manye*:

I think, भगवन् *bhagavan* : O Lord, ते *te* : thy, व्यक्तिम् *vyaktim* : true personality, देवाः *devah* : the Gods, न विदुः *na viduh* : do not know, दानवाश्च *danavah cha* : and the Asuras, न हि विदुः *na hi viduh* : do not know indeed.

Substance : O Lord Krishna ! All that Thou sayest to me I think to be the truth. Thy true personality, neither the *Devas* nor the *Danavas* (Asuras) know indeed.

Commentary : Arjuna's faith in the Lord's declaration is revealed here. Such faith is expected of the disciple towards his master. This very faith, simple and childlike, and utter confidence in the *Guru's* words, draws the compassion of the Master towards his humble disciple.

15. स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।

भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥

२५

*Svayam eva' tmanam tmanam vettha tvam purushottama !
bhutabhyana bhutesa devadeva jagatpate* ॥ 15

Meaning : पुरुषोत्तम *purushottama* : O Supreme Purusha ! भूतभावन *bhutabhyana* : Source of all beings ! भूतेश *bhutesa* : Lord, controller of all beings ! देवदेव *devadeva* : God of Gods ! जगत्पते *jagatpate* : Ruler of the universe, त्वम् *tvam* : thou, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Thy true from, आत्मना *atmana* : by thyself, स्वयं एव *svayam eva* : thyself verily, वेत्थ *vettha* : know

Substance : O Purushothama ! Source of all beings ! God of Gods ! Ruler of the world ! Thyselv indeed know Thyself by Thyself ! (For others it is inscrutable and mysterious).

16. वक्तुमहस्यशेषेण दिव्या श्रात्मविभूतयः ।

याभिर्विभूतिभिलोकानिमास्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥

१६

Vaktaum arhasyaseshena divyahyatma vibhutayah !

yabhir vibhutibhir lokan imamstvam vyapya tisthasi ॥ 16

Meaning : हि *hi* : so, यामि: विभूतिभिः *yabhih vibhutibhiḥ*: by what sovereign Glory (extension of Thy Glory), त्वम् *tvam*: Thou, इमान् लोकान् *iman lokan* : these worlds, व्याप्य *vyapya* : pervading, तिष्ठसि *tishthasi* : exist, दिव्याः *divyāḥ*: (those) divine, आत्मविभूतयः *atmavibhutayah* : Thy Glories, अशेषेण *aseshena* : fully, वक्तुम् *vaktum* : to speak, अर्हसि *arhasi* : (Thou alone) art competent.

Substance : Therefore, deign to tell me without reserve of your divine Glories (the extension of Thy divine power) by which Glories you exist, pervading all these worlds.

Commentary : The Lord alone could be the interpreter, the commentator of His own Divine Sovereignty. Arjuna, as the faithful devotee, prays to the Lord to reveal His Glories as no one else knows Him.

17. कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वा सदा परिचिन्तयम्।

केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥

१७

*Katham vidyam aham yogimstvam sada parichintayan!
keshu-keshu cha bhaveshu chintyo'si bhagavan maya" 17*

Meaning : योगिन् *yogin* : O Lord of Yoga, अहम् *aham* : I, सदा *sada* : always, कथम् *katham* : how, परिचिन्तयन् *pari-chintayan* : thinking, meditating, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, विद्यम् *vidyam* : (I) can know, भगवन् *bhagavan* : O Blessed Lord, केषु केषु भावेषु च *keshu keshu bhaveshu cha* : and in what and what aspects, चिन्त्यः असि मया *chintayah asi maya* : Thou art to be thought of by Me.

Substance : O Lord of *Yoga* ! How shall I ever meditating know Thee ? In what and what aspects (or objects) art Thou to be thought of by me ? O Blessed Lord !

Commentary : Arjuna's prayer is indeed the prayer of all spiritual seekers. Rarely does a man realise the subtle

formless Brahman. All seekers are functioning through the senses and the mind, and the objective world is present before their eyes. The Lord having permeated the whole universe, in what and what aspects and forms He should be cognised and worshipped is the question. The Lord points out some of the outstanding manifestations of His Divine Glory. The Seeker may take up any form and offer worship in the firm belief that it is the Supreme Lord Himself.

18. विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दनं ।

भूयः कथय त्रिप्तिं शृणवतो नास्ति मे अमृतम् ॥

१८

Vistarena'tmano yogam vibhutim cha janardana !

bhuyah kathaya tripitri hi srinvato na'sti me 'mritam ॥ 18

Meaning : जनार्दनं *janardana* : O Krishna ! आत्मनः *atmanah* : Thy, योगम् *yogam* : yogic power, विभूतिं च *vibhutim cha* : and Glory (playful manifestations in the universe), विस्तरेण *vistarena* : comprehensively, भूयः *bhuyah* : again, कथय *kathaya* : tell, हि *hi* : because, अमृतम् *amritam* : Nectar (the Lord's teaching), शृणवतः *srinvatah* : listening, मे *me* : to me, त्रिप्तिः *triptih* : satisfaction, नास्ति *nasti* : is not.

Substance : O Krishna ! Tell me again in detail of your *Yogic* power and sovereign Glory; for, listening to your nectar-like (life-giving) speech, I do not find satisfaction, (I am eager to hear more and more from you).

Commentary : The Lord's teaching is Nectar (*amritam*) to Arjuna. Who can find satiety listening to such life-giving teaching, when the Lord is Himself the Speaker ? Who can say 'enough' ? The teaching is immortal like the Lord Himself. The disciple should have such relish for the *Guru's* words. All other things, the best of them, produce the negative effect after some time. But the Lord's song of Immortality and Eternal Bliss can have no end, no diminution of interest and taste. It grows and grows till the whole being of man is filled with blissful adoration.

The Lord reveals His Glories, the highest of them, as there is no end to His Glory.

श्री भगवानुवाच

19. हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या आत्मविभूतयः ।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥

९१

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Hanta te kathayishyami divya hyatmavibhutayah ।
pradhanyatah kurusreshta na'styanto vistarasya me ॥ 19*

श्री भगवानुवाच Sri Bhagavan Uvacha : The Blessed Lord Said.

Meaning : कुरुश्रेष्ठ *kurusreshta* : O Best of Kurus, हन्त *hanta* : I (now), दिव्याः *divyah* : divine, आत्मविभूतयः *atma-vibhutayah* : My Glories, प्राधान्यतः *pradhanyatah* : in their prominence, ते *te* : to you, कथयिष्यामि *kathayishyami* : I will tell, हि *hi* : for, मे *me* : to Me, विस्तरस्य *vistarasya* : extension of Glory, अन्तः *antah* : end, नास्ति *na asti* : is not.

Substance : The blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! Now, I will declare to you My divine Glories in their prominence, for there is no end to the extension of My divine Glory.

Commentary : Indeed, where can there be an end to the glorious manifestation of the Lord ? He is infinite, and so His Glory is infinite. That is why the Lord declares only the most excellent in which the seeker could easily discover the Lord's presence. In fact there is not a particle of matter or energy or intelligence or virtue which is not a manifestation of the Lord. This universality of outlook and inner understanding is the highest form of devotion.

From this verse onwards till the 39th verse the Lord declares His manifold Glory.

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

२०

*Aham atma gudakesa sarya bhutasayasthitah
aham adis cha madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha ॥ 20*

Meaning : गुडकेश Gudakesa : O Arjuna ! सर्वभूताशस्थितः
sarvabhutasayasthitah : seated in the hearts of all beings,
आत्मा *atma* : Atma (Pratyagatma), अहमेव (अस्मि) *aham eva*
(*asmi*) : I alone (am), भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of Beings,
आदि: च *adih cha* : also origin or source, मध्यं च *madhyam cha*:
and middle, अन्तश्च *antah cha* : and end, अहम् *aham* : I.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings; the origin, middle and also the end of beings, I alone (am).

Commentary : In the very first declaration the Lord states that He is *Atma* dwelling in the hearts of all beings.

The *Pratyagatma* seated in the heart of every being is the Lord Himself. As *Atma*, he is the eternal witness (*Sakshi*) of the functions of the body, mind, and *buddhi* (reason). *Atma*, the witness is no other than *Jivatma* (*Pratyagatma*) who is no other than *Paramatma*. The *Mahavakya* that embodies the highest Truth is here stated. The *Jiva*, by ignorance, has identified himself with the extraneous body and mind, and thus he has forgotten his divine nature. When knowledge dawns, this very *Jiva* comes to realise in a flash that he is *Paramatma* Himself, and there the quest for Truth comes to an end, for he has now discovered that he is the all-pervading, all-blissful, omniscient Self of all. All ideas of littleness and separateness are mere superstitions and hallucinations. They should be rejected once for all, and the Divinity of the Self should be clearly understood, firmly held and definitely realised.

The Lord is present in every being. So, love and friendly feelings towards all, non-injury and service, should be cultivated by the seeker in the true spirit that he is serving the Lord Himself.

As the world is super-imposed on the Lord who is the basis and foundation, and as what is super-imposed (like the

snake in the rope) cannot be different from the original, the Lord is Himself the universe. Therefore He is its origin, its middle and its end.

Let all the aspirants think of the grand and lofty truth that they are veritably the *Pratyagatma*, and certainly not the little ego caught in the cage of flesh. So thinking and meditating, the Truth is permanently realised in proper season. Then is man released from all dreams of pain, sorrow and delusion. Thus awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached.

Gudakesa : *Gudaka+esa*—One who has conquered sleep (i. e.) who has risen above the Tamasic plane. Food and sleep, are stealing the treasure of life. So it is man's first duty to see that they do not ransack his spiritual treasure.

Question : Who is that *Pratyagatma* dwelling in the hearts of all beings ?

Answer : He is Paramatma Himself.

Question : What further is His nature ?

Answer : He is the origin, the middle, and the end of all beings.

21. आदित्यानामहं विष्णुज्योतिषां रविरङ्गुमान् ।
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥

२१

*Adityanam aham vishnur jyotisham ravir amsuman
marichir marutam asmi nakshatranam aham sasi ॥ 21*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, आदित्यानाम् *adityanam* : among Adityas, विष्णुः *vishnuh* : Vishnu, ज्योतिषाम् *jyotisham* : among luminous objects, अंगुमान् *amsuman* : radiant, रविः *ravih* : Ravi, मरुताम् *marutam* : among the Marut Devas, मरीचिः *marichih* : Marichi, अहम् *aham* : I, नक्षत्राणाम् *nakshatranam* :

among the asterisms (stars), शशी *sasi* : the Moon, अस्मि
asmi : am.

Substance : Among Adityas I am Vishnu, among lumina-
ries I am the Sun; among the Marut Devas, I am Marichi;
among the asterisms (Stars) I am the Moon.

Commentary : The Adityas, sons of Aditi, are twelve—
(1) Dhata, (2) Mitra, (3) Aryama, (4) Sakra, (5) Varuna,
(6) Amsu, (7) Bhaga, (8) Vivasvan, (9) Pusha, (10) Savita,
(11) Tvashta, (12) Vishnu. These names are mentioned in the
Adi Parva of Mahabharata.

The Lord declares that He is Vishnu among the Adityas, implying that His glory is most manifest in Vishnu. The other beings mentioned should be understood in a similar manner. The Lord has stated that He would mention the most powerful of the manifestations. In the small heap of stones as well as in the Himalayas, He is equally present. Both are His manifestations. And yet, in the Himalayas we see a vaster and mightier manifestation which will satisfy the seeker's imagination and give him an immediate perception of His Glory.

The Marut Devas are seven : (1) Ahava, (2) Pravaha,
(3) Nivaha, (4) Paravaha, (5) Udvaha, (6) Samvaha,
(7) Parivaha (Marichi).

22. वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मिम् वासवः ।

इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मिम् चेतना ॥

२२

Vedanam samavedo'smi devanam asmi vasavah ।

indriyanam manas cha'smi bhutanam asmi chetana ॥ 22

Meaning : वेदानाम् *vedanam* : among the Vedas, सामवेदः
samavedah : the Sama Veda, अस्मि *asmi* : I am, देवानाम्
devanam : among the Devas, वासवः *vasavah* : Indra, अस्मि
asmi : I am, इन्द्रियाणाम् *indriyanam* : among the senses,
मनश्च *manas cha* : also mind, अस्मि *asmi* : I am, भूतानाम्

bhutanam : of the beings, चेतना chetana : life intelligence, अस्मि asmi : I am.

Substance : Among the Vedas, I am Sama Veda; among the Gods, I am Indra; among the senses I am the mind; and I am intelligence among living beings.

23. रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।

वसुनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥

२३

*Rudranam samkaras cha'smi vitteso yaksharakshasam
vasunam Pavakah cha'smi meruh sikharinam aham* ॥ 23

Meaning : रुद्राणाम् च rudranam cha : among the Rudras and, शङ्करः sankarah : Sankara, अस्मि asmi : I am, यक्षरक्षसाम् yaksharakshasam : among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, वित्तेशः vittesah : Kubera, the Lord of wealth, वसुनाम् vasunam : among Vasus, पावकः च pavakah cha : and Agni, शिखरिणाम् sikharinam : among mountains, मेरुः meruh : Meru, अहम् aham : I, अस्मि asmi : am.

Substance : Among the Rudras, I am Sankara; among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, I am Kubera, the Lord of Wealth; among Vasus, I am Agni, and of mountains I am Meru.

Commentary : The Rudras are eleven : (1) Hara, (2) Bahurupa, (3) Tryambaka, (4) Aparajita, (5) Vrishakapi, (6) Sambhu, (7) Kapardi, (8) Raivata, (9) Mrigavyadha, (10) Sarva, (11) Kapali.

The eleven Rudras are mentioned in Harivamsa.

The Vasus are eight : (1) Dhara, (2) Dhruva, (3) Soma, (4) Ahu, (5) Anila, (6) Anala, (7) Pratyusha, (8) Prabhasa. The eight Vasus are mentioned in the Adiparva of Mahabharata.

24. पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।

सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥

२४

*Purodhasam cha mukhyam mam viddhi partha brihaspatim
senaninam aham skandah sarasam asmi sagarah* ॥ 24

Meaning : पार्थ partha : O Arjuna, पुरोधसाम् purodhasam : among household priests, मुख्यम् mukhyam : the chief, ब्रह्मस्पतिम् च brihaspitim cha : (and) Brihaspati, माम् mam : Me, विद्धि viddhi : know, अहम् aham : I am, सेनानीनाम् senaninam : among generals, स्कन्दः Skandah : Skanda, सरसाम् sarasinam : among lakes, सागरः sagarah : the ocean, अस्मि asmi : I (am).

Substance : O Arjuna ! Among the household priests, know Me as the chief Brihaspati; among generals, I am Skanda; among lakes I am the Ocean.

Commentary : Chief-Prominence and excellence are the chief marks of the Divine.

25. महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ २५

*Maharshinam bhrigur aham giram asmy ekam aksharam ।
yajnanam japayajno'smi sthavaranam himalayah ॥ 25*

Meaning : अहम् aham : I am, महर्षीणाम् maharshinam : among the great sages, भृगुः bhrigu : Bhrigu, गिराम् giram : among words, एकम् अक्षरम् ekam aksharam : the one syllable (OM), अस्मि asmi : I am, यज्ञानाम् yajnanam : among yajnas, जपयज्ञः japayajnah : the yajna of silent repetition, स्थावराणाम् sthavaranam : among immovable objects, हिमालयः himalayah : (I am) the Himalayas, अस्मि asmi : I am.

Substause : Among the great *Rishis*, I am Bhrigu; among words, I am the One syllable OM (*Pranava*); among sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of silent repetition (*Japa*); among immovable objects, I am the Himalayas.

Commentary : *Ekamaksharam*-Though there are thousands of words, yet the single syllable OM (*Pranava*) is the Lord Himself. He is *Pranava*. The sanctity and the divinity of this syllable OM is declared many times in the Scriptures. It

is the greatest purifier. It is the sound symbol of Brahman. Its repetition removes all sins. Contemplation of its meaning and significance leads to *Moksha*. Of what avail is it to waste the precious breath of life in endless talking of a thousand useless and undesirable matters ? May all thh seekers take to *Pranava* with faith, and thereby derive the highest spiritual reward.

Japayajnosmi : The Lord declares that He is the sacrifice of silent repetition (*japa*) among the sacrifices. The sacred power of *Japayajna* is thus proved by the Lord Himself. It is the most powerful act of sacrifice. All the impurities, vicious tendencies, violent passions, are removed by *Japayajna*. Other sacrifices mentioned in the *Vedas* are difficult to perform for the common man, because they require wealth, labour and the help of many people. But nothing is needed for this *Japa yajna*. Every one can do it. There are several *Mantras* mentioned in the scriptures for *Japa*. The seeker can choose any one of them and perform this sacrifice to his heart's content with ease and facility. The Lord is pleased with this *yajna*. Nay, it is the Lord Himself. Let all the aspirants carry on this *Yajna* for self-purification and attain Self-realisation.

26. अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।

गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥

२६

*Asvatthah sarvavrikshanam devarshinam cha naradah :
gandharvanam chirrarathah siddhanam kapilo munih :* 26

Meaning : सर्ववृक्षाणाम् *sarvavrikshanam* : among all trees, अश्वत्थः *asvatthah* : Asvattha, (I am), देवर्षीणाम् *devarshinam* : among divine Rishis, नारदः *cha naradaha cha*: and Narda (I am), गन्धर्वाणाम् *gandharvanam* : among Gandharvas, चित्ररथः *chirrarathah* : Chitraratha (I am), सिद्धानाम् *siddhanam* : among Siddhas or perfected beings, कपिलः *kapilo* मुनिः *munih* : Kapila the sage, (I am).

Substance : Among all trees, I am *Asvattha*; and among the divine *Rishis*, I am *Narada*; among *Gandharvas*, I am *Chi-traratha*; among *Siddhas*, I am the sage *Kapila*.

Commentary: The sanctity and miraculous power of this *Asvattha* tree is mentioned in the Puranas.

The *Asvattha* is the very embodiment of Vishnu from the roots to the leaves. Its fruits are Hari; under its shade great souls reside. Those who seek shelter under it are blessed with fulfilment of all their desires. They derive spiritual benefit and divine virtues. Therefore people worship this tree in various ways. It is also used for medicinal purposes.

27. उच्चैःश्रवसमथानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।

ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥

२७

Uccaisravasam asvanam viddhi mam amritodbhavam ।

airavatam gajendranam naranam cha naradhipam ॥ 27

Meaning : अश्वानाम् *asvanam* : among horses, अमृतोद्भवम्
amritadbhavam : born of nectar, उच्चैःश्रवसम् *uccaisravasam* :
Uccaisravas, गजेन्द्राणाम् *gajendranam* : among lordly elephants,
 ऐरावतम् च *airavatam cha* : Airavata and, नराणाम् *naranam* :
 among men, नराधिपम् *naradhipam* : the King, माम् *mam* : Me,
 विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : Among horses know Me as *Uccaisravas*, born of nectar; among lordly elephants, as Airavata; and among men, as the King.

Commentary : *Uccaisrava* and Airavata were born when the ocean of milk was churned by the Devas and the Danavas in ancient times.

28. आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।

प्रजनश्वास्मि कन्दर्पः सपाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥

२८

Ayudhanam aham vajram dhenunam asmi kāmadhuk ।

prajanashvāsmi kandarpah sapāṇām asmi vasukih ॥ 28

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, आयुधानाम् *ayudhanam* :
 among weapons, वज्रम् *vajram* : the thunderbolt, धेनूनाम्
dhenunam : among cows, कामधुक् *kamadhuk* : Kamadhenu,

अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, प्रजनः *prajanah* : the progenitor, कन्दर्पः च
kandarpah cha : and Manmadha, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, सर्पणाम्
sarpanam : among serpents, वासुकिः *vasukih* : Vasuki, अस्मि
asmi : (I) am.

Substance : Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows, I am Kamadhenu; I am Manmadha among the progenitors, and among serpents, I am Vasuki.

29. अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।

पितृणामयं मा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ २९

*Anantas cha'smi naganam varuno yadasam aham
 pitrinam aryama cha'smi yamah samyamatam aham* ॥ 29

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, नागानाम् *naganam* : among Nagas, अनन्तः च *anantah cha* : and Ananta, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am. यादसाम् *yadasam* : among water-deities, वरुणः *varunah* : Varuna, पितृणां *pitrinam* : among pitris, or ancestors, अर्यमा च *aryama cha* : and Aryama, अहम् *aham* : I, संयमताम् *samyamatam* : among controllers, यमः *yamah* : the Lord of death, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am.

Substance : I am Ananta among Nagas, I am Varuna among water-deities, I am Aryama among the Pitris, among controllers I am Yama, the Lord of Death.

Commentary : The Nagas are different from the serpents. The Nagas have many heads, but they are devoid of poison. The serpents have only one head but they are poisonous.

30. प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।

मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ ३०

*Prahladas cha'smi daityanam kalah kalayatam aham
 mriganam cha mrigendro'ham vainateyas cha pakshinam* ॥ 30

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, दैत्यानाम् *daityanam* : among Daityas, प्रह्लादः च *prahladah cha* : Prahalada and, कलयतां
 कलयताम्

kalayatam : among reckoners, कालः *kalah* : Time, मृगाणां च
mriganam cha : and among beasts, मृगेन्द्रः *mrigendrah* : the
 Lord of the beasts, the lion, पक्षिणाम् *pakshinam* : among birds,
 वैनतेयः च *vainateyah cha* : and Garuda, the son of Vinata,
 अहम् *aham* : I (am).

Substance : Among Daityas I am Prahlada; among reckoners I am time; among beasts I am the lion, the Lord of beasts; and among birds I am Garuda, the son of Vinata.

Commentary : Prahlada is a Daitya, born in the race of Asuras, as the son of Hiranyakasipu, the king of Daityas, who denied the very existence of God and conquered the whole world by his power. And yet all the power of Hiranyakasipu was of no avail when he had to deal with his own little child Prahlada, who was born with Brahmajnana by the grace of Narada. The Daitya King tried all weapons at his command to kill Prahlada, but nothing could destroy the child who was one with the Lord Himself. So the Lord here declares that He is Prahlada among the Daityas. In the supreme state of *Bhakti*, the devotee and the Lord are one. Though the child was born in the demonical race, yet he could attain Divinity and perfection. So, race and birth are of no importance in spiritual enlightenment. Every one can seek for it and find it by the very purity of his heart and the intensity of his devotion.

The Lord is Time, the reckoner. Time embodies all actions, and brings forth their effects inevitably. Time is precious, and the seekers have to use it most carefully for their self-purification and spiritual advancement.

We find that beasts and birds are mentioned among the highest manifestations of the Lord. Gajendra is an elephant, Garuda is a bird—and yet they could attain Divinity by their devotion. Will it then be anything impossible for rational man to attain the highest state? Turning away from material things of momentary nature, let all men realise the divinity of their real Self.

३१. पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
ज्ञापाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥

३१

*Pavanah pavatam asmi ramah sastrabhritam aham ।
jhashanam makaras cha'smi srotasam asmi jahnavi ॥ 31*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I (am), पवताम् *pavatam* : among purifiers or among objects of quick motion, पवनः *pavanah* : the wind, अस्मि *asmi* (I) am, शस्त्रभृताम् *sastrabhritam* : among wielders of weapons, warriors, रामः *Ramah* : Rama, ज्ञापाणाम् *jhashanam* : among fishes, मकरः च *makarah cha* : Makara (shark) and, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, स्रोतसाम् *srotasam* : among rivers, जाह्नवी *jahnavi* : the Ganges, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am.

Substance : Among purifiers I am the wind; among warriors, I am Rama; among fishes, I am Makara; among rivers I am the Ganges.

Commentary : The Lord here declares that He is Ram a. There is no difference between Krishna and Rama.

The purity and the sacredness of the Ganges is mentioned in innumerable places in the Scriptures and the Puranas.

३२. सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥

३२

*Sarganam adir antas cha madhyam chai va'ham arjuna ।
adhyatma vidya vidyanam vadah pravadatam aham ॥ 32*

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna* ! सर्गाणाम् *sarganam*: among creations, आदि: *adih* : the beginning, अन्तश्च *antah cha*: and end, मध्यं च *madhyam cha*: and middle, अहम् एव *aham eva* : I am also, विद्यानाम् *vidyanam* : among sciences, अध्यात्मविद्या *adhyatma vidya* : the science of self-knowledge, प्रवदताम् *pravadatam* : among controversialists, वादः *vadah* : logic argument, अहम् *aham* : I am.

Substance : I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all creations; I am the science of self-knowledge among sciences; I am logic or reason among controversialists or debaters.

Commentary : *Adhyatmavidya*-Among sciences the Lord is the science of Self-knowledge. We see that the modern world has made great advancement in all the sciences, and yet there is neither rest nor peace for countries and nations. Any rational thinker would naturally come to the conclusion that modern scientific achievements are not sufficient to bring peace and happiness to mankind. It is only Self-knowledge that can realise the inherent peace and freedom of mankind. The man of self-knowledge though he does not know any other science, is really the wise man who knows all. And the learned man who does not know the Truth is indeed unlearned and ignorant.

Vadah : Argument is of three kinds-(1) *Vada*, (2) *Jalpa*, (3) *Vitanda*. The reasoning free from malice and hatred undertaken with the noble objects of understanding the Truth is '*Vada*'. The argument advanced with the object of establishing one's own creed and condemning others, is '*Jalpa*'. And the argument used merely for the purpose of abusing and condemning other creeds is '*Vitanda*'. The Lord is '*Vada*' (i. e.) the process of reasoning, questions, and answers, and debates which the wise undertake to know the Truth.

33. अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।

अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥

३३

Aksharanam akaro'smi dvandvah samasikasya cha ।

aham evakshayah kalo dhata'ham visvatomukhah ॥ 33

Meaning: अक्षराणाम् *aksharanam* : among letters अकारः *akarah* : the letter, 'A', अस्मि *asmī* : (I) am, सामासिकस्य *samasikasya* : among all compounds, द्वन्द्वः च *dvandvah cha* : and the dual, अक्षयः *akshayah* : everlasting, कालः *kalah* : Time, अहमेव *aham eva* : I alone, विश्वतोमुखः *visvatomukhah* : All-faced (Omniscient), धाता *dhata* : the dispenser (of the fruits of actions), अहम् *aham* : I (am).

Substance : Among letters I am the letter A; I am the dual among all compounds; verily I am eternal time; I am the Dispenser of the fruits of actions, having faces in all directions (Omniscient).

34. मृत्युः सर्वहराहं उद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिः श्रीवाक्ष नारीणां स्मृतिमेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४

*Mrityuh sarvaharas cha'ham udbhavascha bhavisyatam !
kirtih srir vakcha narinam smritir medha dhritih kshama ॥ 34*

Meaning : सर्वहरः *sarvaharah* : all-devouring, मृत्युः *mrityuh*, च *cha* : death and, भविष्यताम् *bhavisyatam* : of those who are to be born, उद्भवश्च *udbhavah* *cha* : and origin, source, अहं *aham* : I (am), नारीणाम् *narinam* : of the feminine, कीर्तिः *kirtih* : fame, श्रीः *srih* : prosperity, वाक्ष *vakcha* : and speech, स्मृतिः *smritih* : memory, मेधा *medha* : intelligence, धृतिः *dhritih* : firmness, क्षमा च *kshama cha* : and forgiveness.

Substance : And I am all-devouring Death; and the birth of those who are to be born; among the feminine qualities, I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, firmness and forgiveness.

Commentary : Seven virtues among women are mentioned by the Lord. Where these virtues are, whether in men or women, all are qualified for the highest realisation. Women are not weak; they have also in them the Divinity that lifts them up to the plane of spiritual realisation. The point to note is that where these qualities are found, there the Lord is.

The second line of the verse is interpreted in another way. *Prasuti*, the daughter of *Swayambhuva Manu*, married Dakshaprajapati, and to them were born twentyfour daughters. Among them, there are Kirti Devi, Medha Devi, Dhriti Devi, Smriti Devi and Kshama Devi. Sri Devi is the daughter of Bhrigu. Vagdevi is the daughter of Brahma (creator). These

seven are the presiding Deities of the seven virtues. The Lord here declares that He is all these seven feminine virtues. Whatever the interpretation may be it is clear that the functioning of these virtues is due to the Lord Himself.

This verse is an inspiring call to women to give up all superstitious notions about their weakness or lowness, and stand up to realise what is their birth-right along with men and Gods.

35. बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहं ऋतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥

३५

*Brihatsama tatha samnam gayatri chandasam aham ।
masanam margasirsho'ham ritunam kusumakarah ॥ 35*

Meaning : तथा *tatha* : also, अहम् *aham* : I (am), साम्नाम् *samnam* : among Sama hymns, बृहत्साम *brihatsama* : Brihat-sama, छन्दसाम् *chandasam* : among metres, गायत्री *gayatri* : Gayatri, मासानाम् *masanam* : among months, मार्गशीर्षः *margasirshah* : Margasirsha, ऋतूनाम् *ritunam* : among seasons, कुसुमाकरः *kusumakarah* : spring, the flowery season, अहम् *aham* : I (am).

Substance : Among the hymns, I am Brihatsama; among metres, I am Gayatri; among months, I am Margasirsha; among seasons, I am the flowering spring.

Commentary : The prominence of Margasirsha is to be known from the following :

(1) At the time of the Mahabharata, the year used to start with the month of Margasirsha.

(2) The Sastras declare that the month is most suitable and meritorious for the performance of vows and fasts etc.

(3) People obtain the new harvest and there is general prosperity.

(4) It is stated in the Ramayana, that Margasirsha is the ornament of the year.

(5) The Bhagavad Gita was proclaimed to Arjuna in the month of Margasirsha (*Suddha ekadasi*) on the 11th day of the bright fortnight.

(6) Dattatreya was born in the same month (*Suddha Purnima*)

(7) The atmosphere is pleasant and equable and so the month is most suitable for *tapas* and *Sadhana* (Spiritual practice).

Kusumakaraha : The spring season is the most beautiful, and nature puts forth all her beauty. Sri Rama was born in the month of Chaitra.

36. धूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।

जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥

३६

Dyutam chalayatam asmi tejas tejasvinam aham ।

jayo'smi vyayasayo'smi sattvam sattvavatam aham ॥ 36

Meaning : छलयताम् *chalayatam* : of the fraudulent, धूतम् *dyutam* : the gambling, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, तेजस्विनाम् *tejasvinam* : of the splendid, तेजः *tejah* : splendour, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, जयः *jayah* : victory, व्यवसायः *vyayasayah* : determination, सत्त्ववताम् *sattvavatam* : of the good, सत्त्वम् *sattvam* : goodness (Sattvaguna), अहम् *aham* : I (am), अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am.

Substance : I am the gambling of the fraudulent; of the splendid I am the splendour; I am victory; I am determination (of the determined); I am the goodness of the good.

Commentary : *Dyutam* : This word should be carefully understood. It is definitely not a licence given to the gamblers to carry on their fraudulent business. It is only an affirmation of the existence (*astitvam*) of the Lord in essence in every one of the activities, good and bad, carried on in the world. Good people carry on good work, and the bad bad work, and they reap the consequences accordingly. But the Lord is present in essence in all.

The Lord is victory. The Lord is determination. The aspirant has to realise the universality of the Lord by seeing Him everywhere, in all qualities and actions. His manifestation is to be realised in the splendid, good and eminent things. His existence (*astitvam*) is to be realised in all things.

37. वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।

मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥

३७

*Vrishninam vasudevo'smi pandavanam dhanamjayah
muninam apyaham vyasah kavinam usana kavih ॥ 37*

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I (am), वृष्णीनाम् *vrishninam* : among the clan of Vrishnis (Yadavas), वासुदेवः *vasudevah* : Vasudeva, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, पाण्डवानाम् *pandavanam* : among the Pandavas, धनञ्जयः *dhanamjayah* : Arjuna, मुनीनामपि *muninam api* : among the Munis also, व्यसाः *vyasah* : vyasa, कवीनाम् *kavinam* : among poets, उशना कविः *usana kavih* : Ushana the poet.

Substance : Among the Vrishnis, I am Vasudeva; among the Pandavas, I am Arjuna; I am Vyasa among the Munis; among poets I am Ushana, the poet (seer).

Commentary : Arjuna, the hearer of the Gita, Krishna the teacher and Vyasa the poet who recorded it, are all the manifestations of the Lord Himself.

Usanakavi : He is Sukracharya, the son of Bhrigu Maharshi.

38. दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।

मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥

३८

Dando damayatam asmi nitir asmi jigishatam ।

maunam chai'vasmi guhyanam jnanam jnanavatam aham ॥ 33

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I (am), दमयताम् *damayatam* : of the punishers, दण्डः *dandah* : punishment (dandaniti),

अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, चिगीषताम् *jigishatam* : of the seekers of victory, नीतिः *nitiḥ* : statesmanship, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, गुह्यानाम् *guhyānam* : of the secrets, मौनं *maunam* : silence, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, ज्ञानवताम् *jñanavatam* : of the knowers, ज्ञानम् च *jñanam cha* : and Knowledge.

Substance : Of the punishers, I am punishment; of the seekers of victory, I am statesmanship; of the secrets I am silence. I am also knowledge of the knowers.

Commentary : The statesmanship approved by the *Sastras* in securing national welfare is also the Lord. True victory is always based on Truth, and that which is obtained by fraud and deception is no victory.

Maunam : The silence is also the Lord. Silence in word, silence in thought, are essential practices to attain self-control and mastery over one's lower nature. It leads to self-realisation.

Jnanam : Self-knowledge is the Lord Himself. It is His sovereign Glory.

39. यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान् मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ ३९

*Yaccha'pi sarvabhutanam bijam tad aham arjuna !
na tad asti vina yat syan maya bhutam characharam ॥ 39*

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna* : O Arjuna ! सर्वभूतानाम् *sarva-bhutanam*: of all beings, यत् *yat*: which, बीजम् *bijam*: the seed, the source, तत् अपि च *tat api cha*: and that also, अहम् *aham*: I (am), चराचरम् *characharam*: the moving and the non-moving, भूतम् *bhutam*: being, यत् स्यात् *yat syat*: what may be, तत् *tat*: that, मया *maya*: by me, विना *vina*: without, न *na*: not, अस्ति *asti* : is.

Substance : O Arjuna ! And whatever is the seed of all beings, that am I; nor is there anything moving or non-moving, that can exist bereft of Me.

Commentary : Having described His glories, the Lord now declares that He is the source of all beings, and nothing can exist bereft of Him. So all that we see is the Lord Himself. Every being is the manifestation of the Lord, even as the plant is just the manifestation of the seed. One should assert always the Divinity that exists everywhere. He should proclaim the Divinity in himself and in all others. This is the way to progress and realisation. All this is verily the Lord Himself. There cannot be any surer way to lift man from the vile state of weakness than the determined affirmation of his divine origin and his Divine destiny. Let all other thoughts be given up once for all. Let all beings live in the full consciousness that the Lord is in them, around them, and everywhere.

40. नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।

एष तृदेशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेविस्तरो मया ॥

४०

Na'nto'sti mama divyanam vibhutinam paramtapa !

esha tu'ddesatah prokto vibhutervistaro maya ॥

40

Meaning : परंतप *parantapa* : O Arjuna ! मम *mama* : My, दिव्यानाम् *divyanam* : of Divine, विभूतीनाम् *vibhutinam* : glories, अन्तः *antah* : end, नास्ति *na asti* : is not, तु *tu* : but, एषः *eshah* : this, विभूतेः *vibhuteh* : of glory, विस्तरः *vistaroh* : particulars, उद्देशतः *uddesatah* : brief statement, मया *maya* : by Me, प्रोक्तः *proktah* : has been declared.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There is no end of My Divine Glories; this is indeed a brief statement by Me of the particulars of My Glory.

Commentary : The Lord is infinite and hence His Glory cannot have an end.

41. यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वे श्रीमदृजितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोशसंभवम् ॥

४१

Yad-yad vibhutimat sattvam srimad urjitam eva va

tat-tad eva'vagaccha tvam mama tejomsasambhavam ॥

41

Meaning : विभूतिमत् vibhutimat : glorious, श्रीमत् srimat : prosperous, ऊर्जितम् एव वा urjitam evava: powerful also, सत्त्वम् sattvam: thing or being, यद्यत् yad-yad : whatsoever, तत्तत् tat tat : that that, मम mama : My, तेजोऽशसंभवम् एव tejomsasambhavam eva : manifestation of part of My splendour only, त्वम् tvam : you, अवगच्छ avagaccha : know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Whatsoever is glorious, good, beautiful and mighty, that you understand to be only a fragment of My splendour.

Commentary: Whatever there is good—the profusion of knowledge, purity of heart, righteousness, beauty, power and splendour—all that is only a manifested fragment of the Lord's glory. All talents, all faculties, all arts and sciences, all intelligence, order, discipline, all that is admirable, grand, great and splendid, are the manifestations of the Lord's glory. Let no man imagine that he has anything to be proud of. If he has prosperity, that prosperity is the Lord's; if he has power and intelligence, all that is the Lord's; if he has genius that genius is the Lord's. He who thinks that they are his own possessions, is guilty of mis-appropriating the Lord's plenty, and should suffer the penalty of loss and bereavement. These great attributes of the Lord should be contemplated continuously, so that they may become part and parcel of one's own nature and lead him to union with the Lord.

42. अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कुत्सं एकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥

४२

*Athaya bahunai'tena kim jnatena tava'rjuna
vistabhyaham idam kritsnam ekamsena sthito jagat ॥ 42*

Meaning : अर्जुन arjuna : O Arjuna ! अथवा athava : or, बहुना bahuna : many, एतेन etena : by this, ज्ञातेन jnatena : knowing, तव tava : of you, किम् kim : what, अहत् aham : I, इहम् idam : this, कुत्साम् kritsnam : all, जगत् jagat :

universe, एकांशेन *ekamsena* : by one aspect, विष्टभ्य *vishtabhyā* : pervading, स्थितः *sthitah* : (I) exist.

Substance : O Arjuna! But of what avail to you is the knowledge of all these details? Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I exist.

Commentary : The Lord ends this Discourse by declaring that there is no use of the detailed enumeration of His Divine Glories, because they are infinite, and the infinite cannot be rendered in terms of the finite. The Lord then sums up the whole idea in a single proclamation that the whole universe, with everything in it, is only a fragment of His Glory. What contemplation, what imaginative flight, what understanding, what vision, can fathom and comprehend the Infinity of the Lord? These millions and millions of worlds are all pervaded by the Lord. His power is infinite.

In the presence of the Lord, what is man? Let him bow down to the Lord. Let him sing the Lord's Glory. Let him offer himself up to the Lord. Let him live in the Lord, for there is nothing else but the Lord wherever he may turn. Egoism and pride have no place in the heart of a man who can think of the Lord's Glory. His little strength, little good, little beauty, little power, are nothing indeed, nothing before the Glory of the Lord. Thus thinking man realises the truth that the Lord is All and he is himself a part of the Lord.

Question : *By what is this universe pervaded?*

Answer : The universe is only a fragrant of the Lord, and by a single aspect of His, all this is pervaded. (The idea is that in the Infinite form of the Lord, this whole universe occupies a very small part).

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतास्मृपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाज्ञनसंवादे विभूतियोगो नाम
दशमोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Vibhuti
Yogo nama dasamo'dhyayah. ||*

Thus, in the Glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Tenth Discourse entitled-Vibhuti Yoga

(The Yoga of Divine Glories.)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ एकादशोऽध्यायः

Atha Ekadasodhyayah.

ELEVENTH DISCOURSE

विश्वरूपसंदर्शन योगः

VISVARUPA SANDARSANA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE VISION OF THE COSMIC-FORM.

I. The title of the Discourse :

Arjuna appeals to the Lord to reveal His Cosmic-form, and the Lord, pleased with his devotion, shows His Cosmic-Form. The Discourse is filled with the magnificent description of the Cosmic-Form, and Arjuna's divine prayer to the Lord. Therefore it is entitled Visvarupa Sandarsana Yoga.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1) Arjuna's appeal to the Lord | (1-4) |
| 2) The Lord's estimate of His Cosmic-Form. | (5-8) |
| 3) Sanjaya describes the Visvarupa | (9-14) |
| 4) Arjuna's vision and prayer to the Lord | (15-31) |
| 5) The Lord reveals His power and inspires Arjuna to fight. | (32-34) |
| 6) The terrified Arjuna wishes to see the normal form of the Lord. | (35-46) |

- 7) The Lord declares the glory of seeing the Cosmic-Form, and assumes His normal form. (47-50)
- 8) Single-minded devotion alone qualifies a man to see the Cosmic-form. The excellence of Ananyabhakti. (51-55)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one –

In the *Vibhuti Yoga*, the Lord spoke of His infinite Glories, and declared that He pervades the whole universe with a fragment of His sovereign Glory. Arjuna desires to see the Cosmic-Form, and appeals to the Lord to favour him with that vision. Theoretically, the disciple understood the universality of the Lord. But this was not enough. He fervently wished to behold directly the Cosmic-Form. Thus, if the *Vibhuti Yoga* states the principle, the *Visvarupa Sandarsana Yoga* is its ecstatic realisation through direct experience. The Discourse starts with Arjuna's prayer to the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

१ मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvacha

*Madanugrahaya paramam guhyam adhyatmasamjnitas
yat tvayo'ktam vachas tena moho'yam vigato mama ॥ 1 ॥*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna Uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : मदनुग्रहाय *madanugrahaya* : out of grace (compassion) towards me, परमम् *paramam* : supreme, highest, गुह्यम् *guhyam* : secret, अध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् *adhyatmasamjnitas* : Adhyatma-named, यत् *yat* : which, वचः *vachah* : word, त्वया *tvaya* : by thee, उक्तम् *uktam* : said, तेन *tena* : "by that, मम *mama* : my, अयं मोहः *ayam mohah* : this delusion, विगतः *vigatah* : is gone.

Substance : Arjuna Said—By the words of the highest secret concerning the Self, spoken by Thee out of compassion for me, my delusion is gone.

Commentary : Arjuna says that his delusion is gone by hearing the divine exposition of the Highest, by the Lord Himself. Arjuna was thinking, “These are my relations; how can I kill them ?” This kind of body-identification is gone. The Gita-teaching continues. But the fundamental Truth of the immortality of the Self has already been declared. And the all-pervading universality of the Lord has also been declared in definite terms. Arjuna is lifted out of the mire of delusion and despondency.

He speaks of the Lord’s teaching as ‘*Paramam*’ the highest and the best, and as ‘*Guhyam*’—the greatest secret, knowing which all delusion ceases.

The speaker is Lord Krishna and the hearer is Arjuna. What wonder that the Lord’s medicine works on his deluded patient and cures him even before the course of treatment is completed! The effect of the Lord’s teaching is immediately felt by the disciple. Most of the people are in the same position as Arjuna, deluded and beset with doubts. If they adopt the same attitude as Arjuna—“*Sishyaste ham sadhi mam ivam prapannam*”—there is absolutely no doubt that the Lord works on them with the same affection and compassion as he did in the case of Arjuna. What is needed is faith in the Lord. Arjuna had that faith, and so he declared that the teaching was given to him (*madanugrahaya*) by the compassion of the *Guru* towards his disciple. Those who have faith hope to have the same revelation as Arjuna had by the grace of the Lord. Krishna Paramatma is *Jagadguru*, and the Gita is the teaching for all mankind. Whoever believes himself to be a true disciple receives the teaching directly from Krishna Himself. Therefore let all people win the Lord’s grace by total and un-conditional self-surrender to Him.

Question : *What is Adhyatma Vidya ?*

Answer : It is the highest and the great secret.

Question : What is its power ?

Answer : It removes delusion and ignorance and saves man from *Samsara*.

Question : Why did Lord Krishna teach it to Arjuna ?

Answer : Arjuna surrendered to the Lord with faith and devotion.

Question : What was the effect ?

Answer : His delusion was gone.

2. भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥

२

*Bhavapyayau hi bhutanam srutau vistaraso maya
tvattah kamalapatraksha mahatmyamapi cha'vyayam* ॥ 2

Meaning : हि *hi* : indeed, कमलपत्राक्ष *kamalapatraksha* : O Lotus-eyed Krishna ! त्वत्तः *tvattah* : from you, भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of beings, भवाप्ययौ *bhavapyayau* : origin and dissolution, विस्तरशः *vistarashah* : in detail, मया *maya* : by me, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : inexhaustible, माहात्म्यम् अपि च *mahatmyam api cha* : and also (Thy) divine power, श्रुतौ *srutau* : have been heard.

Substance : O Krishna ! From Thee verily have been heard in detail by me the origin and dissolution of beings, and also Thy inexhaustible divine power.

3. एवमेतद्वात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वरं
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥

३

*Evam etad yatha'ttha tvam atmanam paramesvara
drasum icchami te rupam aisvaram purushottama* ॥ 3

Meaning : परमेश्वर *parameswara* : O Supreme Lord, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : of Thyself, यथा *yatha* : as, आत्थ *attha* : has declared, एवम् *evam* : (is) thus, (I believe), एतत् *etat* : that, पुरुषोत्तम् *purushothama* : O Supreme Purusha, ते *te* : Thy, ऐश्वरम् *aisvaram* : divine (possessing Jnana, Aisvarya etc.—the cosmic power), रूपम् *rupam* : form, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum* : to see, इच्छामि *icchami* : I wish.

Substance : O Supreme Lord ! Even as Thou hast described Thyself (I believe) Thou art, and I wish to see Thy Cosmic Form, Omnipotent, O best of Beings.

4. मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥

४

*Manyase yadi tachakyam maya drastum iti prabho ।
yogesvara tato me tvam darsaya'tmanam avyayam ॥ 4*

Meaning : प्रभो *prabho* : O Lord, तत् *tat* : that (thy Cosmic Form), मया *maya* : by me, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum* : to see, शक्यम् *sakyam* : possible, इति *iti* : thus, मन्यसे यदि *manyase yadi* : if Thou thinkest, ततः *tatah* : then, योगेश्वर *yogesvara* : O Lord of Yoga, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : inexhaustible, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Thyself (Form), मे *me* : to me, दर्शय *darsaya* : show.

Substance : O Lord of *Yoga* ! If Thou thinkest that Thy Cosmic Form is possible for me to see, then deign to show me Thy imperishable Self.

Commentary : What we know here is the humility of Arjuna in appealing to the Lord to show His Cosmic Form, if it is possible for him to see it. Is he fit for it ? Is he fit for seeing the vision ? He did not demand it as a right, in the manner of a person who claims it as a reward of his devotion. Such humility is needed for every disciple in the presence of the *Guru*. He

should leave it to the teacher to give him any experience which he thinks fit for the disciple. The disciple does not know what he is, what his powers are, and what he is fit for. The teacher knows it. So Arjuna appeals to the Lord to show him the Cosmic Form if the Lord thinks that he is fit to see it. Moreover in the previous verse Arjuna has declared his complete faith in the words of the Lord. He believes every word of the Lord when He described His infinite Glory. So faith and humility are the only means to win the Lord's Grace.

The Lord describes His Cosmic Form and endows Arjuna with divine vision to see it.

श्री भगवानुवाच

5. पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णकृतीनि च ॥

५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Pasya me partha rupani sataso'tha sahasrasah ।
nanavidhani divyani nanavarnakritini cha ॥*

5

श्री भगवानुवाच — *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha:* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! नानाविधानि *nanavidhani* : of different sorts, दिव्यानि *divyani* : divine, नानावर्णकृतीनि च *nanavarrakritini cha* : and of different colours and shapes, शतशः *satasah* : by hundreds, अथ *atha* : and, सहस्रशः *sahasrasah* : by thousands, मे *me* : My, रूपाणि *rupani* : forms, पश्य : *pasya* : behold.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : Behold O Arjuna ! forms of Me, by hundreds and thousands of different sorts, divine and of various colours and shapes.

6. पश्यादित्यान्वसुन्रुद्रानश्चिनौ मरुत स्तथा ।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्र्वाणि भारत ॥

६

*Pasya'dityan vasun rudran asvinau marutasthatha ।
bahunyadrristapuryani pasya'scharyani bharata ॥*

6

Meaning : भारत *bharta* : O Arjuna ! आदित्यान् *adityan* : the Adityas, वसून् *vasun* : The Vasus, रुद्रान् *rudran* : the Rudras, अश्विनौ *asyinau* : the two Asvins, मरुतः *marutah* : the Maruts, पश्य *pasya* : behold, तथा *tatha* : also, अदृष्टपूर्वाणि *adrishtapurvani* : not seen before, बहूनि *bahuni* : many, आश्चर्याणि *ascharyani* : wonders, पश्य *pasya* : behold.

Substance : Behold, O Arjuna ! the *Ad yas*, the *Vasus*, the *Rudras*, the two *Asvins*, the *Maruts*, also many wonderful forms never seen before (by you and by others).

Commentary : (1) The *Adityas*-twelve, the *Vasus*-eight, the *Rudras*-eleven, the *Asvini Devas*-two, the *Maruts*-forty nine.

7. इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥

७

*Iha'kastham jagat kritsnam pasya'dya sacharacharam
mama dehe gudakesa yacha'nyad drastum icchasi ॥ 7*

Meaning : गुडाकेश *gudakesa* : O Arjuna ! सचराचरम् *sacharacharam* : with the moving and non-moving, कृत्स्नम् *kritsnam* : whole, जगत् *jagat* : universe, अन्यत् यत् *anyat yat* : whatever else, द्रष्टुम् इच्छसि *drashtum icchasi* : you wish to see, च *cha* : also, मम *mama* : My, इह *iha* : this, देहे *dehe* : in body, एकस्थम् *ekastham* : centred in one place (like a limb in the body), अद्य *adya* : now, पश्य *pasya* : behold.

Substance : Here, O Arjuna ! behold the whole universe movable and immovable, and whatever else you desire to see, centred in one place in My body.

Commentary : In the *Vibhuti Yoga*, the Lord declared that the whole universe exists as a fragment of His Glory (*Ekamsena sthito jagat*). So here, the Lord asks Arjuna to behold the whole universe standing like one of the limbs in the body. One

can only imagine the infinity of the Lord. Nay, it is beyond all imagination, to whatever extent it may be stretched by human effort. Physical space is indeed unimaginably large; larger should be the mindspace; larger still should be 'Chidakasa.' In this infinity (*Atma*) the whole universe (*Jagat*) is like a spot.

The Lord of infinite forms, all pervading, all powerfull, is no other than *Paramatma* who is the ruler of all the worlds (*Sarvaloka mahesvaram*). Knowing Him as such, it is man's duty to worship Him with faith, devotion, and humility. Verily, there is no cause for man to feel proud of his little wealth or power or position. What are man's wealth and powers ? What is man after all in the scheme of this universe ? What after all is this earth where man glorifies himself by building a small state or empire ? Man's egoism and pride for his so called achievements is sheer delusion (*Avidya*). What is small appears great; what is not appears to be the reality; what is death-struck appears immortal. This ignorance, the mother of pride and arrogance, will vanish as man truly contemplates the might of *Isvara* and His infinite Glory. Let the seeker be filled with adoration to the Lord, infinite and wonderful. Let his humility purify his heart. Let egotism vanish into nothing and then the Lord comes to dwell in the heart of the meek and the humble. Then comes true devotion (*Para bhakti*).

The Lord endows Arjuna with divine vision to see the Cosmic-Form.

8. न तु सां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वर्य ॥

6

*Na tu mam sakyase drastum anenai'va svachakshusha !
divyam dadami te chakshuh pasya me yogam aisvaram ॥ 8*

Meaning : अनेन anena : with this, स्वचक्षुषा एवत् svachakshusha evatu : with (your) own eyes only, माम् mam : me, द्रष्टुम् drashtum : to see, न शक्यसे na sakyase : you cannot, दिव्यम् divyam : divine, चक्षुः chakshuh : eye, ते te : to you, ददामि dadami : I give, ऐश्वर्य् aisvaram : sovereign, मे me : my, योगम् yogam : yoga, पश्य pasya : behold.

Substance : But you cannot see Me with these your own eyes; I give unto you the divine eye; behold My sovereign *yoga*.

Commentary : The eye of flesh can only see material things. Even physical ether is invisible to the naked eye. The limitations of the human eye and the gross delusions to which it is subject every moment, is within the experience of every thoughtful man. That the human eye is grossly erroneous in its perceptions can be seen from very simple facts. Sitting in the railway carriage, the eye sees the objects around moving with terrific speed. It sees the stationery sun crossing the sky from east to west. It sees the moon running behind the rushing clouds. All these show that the naked eye cannot be trusted to give us a correct picture of anything in the world. In fact, the eye is the most powerful cause of delusion for man. So, the Lord here says that Arjuna cannot see the Cosmic-Form by himself with his own eyes.

“Drisyate tvagraya buddhya sukshamaya sukshmadar-sibhih.”—*Paramatma* is seen by the subtle concentrated intellect of the Seers. So say the *Upanishads*. Though the Lord is everywhere, man is not able to see Him because ignorance covers the eye. This is the veil of *Maya*; this is the darkness or ignorance. When the covering film is taken away, the eye of knowledge sees the Truth, and delusion vanishes.

As the blind man cannot see the sun, so also the eye of the ignorant cannot see the all-pervading Self. It is utter nonsense to say that God does not exist because He is not seen by the eye of flesh. The argument would be as convincing as the blind man's denial of the existence of the sun.

How then can man attain the divine eye to see the Lord ? Assuredly, by the grace of the Lord, by His love, by His compassion. “*Dadami te chakshuh*”, says the Lord (I give to you the divine eye). To whom does he give the divine eye ?—To those who are devoted to Him. (*Tesham satatayuktanam dadami buddhiyogam-10-10*). The same idea is emphasised here. Repeatedly does the Lord inculcate the idea of surrender to Him in a spirit of devotion and humility. “Worship Me,” He says,

"in every possible way; take refuge in Me; surrender to Me; I will give you knowledge, peace and bliss." Arjuna had surrendered to the Lord, and so he has qualified himself to see the Cosmic-Form, and the Lord bestows on him the divine eye for that purpose.

The divine eye comes to all without distinction of caste, creed, religion, or nationality. If it does not open, it is one's own fault. "Knock and it shall be opened." The knocking must be there. Relentless perseverance is needed. Such spiritual thirst for the Divine bears fruition in the Lord's grace descending on man. Let everyone follow the footsteps of Arjuna and obtain the Lord's grace.

Divyam : Divine-obtained by the possession of divine virtues (*daivisampat*).

Question : *Can man see the Lord with the physical eye ?*

Answer : No.

Question : *How to see Him then ?*

Answer : With the divine eye of Knowledge.

Question : *How can this divine eye open ?*

Answer : By the grace of the Lord.

Question : *Who obtains the Lord's grace ?*

Answer : He who is devoted to Him with faith and humility obtains His grace.

Sanjaya describes to Dhritarashtra the wonderful glory of the Cosmic-Form.

सञ्जय उवाच

9. एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥

९

Samjaya uvacha

*Evam uktva tato rajan mahayogesvaro harih
darsayamasa parthaya paramam rupam aisvaram ॥ 9*

सञ्जय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : राजन् *rajan* : O King Dhritarashtra ! महायोगेश्वरः *mahayogeswarah* : the Great Lord of yoga, हरिः *harih* : Hari (Krishna), एवम् *evam* : thus, उक्त्वा *uktva* : having spoken, पार्थीय *parthaya* : to Arjuna, परमम् *paramam* : (His) supreme, ऐश्वरम् *aisvaram* : divine, रूपम् *rupam* : Cosmic-Form, दर्शयामास *darsayamasa* : revealed.

Substance : Sanjaya said—O King Having thus spoken the great Lord of *Yoga*, Hari, showed to Arjuna His supreme divine Form.

Commentary : By the grace of Vedavyasa, Sanjaya obtained the power to see all that happened on the battle-field, including the wonderful vision of the Lord's Cosmic - Form. He is reporting it to King Dhritarashtra.

10. अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुत दर्शनम् ।
अनेकदिव्याभरणम् दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् । १०

11. दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वार्थ्यमयं देवं अनन्तं विश्वतो मुखम् ॥ ११

*Aneka vaktra nayanam anekadbuta darsanam ।
aneka divyabharanam divyanekodyata yudham ॥* 10

*Divya malyambara dharam divya gandhanulepanam ।
sarvascharyamayam devam anantam visvatomukham ॥* 11

Meaning : अनेकवक्त्रनयनम् *anekavaktranayanam* : with numerous mouths and eyes, अनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् *anekadbhutadarshanam* : with numerous wonderful sights, अनेकदिव्याभरणम् *anekadiwyabharanam* : with numerous divine ornaments, दिव्यनेकोद्यतायुधम् *divyanekodyatayudham* : with numerous divine

weapons uplifted, दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरम् *divyamalyambaradharam* : wearing divine garlands and apparel, दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् *divyagandhanulepanam* : anointed with divine unguents, सर्वश्चर्यमयम् *sarvascharyamayam* : all wonderful, देवम् *devam* : resplendent, अनन्तम् *anantam* : endless, विश्वतोमुखम् *visvatomukham* : with faces on all sides.

Substance : With numerous mouths and eyes, with numerous wonderful sights, with numerous divine ornaments, with numerous divine weapons uplifted, wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with divine unguents, all wonderful, resplendent, endless, with faces on all sides-(so was the Lord's Cosmic-Form).

12. दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा साङ्घासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥

१२

*Divi surya sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthita ।
yadi bhah sadrisi sa syad bhasas tasya mahatmanah ॥ 12*

Meaning : दिवि *divi* : in the sky, सूर्यसहस्रस्य *surya-sahasrasya* : of a thousand suns, भाः *bhah* : splendour, युगपत् *yugapat* : at once, उत्थिता भवेत् यदि *utthita bhavetyadi* : if were arisen, सा *sa* : that, तस्य *tasya* : of that, महात्मनः *mahatmanah* : mighty Being, भासः *bhasah* : splendour, सदृशी *sadrisi* : equal, सात् *syat* : would be.

Substance : If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky, that would resemble the glory of that mighty Being.

13. तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥

१३

*Tatrai'kasitham jagat kritsnam pravibhaktam anekadha ।
apasyad devadevasya sarire pandavastada ॥ 13*

Meaning : तदा *tada* : then, पाण्डवः *pandvah* तत्र *tatra* : Arjuna, there, अनेकधा *anekadha* : in many groups, प्रविभक्तम् *pravibhaktam* : divided, कृत्स्नम् जगत् *kristnam jagat* : whole universe, देवदेवस्य *devadevasya* : of the God of Gods, शरीरे *sarire* : in the body, एकस्थम् *ekastham* : placed in one spot, अपश्यत् *apasyat* : beheld.

Substance : There, in the body of the God of Gods, Arjuna then saw the whole universe divided into many groups placed in one spot.

Commentary : The universe appeared to Arjuna as one of the limbs in the body of the God of Gods. In the infinite Cosmic intelligence (consciousness) of the Lord, the world rests in some small nook or corner as a limb, a finger tip or a toe-in the human body.

Pravibhaktam : The universe is differentiated into various groups of objects. But there is no such differentiation in *Paramatma* who is One.

Amazed at the wonderful vision Arjuna adores the Lord.

14. ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः ।

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥

१४

Tatah sa vismayavisto hristaroma dhananjayah ।

pranamya sirasa devam kritanjalirabhashata । 14

Meaning : ततः *tatah* : then, सः *sah* धनञ्जयः *dhananjayuh* : he, Arjuna, विस्मय अविष्टः *vismayavishthah* : filled with wonder, हृष्टरोमा *hrishtaroma* : with hair standing on end, देवम् *devam* : to the Lord, शिरसा *sirasa* : with his head, प्रणम्य *pranamya* : having bowed down, कृताञ्जलिः *kritanjalih* : folding his palms, अभाषत *abhashata* : spoke.

Substance : Then he, Arjuna overwhelmed with amazement, his hair standing on end, having bowed down his head, and with palms joined thus spoke to the Lord.

Commentary : The ecstatic mood of Arjuna is described here. He is overwhelmed with wonder and amazement. His hair stands on end. And he is at the same time filled with deep reverence and devotion to the Lord. Folding his hands, he bows down his head before the inscrutable mystery of the Lord's Manifestation.

अर्जुन उवाच

15. पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे
 सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसंघान् ।
 ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ
 मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५

Arjuna uvacha

Pasyami devamstava deva dehe
saryamstatha bhuta visesha samghan'
brahmanam isam kamalasanastham
risimscha sarvan uragamcha divyan' 15

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna Said.

Meaning : देव *deva* : O Lord, तव देहे *tava dehe* : in Thy body, सर्वान् देवान् *sarvan devan* : all the Gods, तथा *tatha* : also, भूतविशेषसंघान् *bhutaviseshasamghan* : hosts of various classes of beings, कमलासनस्थम् *kamalasanastham* : seated in the Lotus, ईशम् ब्रह्माणम् *isam brahmanam* : the Lord Brahma, सर्वान् मृषीन् च *sarvan rishin cha* : all and sages, दिव्यान् उरगान् च *divyan uragan cha* : Divine serpents and पश्यामि *pasyami* : I see.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Lord ! I see in Thy body, all the Gods, also hosts of various classes of beings, Brahma, the Lord, seated on the Lotus, all the Sages and celestial serpents.

Commentary : *Isam* : This may be taken to refer to Siva (Brahma seated on the Lotus, and Siva).

16. अनेकवाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
नान्ते न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वरं विश्वरूपं ॥ १६

*Aneka bahudara vaktra netram
pasyami tvam savyata' nantarupam ।
na'ntam na madhyam na punastava'dim
pasyami visvesvara visvaruya ॥*

16

Meaning : विश्वेश्वरं Visvesvara : O Lord of the Universe, विश्वरूपं visvarupa : O Cosmic Being, अनेकवाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रम् anekabahudaravaktra netram : with manifold arms, stomachs, mouths, eyes, अनन्तरूपम् anantarupam : of boundless form, त्वाम् tvam : Thou, सर्वतः sarvatah : everywhere, पश्यामि pasyami : I see, पुनः punah : again, तव tava : of Thine, आदिम् adim : beginning, नपश्यामि na pasyami : I do not see, मध्यम् madhyam : middle, न na : not, अन्तम् antam : end, न na : not.

Substance : I see Thee of boundless form on every side with manifold arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes; neither the end nor middle nor beginning of Thine do I see.

17. किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च
तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ता
दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७

*Kiritinam gadinam chakrinam cha
tejorasim savyato diptimantam ।
pasyami tvam durnirikshyam samantad
diptanalarkadyutimaprameyam ॥*

17

Meaning : त्वाम् tvam : Thee, दुर्निरीक्ष्यम् durnirikshyam : dazzling the gaze, समन्तात् samantat : all round, किरीटिनम्

kiritinam : with diadem, गदिनम् *gadinam* : with mace, चक्रिणम् *chakrinam* : with discus, च *cha* : and, तेजसशिम् *tejorasim* : mass of radiance, सर्वतः *sarvataḥ* : everywhere, दीप्तिमन्तम् *dipṭimantam* : shining, दीपानलाक्ष्यतिम् *dipṭanalarka-dyutim* : blazing like burning fire and sun, अप्रमेयम् *aprameyam* : immeasurable, पश्यामि *pasyami* : I see.

Substance : I see Thee with diadem, mace, and discus, shining everywhere, a mass of radiance, dazzling the gaze, blazing like the burning fire and sun, from all sides in the sky, immeasurable.

18. त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
 त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् !
 त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोपा
 सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥ १८

*Tvam aksharam paramam veditavyam
 tvam asya visvasya param nidhanam !
 tvam avyayah sasvata dharma gopta
 sanatanastvam purusho mato me* ॥ 18

Meaning : त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, वेदितव्यम् *veditavyam* : worthy to be known, अक्षरम् *aksharam* : imperishable, परमम् *paramam* : the Supreme Being, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, अस्य विश्वस्य *asya visvasya* : of this universe, परम् *param* : great, निधानम् *nidhanam* : treasure-house, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, अव्ययः *avyayah* : inexhaustible, शाश्वतधर्मगोपा *sasvata dharmagopta* : protector of the eternal Dharma, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, सनातनः *purushah* : Ancient Purusha, मे *me* : of me, मतः *mataḥ* : thought.

Substance : Thou art the imperishable Supreme Being, worthy to be known; Thou art the great treasure-house of the universe; Thou art the protector of the Eternal Dharma; Thou art the ancient Purusha, I deem.

Commentary : *Sasvatadharma-gupta* : *Dharma* is eternal. At no time does it perish. Its power may be reduced or corrupted at times, but the Lord sustains it in such periods when *Adharma* dominates the world. The Lord is Himself the highest *Dharma*. Nothing can please the Lord more than adherence to *Dharma*. Men who follow the law of righteousness are the most dear devotees of the Lord.

19. अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्यं

मनन्तवाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्तं
स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥ १९

Anadi madhyantamanatna viryam
ananta bahum sasi surya netram ।
pasyami tvam dipta hutasa vaktram
svatejasa visvam idam tapantam ॥

19

Meaning: अनादिमध्यान्तम् *anadimadhyantam* : without beginning, middle and end, अनन्तवीर्यम् *anantaviryam* : of boundless power, अनन्तवाहुम् *anantabahum* : of innumerable arms, शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् *sasisuryanetram* : The moon and sun Thy eyes, दीप्तहुताशवक्तं *diptahuta savaktram* : Thy mouth of burning fire, स्वतेजसा *svatejasa*: with Thy brilliance, विश्वम् इदं *visvamidam*: this universe, तपन्तम् *tapantam* : burning, त्वम् *tvam* : Thee, पश्यामि *pasyami* : I see.

Substance : Without beginning, middle, and end, infinite in power, with sun and moon as Thy eyes, of endless arms, the burning fire Thy mouth, burning the whole universe with Thy radiance, I see Thee.

20. धावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि

व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।
दृष्टाङ्गुतं रूपगुणं तवेदं
लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥

२०

*Dyavapritisivyoridam antaram hi
vyaptam tvayai'kena disas cha sarvah ।
dristva' dbhutam rupam ugram tave'dam
lokatrayam pravyathitam mahatman ॥*

20

Meaning : महात्मन् *mahatman* : O Mahatma ! द्यावापृथिव्यः *dyavapritisivyah* : of Heaven and earth, इदं अन्तरम् *idam antaram* : this interspace, सर्वः दिशः च *sarvah disah cha* : and all quarters, त्वया *tvaya* : by thee, एकेन *ekena* : alone, व्यासम् हि *vyaptam hi* : are filled indeed, उग्रम् *ugram* : terrible, अद्भुतम् *adbhutam* : wonderful, तवा *tava* : Thine, इदं *idam* : this, रूपम् *rupam* : Form, दृष्ट्वा *drishtvā* : having seen, लोकत्रयम् *lokatrayam* : the (beings of the) three worlds, प्रव्यथितम् *pravyathitam* : are trembling with fear.

Substance : This interspace of heaven and earth and all quarters are indeed filled by Thee alone; having seen Thy wonderful and terrible Form, the three worlds are trembling with fear, O Mahatma !

21. अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति
केचिद्भीताः प्राज्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षि सिद्धसङ्घाः
स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥ २१

*Ami hi tvam surasamgha visanti
kechid bhitah pranjalayogrinanti ।
svasti' tyuktva maharshi siddhasamghah
stuvanti tvam stutibhih pushkalabhih ॥*

21

Meaning : अमी *ami* : these, सुरसङ्घाः *surasanghah* : hosts of Devas, त्वाम् *tvam* : into Thee, विशन्ति हि *visanti hi* : verily enter, केचित् *kechit* : some, भीताः *bhitah* : in fear, प्राज्जलयः

pranjalayah : with folded hands, गृन्ति *grinanti* : praise Thee, महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घः *maharshisiddhasanghah* : the bands of great Rishis and Siddhas, स्वस्ति *svasti* : may it be well (to the worlds), इति *iti* : thus, उक्त्वा *uktva* : having spoken, पुष्कलाभिः *pushkalabhih* : sublime, स्तुतिभिः *stutibhih* : with hymns, त्वाम् *tavam* : Thee, स्तुवन्ति *stuvanti* : extol .

Substance : These hosts of *Devas* enter Thee; some in fear with joined palms praise Thee; the bands of *Rishis* and *Siddhas* extol Thee with hymns sublime, having said, "May it be well" (*Svasti*).

Commentary : *Svasti* : "May it be well to all the worlds," is always the prayer of great souls. They have so intimately found their unity with the world that they wish for its welfare with all their heart and soul. "*Svasti prajabhyah*"—should be the universal prayer of all aspirants.

Stuvanti : With sublime hymns and songs, the *Rishis* and *Siddhas* extol the Lord. When the wise thus express their devotion through prayer, is it not the duty of common mortals to follow their example ?

22. रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या
विशेऽविनी महस्योऽग्राथ ।
गन्धर्वयक्षायुरसिद्धरङ्गः
वीक्षन्ते त्वा विश्वसाधेव सर्वे ॥ २२

Rudraditya vasavo ye cha sadhy:
visve'svinau marutas cho'shmaapas cha ।
gandharva yakshasura siddha samgha
vikshantme tvam vismitus chaf'va sarve ॥ 22

Meaning : रुद्रादित्यः *rudrudiyah* : Rudras and Adityas, वसवः *vasayah* : vasus, ये च *ye cha* : and these, साध्यः *sadhyah* : Siddhyas, विश्वे *visve* : Visvedevas, अविनी *avinau* : the two .

Asvins, अस्विः marutah : Maruts, च cha : and, ऊष्मपः ushmapah : Pitrīs, च cha : and, गन्धर्वायक्षशसुरासद्धसङ्घः gandharvayakshasurasiddhasanghah : hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshaws, Asuras, Siddhas, सर्वे sarve : all, च cha : and, एव eva : even, विस्मिताः vismitah : amazed, त्वाम् tvam : Thee, वीक्षन्ते vikshante : look at.

Substance : These Rudras and Adityas, Vasus, Sadyas, Visvedevas, the two Asvins, the Maruts, the Pitrīs, and Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Sidhas even all, are looking at Thee, struck with amazement.

23. रूपं महते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं

महाबाहो बहुभाहुरूपादम् ।
बहुदरम्भुवक्त्राकरालं
दृष्टा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥

२३

*Rupam mahat te bahu vaktra netram
mahabaho bahu bahurupadam ।
bahudaram bahu damstrakaralam
drishtva lokah pravyathitastatha'ham*

23

Meaning : महाबाहो mahabaho : O Mighty-armed Krishna ! बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं bahuvaktranetram : with many mouths and eyes, बहुभाहुरूपादम् bahubahurupadam : with many arms, thighs and feet, बहुदरम् bahudaram : with many stomachs, बहुदंष्ट्राकरालम् bahudamshtrakaralam : fearful with many tusks, ते te : Thine, महत् mahat : immeasurable, रूपं rupam : Form (Cosmic), दृष्टा drishtva : having seen, लोकाः lokah : the worlds, प्रव्यथिताः pravyathitah : are terrified, तथा tatha : so also, अहम् aham : I.

Substance : O Mighty-armed Krishna ! With many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs and feet, with many stomachs, fearful with many tusks, having seen Thy magnificent Form, the worlds tremble with fear and so also I.

24. नभः स्पृशं दीसमनेकवर्णं

व्यात्ताननं दीसविशालनेत्रम् ।

दृष्टा हि त्वा प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा

धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥

२४

*Nabhah prisam diptam aneka varnam
vyattananam dipta visala netram ।
dristva hi tvam pravyathitantaratma
dhritim na vindami samam cha vishno ॥*

24

Meaning : विष्णो *vishno* : O Vishnu ! नभः स्पृशं *nabhah prisam* : touching the sky, दीसम् *diptam* : radiant, अनेकवर्णम् *anekavarnam* : of many colours, व्यात्ताननम् *vyattananam* : with mouths wide open, दीसविशालनेत्रम् *diptavisalanetram* : with eyes large and fiery, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, दृष्टा *dristva* : having seen, प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा *pravyathitantaratma* : struck with terror, अहम् *aham* : I, धृतिम् *dhritim* : courage, शमम् च *samam cha* : and peace, न विन्दामि हि *na vindamihi* : I do not find.

Substance : Having seen Thy Cosmic Form, touching the sky, flaming in many colours, with mouths wide open, with large and fiery eyes, terrified at heart I find not either courage or peace.

25. दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि

दृष्टैव कालानलसन्धिभानि ।

दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म

प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥

२५

*Damstrakaralani cha te mukhani
dristvai'va kalanalasannibhani ।
diso na jane na labhe cha sarma
prasida devesa jaganniyasa ॥*

25

Meaning : दंष्ट्राकरालानि *damshtrakaralani* : horrid with tusks, कालानल सन्निमानि च *kalanalasannibhani cha* : and blazing like the fire of Pralaya, ते *te* : Thy, मुखानि *mukhani* : mouths, दृष्टा *drishtva* : having seen, दिशः *disah* : the four quarters, न जाने *na jane* : I do not find (utterly stunned), शर्म च *sarma cha* : and peace, न लभे एव *na labhe eva* : also I do not find, देवेश *devesa* : O Lord of the Gods ! जगन्निवास *jagannivasa* : Abode of the Universe ! प्रसीद *prasida* : be gracious.

Substance : Having seen Thy mouths, horrid with tusks, blazing like the Fire of *Pralaya*, I do not see the four quarters nor find peace; Be gracious, O Lord of the Gods ! Abode of the Universe !

26. अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः
सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ
सहासदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥

27. वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति
दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु
संद्रियन्ते चूर्णैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७ ॥

*Ami cha tvam dhritarastrasya putrah
sarve salai'va'vanipalasanghah!
bhishmo dronah sutaputras tatha'sau
saha'smadiyairapi yodhamukhyaih ॥*

26

*Vaktrani te tvaramana visanti
damstrakaralani bhayanakani ।
kechid vilagna dasanantareshu
samdrisyante churnitair uttamangaih ॥*

27

Meaning : अमी *ami* : those, धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः *dhritarashtrasya-putrah* : the sons of Dhritarashtra, सर्वे *sarve* : all, भीष्मः *bhishmah* : Bhishma, द्रोणः *dronah* : Drona, अर्जौ इत्युपासाः *asau-sutaputraḥ* : this Karna (son of the charioteer), अवनिपालसंघैः *avani palasanghaḥ* : with the hosts of the Kings of the earth, सह *saha* : together, एव *eva* : even, तथा *tatha* : also, अस्मदीयैः *asmadiyaiḥ* : with those of our, योधमुख्यैः अपि याः *yodhamukhyaiḥ* *apisah* : with the chief-warriors, स्वाम् *svam* : thee, त्वरमाणाः *tvaramanah* : hurrying, दंश्ट्रकारालानि *damshtrakaralani* : fearful with tusks, भयानकानि *bhayanyakani* : terrifying, ते *te* : Thy, वक्त्राणि *vaktrani* : mouths, विश्वान्ति *visanti* : enter, केचित् *kechit* : some, दशनान्तरेषु *dasanantareshu* : in the gates between the teeth, विलग्नाः *vilagnah* : sticking, चूर्णितैः *churnitaiḥ* : crushed to powder, उत्तमाङ्गैः *uttamangaiḥ* : with their heads, संदृश्यन्ते *sandrishyante* : are found.

Substance : All the sons of Dhritarashtra, together with the hosts of the Kings of the earth, Bhism, Drona and Karna, and also together with the chief warriors on our side, enter hurrying into Thy mouths fearful with tusks and horrid, some caught in the gates between the teeth are found with their heads crushed to powder.

Commentary : In *Paramatma* who is Time, there is no division of past, present and future. Therefore Arjuna sees in the Cosmic-Form the whole vision of the future. He finds the Kauravas, the Kings, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and also the warrior-chiefs on his own side, hurrying into the horrid mouth of the Lord. What does this mean ? All beings come out of the Lord and go back into Him. All time is one universal present for the Lord. He is Time, He is beyond Time. The idea of the division of Time is created in Him.

The vision of Arjuna should be a revelation to every human being. All that appears to exist in the various shapes and

forms as wife, children, wealth and possessions, Kingdoms and powers, are crushed to death under the mighty chariot wheel of Time. Nothing remains of the fond illusions which the little mind of man is dreaming of in this world. Knowing this, who will cling to them desperately? He knows that they will pass off like summer clouds. Then will arise true dispassion (*Vairagya*), when man frees himself from the thousand bonds of earthly attachments and connections.

To see the future in the present is Knowledge. The *Jiva* visualises death and the dissolution of the body in the present moment itself. He is then free from attachment, free from fear, free from the dualities of pleasure and pain etc. He realises that the Lord alone is the Immortal Reality. Thus he becomes a true devotee and yearns for immortality and the realisation of Truth.

Therefore let all aspirants see and understand the vision of Arjuna, and become truly dispassionate amidst the wonderful delusions of earthly life.

२८. यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
तथा त्वामि नरलोकवीरा
विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥

२८

*Yatha nadinam bahavo'mbuvegah
samudram eva'bhimukha dravanti
tatha tava'mi naralokavira
visanti vaktranyabhivijvalanti*

28

Meaning : यथा *yatha* : as, नदीनाम् *nadinam* : of rivers, बहवः *bahavah* : many, अम्बुवेगाः *ambuvegah* : water-currents, समुद्रम् एव *samudram eva* : verily to the ocean, अभिमुखाः *Abhimukhah* : towards, द्रवन्ति *dravanti* : flow, तथा *tatha* : so, आमि *ami* : these, नरलोकवीराः *naralokavirah* : warriors of the earth, अभिविज्वलन्ति *abhivijvalanti* : flaming, त्वं *tava* : Thy, वक्त्राणि *vaktrani* : mouths, विशन्ति *visanti* : enter.

Substance : As the innumerable water-currents of rivers flow verily to the ocean, so these warriors of the earth enter Thy flaming mouths.

29. यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गां
 विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।
 तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोकास्तवापि
 वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥

२९

*Yatha pradiptam jvalanam patanga
 visanti nasaya samriddhavegah ।
 tathai'va nasaya visanti lokas
 tava' pi vaktrani samriddhavegah ॥*

29

Meaning : यथा *yatha* : as, पतङ्गाः *patangah* : moths, नाशाय *nasaya* : for destruction, समृद्धवेगाः *samriddhavegah* : with quickened speed, प्रदीप्तम् *pradiptam* : flaming, ज्वलनम् *jvalanam* : fire, विशन्ति *visanti* : enter, तथा *tatha* : so, एव *eva* : also, लोकाः *lokah* : the worlds, अपि *api* : even, समृद्धवेगाः *samriddhavegah* : with quickened speed, नाशाय *nasaya* : for destruction, तव *tava* : Thy, वक्त्राणि *vaktrani* : mouths, विशन्ति *visanti* : enter.

Substance : Just as moths for destruction rush into the flaming fire with quickened speed, so also these worlds rush into Thy flaming mouths for destruction with quickened speed.

30. लेलिहसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता
 छोकान्समग्रान्वदनैज्वलद्धिः ।
 तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
 भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥

३०

*Lelihyase grasamanah samantal
 lokan samagran vadanair jvaladbhih ।
 tejobhir apurya jagat samagram
 bhasas tavo'grah pratapanti vishno ॥*

30

Meaning : विष्णो विष्णु ! ज्वलद्भिः *jvaladbhih* : with flaming, वदनैः *vadanaiah* : mouths, समग्रान् *samagran* : all, लोकान् *lokan* : the worlds (beings), समन्तात् *samanat* : on all sides, प्रसमानः *grasamanah* : devouring, लेलिह्यसे *lelihyase* : you lick, तव *tava* : Thy, उग्रः *ugrah* : fierce, भासः *bhasah* : rays, तेजोभिः *tejobhīḥ* : with radiance, जगत् समग्रम् *jagat samagran* : the whole universe, आपूर्ये *apurya* : filling, प्रतपन्ति *pratapanti* : are burning.

Substance : O Vishnu ! Devouring all the worlds on all sides with Thy flaming mouths, you lick; Thy fierce rays are burning with radiance filling the whole universe.

31. आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्रहपो

नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।

विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं

न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥

३१

*Akhyahi me ko bhavan ugrarupo
namo'stu te devavara prasida
vijnatum icchami bhavantam adyam
na hi prajanami tava pravrittim ॥*

31

Meaning : देववर *devavara* : O God Supreme ! उग्ररूपः *ugrarupah* : of fierce form, भवान् *bhavan* : Thou, कः *kah* : who, मे *me* : to me, आख्यहि *akhyahi* : say, हि *hi* : because, तव प्रवृत्तिम् *tavapravrittih* : Thy action, न प्रजानामि *na prajanami* : I do not know, आद्यम् *adyam* : Original Being, भवन्तम् *bhavantam* : Thee, विज्ञातुम् *vijnatum* : to know, इच्छामि *icchami* : I wish, ते *te* : to Thee, नमः *namah* : prostrations, अस्तु *astu* : be, प्रसीद *prasida* : show mercy.

Substance : Tell me who Thou art of fierce form; Salutations to Thee, O God Supreme ! Have mercy. I know not Thy action; I wish to know Thee, the Original Being.

Commentary : The amazement of Arjuna on seeing the terrible Cosmic-Form devouring the whole universe, and the utter humility in praying to the Lord for mercy and illumination are the marks of true devotion. So should the devotee seek for the Lord's grace and mercy.

The Lord reveals who He is.

श्री भगवानुवाच

३२. कालोऽस्मि लोकशयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वा न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥

३२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Kalo'smi lokakshayakrit pravridhah
lokan samahartum iha pravrittah ।
rite'pi tva na bhavishyanti sarve
ye'avasthitah pratyanikeshu yodhah ॥*

32

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The Blessed Lord Said.

Meaning : लोकशयकृत् *lokakshayakrit* : world-destroying, प्रवृद्धः *praviddhah* : mighty, कालः *kalah* : time, अस्मि *asmi* : I am लोकान् *lokan* : worlds, समाहर्तुम् *samahartum* : to destroy, इह *iha* : here, प्रवृत्तः *pravrittah* : engaged, प्रत्यनीकेषु *pratyanikeshu* : in the hostile armies, ये योधाः *ye yodhah* : these warriors, अवस्थिताः *avasthitah* : arrayed, सर्वे *sarve* : all, त्वा *tva* : you, ऋतेऽपि *rite pi* : even without. न भविष्यन्ति *na bhavishyanti* : shall not live.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : I am Time, world-destroying and mighty, now engaged in destroying the worlds; even without you, these warriors in hostile armies shall not live.

३६. रसात्वभुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व

जित्वा शत्रूं भुक्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥

३३

*Tasmat tvam uttistha yaso labhasva
jitva satrun bhunkshva rajyam samriddham !
mayai'vai'te nihatah purvam eva
nimittamatram bhava savyasachin ॥*

33

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, त्वम् *tvam* : you, उत्तिष्ठ *uttishtha* : stand up, शत्रूं *satrun* : enemies, जित्वा *jitva* : having conquered, यशः *yasah* : fame, लभस्व *labhasva* : obtain, समृद्धम् *samriddham* : unrivalled, राज्यम् *rajyam* : Kingdom, भुक्ष्व *bhunkshva* : enjoy, एते *ete* : these, यथा एव *maya eva* : even by Me, पूर्वम् *purvam* : already, एव *eva* : even, निहताः *nihatah* : destroyed, निमित्तमात्रम् भव *nimittamatram bhava* : a mere instrument be, सव्यसाचिन् *savyasachin* : O Arjuna !

Substance : Therefore, stand up and obtain glory ! Conquer the enemies, and enjoy unrivalled Kingdom; verily, by Me they have already been slain; be you a mere instrument, O Arjuna !

Commentary : *Nimittamatram* : The Lord commands Arjuna to fight and obtain the Kingdom of glory. But He makes it clear that Arjuna is nothing more than a mere instrument in the inexorable scheme of Time, carrying out the will of God by whom all the enemy armies have already been destroyed. (*Mayaivaite nihatah purvam eva*). The very cause of Arjuna's grief is the deluded feeling that he is the doer, and that he is to kill his relations and friends.

The Lord now reveals to him that he is not the slayer, but that the Lord in the Cosmic Form of Time, has already destroyed them, and that Arjuna is to be merely an instrument. It is the greatest secret to know that man is not really the doer. The

sense of doership is the cause of bondage. (*ahamkaravimudhatma kartahamiti manyate* 3-27). It is the Lord with His inscrutable power of *Maya*, that does every thing. Knowing this the wise man is not deluded. By giving up the thought of doership, man releases himself from the bondage of *Karma* and attains the liberated state.

Savyasachin : Arjuna was capable of using the arrows with his left hand also.

34. द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥

३४

*Dronam cha bhismam cha jayadratham cha
karnam tatha'nyan api yodhaviran ।
maya hatamstvam jahi ma vyathistha
yudhyasva jetasi rane sapatnan ॥*

34

Meaning : मया *maya* : by Me, हतान् *hatan* : slain already, द्रोणम् च *dronam cha* : and Drona, भीष्मम् च *bhishmamcha* : and Bhishma, जयद्रथम् च *jayadrathamcha* : and Jayadratha, कर्णम् *karnam* : Karna, तथा *tatha* : so also, अन्यान् *anyan* : others, योधवीरान् *yodhaviran* : brave warriors, अपि *api* : even, त्वम् *tvam* : you, जहि *jahi* : do kill, मा व्यथिष्ठाः *ma vyadhishtah* : do not be distressed with fear, युध्यस्व *yudhyasva* : fight, रणे *rane* : in the battle, सपत्नान् *sapatnan* : the enemies, जेतासि *jetasi* : you shall conquer.

Substance : Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other brave warriors—these have already been slain by Me; you do kill them; be not distressed with fear; fight and you shall conquer the enemies.

Commentary : *Ma vyadhishtah* : “Do not fear”. This again is the *Mahamantra* of the Gita,—a single word into which the

essence of the Gita is distilled. Fearlessness, courage, spirit of action,—these are taught in the Gita as the main doctrines of life. Having surrendered every thing to the Lord, having understood that He is the real actor in this wonderful drama of life, why should man fear, when he is working as a mere instrument in the hands of God ? Self-surrender and righteous action cannot have the seeds of fear in them. Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to carry out his duty without any fear. In daily life man is caught in fearful circumstances, and confronted with formidable obstacles. Every one knows this. In such moments, if the Lord's exhortation is remembered, man is inspired with a higher power which will enable him to overcome all the obstacles in the way. No one should give up his duty out of fear. "Yudhyasya" (fight)—that is what the Lord wants every one to do, according to his status in life. The duties of life are prescribed for all, and each man has to perform them without fear or cowardice. The word 'jetasi' (you shall conquer) declares victory as the fruit of action. Thus, if a man surrenders himself to the Lord, and fights the battle of life righteously, he is sure to obtain victory. Where Sri Krishna is, there is victory.

Though Bhishma and others are still alive, the Lord declares them to be 'already dead' (*hatah*). What does this mean ? In the 27th verse, the secret has been revealed. The Lord is Time, not time as we see it divided into past, present and future, but Eternity in which there cannot be any of these divisions manufactured by the limited mind of man. The past, present and future are one in Eternal Time. So the future of man is easily foreseeable by the divine vision. So the enemy warriors are dead already, killed by the Lord, in the Cosmic aspect of Time. Man should learn a great lesson from this. He will find that what he is considering worthy and pleasant, all the relations and friends, all the treasures and loves and hatreds, are already dead and gone, though appearing to live. Death then loses its power over the wise man who regards everything as entering the blazing mouths of the Cosmic Form. The worlds are also dead and gone. Why then this clinging to a little bit of flesh ? Why then weep and wail for the loss of this or that ? Time takes away all. Nay, it is all taken away already. Thus

knowing, the wise man is not deluded. Renunciation (*Vairagya*) comes to him spontaneously. Lord Buddha thought of this inevitable sequence of human life, and was inspired to find out that, which does not die in the midst of death? That question comes to all at one time or other. The answer also comes in due course. The Self of man is beyond death. Realising the Self—*Atma*, man is freed from the shadow of death. He acquires immortality in the Lord.

Sanjaya now reports what Arjuna did afterwards.

सञ्जय उवाच

३५. एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य
कृताञ्जलिवप्यमानः किरीटी ।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं
सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥

३५

Samjaya uvacha

*Etachrutva vachanam kesavasya
kritanjalir vepmanah kiriti ।
namaskritva bhuya eva'ha krishnam
sagadgadam bhitabhitah pranamya ॥*

35

सञ्जय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning: किरीटी *kiriti* : Arjuna. केशवस्य *kesavasya* : of Krishna, एतत् *etat* : this, वचनम् *vachanam* : word, श्रुत्वा *srutva* : having heard, वेपमानः *vepmahanah* : trembling, कृताञ्जलिः *kritanjaliḥ* : joining the palms, कृष्णम् *krishnam* : to Krishna, नमस्कृत्वा *namaskritya* : having bowed down, भीतभीतः *bhitabhitah* : overwhelmed with fear, प्रणम्य *pranamya* : prostrating, सगद्गदम् *sagadgadam* : in a choked voice, भूयः एव *bhuayah eva* : also again, आह *aha* : spoke (thus).

Substance : Sanjaya said :— Having heard that speech of Kesava, the crowned one (Arjuna), with joined palms, trembling,

prostrating himself, again addressed Krishna, in a choked voice, bowing down, overwhelmed with fear.

Commentary : The perfect devotion of Arjuna is revealed here. His adoration, his humility, his sense of fear in the Mighty Presence, his prostrations and salutations in various ways, show how devotion expresses itself in the heart of a man who has surrendered himself to the Lord.

The following eleven verses are Arjuna's prayer to the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

36. स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या
 जगत्प्रहृष्ट्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।
 रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति
 सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥

३६

Arjuna uvacha

*Sthane hrisikesa tava prakirtya
 jagat prahrisyatyanurajyate cha ।
 rakshamsi bhitani diso dravanti
 sarve namasyanti cha siddhasamghah ॥* 36

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : हृषीकेश *hrishikesa* : O Krishna ! तव *tava* : Thy, प्रकीर्त्या *prakirtya* : with (Thy) praise (the utterance of Thy name, power and greatness), जगत् *jagat* : the universe, प्रहृष्ट्यति *prahrisyati* : is delighted, अनुरज्यते च *anurajyate cha* : and rejoices, रक्षांसि *rakshamsi* : the Rakshasas, भीतानि *bhitani* : in fear, दिशः *disah* : to all quarters, द्रवन्ति *dravanti* : fly, सर्वे सिद्धसङ्घाः *sarve siddhasamghah* : all the hosts of Siddhas, नमस्यन्ति च *namasyanti cha* : and bow to Thee, स्थाने *sthane* : it is meet.

Substance : Arjuna said : It is but meet, O Krishna ! that the world delights and rejoices in thy praise; the *Rakshasas* fly in fear to all quarters; and all the hosts of Siddhas bow to thee.

Commentary : *Tava prakirtya* : The world is delighted and great joy fills the heart of the devotee by thinking and speaking of the wonderful glory, power and grandeur of the Lord. The whole universe is His; nay, He is Himself the whole universe. What wonderful manifestation of His inscrutable, mystic, mysterious Power ! (*Yogamaisvaram*). To utter His name, to contemplate His Glory is the source of True joy for the world. The devotees who thus spend their life in divinity are indeed blessed.

Rakshamsi : The *Rakshasas* fly to all quarters in fear. Where the Lord is manifesting there cannot exist the *tamasic* and *Asuric* forces. It also means that *kama* and *krodha*, the eternal enemies of mankind, cannot corrupt and pollute the heart of a true devotee. They fly in fear.

Siddhasamghah : The *Sattvic* forces find strength and joy in the presence of the Lord. They bow down to Him.

It is said that this verse contains many ‘*bijaksharams*’, and so by repeating it a prescribed number of times, all evil spirits that harass mankind are deterred and driven away.

37. कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्
गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
त्वमक्षरं सदसत्त्वरं यत् ॥

३७

*Kasmaccha te na nameran mahatman
gariyase brahmaṇo'pyadikartre ।
ananta devesa jagannivasa
tvam aksharam sad asat tat param yat ॥*

37

Meaning : महात्मन् *mahatman* : O Great Lord ! अनन्त *ananta* : O Infinite Lord ! देवेश *devesa* : Supreme God !

जगन्निवास *jagannivasa* : Abode of the universe ! सत् *sat* : Being, असत् च *asat cha* : and non-being, यत् *yat* : which, तत् *tat* : that (Thou art), परम् *param* : Supreme, अक्षरम् *aksharam* : Imperishable, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, ब्रह्मणः *brahmanah* *api* : of even Brahma (creator), आदिकर्त्रे *adikartre* : the primal cause, गरीयसे *gariyase* : greater (than all), ते *te* : thy, कस्मात् *kasma* : why, न नमेत्वं *na nameran* : not they prostrate,

Substance : O Great Lord ! And why should not they bow down to Thee, greater (than all), of Brahma even, the primal cause, O Infinite Lord ! Lord of Gods ! Abode of the Universe ! Thou art the Imperishable, being and non-being, and what is Supreme, (higher than *Sat* and *Asat*) that Thou art.

Commentary : *Sadasat tatparam* : *Paramatma* is distinct from *Sat* and *Asat*. *Sat* means the world of matter (*sthula jagat*) and *Asat* the subtle world of mind (*sukshma jagat*). *Paramatma* is distinct from both. Or, *Sat* may be taken to mean ‘mind’ and *Asat* the ‘body’. Thus taken also, we get the same idea. From the standpoint of *Paramatma*, both the physical and mental worlds do not exist. *Paramatma* alone is. Therefore it is declared here that He is distinct from both. He is the Supreme.

Question : What is the nature of *Paramatma* ?

Answer : He is Supreme, Primal cause of Brahma, Infinite, Lord of Gods, abode of the Universe, Imperishable, distinct from body and mind.

38. त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥

३८

*Tvam adidevah purushah puranas
tvamasya visvasya param nidhanam ।
vettasi vedyam cha param cha dhama
tvaya tatam visvam ananta rupa ॥*

38

Meaning : अनन्तरूप् *anantarupa* : O Lord of Infinite Form, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, आदिदेवः *adidevah* : the Primal God, पुराणः *puranah* : the Ancient, पुरुषः *purushah* : Purusha, अस्य विश्वस्य *asya visvasya* : of this Universe, परम् *param* : Supreme, निधानम् *nidhanam* : refuge, वेत्ता *vetta* : knower, वेद्यम् च *vedyam cha* : and that which is to be known, परं च धाम *param cha dhama* : and Supreme Abode, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, असि *asi* : (thou) art, त्वया *tvaya* : by thee, विश्वम् *visvam* : the Universe, ततम् *tatam* : is pervaded.

Substance : Thou art the first of the Gods, most Ancient *Purusha*; Thou art the supreme receptacle of all that lives; Thou art the knower and known, the Abode Supreme; by Thee the Universe is pervaded, O Thou of Cosmic-Form !

Question : How is *Paramatma* further described ?

Answer : He is (1) First of the Gods, (2) Ancient Purusha, (3) the foundation of the world, (4) Omniscient, (5) that which is to be known, (6) Supreme Abode, (7) Pervading the whole world, (8) Infinite in Form.

39. वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः
प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः
पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥

३९

*Vayur yamo'gnir varunah sasankah
prajapatistvam prapitamahas cha ।
namo namaste'stu sahasrakritvah
punas cha bhuyo'pi namo namaste ॥*

39

Meaning : वायुः *vayuh*: Vayu, यमः *yamah*: Yama, अग्निः *agnih*: Agni, वरुणः *varunah* : Varuna, शशाङ्कः *sasankah* : Moon, प्रजापतिः *prajapathi* : Prajapati, प्रपितामहः च *prapitamah cha* : and great grandsire, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou (art), ते, ते : to Thee,

सहस्रकृत्वः sahasra kritvah : thousand times, नमो नमः namo-namah : salutations, अस्तु astu : be, ते te : to Thee, पुनः च punah cha : and again, नमः namah : salutations, भूयः अपि bhuyah api : also again, नमः namah : salutations.

Substance : Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the Moon, Prajapati, and great grandsire of all; salutations, salutations to thee again and again, and once again salutations, a thousand times salutations unto Thee !

Commentary : Such ecstatic devotion is essential for all aspirants to God-realisation.

40. नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते

नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।

अनन्तवीर्यामित विक्रमस्त्वं

सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥

४०

*Namah purastad atha pristhataste
namo'stu te sarvata eva sarva'
ananta viryamita vikramas tvam
sarvam samapnoshi tato'si sarvah ॥*

40

Meaning : सर्वं sarya : O All, पुरस्ताद् purastat , before, पृष्ठतः pristhatah : behind, ते te : to Thee, नमः namah : salutations, अथ atha : also, सर्वतः sarvatah : on every side, एव eva : even, ते te : unto Thee, नमः namah : salutations, अस्तु astu : be, अनन्तवीर्यामित विक्रमः anantaviryah amita vikramah: boundless in power, measureless in strength, त्वम् tvam : Thou, सर्वम् sarvam : all, समाप्नोषि samapnoshi : pervadest (Thou), ततः tatah : wherefore, सर्वः sarvah : all, असि asi : Thou (art).

Substance : Salutations to Thee before and behind; Salutations to Thee on all sides; O All ! boundless in power and measureless in strength, Thou art pervading all, wherefore Thou art all !!

Commentary : The Lord's power is Infinite ! Who can measure Him ? If we can use our eyes and look around day or night, we can get a faint glimpse of the infinite extension of the Lord's power. The man of science is discovering infinitesimal fragment of His Divine power. The more powerful telescopes reveal more and more of the immeasurable star-worlds on all sides. The more powerful microscopes reveal infinitesimally smaller and smaller beings everywhere. So the Lord is greater than the greatest, larger than the largest, smaller than the smallest. What is man before the Divine ! Man's attempt to know God's power is just like an ant's attempt to fathom the depth of the ocean !

Man can use a fan for a whiff of breeze; God can cause a tempest ! Man can light a lamp to illumine a room, God can send forth the Sun to illumine the earth and sky ! Man can dig a well for water, God can plunge the world in a deluge, making miles around vast sheets of water ! Man can shoot a rocket into space ! God can shoot stars and planets into space. What is man's power before God's ! The rational man knows that he is nothing before God. His ego vanishes that very moment, and he prostrates himself before God, as Arjuna did in this situation. It is only the blind, little-minded, deluded men who boast of their power and position. Man grows and evolves, as his eyes are cleared of the cataract. He realises gradually the Infinity in which he is placed—Infinity before and behind; Infinity in the past and future; Infinity everywhere ! The little human being discovers the Infinite, he becomes the Infinite; contemplating the Divine, he becomes the Divine, Delusion vanishes, Man realises the Self.

The devotee sees the Lord everywhere, manifesting His inscrutable and mysterious power in a miraculous manner. He bows before Him, prostrates himself before Him, offers his adoration and worship, and thus thinking of the Lord he attains the Supreme.

Question : *How is Paramatma described further ?*

Answer : He is infinite in power, He pervades all, He is the Cosmic-Form.

41. सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात् प्रणयेन वापि ॥

४१

42. यच्चापहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥

४२

*Sakhe'ti matva prasabham yad uktam
he krishna he yadava he sakhe'ti ।
ajanata mahimanam tave'dam
maya pramadat pranayena va'pi ।*

41

*Yaccha'pahasartham asatkrito'si
vihara sayyasana bhojaneshu ।
eko'thava'pyachyuta tat samaksham
tat kshamaye tvam aham aprameyam ।*

42

Meaning : अच्युत achyuta : O Krishna ! तव tava : Thy, इद् idam : this, महिमानम् mahimanam : greatness, अजानता ajanata : not knowing, मया maya : by me, प्रमादात् pramadat : by carelessness, प्रणयेन वापि pranayena vapi : or even due to love, सखा इति sakha iti : as friend, मत्वा matva : regarding (Thee), हे कृष्ण he Krishna : O Krishna, हे यादव he yadava : O Yadava, हे सखा he sakha : O Friend, इति iti : thus, प्रसभम् prasabham : presumptuously, यत् yat : whatever, उक्तं uktam : spoken by me, विहार शय्या आसन भोजनेषु viharasayyasananabho jneshu : while at play, or on bed, while sitting or at meals, एकः ekah : (when) one, अथवा athava : or, तत् tat : that, समक्षम् samaksham : the company, अपि api : even, अपहासार्थम् apahasartham : for the sake of fun, असत्कृतः

asatkritah : disrespected, असि *asi* : Thou art, यत् च *yat cha* : and whatever, तत् *tat* : that, अप्रमेयम् *aprameyam* : Immeasurable ! त्वाम् *tvam* : Thou, अहम् *aham* : I, क्षामये *kshamaye* : implore to forgive.

Substance : Whatever I presumptuously spoke from carelessness or even affection addressing Thee as 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Sakha ! considering Thee as a friend only, not knowing this Thy greatness, in whatever way I may have disrespected Thee for the sake of fun, while at play, resting, sitting, or at meals, when alone in company with Thee—all that I implore Thee to forgive, O Thou Immeasurable One !

43. पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य

त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुगरीयान् ।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कृतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव !!

४३

Pita'si lokasya characharasya
tvam asya pujyas cha gurur gariyan ।
na tvatsamo'styabhyadhikah kuto'nyo
lokatraye'pyapratima prabhava ।

43

Meaning : अप्रतिम प्रभाव *apratimaprabhava* : O God of unequalled power ! त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, चराचरस्य *characharasya* : of the moving and the unmoving, अस्य लोकस्य *asya lokasya* : of this world, पिता *pita* : father, असि *asi* : art, च *cha* : and, अस्य *asya* : of this, पूज्यः *pujyah* : revered, गरीयान् *gariyan* : weightier, गुरुः *guruḥ* : teacher, लोकत्रये अपि *lokatraye api* : even in the three worlds, त्वत् समः *tvat samah* : equal to Thee, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, अभ्यधिकः *abhyadhikah* : surpassing Thee, अन्यः *anyah* : another, कुतो *kutah* : whence.

Substance : Thou art the father of this world, the moving and the unmoving; Thou art the great Guru; equal to

Thee, there is none; whence another higher than Thee in the three worlds ? O God of unequalled power !

Commentary : The Lord has already declared that He is the Father, Mother, Grandsire, of the universe. Arjuna understands the truth now, and worships the Lord as Father and *Guru*. He is the highest *Guru*, the *Guru* of *Gurus*, the Universal Master (*Jagadguru*). The Lord is the only reality, and all else is '*asat*' non-existing illusion. This being so, how can there be anything equal or greater than the Lord ? He is the final refuge for all beings.

Question : *How is Paramatma further described ?*

Answer : He is the father of the world, the most revered, the highest *Guru*, of incomparable power in all the worlds, having none equal or superior.

44. तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं

प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीच्चम् ।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः

प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोद्धम् ॥

४४

*Tasmat pranamya pranidhaya kayam
prasadaye tvam aham isam idyam ।
pite'va putrasya sakhe'va sakhyuh
priyah priyaya'rhasi deva sodhum ॥*

44

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, कायम् *kayam* : body, अहम् *aham* : I, प्रणिधाय *pranidhaya* : having bent, प्रणम्य *pranamya* : saluting, ईशम् *isam* : the Lord, ईच्चम् *idyam* : the Adorable, त्वाम् *tvam* : thee, प्रसादये *prasadaye* : crave forgiveness, देव *deva* : O God, पुत्रस्य *putrasya* : of the son, पिता इव *pita iva* : like father, सख्युः *sakhyuh* : of the friend, सखाइव *sakha iva* : like friend, प्रियायः *priyayah* : to the beloved, प्रियः *priyah* : lover, सोद्धम् *sodhum* : bear, अर्हसि *arhasi* : thou shouldst.

Substance : O God ! Therefore bowing down and prostrating I crave Thee forgiveness; like father the son, like friend the friend, like lover the beloved, Thou shouldst forgive me, O Adorable Lord !

Commentary : *Pranidhayakayam* : The manner of prostration before elders, *Gurus* and God, is described here. The whole body should touch the earth. This is '*Sashtangavandanam*'. By this, the intractable ego, feeding itself on pride and presumption, is killed. As the ego flourishes by identity with the body, the way to destroy it is by throwing down the body before elders, *Gurus* and God. Arjuna did so and received God's grace, Sage Visvamitra prostrated himself before Vasishtha and became a Brahmarshi.

Arjuna had a glimpse of the infinite majesty, power and Glory of the Lord. Himself a warrior of might and repute in the world, he now fully realises that he is less than straw before the mighty Lord. The '*durahankara*' that agitates man is nothing else but '*avidya*', and it functions by making man blind to the infinity that surrounds him and in which he exists just like the bubble in the ocean. How would we look upon the bubble if it feels proud of its power and glamour ! We laugh at the silly little thing, knowing that its glamour is only for a second, that it will break and dissolve in the ocean. So would man think of himself when wisdom dawns on him. The infinitude of the Lord and the utter littleness of man is realised by the aspirant by contemplating the Glory of that mighty Being. The *Vibhuti Yoga* and *Viswarupa Sandarsana Yoga* serve the purpose of destroying the little 'I' and raising man to the plane of Divine Glory. The ecstatic adoration of Arjuna touches the peak point here. May all people rise to that plane ! May all receive God's grace !

Question : *How is the Lord further described ?*

Answer : He is the ruler and the Lord of the world. He is the most revered of all.

Question : *How should man show respect to elders, [God and Gurus ?*

Answer : He should prostrate himself before them with true devotion and humility.

45. अदृष्टपूर्व हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्टा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥

४५

*Adristapurvam hrishito'smi dristva
bhayena cha pravyathitam mano me ।
tad eva me darsaya deva rupam
prasida devesa jagannivasa ॥*

45

Meaning : अदृष्टपूर्वम् *adrishtapurvam* : not seen before (this Cosmic-Form), दृष्टा *drishtya* : having seen, हृषितः *hrishitah* : delighted, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, च *cha* : and, मे *me* : my, मनः *manah* : mind, भयेन *bhayena* : with fear, प्रव्यथितम् *pravyathitam* : is distressed, देव *deva* : O God ! तत् रूपम् एव *tat rupam eva* : that form only (pleasing), मे *me* : to me, दर्शय *darsaya* : show, देवेश *devesa* : Lord of Gods ! जगन्निवास *jagannivasa* : Abode of the world ! प्रसीद *prasida* : have mercy.

Substance : Having seen what was never seen before (the Cosmic-Form), I am delighted and yet my mind with fear is distressed; show me that former form only. O God ! Have mercy, O Lord of Gods ! abode of the Universe !

Commentary : Arjuna was delighted and at the same time struck with terror by the Cosmic-Form of the Lord. The full manifestation of the Lord should be terrifying indeed, when the Lord appears as Time, the Destroyer. Even Arjuna was fear-struck and distressed. So he wishes to see the Lord in His former pleasing form.

Prasida : In the 25th verse, Arjuna makes the same appeal.

Tadeva rupam : Some interpret the words to mean the four-armed form of Vishnu.

Arjuna declares the form that he wishes to see.

46. किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त

पिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन
सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥

४६

*Kiritinam gadinam chakrahastam
icchami tvam drashtum aham tathai'va !
tenai'va rupena chaturbhujena
sahasrabaho bhava visvamurte ॥*

46

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, तथा एव *tathā eva* : as formerly, किरीटिनम् *kiritinam* : with Crown, गदिनम् *gadinam* : bearing the mace, चक्रहस्तम् *chakrahastam* : with discus in the hand, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum*: to see, इच्छामि *icchami*: (I) wish, सहस्रबाहो *sahasra baho* : O thousand-armed, विश्वमूर्ते *visvamurte* : O Universal Form ! चतुर्भुजेन *chaturbhujena* : with four arms, तेन रूपेण एव *tena rupena eva* : that form only, भव *bhava* : be.

Substance : I desire to see Thee as before, with crown, mace, and discuss in Thy former four-armed form only. Appear, O Thousand-armed ! O Universal Form !

Commentary : A question arises in this verse. When Arjuna says, “*tenaiva rupena chaturbhujena*,” it is implied that he has seen this delightful form before ? If so, when did he see this form ? It appears from his imploring the Lord to forgive him for any word or act of disrespect to Him, that he has not formerly realised the Divinity of the Lord, but regarded him as a friend and relation. This contradiction can be reconciled in the following way.

(1) Before the Lord revealed His Cosmic-Form, He should have shown the four-armed form of Vishnu. In the 50th verse; it is said that the Lord appeared again in His normal form,

(*bhuyah svakam rupam darsyamasa*), and also that the Lord appeared in His gentle form (*punah saumyavapur' mahatma*). Thus we come to know that the Lord had shown the four-armed form of Vishnu just before he assumed the Visvarupa.

(2) Arjuna might have heard that when the Lord was born to Devaki, He appeared in the form of Vishnu with Discuss, Conch and Crown etc.

(3) By seeing the Cosmic-Form, Arjuna realises that he is no other than the Supreme Lord Vishnu who rules Vaikunta, in His delightful form.

The Lord declares the might of the Cosmic Form before He assumes His normal Form.

श्री भगवानुवाच

47. मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥

४७

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Maya prasannena tava'rjune'dam
rupam param darsitam atmayogat ।
tejomayam visvam anantam adyam
yan me tvad anyena na dristapurvam ॥*

47

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : Sri Bhagavan said.

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna, तेजोमयम् *tejomayam*: mass of radiance, विश्वम् *visvam* : the universal form, अनन्तम् *anantam* : endless, आद्यम् *adyam*: primal, त्वत् अन्येन *tvad anyena*: by no one other than you, न दृष्टपूर्वम् *na drishtapurvam* : not seen before, मे *me*: My, यत् इदं परम् रूपम् *yat idam param rupam*: what this supreme form, तत् *tat* : that (Cosmic-Form), प्रसन्नेन मया *prasannena maya* : by my grace, तव *tava* : to you,

आत्मयोगात् *atmayogat* : by My Sovereign Yoga, दर्शितम् *darsitam* : was revealed.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! This Supreme Form was shown to you graciously by me by My Sovereign yoga,-full of radiance, primeval, infinite, universal form, which has never been seen before by any one other than you.

Commentary : *Maya prasannena* : It is clear that the Lord showers His grace on his devotees who worship Him with single-minded devotion.

Question : *What is the nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : He is radiant, all-pervasive, infinite and primeval.

48. न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्दानैर्न
च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
एवं रूपः सक्य अहं नृलोके
द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥

48

*Na vedayajnadhyyayanair na danair
na cha kriyabhir na tapobhir ugraibh ।
evam rupah sakya aham nriloke
drashtum tvad anyena kurupravira ॥*

48

Meaning : कुरुप्रवीर *kurupravira* : Hero of the Kurus, O Arjuna ! एवम् रूपम् *evam rupam* : in this form, अहम् *aham* : I, नृलोके *nriloke* : in the world of men, त्वदन्येन *tvadanyena* : by any other than you, वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैः *vedayajnadhyyayanaih* : with Vedic study, yajnas, study of the scripture, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum* : to see, न शक्यः *na sakyah* : is not possible, दानैः *danaih* : with charity, न *na* : not (possible to see), क्रियाभिः *kriyabhih* : with rites and rituals (Agnihotra, Srauta, Smarta), न *na* : not (possible to see), उग्रैः तपोभिः च *ugraibh tapobhih cha* : and with severe austerities, न *na* : not (possible to see).

Substance : O Arjuna, hero of the Kurus ! This Cosmic Form of mine, no one other than you has seen in the world of men (by My grace you have seen It); and it is impossible to see Me in this Form, by Vedic study, by sacrifices, by rites and rituals, and even by terrible austerities.

Commentary : It should not be misunderstood that Vedic study, *yajnas* and other rites and rituals prescribed in the *Sastras* are all useless. Without devotion to the Lord, these acts do not yield the highest results. Austerity by itself cannot lead to God-realisation without devotion (*Bhakti*). Whatever may be the efforts unless the field is watered, there is no harvest. So also the works of men bear no fruit without devotion.

49. मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो

दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीद्यमेदम् ।

व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं

तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥

४९

*Ma te vyatha ma cha vimudhabhavo
dristva rupam ghoram idrin mame'dam ।
vyapetabhih pritamanah punas tvam
tad eva me rupam idam prapasya ॥*

49

Meaning : ईदृक् *idrik* : such, घोरम् *ghoram* : terrible, मम *mama* : My, इदंरूपम् *idam rupam* : this Cosmic Form, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : having seen, ते *te* : to you, व्यथा *ma* : distress be not, विमूढ भावः च मा *vimudhabhavah cha* : and bewildered state be not, त्वम् *tvam* : you, व्यपेतभीः *vyapetabhih* : free from fear, प्रीतमनाः *pritamanah* : of gladdened heart, मे *me* : My, तत् इदं रूपम् *tat idam rupam* : that this (former) form (you wish to see), एव *eva* : only, पुनः *punah* : again, प्रपश्य *prapasya* : behold.

Substance : Having seen this My Cosmic Form, do not be fearstruck and bewildered in mind; free from fear and with gladdened heart, behold again this former form (that you wish to see).

Sanjaya now narrates what the Lord did afterwards.

सञ्जय उवाच

50. इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमैवं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्गहात्मा ॥

५०

Samjaya uvacha

*Ityarjunam vasudevas tatho'ktva
svakam rupam darsayam asa'bhuayah
asvasayam asa cha bhitam enam
bhutva punah saumyavapu mahatma ॥*

50

सञ्जय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : इति *iti.* : thus, वासुदेवः *vasudevah* : Krishna, अर्जुनम् *arjunam* : to Arjuna, उक्त्वा *uktva* : having spoken, तथा *tatha* : so, स्वकं रूपम् *svakam rupam* : His own form, भूयः *bhuayah* : again, दर्शयामास *darsyamasa* : showed, महात्मा *mahatma* : the great-souled Lord, पुनः च *punah cha* : and again, सौम्यवपुः *saumyavapuh* : gracious form, भूत्वा *bhutva* : having taken, भीतम् *bhitam* : terrified, एवम् *enam* : Arjuna, आश्वासयामास *asvasayamasa* : consoled.

Substance : Sanjaya said : (O King Dhritarashtra !)—the Lord having thus spoken to Arjuna showed His gracious form again; and the great-souled Lord, having assumed His graceful form, consoled the terror-struck Arjuna.

Commentary : It is twice said here that the Lord showed His gracious form—the first may be the four-armed form of Vishnu, and the second may be the human form of Krishna, the Charioteer.

Arjuna speaks to Krishna.

. अर्जुन उवाच

51. हस्तवेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दनं ।
इदानीमस्मि संकृतः सरेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ।

५१

Arjuna uvacha

*Dristve'dam manusham rupam tava saumyam janardana !
idanim asmi samvrittah sachetah prakritim gatah !* 51

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : जनार्दन janardana : O Krishna ! तव tava : Thy, सौम्यम् saumyam : graceful, इदं मानुषरूपम् idam manusham rupam : the human form, दृष्टि drishtva : having seen, इदानीय् idanim : now, सचेताः sachetah : of untroubled mind, संवृत्तः samvrittah : (I) have become, प्रकृतिम् prakritim : (my) natural state, गतः अस्मि gatah asmi : (I) have attained.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! having seen Thy graceful human form, my mind has become calm and untroubled and I have attained my natural state.

The Lord explains the greatness of the Cosmic Form which Arjuna had seen.

श्री भगवानुवाच

52. सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम !

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षणः ॥

५२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Sudurdarsam idam rupam dristayanasi yanmama !
deva apyasya rupasya nityam darsana kankshinah ॥* 52

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhaghavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : मम mama : My, यत् yat : what (form), दृष्टवान् असि drishtyan asi : you have seen, इदं रूपम् (tat) idam rupam : this Cosmic-form, सुदुर्दर्शम् sudurdarsam : most difficult to see, देवाः अपि devah api : even the Gods, नित्यम् nityam : always, अस्य रूपस्य asya rupasya : of this Form (Cosmic-Form), दर्शनकाङ्क्षणः darsanakankshinah (bhavati) : are ever desirous to behold.

Substance: The Blessed Lord said: This form (the Cosmic-Form) which you have seen is most difficult to see; even the Gods are ever desirous of beholding that Form.

Commentary: It is very difficult for the common man to see the Cosmic-Form of the Lord. Perfect purity of mind, stainless devotion, and an entire submission of the human personality to the Lord,--these are the essential conditions to see the Lord in His Cosmic aspect. Therefore it is said 'sudurdarsam' and not merely 'durdarsam.' The idea is that very few could see God in His universal aspect.

53. नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।

शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥

५३

Na'ham vedair na tapasa na danena na che'jvaya ।

sakya evamvidho drashtum drishtavan asi mam yatha ॥

53

Meaning: माम् *mam* : Me, यथा *yatha* : how, दृष्टवान् *drishtavan* : who has seen, असि *asi*, दृष्टवान् *drishtavan asi* : you have seen, एवं विधः *evam vidha* : like this, अहम् *aham* : I, वेदैः *vedaih* : by Vedic study, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum* : to see, न शक्यः *na sakyah* : not possible, तपसा *tapasa* : by austerity, न *na* : not (possible to see), दानेन *danena* : by charity, न *na* : not (possible to see), इज्यया *iyyaya* : by sacrifice, न च *na cha* : and not (possible to see).

Substance: That Form of Mine, which you have seen, is not possible to behold either by Vedic study or by austerity, or by charity or by sacrifice.

Commentary: The same idea as in the 48th verse is emphasised here. Good in themselves, these practices like Vedic study, charity, etc., do not yield the highest reward of God-realisation without devotion (*Bhakti*).

The Lord declares the open path to God-realisation.

54. भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥

५४

*Bhakiya tvananyaya sakya aham evamvidho'rjuna !
jnatum drashtum cha tattvena praveshtum cha parantapa ॥ 54*

Meaning : परन्तप् *parantapa* : O scorcher of foes अर्जुन
Arjuna : O Arjuna, एवम् विधः *evam vidhah aham* : I am of this form, अनन्य भक्त्या तु *ananya bhaktya tu* : by single-minded, devotion only, तत्त्वेन *tattvena* : in essence, ज्ञातुम् *jnatum* : to be known, द्रष्टुम् च *drashtum cha* : and to be seen, प्रवेश्टुम् च *praveshtum cha* : and entered into (attain union), सक्यः *sakyah* : possible.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I of this form become possible by single-minded devotion only, to be known, to be seen, and to be entered into, O scorcher of enemies !

Commentary : In the previous verse it was stated that God-realisation is not possible by Vedic study, sacrifices etc. In this verse, it is explained what makes union with God possible for man. This verse is therefore very important for all seekers. They should understand the full significance of the idea and realise it in practice.

It is here declared categorically that by single-minded devotion only the Lord could be known, seen, and attained. '*Ananya bhakti*' is emphasised in several places in the Gita. The mind should not be attached to anything in the objective world; it should be centred in the Lord as the sole refuge, as the most beloved and as the highest goal. Devotion that is not shared, that is not tempted away from God, that does not desire anything other than God, is single-minded devotion. Man's mind is generally possessed by worldly things and only a part of it is offered to the Lord. This is not '*ananya bhakti*'. When the mind is not distracted by anything material, it acquires divine power and thus attains the Lord.

Three stages of God-realisation are mentioned here – (1) *Jnatum*-to be known, (2) *drashtum*-to be seen, (3) *praveshtum*-to be entered into. In the beginning man acquires knowledge of

the nature of the Lord. Even this is difficult, because it requires deep study and correct understanding of the Sastras. At this stage, the Lord, though his nature is understood, is quite far-away. This is *Dwaita*. Then in the next stage the devotee is able to see the Lord face to face, have a clear vision of God in whatever form he contemplates Him. Now there is no doubt at all about His existence, because he has directly seen the Deity. The second step is higher than the first. God is seen like a leaf or fruit in one's own hand. This is nearly the state of *Visishtadvaita*.

After long and arduous practice the devotee becomes united with the Lord (*Praveshtum*). Like salt in water, like rain drops in the ocean, like water in milk, the devotee is merged in the Lord. Then there are no two entities, the devotee and the Lord. The Lord alone is. This is the highest stage. This is perfect *Advaita*. The aspirant should not stop anywhere till this highest goal is reached. The first is the nearness of God (*samipya*), the second is the vision of God (*sarupya*) and the third is union with God (*sayujya*). The natural progress of man towards God is explained thus in this verse. Every aspirant should move forward from the first to the second and from the second to the last and ultimate state. It is for this reason that the Lord has stated '*Jnatum*' first, and '*drashtum*' next, and '*Praveshtum*' last.

Suppose somebody tells us that he has seen a good and beautiful, highly relishing fruit in the market. What is our reaction? We are interested to go and see the fruit and then to buy it and eat it. At first we have come to know of the fruit (*jnatum*) and next we go and see it (*drashtum*), and finally we are fully satisfied by tasting the fruit for ourselves (*Praveshtum*). The last is the state of the *Jivanmukta*, the liberated man. It is *Moksha*. We come to know of a house, see it, and then enter it. Thus one should approach God and realise Him. Everybody should attain the highest *Advaitic* realisation even in this very life. Then only he is free from the bondage of '*samsara*'.

The Upanishad says—

*“Yada hyevaisha etasminnudara mantaram
kurute atha tasya bhayam bhavati.”*

Even the slightest separation from the Lord causes fear. When there is fear of anything, it is not perfection. So every aspirant should strive to attain the Lord (*Praveshitum*) and free himself from fear.

If Vedic study alone could lead to God-realisation, the illiterates shall have to go without it. If austerity alone should lead to God-realisation the weak shall have no hope; If ‘*yajnas*’ and ‘*Dana*’ alone could lead to God, the poor shall have to be where they are. As it is declared by the Lord that by single-minded devotion alone he could be realised, every human being can aspire for God-realisation by pure and uncontaminated devotion. Thus out of His compassion, the Lord has revealed the easy path of God-realisation to all beings.

Question : *What is the way to God-realisation ?*

Answer : Single-minded devotion.

Question : *What are the stages of God-realisation ?*

Answer : (1) Knowing Him, (2) Seeing Him, (3) and being united with Him.

The Lord declares how man could attain Him.

55. मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥

५५

Matkarmakrin matparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah ।

nirvairah sarvabhuteshu yah sa mam eti pandava ॥

55

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava* : O Arjuna ! मत्कर्मकृत् *mat-karmakrit* : works for me (surrendering all actions to Me or doing work dear to Me), मत्परमः *matparamah*: looks on Me as the Supreme, the highest goal of life, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : has devotion for Me, सङ्गवर्जितः *sangavarjitah* : is freed from

attachment (desire and possession), सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : towards all creatures, निर्वािहः *nirvairah* : without hatred, यः *yah* : who, सः *sah* : he, माम् *mam* : to Me, एति *eti* : goes.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Who works for Me only, who looks on Me as the only refuge, who is devoted to Me, who is freed from attachment (to sense-objects and sense-pleasures, without any desire for them) who has no enmity to any being, he attains Me.

Commentary : It is clearly described how and by whom the Lord could be realised. Five essential qualities are mentioned here. Any being who could cultivate these qualities will attain the Lord without distinction of caste, creed, race or nationality. A potent medicine works on all who takes it. Any one can light fire if oil, wick and match are secured. So is the Lord realisable by all who cultivate divine virtues.

1) *Matkarmakrit* : This may refer to *Puja*, *Japa*, and *Dhyana* which are prescribed by the *Sastras* as methods of worshipping the Lord. Or, it may be taken to include all work (not evil work) which man offers to the Lord in a spirit of self-surrender. Such a man gradually develops purity of mind, acquires God's grace, and attains *Moksha*. In the course of one's daily life, he performs many actions, and all those should be surrendered to the Lord. Work then becomes worship. They are so transformed that they lead to liberation. Hence '*matkarmakrit*' is mentioned as the first quality of the aspirant.

2) *Matparamah* : The seeker should firstly realise that God is his sole refuge. Many people spend day and night in the pursuit of worldly objects. They are material things, perishable stuff; they cannot lead one to freedom and perfection. '*Paramatma*' alone is real. Knowing this, the seeker considers the Lord as his sole refuge. He attains God.

3) *Madbhaktah* : The man devoted to the Lord attains Him quickly. Of what avail is it to cling to mundane things which bind man and throw into the jaws of death ? Love for

God is the real thing. God is the saviour. He is the Liberator. He is alone worthy of devotion and none else.

4) *Sangavarjitaḥ* : ‘*Sanga*’ means attachment for the body and the objective world. Detachment should be practised. With the sword of non-attachment the mighty tree of ‘*samsara*’ should be cut (*asanga sastrena dhridena cchitva*-15th Discourse). Like the water-drop on the lotus-leaf, though engaged in a hundred worldly activities, man should be detached by the very power of discrimination (*Vichara*). By such detachment he attains ‘*Moksha*’.

5) *Nirvairah sarvabhuteshu* : The fifth quality is love for all beings, and freedom from enmity and hatred. It is not love for this or that being but love for all,—universal love. All beings are different forms of God (Narayanaswarupas). Harm done to any being is harm done to God. This truth is mentioned many times in the Gita (*Adveshta sirvabhuṭanam* etc.). Of what avail is it to read the Scriptures and conduct worship of God when there is hatred and jealousy in the heart. That is not practical *Vedanta*. He who takes medicine should observe the rules of diet. The above-mentioned four qualities are like medicine, and this universal love, the fifth, is like diet. One’s spiritual practice should be permeated with Universal love.

This verse is of very great importance in the Gita. Sri Sankaracharya declares it to be the highest truth in the Gita, the very essence of the Gita. It contains in a nut-shell all the different *yogas*; that which gives life to all these *yogas* is universal love.

- | | | |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>Matkarmakrit</i> | — Karma Yoga | } Medicine. |
| 2. <i>Matparamah</i> | — Dhyana Yoga | |
| 3. <i>Madbhaktah</i> | — Bhakti Yoga | |
| 4. <i>Sangavarjitaḥ</i> | — Jnana Yoga | |
| 5. <i>Nirvairassarvabhuteshu</i> : Compassion for
all beings. | | } Diet. |

Therefore the seekers should contemplate this verse again and again, and acquire all the virtues needed for self-realisation even in this birth.

Question : Who can attain God ?

Answer : He who does God's work, who takes sole refuge in Him, who is devoted to Him, who is free from desire and attachment, and who has love for all beings, attains God.

Question : What then is the path to God-realisation ?

Answer : 1) Doing work for God by surrendering all (good) actions to Him,
 2) taking refuge in Him,
 3) having utmost devotion to God,
 4) practising non-attachment,
 5) possessing love for all beings without any trace of ill-feeling towards any creature.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
 श्रीकृष्णाजुनसंवादे विश्वरूपसंदर्शनयोगो नाम
 एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
 yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Visvarupa
 Sandarsana Yogo nama ekadaso'dhyayah. ॥*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the Scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Eleventh Discourse entitled Viswarupa Sandarsana Yoga

(The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic-Form.)

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ द्वादशोऽध्यायः

Atha dvadasodhyayah

TWELFTH DISCOURSE

भक्तियोगः

BHAKTI YOGA

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

I. The title of the Discourse :

As this discourse expounds the principles of *Bhakti*, it is entitled Bhakti yoga. The nature of *Bhakti*, the qualities of the *Bhakta*, the methods of spiritual practice are mentioned here. It starts with *Bhakti* and ends with *Bhakti*, and so it is called the Yoga of Devotion.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1) Thoughts about the Divine with form and without form : | (1-5) |
| 2) The excellence of Bhakti Yoga | (6-8) |
| 3) Different spiritual practices | (9-12) |
| 4) The qualities of the <i>Bhakta</i> | (13-20) |

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

From the 2nd Discourse upto 11th, the Lord has explained in some places the knowledge of the Imperishable

Brahman, and again He has presented His manifested Form in the *Vibhuti Yoga* and the *Visvarupasandarsana Yoga*. The Lord ultimately revealed His Cosmic-Form. At the end of that Discourse, He has mentioned how the devotee could attain Him by complete devotion to Him. (*Matkarma Krit Matparamo Madbhaktah* etc). All this is the worship of God with form (*Saguna*). Arjuna who heard both the methods of worship and realisation of *Atma*, and of devotion to the Lord with Form—is perplexed as to what particular method he should choose and who is superior among these spiritual seekers-meditators on the formless Brahman or worshippers of Lord—? The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question.

Arjuna's question :

अर्जुन उवाच

१. एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥

१

Arjuna uvacha

*Evam satatayukta ye bhaktastvam paryupasate ।
ye cha'pyaksharam avyaktam tesham ke yogavittamah ॥ 1*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna Said.

Meaning : एवम् *evam* : thus, (as declared in the previous Discourse), सततयुक्तः *satatayuktah* : ever harmonised in mind, ये भक्ताः *ye bhaktah* : those devotees, त्वाम् *tvam* : You, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : worship, ये च अपि *ye cha api* : and also those, अव्यक्तम् *avyaktam* : the unmanifest (not visible to the senses and mind), अक्षरम् *aksharam*: Imperishable Brahman, (*paryupasate* : meditate upon), तेषाम् *tesham* : of the two, के *ke* : who, योगवित्तमाः *yogavittamah* : are superior knowers of *yoga* ?

Substance : Arjuna said—Thus, those who worship You, ever steadfast, and also those who meditate on the unmanifest Imperishable Brahman—of the two types of seekers, who are superior knowers of *yoga* ?

Commentary : *evam* : ('thus') : This word refers to the last verse (*matkarmakrit* etc.) in the previous Discourse.

Arjuna's question is simple and clear. Who are superior—those who worship the Divine form, as the Cosmic Manifestation, or the four-armed Vishnu, or the cowherd boy of Brindavan—(*sagunopasakas*) — or those who meditate on the formless, attributeless Brahman (*nirgunopasakas*) ? In the 2nd Discourse the Lord has declared the deathless and birthless reality of *Atma*, and in the 8th Discourse, he has explained the *Nirguna* aspect as Imperishable Brahman. It is quite natural for Arjuna to question the Lord about the superior excellence of either of the two. Arjuna's question is the question of all seekers in the world—which is the better method of worship—*Saguna* or *Nirguna*?

The Lord answer the question and clears all doubts.

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥

२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Mayyavesya mano ye mam nitya yukta upasate
sraddhaya parayo' petas te me yuktatama matah ॥ 2*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : मयि *mayi* : in Me, मनः *manah* : mind, आवेश्य *avesaya* : established, नित्ययुक्ताः *nitya yuktaḥ* : ever thinking of God (centered only in God), परया *paraya* : with supreme, श्रद्धया *sraddhaya* : faith, उपेताः *upetah* : endowed, ये *ye* : who, माम् *mam* : Me, उपासने *upasate* : worship, ते *te* : they, युक्ततमाः *yuktatamah* : (are) the highest yogis, मे मताः *me mataḥ* : (is) my opinion.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : With mind established in Me, ever steadfast in their devotion, endowed with the highest faith, those who worship Me, they are in my opinion, the best of yogis.

Commentary: The Lord answers Arjuna's question about the superiority of the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* worshippers. The Lord declares that who-so-ever worships Him with supreme faith and single-minded concentration, he is the best of *yogis*. Three aspects of spiritual practice are mentioned here.

1. Establishing the mind in the Lord,
2. ever thinking of Him,
3. having firm faith in God.

Whoever possesses these three qualities is the best of *yogis*. Whether he is a *Saguna* or *Nirguna* worshipper or whether he is a *sannyasi* or house-holder—these distinctions have no significance at all. The Lord's amazing insight into spiritual Truth is revealed here. Devotion, faith and concentrated effort—these are emphasised as the final determining factors in spiritual life, and not the path or method of worship.

The Lord speaks of the worshippers of Nirguna Brahman :

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 3. | ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमध्यक्षं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ | ३ |
| 4. | संनियमेन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ | ४ |

*Ye tvaksharam anirdesyam avyaktam paryupasate ।
sarvatragam achintyam cha kutastham achalam dhruvam ॥ 3*

*Samniyamye'ndriyagramam sarvatra samabuddhayah ।
te prapnuvanti mam eva sarva bhuta hite ratah ॥ 4*

Meaning : ये तु *ye tu* : verily those, इन्द्रियग्रामम् *indriya-gramam* : the aggregate of the senses, संनियम्य *samniyamya* : having well restrained, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : every where, समबुद्धयः *samabuddhayah* : even-minded, सर्वभूतहितेरताः *sarvabhuta hiteratah* : rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, अनिर्दश्यम् *anirdesyam* : indefinable, अव्यक्तम् *avyaktam* : the unmanifest, not percep-

tible to the senses, or which cannot be apprehended by any known standards (Nirguna Brahman), अचिन्त्यम् *achintyam* : beyond thought, कुटस्थम् *kutastam* : changeless (the foundation for the world), अचलम् *achalam* : immovable, ध्रुवम् *dhruvam* : eternal, सर्वत्रगम् च *sarvatragamcha* : and all-pervading, अक्षरम् *Ashram* : the imperishable, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : worship, meditate upon, ते *te* : they, माम् एव *mam vea* : Me alone, प्राप्नुवन्ति *prapnuvanti* : attain.

Substance : Those who, having restrained well all the senses, even-minded everywhere, rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, meditate on the indefinable, eternal, all-pervading and Imperishable Brahman—they attain Me alone.

Commentary : One *Paramatma* is both with form and without form (*Saguna* and *Nirguna*), and so the goal of both forms of worship is the same. Whatever may be the method of worship, if it is practised with faith and devotion, man reaches *Paramatma*. These two verses deal with persons who seek for *Nirguna Para Brahman*. The first verse states the attributes of the Imperishable Brahman and the second the qualities necessary for the aspirant for such realisation. Even though the seeker carries on his meditation on the formless Brahman, yet, if he does not possess purity of mind, self-restraint, equanimity and love for all beings, his effort does not yield the desired results. Without these qualities of good character, realisation of Brahman is impossible. His worship will be like depositing good and relishing eatables in an impure vessel. All of them become corrupt and contaminated by the impurities of the vessel. Both the paths of realisation require the above qualities of character. Therefore the Lord mentions the three indispensable qualities of the aspirant in this context.

- 1) Complete self-restraint,
- 2) Equal-mindedness,
- 3) Universal love.

The seekers should cultivate these three qualities well while carrying on their method of worship. Here the word ‘*Samniyamya*’ is used to emphasise complete control of all the senses; the word ‘*Sarvatra*’ emphasises equanimity at all times and under all circumstances; and ‘*Sarvabhutahieratah*’ emphasises love for all beings without any distinction whatsoever. Thus meditating, the seeker attains the Lord undoubtedly. Let all the seekers examine themselves how far they have acquired these basic virtues.

The difficult nature of worshipping the formless Brahman is stated :

5. क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तैतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिदुःखं देहवद्धिरवाप्यते ॥

५

*Kleso’dhikataras tesham avyaktasakt : chetasam ।
avyakta hi gatir duhkham dehavadbhish avaptyate ॥* 5

Meaning : अव्यक्ता सक्तैतसाम् *avyaktasakti* *tetasam*; who aspire for the unmanifest Parabrahman, तेषाम् *tesham*: for those, क्लेशः *klesah*: difficulty, अधिकतरः *adhikatarah*: (is) greater, हि *hi*: because, अव्यक्ता: *avyaktah*: the unmanifested, गतिः *gatih*: goal, path, देहवद्धिः *dehavadbhish*: for the embodied beings, दुःखम् *dukhama*: with difficulty, अवाप्यते *avaptyate*: is reached.

Substance : Greater is the difficulty for those whose mind is set on the realisation of the unmanifest (*Nirguna Brahman*), because the unmanifested is reached with difficulty by embodied beings.

Commentary : It is here declared that for those who are body-minded, the worship of *Nirguna Brahman* is very difficult. For others it is easy. That is, for the aspirant who is more self-controlled, who has acquired facility in desireless action, the contemplation of Brahman is quite suitable and comfortable. So it should be clearly understood that the difficulty here is only

for those who have not acquired purity by worshipping Isvara (God). It should also be remembered that in the previous two verses, the Lord has declared that the goal of both the paths is the same, and both require certain qualities without which no spiritual growth is possible.

Therefore let the seekers be not in a hurry to reach the unmanifest even at the start. Let them try to get over the body-attached egoism by worship of Isvara, and obtain complete mastery of their senses through desireless performance of all good actions. Then self-realisation becomes possible and man attains union with Brahman easily. Most people complain that their 'sadhana' is not bearing fruit. It is because their minds are not purified. Of what use is it to sow the seeds before preparing the ground ? Will any building stand without proper foundation? So, the mind does not come to rest in Brahman when it is impure by past 'samskaras'. The aspirant should understand the position correctly, so that he might not feel frustrated by failing to get the proper results immediately. In truth, worship and meditation are realms of bliss and blessedness. One is entering the ocean of *Sachidananda* ! Why the pain and difficulty ? It is intended to remove suffering and not to cause it. But people find it difficult and painful, because they do not know the path clearly and distinctly. So for some time in the beginning let the seekers carry on worship of Isvara (*Saguna*) and then enter the path of meditation on the imperishable Brahman (*Nirguna*).

The Lord declares that He would lift His devotees from the ocean of 'samsara' :

6. ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥

६

7. तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामिर नचित्पार्थं मर्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥

७

*Ye tu sarvani karmani mayi sannyasya matparah ।
ananyeni'va yogena mam dhyayanta upasate ॥*

6

*Tesham aham samuddharta mrityu samsara sagarat
bhavami na chirai partha mayyavesita chetasam ॥*

7

Meaning : पार्थं Partha : O Arjuna ! येतु ye tu : those verily, सर्वाणि sarvani : all, कर्माणि karmani : actions, मयि mayi : in Me, संन्यस्य sannyasya : surrendering, मत्पराः matparah : having Me as their goal, (Mind fixed in Me), अनन्येन योगेन ananyena yogena : with yoga dedicated to Me, माम् एव mam eva : Me alone, ध्यायन्तः dhyayantah : meditating, उपासते upasate: worship, मर्यादेशित चेतसाम् mayyavesita chetasam: with mind established on Me, तेषाम् tesham : for them, अहम् aham : I, मृत्युसंसार सागरात् mrityusamsara sagarat : from the ocean of death and Samsara, न चिरात् na chirat : quickly (ere long), समुद्धर्ता samuddharta : the saviour, भवामि bhavami : become.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Those verily who renounce all actions in Me, think of Me as the only refuge and worship Me with single-minded devotion and *Dhyana*, to them I become the saviour and quickly lift them up from the ocean of death and ‘*samsara*’.

Commentary : In the first verse the path to be followed by the seeker and in the second, the highest reward of such ‘*sadhana*’ are mentioned. The path of ‘*sadhana*’ includes three things—(1) Renouncing all actions to Him, (2) Considering Him as the sole refuge and the highest goal, (3) Worshipping Him with undivided mind. In this way, if man worships God, He becomes the Saviour and lifts him up from the ocean of *samsara*. What wonderful reward for His worshippers ! The Lord’s offer should inspire all human beings with joy and faith. They can derive consolation that they shall be freed from the fearful agonising tortures of worldly life. For the individual *Jiva* who is whirled about from birth to death and from death to birth again and again from time immemorial (*Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam*), these words of the Lord indeed have the potency of Nectar ! What the life-boat is for the drowning man, so is the Lord for unfortunate humanity. He would lift them up

from this terrible ocean of 'samsara'. But man should lift up his hand towards God, obtain His grace by devotion and self-surrender. For others who deny Him, who do not think of Him, there is no hope. The Lord is indifferent to them. They should have to wander about in the wilderness of ignorance and death. If man does what is expected of him, the Lord is ever by his side to help him. What can God do, if man refuses to accept Him and seek for His help? Therefore the wise man, understanding his terrible fate in the wheel of 'samsara,' should strive in every way to obtain God's grace. Nothing else can cure the disease of worldly life.

Yetu-All men are qualified to obtain God's grace.

Sarvani karmani: All actions done by man should be surrendered to God.

Ananyenaiva yogena: After speaking of several *yogas* like *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Dhyana* etc. the Lord brings out another *yoga*-'*ananya yoga*'. This is not a separate *yoga*, but no other *yoga* can yield proper fruit if it is not '*ananya yoga*'. Single mindedness, renunciation of all worldly thoughts and actions is the essence of this *yoga*. Then any *yoga* acquires tremendous power.

Mam dhyayanta upasate: Here the word '*dhyana*' is added to '*upasana*'. It is not simply worship without understanding, but worship combined with deep insight into the meaning and significance of the worship. When doing '*japa*', the sacred '*mantra*' should not only be uttered but its meaning also should be contemplated. Similarly, when worshipping the Lord, His Divine Nature, Form and qualities should be thought of deeply in a concentrated manner. Patanjali explains the same thing in his *Yoga Sutras*.

"*Tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam*" (3—2)

Samuddharta: God is a perfect Saviour.

Mrutyusamsara sagarat: '*Samsara*' is compared to an ocean. It is fearful like the ocean, infected with deadly dragons of desire and hatred (*Kama* and *Krodha*), never at rest and peace,

always bubbling and boiling. Man is naturally terrified by it. And yet, some people think of the pleasures of 'samsara', wish for such fleeting joys. It is nothing but ignorance. They have yet to realise the foul and filthy nature of 'samsara', and the terrible end that comes to them through it. The Lord states it here—“Mrityusamsara”. Nothing can be a truer description of the wheel of birth and death and the horrible sorrow and suffering during the interval between the two. Man who is bound to this rack, should naturally seek for God's grace, the embodiment of bliss and blessedness.

na chirat : Man is saved quickly (Gajendra, Prahlada, Ambarisha and Draupadi are examples).

Question : *What is the nature of Samsara ?*

Answer : Like the ocean it is boundless, unfathomable. It leads to birth and death.

Question : *How to escape from it ?*

Answer : By seeking for God's grace, man is lifted out of the ocean.

Question : *How to win God's grace ?*

Answer : By renouncing all actions to Him, by thinking of Him as the sole refuge, by fixing the mind in Him, and worshipping Him with single-minded devotion man obtains God's grace.

In four verses, the Lord explains different practices to be followed by the devotee and first mentions establishing the mind in Him.

8. मथयेव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धि निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मथयेव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥

*Mayyeva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim nivesaya ।
nivasishyasi mayyeva ata urdhvam na samsayah ॥* 8

Meaning : मयि एव *mayi eva* : in Me alone, मनः *manah* : mind, आधत्स्व *adhatsva* : fix firmly, मयि *mayi* : in Me, बुद्धिम्

buddhim : intellect, mind, निवेशय *nivesaya* : place, अतःऊर्ध्वम्
atah urdhvam : thereafter, मयि एव *mayi eva* : in Me alone,
निवसिष्यसि *nivasishyasi* : you shall live, न संशयः *na samsayah* :
(there is) no doubt.

Substance : Fix the mind firmly in Me only; place the intellect in Me, thereafter you shall live in Me only; there is no doubt about this.

Commentary : The Lord is now teaching various practices to reach Him, one after another. The Lord is clear and simple in the teaching, like an able teacher when he is instructing a young boy. The first lesson is fixing the mind firmly in Him. It is not enough to fix the mind only, the intellect also should be placed in Him. Why ? The intellect is the deciding power, and without its direction the mind wavers and wanders away from the goal. The mind thinks and reason decides. It is reason ('*buddhi*') which takes the final decision that the Lord alone is real and all else is like water in the mirage. By the very power of this decision, the mind becomes one-pointed and is then established in God. If the mind wavers, it is because the intellect has not decided aright. So the Lord here says that the intellect should be placed in Him. Then meditation becomes deep and firm. Man then lives in God. Like salt dissolving in water, the mind becomes that which it contemplates. Thinking of the Lord, by giving up all the evil qualities arising from ignorance and past *samskaras* is *Moksha*. This is what is meant by living in God. The Lord adds—there is no doubt about this. “Follow this practice, and you shall live in Me”, declares the Lord to all mankind and assuredly confirms his declaration. The devotee's duty is stated here, and his future is taken over by the Lord.

***na samsayah* :** There is no doubt about it. What should be the faith of the devotee, when the Lord gives such an assurance !

***mayi eva* :** “In Me only”—the mind should not move away from the Lord towards any other object.

Question : Where should the mind and reason be fixed ?

Answer : In the Lord only.

Question : What is the result ?

Answer : Man lives in God. There is no doubt about this.

The Lord explains what the aspirant should do if he cannot fix the mind in Him.

9. अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥ ९

*Atha chittam samadhatum na saknoshi mayi sthiram !
abhyasa yogena tato mam iccha'ptum dhananjaya ॥ 9*

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhananjaya* : O Arjuna ! अथ *atha* : if, चित्तम् *chittam* : mind, मयि *mayi* : in Me, स्थिरम् *sthiram* : firmly, समाधातुम् *samadhatum* : to fix, न शक्नोषि *na saknoshi* : you are not able, ततः *tatah* : then, अभ्यासयोगेन *abhyasayogena* : by the yoga of constant practice, माम् *mam* : Me, आप्तुम् *aptum* : to reach, इच्छु *iccha* : (you) wish .

Substance : O Arjuna ! If you are not able to fix the mind firmly in Me, then desire to reach Me by the *yoga* of constant practice. (Practise constantly and fix the mind in Me).

Commentary : The Lord offers certain alternatives for those who are not able to follow the path pointed out in the previous verse. How much the Lord is interested in His devotees! How kind and compassionate He is to all! The mind is the cause for bondage or limitation.

*Mana eva manushyanam
karanam bandhamokshayoh.*

(*Amritabindupanishad*).

So the mind should be dissolved in *Paramatma*, God, for attaining *Moksha*. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to attain that state by the *yoga* of constant practice. There is no other way. Every one should strive for this state by withdrawing the mind from

extemal objects and fixing it in the Self. If, in the beginning, this is not possible, by slow and steady practice the mind should be trained to enter the inner sphere of *Atma*. As *Moksha* is nothing else but merging the mind in *Atma*, all seekers should achieve it sooner or later. In the Sixth Discourse, the Lord has already pointed out the truth.

Abhyasayogena : This *yoga* is the common ingredient in all the other *yogas*-*Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana* and *Jnana*. Without it no *yoga* could develop and lead the person to the goal.

Generally the seekers put this question to their Master (Guru-) "Revered Sir ! My mind is unsteady and I am not able to fix it in God. What shall I do ?" The Lord gives the answer to such seekers here. He says that there is no other way except to control the mind by long and untiring practice. In the Sixth Discourse, Arjuna raises the same issue and the Master answers it clearly and finally.

*Abhyasena tu kaunteya
vairagyena cha grihyate* (6-35).

As there is no other way, all men should try their best to control the mind by steady practice and dispassion.

Question : *What should man do if the mind is unsteady and does not rest in Atma ?*

Answer : The aspirant should achieve that state by constant practice. There is no other way.

The Lord explains what should be done if a seeker is not competent even for Abhyasayoga.

10. अभ्यासेऽयसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदथेषपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्निमद्विमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १०

*Abhyase'pyasamartho'si matkarmaparamo bhava ।
mad aritham api karmani kurvan siddhim avapsyasi ॥ 10*

Meaning : अभ्यासे अपि *abhyase api* : if in practice also, असमर्थः *असि asamarthah asi* : you are not competent, मत्कर्मपरमः

matkarmaparamah : intent on doing work for My sake, भव
bhaya : be, मदर्थम् *madarthatam* : for my sake, कर्मणि *karmani* :
actions, कुर्वन् अपि *kurvan api* : doing also, सिद्धिम् *siddhim* :
perfection (Moksha), अवाप्स्यसि *avapsyasi* : you shall attain.

Substance : Even if you are not capable of practice, do work for My sake; By doing work for My sake also, you shall attain perfection.

Commentary : Again the Lord offers an alternate path for those who are not able to get steadiness in meditation even by constant practice. They should engage themselves in doing good actions, charitable deeds of helpfulness, and beneficence on all beings. And such actions should be offered to the Lord, without any desire for personal reward. This is simply *Nishkama Karma*. *Japa*, prayer, ‘*namasamkirtan*’, worship, vows of fasting and silence, all these come under good actions for the sake of God. This is the idea of “*matkarmaparamo bhaya*”. By such actions the mind is purified, and by purity of mind, liberation is attained. Thus *Nishkam* Karma leads to perfection. This is recommended to those who are not able to still the mind in *Dhyana*. Only, those actions should be done in a spirit of self-surrender to God. They should be done to win God’s grace and not for obtaining selfish rewards. This idea should be firmly held in the mind while performing all good work in the world.

Question : What is the way for those who are not competent even for *Abhyasa yoga* ?

Answer : They should perform good actions in a selfless spirit and surrender the fruits to God.

The Lord explains what should be done if the seeker is incompetent even to work for His sake.

11. अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥

११

Athai tad apyasakto'si kartum madyogam asritah ।

sarva karma phala tyagam tatah kuru yatatmavan ॥ 11

Meaning : अथ atha : if, मधोगम् madyogam : My yoga, आश्रितः asritah : taking refuge in Me, एतत् अपि etat api : even this, कर्तुं kartum : to do, अशक्तः असि asaktah asi : you are not able, ततः tatah : then, यतात्मवान् yatatmavan : self-controlled, सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् saryakarmaphalatyagam : renunciation of all actions and their fruits, कुरु kuru : do.

Substance : If you are not able to do My *yoga* taking refuge in Me, then renounce all actions and the fruits thereof, self-controlled.

Commentary : The Lord suggests the easiest of all paths here. Man is engaged in a hundred actions day and night in the course of his life. While performing these actions, let him remember God, think of Him as the doer and himself a mere instrument, and surrender all works and their fruits entirely to God. That is, all work should be done in a spirit of self-surrender to God. Bad actions are not included here, because they are already prohibited by the *Sastras*. No one should do sinful acts. Worship of God, singing His name and glory, charity, works of social welfare, all these are good actions and they should be surrendered to God. (*Isvararpanam*, *Ramarpanam*, or *Krishnarpanam*). As several paths are suggested, each man may take up any practice suitable to his physical and mental pre-disposition. This last path is within the reach of all persons. While walking, let it be thought of as *pradakshinam* of God. While talking let it be thought of as singing His glory. This may be extended to all actions. By this, the Lord is constantly kept in view, and the mind, without any strain comes to entertain Godly ideas in the natural way. The Lord has already said “*mam anusmara yudhya cha*” – “Remember Me and fight.” So, this path is the easiest and the best-fitted for all sincere seekers on the spiritual path. All sin is destroyed, the mind becomes pure, and liberation is attained ultimately.

***yatatmavan* :** Thn seeker should be self-controlled. Without it constant memory of God and self-surrender to Him are

not possible. So the least that man can do is to cultivate that degree of self-control to remember the Lord while carrying on the various activities of life and surrender the fruits of actions to Him.

Question : *What is the way for those who are not competent to do actions for His sake ?*

Answer : Self-controlled, man should surrender all actions with the fruits thereof to God. This is the least way for all people who are not competent for higher plights of yoga.

The excellence of 'Karmaphala tyaga' is declared.

12. श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासात् ज्ञानाद्वयानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥

१२

*Sreyo hi jnanam abhyasat jnanad dhyanam visisyate ।
dhyanat karmaphala tyagas tyagacchantir anantaram ॥ 12*

Meaning : अभ्यासात् *abhyasat* : than practice (without understanding,) ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge (obtained by the study of the *Sastras*), श्रेयो हि *sreyohi* : better indeed, ज्ञानात् *jnanat* : than (such) knowledge, ध्यानम् *dhyanam* : meditation, विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is better, excels, ध्यानात् *dhyanat* : than meditation (stillness of mind at the time of Dhyanam), कर्मफलत्यागः *karmaphalatyagah* : renouncing the fruits of actions (keeping the mind pure even in external worldly life), विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is better, त्यागात् *tyagat* : from renunciation, अनन्तरम् *anantaram* : immediately, शान्तिः *santih* : peace, भवति *bhavati* : is.

Substance : Than practice (without discrimination) knowledge (derived from the study of the *Sastras*) is better indeed ! than (such) knowledge, meditation is better, than meditation (stillness of mind at the time of meditation) renunciation of all fruits of action is better; immediately after renunciation peace is attained.

Commentary: Here ‘*abhyasa*’ means practice without discrimination; ‘*jnana*’ means knowledge got through study of books, ‘*Dhyana*’ means thinking over the object at the time of meditation.

Jnanat dhyanam visishyate: Of course, direct experience through ‘*Dhyana*’ is far higher than mere knowledge got through the study of the scriptures. ‘*Dhyana*’ means the realisation of knowledge by constant meditation. This is indeed far higher than mere knowledge derived from the study of books.

Dhyanat karmaphalatyagah: Renunciation of action and their fruits is higher than ‘*Dhyana*’. For the unripened *Dhyana-yogi*, the mind may be still and pure only at the time of meditation. But when he comes into practical life, there is always the danger of its being contaminated by worldly objects. But for the man who has surrendered all actions to God, the mind is always pure. The ‘*Tyagi*’ enjoys purity everywhere and at all times. Therefore it is said here that ‘*tyaga*’ is higher than ‘*Dhyana*’. From this, we understand the superior excellence of ‘*Nishkama Karma*’. Most people are engaged in work. Very few can renounce work completely. So for the majority of mankind this path is most suitable, and leads them to a higher realisation than ‘*jnana*’ and ‘*dhyana*’. Moreover, purity of mind is essential for all *yogas*. And such purity is attainable by *Nishkama Karma*. If this is practised for long, the foundation of spiritual life would be firm and steady. The higher realisation can be had only after this purity is perfected in the mind and heart.

Tyagat santiranantaram: Peace is the immediate reward of self-surrender to God. Renunciation of the ego, renunciation of the objective world, renunciation of sin and evil—this is immediately followed by peace. The impurities of the mind being cleansed, peace flows into it like a flood (*tesham santih saswati netaresham*). *Atma* shines forth in the pure heart. Every one in the sorrowful world is seeking for peace. How to get it? “*iyagat santih*”—from renunciation, peace is obtained. Therefore one should give up all sensual pleasures, fruits of actions, egoism and the binding sense of doership. Then he

shall experience the highest peace. Such is the path shown by the Lord to all mankind.

Question : *What is the excellence of 'Karmaphalatyaga' ?*

Answer : It is better than practice without understanding, than knowledge obtained from books, than *Dhyana* which stills the mind only during the time of meditation.

Question : *How to attain peace ?*

Answer : By renunciation of the fruits of action.

Having explained different spiritual practices, the Lord now describes the attributes of the devotee :

13. अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समुदुखसुखः क्षमी ॥

१३

14. संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मथ्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

१४

*Adveshta sarva bhutanam maitrah karuna eva cha ।
nirmamo nirahamkarah samaduhkhasukhah kshami ॥*

13

Samtustah satatam yogi yatatma dridhanischayah ।

mayyarpita manobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa mः priyah ॥ 14

Meaning : सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabutanam* : towards all beings, अद्वेष्टा *adveshta* : without hatred, मैत्रः *maitrah* : friendly, करुण एव च *karuna eva cha* : and also compassionate, निर्ममः *nirmamah* : without a sense of me and mine, निरहङ्कारः *nirahankarah* : without egoism, समुदुखसुखः *samaduhkhasukhah* : equal-minded in sorrow and happiness, क्षमी *kshmi* : forgiving, सततम् *satatam* : always, सन्तुष्टः *santushtah* : contented, योगी *yogi* : steady in meditation, यतात्मा *yatatma* : self-controlled, दृढनिश्चयः *dridhanischayah* : of firm conviction, मयि *mayi* : in Me, अर्पित *arpita* : dedicated, मनोबुद्धिः *manobuddhih* : mind and intellect, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : My devotee, यः *yah* : who, सः *sah* : he, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : (is) dear.

Substance : Who does not hate any being, who is friendly and compassionate, who is free from attachment and egoism, who is equal-minded in sorrow and happiness, who is forgiving, who is always contented, steady in meditation, who is self-controlled and firm in conviction, who has surrendered his mind and intellect in Me, he (such a devotee) My *Bhakta* is dear to me.

Commentary : In seven verses the Lord ennumerates the qualities which His devotee should possess. Thirty five virtues are mentioned and the devotee who possesses them is dear to the Lord. Each one is a subject of study, and unless the *sadhaka* acquires perfection in all of them, he is not supposed to have passed the test of a devotee. Let no one imagine that he can by-pass any one of them and get into the higher class! If man desires to cross over the ocean of *samsara*, free himself from sorrow and misery, he should attain perfection in these virtues, and on such a man alone descends the grace of God.

God is the same to all. He does not consider anyone to be hateful or dear to Him. Those who worship Him with devotion, He is in them and they are in Him. So by acquiring good qualities, the devotee becomes dear to the Lord, and the Lord confers *Atmajnana* on him, and by it he attains *Moksha*. Each one of those qualities should be cultivated assiduously by all seekers.

Many may think that they have love for the Lord. That is not enough. They should know if they are the recipients of God's grace. They should examine themselves and find out what is standing in the way of His grace freely flowing into him. If God's grace is obtained every thing is obtained, for His grace destroys all ignorance in a flash. The Lord is perfectly clear when he declares that only those devotees are dear to Him, who possess the above-mentioned qualities (*Yo madbhaktah sa me priyah*).

Paramatma is the goal to be attained. The path to reach the goal is *sadhana*, practice. The Gita expounds more the practical side of *sadhana* than the goal to be attained. So it is known as a practical guide to self-realisation. In the Second Discourse,

the Lord has explained the nature and state of the man of steady wisdom (*Sthitaprajna*). Here the nature and qualities of the devotee are stated. In the following Discourse, He declares the qualities of the *Jnani*. Then *Daivisampath* is explained, starting with 'abhayam' fearlessness. In this way, the practical side of religion is frequently emphasised by the Lord in various ways.

Let the aspirant think of these qualities and make them part and parcel of his life. The first is the absence of any trace of hatred towards any creature. There is no exception to this command. Love and kind feeling towards all creatures is the basic virtue of a *bhakta*.

Santushtah satatam : The devotee should be fully satisfied and contented. Discontent is a sign of imperfection. Under all circumstances the devotee should be fully at rest and peace with himself and the world.

Dhridhanischayah : Firm conviction in spiritual life is again an indispensable quality. The difficulty with most seekers is that the mind wavers in crucial moments of life. Doubt crops up about the truth as declared by the *Guru* and *Sastras*. Does God exist or not ? Such doubts cut at the very root of spiritual life. Firm conviction that Self-realisation is the goal of life is the foundation for all growth and advancement. No doubts and surmises and speculations ! All these are the 'tricks' of *Avidya* which somehow tries to bring down the aspirant into the world and bind him to the wheel of *samsara*.

Mayyarpita manobuddhih : The mind and the intellect should be absorbed in the Lord. The intellect being the deciding power, if it is not linked to the mind, the latter disintegrates with hundreds of doubts and fear. Firm decision and immovable faith are essential.

15. यसानोद्विजते लोको लोकानोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षमर्षभयोद्बग्नेमुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥

१५

*Yasman no'dvijate loka lokan no'dvijate cha yah !
harshamarshabhayodvegair mukto yah sa cha me priyah ! 15*

Meaning : यस्मित् *yasmat* : from whom, लोकः *lokah* : the world (people), नोद्विजते *no dvijate* : is not agitated (with fear), लोकात् च *lokat cha* : and from the world (people), यः *yah* : who, न उद्विजने *na udvijate* : is not agitated with fear, यः *yah* : who, हर्षामर्षभयोद्वैगैः *harshamarshabhayodvegaih* : from fits of joy, hatred, fear, and anxiety, मुक्तः *muktah* : freed, सः च *sah cha* : he also, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : From whom the world (people) has no fear, and who from the world has no fear, who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety, he is dear to Me.

Commentary : *Lokan no dvijate* : The devotee should not have any fear of the world. People may say hundred things to him and about him, he should not swerve from the path of truth and righteousness. "Be fearless" is the command. The Lord has already mentioned fearlessness (*vigataabhih*)—and declares it again as '*abhayam*'.

Harshamarshabhayodvegaih : To be free from these fits of joy, hatred, anxiety, fear—is to be almost perfect in spiritual realisation. All these are various mental modifications which cause misery to man. The devotee should be free from them. He should maintain equanimity of mind at all times (*samatvam yoga uchyate*).

16. अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

१६

*Anapekshah suchir daksha udasino gatavyathah
sarvarambha parityagi yo madbhaktah sa me priyah* 16

Meaning : अनपेक्षः *anapekshah* : free from desires, शुचिः *suchih* : pure internally and externally, दक्षः *dakshah* : competent in action, expert, उदासीनः *udasinah* : unconcerned with any thing, गतव्यथः *gatavyathah* : untroubled, free from fear or sorrow, सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी *sarvarambhaparityagi* : removing

all sense of doership in undertakings (or renouncing all acts of desire, and actions prohibited by the *Sastras*), मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : My devotee, यः *yah* : who, सः *sah* : he, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : He who is free from desire, who is pure in body and mind, who is competent and ready-willed, who is unconcerned, free from anxiety and sorrow, who has renounced all sense of doership (or who has renounced all acts of desire, prohibited by the '*Sastras*'), who is devoted to Me-is dear to Me.

Commentary : *Suchih* : Purity is many times emphasised by the Lord. The devotee should be clean in body and mind, and the place where he lives should also be clean. Such purity of body is essential for purity of mind.

dakshah : He should be competent and ever alert in carrying out his '*sadhana*'. A moment's negligence is enough for '*maya*' to strike him down.

gatavyathah : Anxiety and fear are the two real enemies of all men. Having taken refuge with the Lord, it would be foolish for a devotee still to be anxious and struck with fear about anything in the world.

sarvarambhaparityagi : This does not mean that the devotee becomes dull and inactive. It means that he has renounced all sense of doership in all actions. Or it may mean that he has renounced all desire-prompted actions prohibited by the '*Sastras*'. Having given up the feeling of doership, though he is engaged in good work, still he is one who has not done anything.

17. यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

*Yo na hrisyati na dvesti na sochati na kankshati
subhasubha paritiyagi bhaktimanyah sa me priyah ॥ 17 ॥*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, न हृष्यति *na hrishyati* : is not elated, न द्वेष्टि *na dveshti* : is not hateful, न शोचति *na sochati* : not grieves, न काङ्क्षति *na kankshati* : has no desire, यः *yah* : who, शुभाशुभपरित्यागी *subhasubhaparityagi* : has renounced good and bad, सः भक्तिमान् *sah bhaktiman* : that devotee, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : Who is not elated, who does not hate, does not grieve, who has renounced both good and bad, he, My devotee is dear to Me.

Commentary : *na hrishyati* : The devotee is always calm and is not elated with pleasure or joy. Of course joy is a good quality, but here it refers to the unbalanced fits of elations which overtake the common man when good things come to him. Joy and sorrow are pairs of opposites (*dvandas*) which stand in the way of realisation. Unless the mind is freed from these pairs, firmness in self-realisation is impossible.

subhasubhaparityagi : This may give rise to a doubt for the reader. The way of the world is to give up '*asubha*' and hold on to '*subha*'. Here it is stated that both should be renounced. We must understand these statements continuously by studying the context of each of these thoughts. Here the ultimate goal of '*Bhakti*' is being declared. The final end of *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are the same. The perfect devotee and the perfect '*Jnani*', both have their life and being in the Divine, the *Atma*. This state is that of the '*Jivanmukta*' who has transcended all the modifications of the mind. In that state the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, good and bad, do not exist. Only the Divine, the *Atma* exists. So the perfect devotee is free from both good and bad. The seekers should take to '*subha*' first and eliminate '*asubha*', and then both should be given up. This is the thought-free ('*nirvikalpa*') state. '*Subha*' and '*asubha*' drop away in the ultimate stage when only the Divine appears everywhere for the perfected devotee. This is the idea of *subhasubhaparityagi*, and not giving up good and auspicious actions.

18. समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानावमानयोः।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥

१८

19. तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥

१९

*Samah satrau cha mitre cha tatha manavamanayoh ।
sitoshna sukha dukheshu samah sangavivarjitaḥ ॥ 18*

*Tulya ninda stutir mauni samtushto yena kenachit ।
aniketah sthiramatir bhaktiman me priyo narah ॥ 19*

Meaning: शत्रौ च *satrau cha* : and towards enemies, मित्रे च *mitre cha* : and towards friends, तथा *tatha* : thus, मानावमानयोः *manavamanayoh* : in honour and shame, समः *samah* : the same, equal-minded, शीतोष्ण सुखदुःखेषु *sitoshnasukhaduhkheshu* : in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, समः *samah* : the same, equal-minded, सङ्गविवर्जितः *sanga vivarjitaḥ* : freed from attachment (mental), तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः *tulyanindastutih* : equal in praise and blame, मौनी *mauni* : silent (or meditating on God,) येनकेनचित् *yenakenachit* : by what-so-ever he gets, संतुष्टः *samtushtah* : satisfied, अनिकेतः *aniketah* : without abode (not attached to home), स्थिरमतिः *sthiramatih* : decided in mind, भक्तिमान् *bhaktiman* : devoted to Me, नरः *narah* : man, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance: Who is equal-minded towards friends and enemies, in honour and disgrace, in heat and cold, and pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment (desire and selfishness), who is silent (meditating), who is satisfied with what-so-ever he gets, who has no particular home, who is decided in mind, who is devoted to Me, such a man is dear to Me.

Commentary: Five pairs of opposites are mentioned in these two verses. (1) Friends and enemies, (2) Honour and dishonour, (3) Heat and cold, (4) Joy and sorrow, (5) Praise and blame. The devotee is expected to remain calm and equal-

minded when these pairs of opposites overtake him in the usual course of life.

mauni : Silence does not simply mean giving up talking. It means the stillness of the mind also. As the devotee is very much absorbed in thinking of the Lord, he is silent and does not expend his vocal energy in useless talk. Or it may be taken to mean, one whose mind is absorbed in the contemplation of the Divine.

aniketah : One who has no particular home is '*aniketah*'. He finds his home wherever he is. If he stays in one place, home or choultry, he may become attached to it by association. Or, the word '*niketa*' may be taken to mean 'body'. Then '*aniketa*' means one who has no body-idea (*dehabhimana*).

The qualities of a '*bhakta*' are so far mentioned. As one who is gifted with these thirty five qualities is said to be a '*Bhakta*', and as these qualities are also the attributes of a '*jnani*', it is clear that in essence both devotion and knowledge are the same. The devotee at first worships with flowers and fruits. But as he evolves he offers the flower of his own mind to the Divinity pervading the whole universe.

Sankaracharya in his Sivanandalahari says that people have not yet learnt to offer the flower of their mind to the Lord and then remain in blissful quietude. Thus the real devotee evolves towards the higher form of worship with the mind. What are these flowers of the mind ? They are the thirty five virtues mentioned here.

Non-injury, self-restraint, universal love, forgiveness, peace, austerity, meditation, and truthfulness are most dear to Lord Vishnu. Therefore, along with natural flowers, it is necessary to worship the Lord with flowers of virtue and spiritual conduct. May all the seekers learn His higher form of worship and obtain God's grace.

Of all worldly things, the greatest and the most precious possession of man is the Lord's love, and such love cannot be attained except by the practice of the above-mentioned virtues.

Those whose conduct is hostile to Divine Command and the injunctions of the 'Sastras' cannot hope to receive God's grace. It is self-delusion for any one to think that he is worshipping God, while his mind is beset with all foul and filthy passions and desires.

narah : The general term 'man' is used to indicate that all human beings are qualified for the divine state without any distinction what-so-ever.

Question : *What are the qualities of the devotee mentioned in this Discourse ?*

Answer : Thirty five qualities are mentioned here (1) Absence of hatred towards all beings, (2) Friendliness, (3) Compassion, (4) The absence of 'Myness'. (5) Absence of egoism, (6) Equanimity in joy and sorrow, (7) Forbearance, (8) Contentment, (9) Self-control, (10) Firm determination, (11) Surrendering the mind and intellect to God, (12) Absence of fear either by him to the world or by the world to him, (13) Absence of elation, hatred and fear, (14) Desirelessness, (15) Purity, (16) Competence in action, (17) Indifference, (18) Freedom from anxiety, (19) Renunciation of the fruits of action, (20) Absence of elation, (21) Absence of hatred, (22) Absence of fear, (23) Absence of desire. (24) Renunciation of good and bad, (25) Equal mindedness towards friends and enemies, (26) Equanimity in honour and dis-honour, (27) Equanimity in heat and cold, (28) Equanimity in joy and sorrow, (29) Non-attachment, (30) Equal mindedness in praise and blame, (31) Silence, (32) Contentment with what-so-ever obtained by chance, (33) Absence of attachment to home, (34) Firmness of decision, (35) Devotion to God.

Question : *Who is dear to the Lord ?*

Answer : He who possesses the above virtues is dear to the Lord.

Question : *What then is the way to obtain God's grace ?*

Answer : The possession of these virtues alone draws God's grace.

The Lord declares the fruits of *sadhana* in the last verse of this Discourse.

20. ये तु धर्म्यमृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

श्रद्धाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २०

*Ye tu dharmyamritam idam yathoktam paryupasate
sraddadhana matparama bhaktaste'tiva me priyah ॥ 20*

Meaning : ये तु ye tu : those indeed, श्रद्धानाः *sraddadhana* : with faith, मत्परमाः *matparamah* : having Me as their goal (loving Me,) इदम् *idam* : this, धर्म्यमृतम् *dharmyamritam* : the nectar of Dharma, (of Moksha), यथोक्तं *yathoktam* : as declared above, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : follow, practice, ते भक्तः *te bhaktah* : these devotees, मे *me* : to Me, अतीव *ativa* : very much, most, प्रियाः *priyah* : (are) dear.

Substance : Who, with faith having Me as their goal follow this immortal and nectar-like *Dharma* as declared above, such devotees are most dear to Me.

Commentary : The Lord declares the fruit of practising this immortal *Dharma*. It is natural that people wish to know the reward of spiritual *sadhana*. It strengthens their faith and prompts them to act. Therefore the Lord proclaims the reward. What is it? ‘*te ativa me priyah*’. “Such devotees are most dear to Me.”—says the Lord. That is the reward. What else does man require? Having the Lord’s grace man has every thing, and not having it, man has nothing (though he may possess wealth and kingship even). The Lord’s grace leads to freedom and perfection (*Moksha*). By His Grace, man acquires ‘*buddhi yoga*’ (the intellectual keenness to know the essence of things and hold on to truth) and by it, he attains *Moksha*.

Dharmyamritam: This *Dharma* is spoken of as ‘nectar’ (immortal) because it takes man from death to immortality. Man is transformed into the Immortal Being. Such is the power of this *Dharma*. The Lord has showered ‘nectar’ and it is the duty of man to collect it in the vessels of their own minds and

drink deep this spiritual drink of God. Those who fail to do so are miserable men and they suffer horrid thirst in the desert sands of worldly life.

Sraddhadhanah : How should this *Dharana* be practised ? With faith. The Lord has emphasised faith a hundred times in the course of His teaching. Moreover, the devotee should be perfectly convinced that the Lord is his goal (*matparamah*). When the disciple carries out the teacher's injunctions faithfully, the latter is full of confidence about the future prospects of his student. When the father takes care of the child in his arms, the child has no fear. So also, the devotee who has won God's grace need not have any fear about his life and spiritual fulfilment. Therefore let all the aspirants strive to obtain these virtues and attain freedom.

"*Ye tu*"—it is clear that no one is prohibited from obtaining God's grace by following the eternal '*Dharma*'.

Question : *What is the 'Dharma' taught by Lord Krishna ?*

Answer : It is Immortal, and takes man out of the wheel of birth and death.

Question : *How should man follow it ?*

Answer : With faith and deep devotion.

Question : *What is the reward ?*

Answer : Such a devotee is most dear to the Lord.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासुपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाज्ञेनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम
द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥

*In Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Bhakti yogo
nama dvadasa'dhyayah*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the Scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Twelfth Discourse entitled
Bhakti Yoga
(The Yoga of Devotion.)



श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः

Atha trayodasodhyayah

THE THIRTEENTH DISCOURSE

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगः

KSHETRAKSHETRAJNAVIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF DIVISION

BETWEEN THE FIELD AND ITS KNOWER.

I. The title of the Discourse :

‘*Kshetra*’ means the body, and *Kshetrajna* means the Knower of the body, *Atma*. The *Jiva* is not the *Kshetra*; he is verily *Kshetrajna*. But by ignorance he has identified himself with the body and so suffers endless misery. The body (*Kshetra*) is composed of the five elements, changing and perishable. The Knower of the Field is the Self, omniscient, eternal, and changeless. In this Discourse, the distinction between the *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna* is distinctly shown and how to differentiate between the two which are intermingled, is clearly explained. So it is entitled *Kshetrakshetrajnavibhaga Yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- 1) An account of the nature of the *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna*.

(1-7)

- 2) The qualities of the *Jnani* (8-12)
- 3) The enunciation of that which is to be known (13-18)
- 4) Distinction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. (19-35)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the 12th Discourse, the Lord taught Arjuna the worship of the deity (*Saguna*) and the qualities of the devotee. He has not touched fully upon the nature of *Nirguna Brahman* or the philosophic discrimination of knowledge (*Jnana*). After Arjuna was taught how to be a '*Bhakta*', how to obtain God's grace, how to worship, how to surrender himself to God, the Lord now explains the position of *Jnana* and the *Jnani*. Arjuna was eager to know the truth about the body and the Knower of the body. He questions the Lord about '*Kshetra*' and '*Kshetrajna*'. In answer to the devotees question, the Lord gives a full and complete explanation of the highest philosophic Truth and Self-realisation.. The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।
एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥

१

Arjuna uvacha

*Prakritim purusham chai'va kshetram kshetrajnam eva cha ।
etad veditum icchami jnanam jneyam cha kesava । 1*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : केशव *Kesava* : O Krishna! प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : *prakriti*, पुरुषम् च एव *purusham cha eva* : and also *purusha*, क्षेत्र *kshetram* : the field, क्षेत्रज्ञम् एव च *kshetrajnam eva cha* : and the knower of the field also, ज्ञानम् *jnanam*: knowledge, ज्ञेयम् च *jneyam cha* : and the object to be known (Paramatma), एतत् *etat*: (all) this, वेदितुम् *veditum*: to know, इच्छामि *icchami*: I wish.

Substance : Arjuna said—O Krishna! *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, ‘*kshetra* and *kshetrajna*’, knowledge and the object to be known, all this I desire to know.

Commentary : Arjuna now questions the Lord about the attributeless *Brahma*. In the Gita, the first six chapters (1-6) are known as ‘*Karmashatakam*’ dealing with *karmayoga*; the second six chapters (7-13) are known as ‘*Bhaktishatakam*’ dealing with ‘*Bhakti*’; and the last six chapters (13-18) are known as ‘*Jnashatakam*’ dealing with ‘*Jnana*’. So in this Discourse, the subject of knowledge is taken up for detailed investigation. For the aspirant in the ‘*Jnanamarga*’, this Discourse is of great importance.

Question: *What is Arjuna's question?*

Answer : He desires to know ‘*Prakriti*’ and ‘*Purusha*’, ‘*Kshetra*’ and ‘*Kshetrajna*’, ‘*Jnana*’ and ‘*Jneya*’.

The Lord answers Arjuna's question in detail, elaborately :

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Idam sariram kaunteya kshetram ityabhidhiyate ।
etad yo vetti tam prahuh kshetrajna iti tadvidah ॥ 2*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhaghavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! इदं शरीरम् *idam sariram* : this body, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the field, इति *iti* : thus, अभिधीयते *abhidhiyate* : is said, एतत् *etat* : this, यः *yah* : who, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, तम् *tam* : Him, क्षेत्रज्ञः *kshetrajna* *iti* : as the knower of the field, तद् विदः *tat vidah* : knower of that, प्राहुः *prahuh* : say.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! this body is called the field (*kshetra*); He who knows the field is known as the knower of the field (*kshetrajna*); the wise who know both declare so.

Commentary : ‘*Kshetram*’ means field. The field is necessary for growing corn and other things to sustain the beings of the world. So also the body is necessary for the growth of the seed of knowledge in the heart of man. All ‘*sachana*’, ‘*tapas*’, thinking and meditation—all this is to be done with the body. So the body, the ‘*kshetra*’, is the field for the growth of the seed of ‘*Dharma*’ as well as ‘*Jnana*’. Therefore it is called ‘*kshetra*’.

The body being inert (‘*Jada*’) does not know itself; There is a consciousness within with power to cognise the body. This consciousness power is known as ‘*kshetrajna*.’ He is ‘*Pratyagatma*’. He is the witness of the combined elements of the body, senses and the mind. He is changeless, pure, intelligence, deathless, separate from the five sheaths (‘*Panchakosas*’). What is inert cannot know itself. The wall does not know that it is a wall, nor does a pot know that it is a pot. It is the intelligence that has the power of cognition. That Intelligence is the Knower of the body. He knows. He (‘*kshetrajna*’) is pure Intelligence.

The knower of the field is certainly different from the field. So the knower of the body should certainly be distinct from the body. Though the Intelligence is in the body, yet it remains free and perfect, witnessing the modifications of the body and mind during all the three states wakefulness ‘*Jagrat*’, dream ‘*Svapna*’ and sleep ‘*Sushupti*’.

Question : *What is Kshetra ?*

Answer : This body, this vehicle (Upadhi) is the *Kshetra*.

Question : *Who is the kshetrajna ?*

Answer : Pure Intelligence (*Pratyagatma*) is the knower of the field.

*The Lord declares that He is the knower (*kshetrajna*) in all the fields.*

3. क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोऽनानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥

३

*Kshetrajnam cha'pi mam viddhi
sarva kshetreshu bharata ।
kshetra kshetrajnayor jnanam
yat tat jnanam matam mama ॥*

3

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! सर्वक्षेत्रेषु *sarva-kshetreshu* : in all the fields (bodies), माम् *mam* : Me, क्षेत्रज्ञम् च अपि *kshetrajnam cha api* : as also the knower of the field, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः *kshetrakshetrajnayoh* : of the field and its knower, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, यत् *yat* : which, तत् *tat* : that, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : (is) knowledge, मम् *mama* : My, मतम् *matam* : opinion.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Know Me as the *kshetrajna* (Knower) in all the *kshetras* (bodies); Knowledge of the *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* is real Knowledge, according to My opinion.

Commentary : In this verse, the Lord teaches the *Mahavakya* ‘*tat tvam asi*’ (Thou art That). In the second Discourse in the verse ‘*Na tveyaham jatu nasam*’ (2-12), the Lord has already taught the *Mahavakya*, the highest truth. The *Jiva* is no other than Siva. The *Jiva* (really *Pratyagatman*) is the Knower of the field, the witness to the modifications of the body and mind, and this *Jiva* is not distinct from *Paramatma*, is actually one with Him. “Know Me as the Knower of the body in all the bodies”. So the *Jiva* who is the Knower in a particular body is *Paramatma* Himself, who is also the knower in every body. There is therefore only one Knower and He is functioning in every body as the witness. The Lord Himself is the Knower in all the bodies. The ‘*Jiva*’ is only a fictitious entity and has no real existence at all apart from the Lord. To know this Truth fully and finally is the highest achievement of man.

This knowledge gives to every man the greatest strength and courage. Why should one weep and wail ? Why should he suffer the miseries of life ? Let him remember that the Lord is actually, directly present in him. This is the truth. No other kind of knowledge except this can give man supreme joy and blissfulness. Knowledge of the sciences, arts and politics, is incomplete and one-sided. There is no perfection in them. There is no finality in them. They keep man where he is. This knowledge of the *kshetrajna* transforms man into a Divine Being. He understands the tremendous mystery of the human personality.

Sarvakshetreshu: Lord Krishna declares Himself to be *Paramatma* present in every being. He is the basis, the foundation of all. In all human beings irrespective of caste, creed, race, sex and nationality, and in all animals, reptiles and worms, in every body the Lord is present as the One Cognising Power. All the rest is '*Jada*', except the Lord.

The splendid declaration of the Lord should be thought of, meditated upon, and realised by every seeker.

Question: *Who is it that functions as the Cognising Intelligence in all bodies ?*

Answer : He is Lord Himself, *Paramatma*.

Question: *Where does then Paramatma exist ?*

Answer : He exists in the heart of every being, as the eternal witness.

Question: *Does He exist in certain bodies only ?*

Answer : No. In all *kshetras*,—man, animal, bird, reptile etc., he exists.

Question: *What is the nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : He is not a '*jada*', or nothingness. He is pure intelligence. So He is the one *kshetrajna* in all beings.

Question: *What is true Knowledge in the world ?*

Answer : That knowledge which enables man to distinguish the body from the knower of the body, the '*Drik*' from

the 'Drishya' is true knowledge—That is the Lord's declaration.

The Lord elaborates the theme of kshetra and kshetrajna.

4. तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च याद्वक्त्वं यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥

४

Tat kshetram yaccha yadrik cha yadvikari yatas cha yat : sa cha yo yat prabhavas cha tat samasena me srinu ॥ 4

Meaning : तत् क्षेत्रम् *tat kshetram* : that Field, यत् च *yat cha* : and what (it is), याद्वक्त्वं *yadrik cha* : and how (it is), यत् विकारि *yat vikari* : how it changes, यतः च यत् *yatah cha yat* : and from what, and how (it) arises, सः च *sah cha* : and he (the knower of the Field), यः *yah* : who, यत् प्रभावः च *yat prabhavah cha* : and what power, तत् *tat* : that, समासेन *samasena* : in brief, मे *me* : from Me, शृणु *sruru* : hear.

Substance : That *kshetra*—what it is, how it is, how it changes, and from what and how it is born, and the *kshetrajna*, who He is, and of what power,—all this in brief hear from Me.

Commentary : The essence of what the Lord has to say is already stated here. The *kshetra* is (*Vikari*) changing, and the *kshetrajna*, the Lord is of great power (*Prabhavah*). Unchanging really the body is subject to innumerable changes every minute, whereas *Paramatma* is unchanging, eternal and all-powerful.

Samasena srunu : The Lord is brief in his declarations, as He is speaking on the field of battle, and there is no time for endless philosophical speculations. The Gita is thus the very essence of *Brahma Jnana* stated in perfect clarity and brevity.

The Lord eulogises the knowledge of kshetra and kshetrajna.

5. क्रषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।

ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैर्थैव हेतुमद्विविनिश्चितैः ॥

५

Rishibhir bahudha gitam chandobhir viyidhais prithak ! brahmasutrapadais chai'va hetumadbhir vinischittaih : 5

Meaning : ऋषिभिः *rishibhīḥ* : by the sages, बहुधा *bahudha* : in many ways, पृथक् *prithak* : separately, विविधैः *vividhaɪ̄* : in various ways, छन्दोभिः *chandobhīḥ* : by the *Vedas*, गीतं *gitam* : established, हेतुमध्यिः *hetumadbhīḥ* : with rational arguments, विनिश्चितैः *vinischitaiḥ* : decided, ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैः च एव *brahmaśutra padaiḥ cha eva* : and also by the words of the *Brahmasutras*,

Substance : This knowledge of (*kshetra* and *kshetrajna*) is established by the sages in many ways and by the *Vedas* in various distinct hymns; and is declared by the decisive arguments of the *Brahmasutras* also.

Commentary : *Rishibhirbahudhagitatam* : *Rishi* means a sage who has conquered the senses, and who has attained *Brahmajnana*. What they say is the very essence of all things and they have established this '*jnana*' in various ways. It is clear that this knowledge has come down to us from great Rishis.

Hetumadbhirvinischitaiḥ : The *Brahmasutras* of *Vyasa* are not fictitious creations of fancy and imagination. They are scientific and logical statements proved and declared by subtle intellectual and analytical reasoning. The modern man who claims rational thinking as his special privilege will find enough argumentative power and conclusive reasoning in every part of the *Brahmasutras*. That is why it is said '*vinischitaiḥ*'—conclusively proved. Not only is this knowledge obtained by reasoning but directly apprehended by them through personal experience. It is the highest truth and there is nothing beyond it.

The kshetra (the Field) is described in two verses.

6. महाभूतान्यहङ्कारे बुद्धिरन्यत्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥
7. इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं सङ्खातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥

*Mahabhotany ahamkaro buddhir avyaktam eva cha
indriyani dasai'kam cha pancha che'ndriyagocharah* 6

*Iccha dveshah sukham duhkham
samghatas chetana dhritih
etat kshetram samasena
savikaram udahritam* 7

Meaning: महाभूतानि *mahabhotani* : the five great elements, अहङ्कारः *ahamkarah* : egoism, बुद्धिः *buddih* : intellect, अव्यक्तम् च एव *avyaktam cha eva* : and also the unmanifested (Mula Prakriti), दश एकम् च इन्द्रियाणि *dasa ekam cha indriyani* : the ten external and internal senses and the mind (eleven), इन्द्रियगोचराः पञ्च च *indriya gocharah pancha cha* : and the five objects of the senses (sound, colour, etc.), इच्छा *iccha* : desire, द्वेषः *dveshah* : dislike, सुखम् *sukham* : pleasure (of the senses), दुःखम् *dukhama* : pain, sorrow, सङ्घातः *samghatah* : the aggregate of the body and the senses, चेतना *chetana* : intelligence, (Vritti Jnana), धृतिः *dhritih* : fortitude, एतत् *etat* : thus, सविकारं *savikaram* : with modifications, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the field, समासेन *samasena* : briefly, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is described.

Substance: The five great elements, the ego, intellect, ‘*mula prakriti*’, the ten senses and the mind, the five sense-objects like sound, touch etc., desire, dislike, pleasure, sorrow, the aggregate of the body of the senses, intelligence (*Vrittijnana*), fortitude, - all this together with modifications is briefly described as ‘*kshetram*’.

Commentary: ‘*Kshetram*’ does not simply mean the physical body alone. All that is perceived (*drisya*) is the Field. The five elements, mind and intellect and the unmanifested ‘*Mula prakriti*’ also come within the concept of the Field. As the mind also is ‘*kshetram*’, its modifications like desire and hatred, pleasure and pain, etc., also come under *kshetram*. Not only the bad modifications but good qualities of the mind like

fortitude (*dhritti*) are also included in *kshetram*. In the highest state (*nirvikalpa Atma* state) when *Atma* is experienced, the good and the bad are both left behind.

savikaram : The entire *kshetram* which is *Drisya* is subject to constant change. The *kshetrajna* (*Drik*, the seer) alone is changeless.

‘*Sukham*’—happiness, usually understood by people, is also *Drisya* (*kshetram*) and subject to change. So instead of clinging to a changing and momentary happiness, man should seek for the unchanging bliss of *Atma*.

The wise man has to reject all that is *Drisya* both external, and internal. Thoughts are *drisya*, pleasure and pain are *drisya*, likes and dislikes are *drisya*, cowardice and courage are *drisya*—in fact all that comes within our comprehension is *drisya*—(*kshetram*). The wise man should not identify himself with these bodily and mental modifications. He should remain as *kshetrajna*, the witness of these changes. Thus, he attains the established state in *Atma*.

This Knowledge, is obtained through discrimination between *Atma* and *Anatma*. All that is *Anatma* is *kshetram*—the Field, and *Atma* is the *kshetrajna*, the knower of the field. The seeker has to carry on this discriminatory process constantly till he is firmly established in the Self.

Question : What is *Kshetram* ?

Answer : (1) The five great elements, (2) egoism (3) intellect, (4) ‘Mula Prakriti’, (5) The ten internal and external sense organs and the mind, (6) the five sense-objects, (7) desire, (8) dislike, (9) sense-enjoyments, (10) sorrow, (11) the aggregate of the body and the senses, (12) intelligence (Vritti Jnanam), (13) fortitude.

In five verses, the Lord declares the qualities of *Jnana*.

8. अमानित्वपदभित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिराज्यवश् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥

9. इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ९
10. असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १०
11. मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ ११
12. अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १२

*Amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa kshantir arjavam ।
acharyopasanam saucham sthairyam atmavinigrahah ॥ 8*

*Indriyarthaेषु vairagyam anahamkara eva cha ।
janma mrityu jara vyadhi duhkha doshanudarsanam ॥ 9*

*Asaktir anabhishvangah putra dara grihadishu ।
nityam cha samachittatvam istanistopapattishu ॥ 10*

*Mayi cha'nanyayogena bhaktir avyabhicharini ।
vivikta desa sevitvam aratir janasamsadi ॥ 11*

*Adhyatma jnana nityatvam tattva jnanartha darsanam ।
etaj�्ञानम् iti proktam ajnanam yad ato'nyatha ॥ 12*

Meaning : अमानित्वम् *amanitvam* : humility, absence of self-glorification, अदम्भित्वम् *adambhitvam* : unpretentiousness, अहिंसा *ahimsa* : non-injury, not doing any harm to other beings either by word, thought or deed, क्षान्तिः *kshantih* : forbearance, आर्जवम् *arjavam* : rectitude, uprightness, आचार्योपासनम् *acharyopasanam* : service of the Teacher, शौचम् *saucham* : purity (internal and external), स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam* : steadiness, आत्मविनिग्रहः *atmavinigrahah* : self-control, इन्द्रियार्थेषु *indriyarthaेषु* : of sense objects, वैराग्यम् *vairag्यम्* : dispassion, अनहङ्कारः एव च *anahamkarah evacha* : and also absence of egoism, जन्म मृत्यु जराव्याधि दुःख दोषानुदर्शनम् *janma*

mrityu jaravyathi duhkha doshanu darsanam : clear understanding of the sorrow and evil of birth, death, old age and disease, पुत्रदारगृहादिषु *putradaragrihadishu* : in son, wife, home and other possessions, असक्तिः *asaktih* : non-attachment, अनभिष्वज्ञः *anabhishvargah* : non-identification of self with the persons and things mentioned above, इष्टानिष्ठोपपत्तिषु *ishtonishtcpipathishu* : in desirable and undesirable occurrences, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, समचित्तत्वम् च *sama chittatvam cha* : and equal-mindedness, मयि *mayi* : in Me, अनन्ययोगेन *ananyayogena* : by the yoga of non-separation, अव्यभिचारिणी *avyabhicharini* : unswerving, भक्तिः *bhaktih* : devotion, विविक्तदेशसेवित्वम् *vivikta-desasevitam* : resorting to solitude, जनसंसदि *janasamsadi* : for the society of men, अरतिः *aratih* : distaste, अध्यात्मज्ञानं नित्यत्वम् *adhyatmajnana nityatvam* : constancy of Self-knowledge, तत्त्वज्ञानार्थं दशनम् *tatvajnanartha darsanam* : perception of the end of true knowledge, एतत् *etat* : (all) this, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, इति *iti* : thus, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is declared, यत् *yat* : what (is), अतः अन्यथा *atah anyatha* : opposed to this, अज्ञानम् *ajnanam* : (is) ignorance.

Substance : Absence of self-glorification, absence of pretension, non-injury, fortitude, uprightness, service to teacher, purity, firmness, self-control,—dispassion towards sense-objects, absence of egoism, rememberence of the evil sand sorrows of birth, death, old age, and pain,—non-attachment and non-identification with son, wife, house etc., constant equal-mindedness during desirable and undesirable occurrences,—unswerving devotion to Me by the *yoga* of non-separation, resorting to solitary places, distaste for the society of men,—constancy of Self-knowledge, perception of the true end of Knowledge, — all this is *jnanam*, and what is opposed to it is ignorance (*ajnanam*).

Commentary : In this Discourse, both knowledge and the object of Knowledge are explained. The moral and spiritual qualities needed for Self-realisation are stated as Knowledge (*Jnanam*) here. Without perfect command of these qualities, no one can attain *Paramatma*. When the mirror is pure, the reflection is clear, not otherwise. Thus when the mind is purified by spiritual qualities, the Self is clearly reflected in it. So the seeker has to cultivate these qualities of *jnanam* first, and the self-existent *Paramatman* is revealed spontaneously without any effort on the part of man. All effort, all practice, all ‘*sadhana*’ is needed to purify the mind by acquisition of these moral and spiritual qualities. There ends all effort. The realisation of *Paramatman* occurs by itself. No effort is needed. Twenty spiritual qualities are mentioned here. The seeker has to understand each one of them and make them all part of his own personality.

acharyopasanam : Service to the *Guru* is an essential factor in spiritual life. Without the benediction of God and *Guru*, no advancement is possible. Knowledge of *Atma* is attained by their grace. (Vide 4-34).

saucham : Purity both internal and external is another essential factor of spiritual life. The mind and body should be washed clean of all their dirt and foul passions.

sthairyam : The seeker should be firm, determined and resolute. His decision should be unalterable. The views and opinions of worldly men should not be allowed to loosen the firmness of one's own conviction about spiritual truth.

atmavinigrahah : Here the word *Atman* stands for senses and mind. They should be thoroughly brought under control, without any fear of rebellion from them at any time. The power of *Maya* can easily trap up a man, if his self-control is partial or inadequate.

indrivartheshu vairagyam : Dispassion for sense-objects is the test of a *jnani*. The man of knowledge is never tempted by the attractions of the sense-world. If the mind runs after sense-pleasures, it cannot be brought to rest in the Self. Meditation is

not possible. The seeker has to develop 'vairagya' as the very life element of spiritual progress. He should turn the mind inwards to look into the Self by withdrawing it from its usual wanderings in the objective world.

janmamrityu jaravyadhi dukha doshanudarsanam : Generally people are able to understand the evils of old age, disease and death. But they do not understand the evils of birth. When a child is born people feel happy. But the Lord here says that birth itself is evil and sorrowful. Because all the ensuing ills and miseries of life come after birth. When there is no birth, there is no body; when there is no body there is no old age or disease or death. That is why both birth and death are said to form the cycle of 'samsara'. The man who desires to escape death, should also avoid birth. One cannot be had without the other. The true aspirant thinks deeply and sees clearly (*anudarsanam*) all the evils arising from material life. By such contemplation he develops a deep inspiration to transcend these evils by every means possible. He finds ultimately that he is not the body, but *Atma*, the unborn and deathless, free from all the modifications of body and mind. Thus he transcends death. This habit of the mind to see the evils of life and death is of utmost importance in the path of knowledge.

asaktir anabhisvangaḥ putradaragrihadishu : The house-holders should think of this aspect of *jnana*. He should understand that these things like wife and children, positions and possessions, do not really belong to him. It does not mean that he should abandon them. The idea is that there should not be any mental attachment for them. He should realise that he has nothing to do with them, though externally he discharges all the duties of a house-holder.

samachittatvam : Equanimity of mind under all circumstances is again the essence of *jnana*. The wise man is constant and steady whatever may happen, because he knows that he is not the *kshetra*, but the *kshetrajna*. So he is indifferent to joy or sorrow, good fortune or ill-fate.

bhaktiravyabhicharini: The Lord mentions devotion to Him as one of the qualities of Knowledge. This devotion should be constant and continuous, and it should not be diverted towards any other object in the world. Though in the beginning, such single-minded devotion is not possible, yet by resolute practice he should attain that state when the mind rests steadfast in the Lord, and does not move away from Him.

viviktadesa sevitvam: In the early stages the company of worldly-minded people causes great distraction (*vikshepa*), and so the seeker is required to resort to solitary places for silent thinking and meditation. It is quite possible to create such silence and solitude in one's own house by keeping a room separately for purposes of study and meditation. As the seeker advances, he takes to silence and solitude naturally.

aratirjanasamsadi: The company of indifferent people should be avoided. 'Satsang' is always desirable.

adhyatmajnana nityatvam: Constancy of Divine contemplation and knowledge is taught here. The light of knowledge should be steady and bright in the heart always. If the light is extinguished, darkness immediately envelops the heart of man. When *jnana* is lost, *ajnana* enters at once. When *ajnana* is put off, *jnana* dawns at once. They are like light and darkness. When the one is, the other is not. The seekers should remember the Lord's instruction and try to be aware of the truth at all times. Such awareness keeps off 'avidya' from possessing the heart of man.

taivajnanartha darsanam: Direct experience of the truth is one of the important qualities of a *jnani*. It is not speculation or logic or argument, but actual perception of *A'mu*, which is *Brahmajnana*.

ajnanam yadatonyatha: What is ignorance? What is not *jnana* is ignorance. The Lord need not explain what ignorance is. Everybody knows it already. Pride and arrogance, selfishness, envy and jealousy, ill-will, hatred and a host of evil passions, desires, hopes and fears which beset the mind constitute ignorance.

Question : *What are the qualities of a jnani and how many are they ?*

Answer : They are twenty—1) Absence of self-glorification, 2) absence of pretension, 3) non-injury, 4) fortitude, 5) uprightness, 6) service to teacher 7) purity, 8) firmness, 9) self-control, 10) dispassion towards sense-objects, 11) absence of egoism, 12) remembrance of the evils and sorrows of birth, death, old age and pain, 13) non-attachment, 14) non-identification with sons, wife, house etc., 15) constant equal-mindedness during desirable and undesirable occurrences, 16) unswerving devotion to the Lord by the yoga of non-separation, 17) resorting to solitary places, 18) distaste for the society of men, 19) constancy of Self-knowledge, 20) perception of the true end of knowledge. These are the qualities of a *jnani*.

Having spoken of jnanam, the Lord explains the jneyam (that which is to be known) in six verses :

13. ज्ञेयं यत्त्वाप्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्त्वासदुच्यते ॥

१३

*Jneyam yat tat pravakshyami yajjnatva'mritam asnute!
anadimat param brahm na sat tan na'sad uchyate ॥ 13*

Meaning : यत् *yat* : what, ज्ञेयम् *jneyam* : to be known (Brahman), यत् *yat* : what, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, अमृतम् *amritam* : immortality Moksha, अश्नुते *asnute* : (man) attains तत् *tat* : that, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami* : (I) will tell, अनादिमत् *anadimat* : beginningless, परम् ब्रह्म *param brahma* : supreme Brahman, तत् *tat* : that, सत् *sat* : existence, न उच्यते *na uchyate* : is not said, असत् *asat* : non-existence, न *na* (*uchyate*) : is not said.

Substance : That which is *Brahman* to be known, knowing which man attains immortality, that (*Brahman*) I will tell; that

beginningless supreme *Brahman* is not said to be existence or non-existence.

Commentary : From this verse onwards in six verses the Lord explains the nature of that which is to be known, the supreme Brahman. The former verses (8-12) dealt with knowledge and its qualities. But that is not enough. Knowledge of what ? What is it that the man of wisdom knows ? What does knowledge lead to ? What is that to be known ? These questions are answered now by the Lord. Having abandoned bad qualities, the aspirant acquires good qualities, and then abandoning both, he attains the supreme Brahman. This is the state of perfection. All the other states are imperfect.

Some of the religions are content with the teaching of ethical principles and a moral code of conduct. It is good in itself, but that is not enough. The aspirant should purify himself by ethical conduct, and then find his identity with the Supreme. That is the ultimate goal. There is no resting ground anywhere below that state. Therefore in the Gita, the Lord takes his disciple to the highest rung of the spiritual ladder and leaves him there—the *Advaita* realisation of *Nirguna Brahman*. The Gita explains *Dvaita*, *Visishtadvaita* and *Advaita* one after another and so it is said to be the one complete spiritual *Sastra*.

Pravakshyami : The enthusiasm of the Lord in this spiritual teaching is indicated by this word.

Amritam asnute : The reward of the Brahman is stated even at the beginning—the reward is Immortality. Knowing this, the seeker is inspired with zeal to move forward towards the goal—Immortality, *Moksha*, Perfection ! That is the reward. Why should man cling to wretched perishable stuff and exhaust his precious life in animal activities, when there is Perfection awaiting him at the end of this '*sadhana*' ?

nasaduchyate : The supreme Brahman is not an object of sense-perception. That is the idea of 'na sat' (not existence). It does not mean that it has not existence. A body exists and when it dies it ceases to exist. This is true of all objects. But Brahman is not said to exist or not exist in this sense. It is beyond existence and non-existence.

14. सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमङ्गलोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥

१४

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvato'kshisiromukham ।

sarvatah srutimat loke sarvam avritya tishtati ॥ 14

Meaning : तत् *tat* : that (Brahman Atma), सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, पाणिपादम् *panipadam* : having hands and feet, सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, अक्षिशिरोमुखम् *akshisiromukham* : havings eyes, heads and faces, सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, श्रुतिमत् *srutimat* : having ears, लोके *loke* : in the universe, सर्वम् *sarvam* : all, आवृत्य *avritya* : having pervaded, तिष्ठति *tishtati* : is.

Substance : That (Brahman *Atma*), having hands and legs everywhere, and everywhere haing eyes, heads and faces, and having ears everywhere, exists in the Universe, having pervaded all.

Commentary : Brahman is described as having eyes, ears, hands and feet etc. everywhere, and as pervading the entire Universe. All that men does is witnessed directly by *Paramatma* and so it is man's duty to follow *Dharma* in his life and conduct. Every thought generated in the mind is known to *Paramatma*, and so what ver is thought of by man should be pure and good.

Where is God ? The answer is He is everywhere. This verse states the 'saguna' aspect of Brahman, the all-pervasive cosmic intelligence, the basis and foundation by which the whole of the manifested universe is sustained.

sarvam avritya tishtati : Brahman pervades all the Universe. What pervades all should be more than the Universe that is pervaded. The Universe which is *Drisya* is just a fragment of Brahman, who is infinitely greater and higher. So, instead of clinging to *Drisya*, one should take refuge in the *Diik, Paramatma*.

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|--|----|
| 15. सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वभूच्चरं निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तु च ॥ | १५ |
| 16. बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ | १६ |
| 17. अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तु च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ | १७ |
| 18. ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ | १८ |

*Sarvendriya gunabhasam sarvendriya vivarjitam ।
asaktam sarvabhricchai'va nirguna.n gunabhoktri cha ॥* 15

*Bahir antas cha bhutanam acharam charam eva cha ।
suksmatvat thad avijneyam durastham cha'ntike cha tat ॥* 16

*Avibhaktam cha bhuteshu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam ।
bhuta bhartru cha tajjneyam grasishnu prabhavishnu cha ॥* 17

*Jyotisham api taj jyotis tamasah param uchyaite ।
jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya vishthitam ॥* 18

Meaning : तत् *tat* : Brahman, सर्वेन्द्रिय गुणाभासं *sarven-*
driyagunabhasam : the functions of all the senses, सर्वन्द्रिय
विवर्जितम् *sarvendriya vivarjitam* : devoid of all the senses,
असक्तम् *asaktam* : unattached, सर्वभूतं च एव *sarvabhrīt cha eva* :
and also supporting all, निर्गुणम् *nirgunam* : without qualities'

गुण भोक्तु च *gunabhoktri cha* : and (yet) experiencer of the qualities, भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of all elements, बहिः *bahih* : without, अन्तः च *antah cha* : and within (Brahman is), अचम् *acharam* : non-moving, चरम् एव च *charmeva cha* : and also moving, सूक्ष्मत्वात् *sukshmatvat* : because of its subtlety, अविज्ञेयम् *avijneyam* : (is) unknowable, तत् *tat* : that (Brahman), दूरस्थम् *durastham* : far away, अनिके च *anti kecha* : and near, भूतेषु *bhuteshu* : in beings, तत् *tat* : that (Brahman), अविभक्तम् च *avibhaktam cha* : and indivisible, विभक्तम् इव च *vibhaktim iva cha* : and as if divided, स्थितम् *sthitam* : exists, भूतभर्तु च *bhuta-bhartri cha* : and the supporters of beings, ग्रसिष्णु *grasishnu* : devouring, प्रभविष्णु च *prabhavishnu cha* : and generating, *tat* : that (Brahman), ज्ञेयम् *jneyam* : to be known, तत् *tat* : Brahman, ज्योतिषाम् अपि *jyotisham api* : even of shining objects like sun, fire etc., ज्योतिः *jyotih* : light, तमसः परम् *tamasah param* : beyond darkness, (ignorance), ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge (intelligence), ज्ञेयम् *jneyam* : the knowledge, ज्ञानगम्यम् *jnanagamyam* : the goal of knowledge, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all beings, हृदि *hridi* : in the heart, विष्टितम् *vishtitam* : seated, उच्यते *ucchyate* : is said.

Substance : That Brahman shines through the functions of all the senses, and yet is without the senses; it is unattached and yet is supporting all; it is without qualities, and yet it is the experiencer of all qualities.

That Brahman exists within and without all the beings; it is immoving and also moving; because of its subtlety it is unknowable (by the ignorant); it is far away and also near.

That Brahman is undivided and yet exists in beings as if divided; it is the supporter of all beings; it is worthy to be known, it is destroying and also generating.

That Brahman is the light of the shining objects like the Sun, Moon and Fire; it is beyond darkness (ignorance); it is knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge; in the heart of all beings it is seated.

Commentary : In these verses, the Knowable (Brahman) is stated vividly. ‘*Jnanagamyam*’ i.e. the goal to be reached by the practice of the qualities of knowledge mentioned in verses 8-12. The supreme Brahman is known only to those who possess the qualities of knowledge. But the qualities themselves are not the goal. The goal is Brahman. Whatever path is followed, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga* or *Dhyana*, the end of the spiritual pilgrimage is Brahman. *Brahma-Jnana* liberates man from the horrible dream of ignorance, birth and death. Man knows the reality and that he is himself one with the Reality. The little ‘I’ did not and does not exist. So the seeker should contemplate the Knowable (*Jneyam* : Brahman) and realise his identity with That.

The idea is that with the destruction of the *vasanas*, one should possess the Knowledge of the Supreme. ‘*Sadhana*’ and knowledge of ‘*Sadhyā*’ are both necessary. The aim of the Gita is to clear the path and also to attain the goal. Man’s glorious destiny is the Realisation of Brahman. May all the seekers discard all foolish and impure notions of their being flesh and blood and know themselves to be the blissful and ever-blessed *paramatma*.

asaktam : (drik) *Atma* does not touch the objective world (*drisya prapancham*.)

bahirantas cha bhutanam : He is both inside and outside all beings. So near He is to beings, witnessing all that they think and do, that they should never commit evil and sin in any manner what-so-ever.

acharam charam eva cha : He is moving and unmoving: How can this be ? In the dream-state man imagines that he is moving here and there and doing so many things. But does he really move ? No. He is lying down in his bed. So also, this Universe in the form of beings is moving, and as Brahman it is

unmoving. The real man, being Brahman does not move. What moves is the *Drisya prapancham* (*Prakriti*). Or it may also be interpreted that He is both the objects like animals and birds and so on, and also the unmoving like mountains and trees etc.

sukshmatvat avijneyam : There are three ethers 1) The material ether (*Sthulakasa*) 2) The mental ether (*Chittakasa*) 3) The Intelligene ether (*Chidakasa*). One is subtle than the other. The third is the subtlest of all. This *Chidakasa* is the knowable Brahman. It is unseen by the physical eye, by the mental eye, by the eyes of the ignorant. Only the vision of knowledge reveals the Supreme.

antike cha tat : He is near, very near to the people. Knowing this they should be free from all evil and sin.

vibhaktamiva cha : Brahman is undivided. He does not exist as a separate entity in the beings of the world. It would be absurd to think that each man has a separate Brahman of his own. It is the one Being who is present in all. On account of 'avidya' it appears as though He is divided. That is why the word 'iva' is used. In a pot of water, in the river, in the ocean, the Sun's reflection is seen differently. But the Sun is only one. Exactly in that manner, the one Brahman, who is shining through the millions of beings, appears to be divided, but is not really divided. Like the string keeping together different flowers, He exists all alone sustaining the manifold universe. Brahman being infinite, there cannot be any separateness or division in Him. The aim of spiritual 'sadhana' is to know that one in this manifold Universe of name and form.

Bhutabhatricha, grasishnu prabhavishnu cha : He is the supporter, the creator and the destroyer. He is Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

tamasah param : All these worlds, mind and *buddhi*, are in the realm of 'avidya'. This ignorance is itself darkness. The Lord is beyond the darkness of 'avidya' (*aditya varnam tamasah parastat*). (8-9).

jnanam, jneyam, jnanagamyam: The first word (*jnanam*) stands for knowledge. The second word (*Jneyam*) mens *Atman*. The third is '*Jnanagamyam*'—Here the word '*jnanam*' stands for qualities like humility etc. which lead to the understanding of Brahman. *Jneyam* is that which is to be known, the knowable (i. e.) the Supreme Brahman. This alone takes man beyond *samsara*. No other knowledge can achieve this liberation for mankind.

How then to realise God? Certainly, the answer is by the full possession of the qualities of *Jnana*-like *amanitvam*, '*adambhityam*' etc. There is no other way. Let the seekers be perfectly clear about this point, and strive hard to cultivate every one of the divine virtues.

hridi sarvasya vishtitam: He is in the heart of all. From worms and germs upto Brahma (Creator) the Lord is present in every being, in the moving and the unmoving. There is nothing where he is not. This being the highest truth, each one can realise Him in His own heart. Whether one looks out at the manifested universe or looks within at the *Atma* the same Brahman exists. There cannot be any distinction of high or low or big or small. Every one can hope to realise Him, whoever he is and wherever he may stand in the scheme of things.

Question : *What is the nature of jneyam (Parabrahman) ?*

Answer : 1) That Brahman having hands and legs everywhere and every where having heads and faces, and having ears everywhere exists in the Universe, 2) It pervads all the Universe, 3) It shines by the functions of all the senses, 4) It is without the senses, 5) It is unattached, 6) It supports all, 7) It is without the three qualities i. e. *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*, 8) It is the experiencer of the qualities, 9) It exists within and without all beings, 10) It is unmoving, 11) and it is moving, 12) It is unknowable to ignorant because of its subtlety, 13) It is far away, 14) It is near, 15) It is indivisible but exists as if divided in beings, 16) It is the supporter of beings, 17) It is worthy to be known, 18) It is destroying and also generating,

19) That Brahman is the Light of the shining objects like the Sun, the Moon and the Fire, 20) It is beyond darkness (ignorance), 21) It is knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge, 22) It is seated in the heart of all beings.

The Lord, having described kshetra and kshetrajna, now declares the fruit of the knowledge.

19. इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समाप्तः ।
मद्भक्त एति विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥

१९

*Iti kshetram tatha jnanam jneyam cho'ktam samasatah ।
madbhakta etat vijnaya madbhavayo'papadyate ॥*

19

Meaning : इति *iti* : thus, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the field, तथा *tatha* : as well as, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, ज्ञेयम् च *jneyam cha* : and the knowable, समाप्तः *samasatah* : briefly, उक्तम् *uktam* : is said, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : My devotee, एतत् *etat* : this, विज्ञाय *vijnaya* : knowing, मद्भावाय *madbhavaya* : to My being (Moksha), उपपद्यते *upapadyate* : is fit.

Substance : Thus, the Field as well as Knowledge and that which is to be known (the knowable) is said briefly; My devotee, knowing this becomes fit to enter My being (*Moksha*).

Commentary : *Madbhakta etat vijnaya* : It is clear from this that no one, unless he is the devotee of Lord, can attain that knowledge which makes him fit to become one with the Supreme Being. It is only from the flower of devotion that the fruit of knowledge grows. Therefore every seeker has to acquire God's grace and *Guru's* benediction by virtuous acts, by worship, by *japa*, *tapas*, by singing the name and glory of the Lord and by following all the aids to pure devotion. Then, out of compassion, He bestows on His *Bhakta* the '*buddhiyoga*' which enables him to distinguish the *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*. This knowledge leads him to become one with *Paramatma* (*Madbhavaya*). One may become a great scholar of the *Sastras* and Sciences, but he cannot obtain knowledge of the Divine if there is no devotion.

Learning and realisation are entirely different. They are poles apart. Let the seekers move forward on the path of devotion, and let them gradually gain the intellectual purity to understand the final Truth.

Moksha is the fruit of perfect knowledge of the *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*. And this knowledge is offered to the true devotee by the Lord Himself.

Question : *Who attains union with God, Moksha ?*

Answer : He who knows the 'Kshetra' and 'Kshetrajna'.

Question : *Who can obtain this knowledge ?*

Answer : Only the true devotee of the Lord.

The Lord explains Prakriti and Purusha.

20. प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्युयनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥

२०

*Prakritim purusham chai'va viddhyanadi ubhavapi ।
vikaramscha gunamschais'va viddhi prakritisambhavan ॥* 20

Meaning : प्रकृतिं *prakritim* : prakriti (matter), पुरुषम् च एव *purusham cha eva* : and also purusha (Spirit), उभौ अपि *ubhau api* : even both, अनादी *anadi* : beginningless, विद्धि *yiddhi* : know, विकारांश्च *vikaramscha* : and modifications, गुणान् च एव *gunam cha eva* : and also qualities, प्रकृतिसंभवान् *prakriti sambhavam* : born of prakriti, विद्धि *yiddhi* : know.

Substance : (O Arjuna !) Know that *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are both beginningless; know also that modifications and qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) are born of *Prakriti*.

Commentary : Many ask the question—"When did this *samsara*, bondage, *maya*, begin?"—It would be difficult for the sleeper to say when a dream has started during sleep. This world also is of the same nature. It is beginningless. If one enters a mountain-cave full of darkness, he cannot say how long the darkness has been there. Therefore, it is said that this

Maya, Prakriti, is beginningless (*anadi*). No one can say when it began. But it has not been said that it is endless (*anantam*). If it is endless also, no one can cross over. *Maya* has no beginning, but it has an end. The moment knowledge dawns on man, it ends. The illusion is shattered, the moment Truth is seen. The dream-world may be beginningless, but the moment one wakes up it is all gone. True Knowledge then removes delusion for ever. So *Prakriti* has no beginning but has an end; *Purusha* is beginningless and endless. He is eternal.

Prakriti sambhavan : *Purusha* is ever pure (*Nityasiddha*). There cannot be any change or modification in Him. Desire, hatred, pleasure and pain all these arise from *Prakriti*. As long as these passions agitate the mind, it is clear to every one that he is subject to the power of *Maya*, that he is still in the realm of *kshetra* and has not attained the *kshetrajna*. These 'vasanas,' having come to man from endless births, should be cleared by determined effort, and he should reach the *Purusha* in due course. Whenever the mind is agitated by these passions, whenever the intellect becomes clouded, one should firmly assert and affirm that he is the *Purusha*, changeless, pure and perfect. He should keep himself alert and apart, and watch these modifications as objective changes in the outside world with which he is not at all concerned. He should remain firm and immovable like the mountain. That is the way to overcome the past 'samkaras'; there is no other way.

The theme of Prakriti and Purusha is further elaborated :

21 कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिं रुच्यते ।
पुरुषःसुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥

२१

*Karya karana kartritve hetuh prakritir uchyate¹
purushah sukhaduhkhanam bhoktritve hetur uchyate²* 21

Meaning : कार्यकारण कर्तृत्वे *karyakarana kartritve* : in producing the effect and the cause, प्रकृतिः *prakriti* : (*Maya*) *Prakriti*, हेतुः *hetuh* : cause, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, सुखदुःखानाम् *sukhaduhkhanam* : of joy and sorrow, भोक्तृत्वे *bhoktritve* : in

the experience, पुरुषः *purushah* : purusha, हेतुः *hetuh* : cause, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said.

Substance : *Prakriti* is said to be the cause in providing the chain of cause and effect; *Purusha* is said to be the cause in the experience of joy and sorrow.

Commentary : ‘*Karyam*’ means the body; ‘*Karanam*’ means the senses, mind and ego, the five elements, and the objects of the sense-world. *Prakriti* is the cause, (i. e.) all these things are produced by *Prakriti*. So *Prakriti* is the cause of these things. (*Prakriti* is inert (*Jada*) and so cannot have the power of experiencing joy and sorrow. *Purusha* is pure consciousness. So He cannot be subject to joy and sorrow. But by the senses of *Prakriti*, the *Purusha* appears to be experiencing these modifications of joy and sorrow. Really *Purusha* does not cause anything nor does anything affect Him in any way. He is neither cause nor effect, neither the modifications nor the experiencer of them.’

Intermingling with Prakriti is the cause of birth.

22. पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुद्भक्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।

कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥

२२

Purushah prakritistho hi bhunkte prakritijan gunan ।

karanam gunasangno'sya sad asad yoni janmasu ॥ 22

Meaning : प्रकृतिस्थः *prakritisthah* : seated in prakriti, पुरुष *purushah* : purusha (jiva) प्रकृतिजान् *prakriti jan* : born of Maya, गुणान् *gunan* : qualities (like joy and sorrow), भुद्भक्ते हि *bhunktehi* : verily enjoys, गुणसङ्गः *gunasangah* : attachment to the Gunas, अस्य *asya* : to the jiva, सदसद्योनि जन्मसु *sadasadyonijanmasu* : of birth in good and evil wombs, कारणम् *karanam* : (is) the cause.

Substance : Seated in *Prakriti*, *Purusha* (*Jiva*) enjoys the qualities born of *Prakriti*; attachment to the qualities is the cause for the birth of the *Jiva* in good and evil wombs.

Commentary : This verse explains the cause for the birth of the *Jiva* in good and evil wombs. The cause for it is the attachment of the *Jiva* with qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) and the various objects of the material world. This is the cause of bondage though the *Jiva* (*Purusha*) is really the *Drik* (seer), yet he is deluded into thinking that he is the objective body, and by the delusion, he attaches himself to the objective world through a sense of 'I' and 'mine', through '*raga*' and '*dvesha*'. Thus he becomes bound and takes birth after birth in the world. He becomes a '*samsari*' by binding himself to '*samsara*'. Therefore the wise man should know that attachment to the *Gunas* is the cause of birth and all the evils arising from it. He should cut off all contact with the *Gunas*, and the vehicle of the body; and he should not have any feeling of 'myness', regarding the body and its modifications. He should positively contemplate that He is ever free, pure consciousness, till by such contemplation, he releases himself from the shackles of the body and the *Gunas* relating to it. He then knows what he really is—the eternally pure and perfect *Purusha*. This is the only way to go beyond the ocean of *samsara*, the series of births and deaths which one suffers. Attachment is bondage, detachment is freedom.

In a huge factory, several small wheels rotate by the power of the fly-wheel. If the belt of the fly-wheel is snapped, the other smaller wheels stop rotating automatically. If the main-spring of a watch is cut off, all the other wheels stop moving. Thus if the contact with the body and the *Gunas* of *Prakriti* is given up completely, the whole series of births and deaths come to end, and that very moment man attains freedom and perfection.

Question : *What is the cause of birth ?*

Answer : The attachment of the 'Jiva' with the vehicle of the body, and the 'Gunas' caused by 'Prakriti' is the cause of birth.

Question : *What then is the way to escape from birth and death ?*

Answer : By discrimination, man should give up attachment to the body, to the 'Gunas' and the whole of the objective world.

The Lord declares that the Jiva is Purusha.

23. उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥

२३

*Upadrashta'numanta cha bharta bhokta mahesvarah ।
paramatme'ti cha'pyukto dehe'smin purushah parah ॥ 23*

Meaning : पुरुषः *Purushah* : Atma, अस्मिन् देहे अपि *asmin dehe api* (*sati*) : even though dwelling in this body, परः *parah* : separate from the body, उपद्रष्टा *upadrashta* : witness (*sakshi*), अनुमन्ता च *anumanta cha* : and the permitter, भर्ता *bharta* : the supporter, भोक्ता *bhokta* : the enjoyer, महेश्वरः *mahesvarah* : the great Lord, परमात्मा इति च *paramatma iti cha* : and thus the supreme Self, उक्तः *uktah* : is called.

Substance : Though the *Purusha* (*Atma*) dwells in this body, yet he is separate from the body; the witness, the permitter, the supporter, and the enjoyer. The great Lord, *Paramatma* thus He is called.

Commentary : *Upadrashta* : In *yajna*, the '*upadrashta*' remains a spectator. So also, *Atma*, though dwelling in the body, is separate from the body. He is the spectator of the body, mind and their modifications. Therefore the '*jiva*' should meditate continuously that he is not at all the body and mind but *Atma*. By the very force of that meditation, he regains his original state as *Atma*. In truth, the *jiva* is no other than *Atma*. He is deluded into thinking that he is the body which he never was and which he never can be. This deluded thinking should be given up once for all, and man should assert himself to be *Atma* which he really is.

Mahesvarah, Paramatma, asmin dehe : The great Lord, *Paramatma* is in this body, nearest to us. So, it should be easy to look up and know that the real man is that *Paramatma*. The great Lord is not far away but seated in our very heart. He is

the controller and the punisher. Purity and truth in thought, word and deed should be followed always as everything takes place under the very eye of the Lord.

Parah : This word may be taken to mean the supreme (*Purusha*). He is distinct from the body and mind and transcends all these vehicles (*Kosas*).

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : Though dwelling in the body, He is distinct from the body. He is the witness. He is the permitter, the supporter, the enjoyer, the Great Lord, the Controller.

The fruit of this knowledge of Prakriti and Purusha is stated here.

24. य एवं वेति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥

२४

Ya evam vetti purusham prakritim cha gunaih saha ।

sarvatha vartamano'pi na sa bhuyo'bhijayate ॥

24

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, एवम् *evam* : thus, पुरुषम् *purusham* : Purusha, गुणैः *sah* *gunaih sah* : with the three Gunas, प्रकृतिम् च *prakritim cha* : and prakriti, वेति *vetti* : knows, सः *sah* : he, सर्वथा वर्तमानः *अपि sarvathavaratamanah api* : though in what-so-ever way acting, भूयः *bhuyah* : again, न अभिजायते *na abhijayate* : is not born.

Substance : Who, in this way knows *Purusha* (*Atma*) and *Prakriti* with *Gunas*, he in what-so-ever way acting is not born again.

Commentary : The man of discrimination is able to see distinctly what *Prakriti* is and who *Purusha* is. Such a man knows that he is the *Drik* (seer) and *Prakriti Drisya* (seen). He also knows the qualities of *Prakriti-sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. He takes refuge, not in *Prakriti*, which causes bondage, birth and all the ills of life, but in *Atma*, the *Purusha*, free and perfect, the blissful and the blessed. Detached from *Prakriti*,

he attaches himself to *purusha*. He is not born again. He is liberated. He is *Jivanmukta*.

sarvadha vartamanopi : The wise man who has released himself from the bondage of *prakriti*, may act in whatever way he wishes. He may be *Sannyasi*, absorbed in ‘*samadhi*’ always. Or he may be an active worker in the world doing many good works for the benefit of humanity. He may be a celebte or a house-holder. He has no birth again. We should understand that the word ‘*sarvatha*’ does not imply sinful deeds, prohibited by the *sastras*. In fact, the Lord has always stated the qualities of knowledge, without which this supreme understanding cannot be obtained by anyone. Having obtained the knowledge of the *purusha* the *Jivanmukta* can work in whatever way he likes for universal good or he may remain in absolute *samadhi*. This makes no difference for Him. He is ever free.

Question : *What is the reward of knowing distinctly prakriti and purusha ?*

Answer : He is not born again, though he may live in whatever way he wishes.

In two verses the Lord explains that many attain liberation in various ways according to their samskaras. (tendencies).

25. ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मनमात्मना ।

अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥

२५

*Dhyanena'tmani pasyanti kechid atmanam atmana !
anye samkhyena yogena karmayogena cha'pare ॥ 25*

Meaning : आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Atma (pratyak or paramatma), केचित् *kechit* : some, आत्मना *atmana* : with purified mind, ध्यानेन *dhyanena* : by Dhyana yoga, आत्मनि *atmani* : in themselves, पश्यन्ति *pasyanti* : see (realise), अन्ये *anye* : some others, सांख्येन *samkhyena* *yogena* : by Samkhya yoga, अपरे *apare* : some others, कर्मयोगेन च *karma yogena cha* : and by Karma yoga, (पश्यन्ति), realise paramatma).

Substance: Some behold *Atma* (*pratyagatma* or *paramatma*) in themselves with purified mind by *dhyana yoga*; others (behold *Atmā*) by *samkhya yoga*; yet others (behold *Atma*) by *Karma yoga*.

Commentary : Men are born with different mental predispositions according to their past *samskaras*. They strive to know the truth in different ways, suitable to their nature. Some meditate, some follow *bhakti*, some *jnana*, some the path of work. Whatever may be the path, if the mind is pure and effort sincere, they realise God. As all these paths lead to the same goal, they are all of equal merit. Each man is free to follow any path that he chooses. All reach the same goal.

Bhakti yoga is not mentioned here separately because devotion to God is essential for success in any path. *Bhakti* is necessary for all aspirants whatever the path they follow. So particular mention of it is not made here. Without such devotion no aspirant succeeds in any path (Vide Verse '19).

Pasyanti : *Paramatma* is seen by man (i. e.) realised by the aspirant as a deep abiding illuminating experience. It is not mere speculation or argument or mere logical conclusion. The Lord here declares that God can be seen, and all doubts are set at rest by this tremendous declaration — “You can see God; great souls have beheld by *Dhyana* and other means”—So says Lord Krishna.

atmani : *Paramatma* is seen in one's own self. As He is seated in the heart, the seeker has to gradually cultivate the attitude of looking for His presence within himself rather than searching for Him in other places. He has to search and examine himself to unveil God in his own heart. Moreover, whatever may be the path followed, the purified mind alone is the instrument for Self-realisation. It is the key to open the gateway to liberation (*Moksha*). It is in one's own hands. What is necessary is to cleanse the mind of the accumulated dust of past *samskaras*, reshape in such a way as to make it capable of perceiving the Self.

It is wrong to think that one *yoga* is superior to another. Some think that *Jnana yoga* is higher than *Karma yoga*. The Lord has set at rest all these foolish notions by emphasising the importance of every type of *yoga* according the natural tendencies of the seeker. *Karmayoga* is necessary to purify the heart and through such purity man attains Self realisation, which is the fruit of *Jnana*.

Question : *Where is Paramatma to be realised ?*

Answer : In ones own heart.

Question : *With what ?*

Answer : With the purified mind.

Question : *How ?*

Answer : Some by Dhyana yoga, others by ‘Sankhya yoga, and yet others by Karma yoga realise ‘Paramatma.’

26. अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।

तेऽपि चातितरन्तयेव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥

२६

*anye tv evam ajanantah srutva'nyebhya upasate !
te'pi cha'titarany eva mrityum sruti parayanah ॥ 26*

Meaning : अन्ये तु *any tu* : others yet, एवम् *evam* : in this way (by Dhyana, Samkhya and Karmayogas), अजानन्तः *ajanantah* : not knowing (God), अन्येभ्यः *anyebhyah* : from others, श्रुत्वा *srutwa* : hearing of Paramatma (initiated by othets), उपासते *upasate* : worship, श्रुति परायणाः *sruti parayanah* : regarding what they have heard on the Supreme refuge, ते अपि च *te api cha* : and they also, मृत्युम् *mrityum* : Samsara in the form of death, अतितरन्ति एव *atitaranti eva* : verily cross over.

Substance : Yet others, nor knowing (*Paramatma* by the *Dhyana*, *Samkhya* and *Karma yogas*), hearing from others, worship; Even they, regarding what they have heard as the Supreme refuge, cross over death (*Samsara*).

Commentary : It is declared that those people who are not able to practise the above - mentioned *yogas* cross over *samsara* by listening to experienced elders and worshipping according to their instructions.

ajanantah : Though these people do not have knowledge of *yoga*, study, and enlightenment, yet by the very power of their faith and devotion to the teaching of elders, they cross over the ocean of death. One may not be an expert in medical science, and yet by taking medicine prescribed by the doctor with faith and conviction, the disease is cured ! Even the doctor has to take medicine to cure himself of any disease. His knowledge of medicine does not cure him. Therefore the word '*upasate*' is used emphatically here. Mere scholarship or mere hearing is not enough. Actual worship is essential. No doubt, it is good to have knowledge and understanding of the *Sastras*. What is implied here is that, if a person does not possess this form of equipment, he need not be disheartened. He can hear of God, the ways of God, the path to reach Him, from experienced elders and act accordingly. That is enough to take him over *samsara*, if he has faith in their words and worship with devotion and conviction. He verily crosses over death. There is no doubt about it.

mrityum : Death is used here as a synonym for the bondage of *samsara*. All the so called attractions of life are transient and end in death. So the wise man should not have any attachment for them. What he should aspire for is immortality by self-realisation.

Question : *What is the way for the unlearned to cross-over death ?*

Answer : They should hear of the Truth from others, and practising it they are saved from death.

Question : *What is the nature of Samsara ?*

Answer : It is transient and ends in death.

Question: *How can man cross over death ?*

Answer : By hearing of truth from experienced elders and practising it.

All objects are produced by the union of kshetra and kshetrajna.

27. यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥

२७

*Yavat samjayate kimchit sattvam sthavara jangamam !
kshetrakshetrajna samyogat tad viddhi bharatarshabha ॥ 27*

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas, स्थावर जङ्गमम् *sthavara jangamam* : the unmoving and the moving, सत्त्वम् *sattvam* : being, यावत् किञ्चित् *yavat kimchit* : whatsoever any, सजायते *sanjayate* : is born, तत् *tat* : that, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ संयोगात् *kshetra kshetrajna samyogat* : from the union of the kshetra and kshetrajna, विद्धि *viddhi* : know (to be produced).

Substance : O Arjuna ! in this world whatever being moving or unmoving, is born, know that to be produced from the union of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*.

Commentary : The presence of the Lord in every thing in the world is declared here. The moving and non-moving objects, whatever they are, all of them and everyone of them, are produced by the union of *prakriti* and *purusha* (*kshetra* and *kshetrajna*). Knowing this man has to cultivate universal love as the rule of conduct in life. Does God exist in the stone ? The answer is that the stone cannot have any existence at all, without the union with the Lord. The stone as stone would not be there. This being so, is it any wonder that the Lord is present in living beings, animals, birds or men ? So in the trees and mountains, rivers and valleys, fields and meadows, in the ant, in the sparrow, in the deer and the tiger, in men, in demons and the Gods, *paramatma* exists. Such faith is needed for God-realisation.

Question: How are the moving and non-moving objects produced?

Answer : They are produced by the union of 'kshetra' and 'kshetrajna'.

He is the real seer who sees the all-pervading Paramatma.

28. समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २८

*Samam sarveshu bhuteshu tishantam paramesvaram !
vinasyatsvavinasayantam yah pasyati sa pasyati ॥ 28*

Meaning : सर्वेषु भूतेषु *sarveshu bhuteshu* : in all beings, समम् *samam* : equally, तिष्ठन्तं *tishantam* : existing, परमेश्वरम् the supreme Lord, विनश्यत्सु *vinasyatsu* : though the body, vital breath etc. die, अविनश्यन्तम् *avinasyantam* : undying यः *yah* : who, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, सः *sah* : he, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees (knows the truth).

Substance : Who sees the supreme Lord equally in all beings, who sees that He is undying, though the body and vital forces perish, he is the real seer (He knows the Truth).

Commentary : *Paramatma* is present in all beings equally. It is not that He is more present in some and less present in others. He is like the string inside a garland of flowers.

The supreme Lord is present in all equally.

avinasyantam : The vehicles of the body, *Prana*, mind etc., perish at the time of death. But *Atma*, the Lord is undestructible. He exists. It is clear that the whole of the objective world perishes and the *Drik*, *Atma*, the Lord alone is eternal. Therefore to let go the bond of attachment to the perishable things, and to strengthen firm hold of the Lord, is the duty of all thoughtful men.

yah pasyati sa pasyati : The physical eyes are formed to see material things only. They cannot see any thing more. But the vision of the seer goes deeper and discovers the eternal

principle of life, the Supreme Lord, in the midst of the destruction of phenomenal nature. It is the eye of Knowledge that sees *Atma*, the Lord. He alone sees, because he sees the truth. All others, though having eyes, do not see the truth whatever their power and position, wealth and beauty may be. So, the aspirants should open the inner eye of knowledge, see the truth, and become fearless of death. They would realise that what is perishing is only the body, and the Lord, *Atma* is Eternal, pure and perfect. This knowledge alone saves man from the terrors of death.

Question : *Where is Paramatma ?*

Answer : In all beings.

Question : *How ?*

Answer : Equally in all beings.

Question : *What is the nature of the body etc. ?*

Answer : The body, Prana and mind are subject to death.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It is Immortal; Though the body and other vehicles die, it exists.

Question : *Who is the real seer ?*

Answer : Who knows that Atma exists, in the midst of the perishing phenomenal world, he is the real seer, because he has opened the eye of Knowledge.

He who knows that the Lord exists equally in all, attains liberation (Moksha).

29. समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २९

*Samam pasyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam isvaram ।
na hinastyatmana'tmanam tato yati param gatim ॥*

29

Meaning : हि *hi* : for, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : in all beings, समवस्थितम् *samavasthitam* : equally dwelling, ईश्वरम् *isvaram* :

the Lord (Paramatma), समम् *samam* : equally, पश्यन् *pasyan* : seeing (realising), आत्मना *atmana* : by self, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the Self, न हिनस्ति *na hinasti* : destorys not, ततः *tatah* : so, परामृगतिम् *paramgatim* : supreme goal (Moksha), याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : Seeing the Lord equally dwelling, the same in all beings, he does not destroy the Self by the self; so, he attains the supreme goal (*Moksha*).

Commentary : *Samam, sarvatra, samavasthitam* : These three words show that the Lord is (1) equally present, (2) is in all beings. (3) and is the same. The wise man who realises *Atma* in this way does not destroy the Self with the self. What is meant is that the ignorant man destroys the Self by identifying himself with the body. In fact this amounts to suicide (*Atma hatya*). The Lord shows how the ignorant man, thinking of himself as the non-Self, is destroying his true Self. Generally what does the common man see and think ? He sees the body and the world externally, and thinks that he is the body. What happens then ? The true Self is as good as having been destroyed, because its existence is not known or realised. The wise man sees and realises the true Self, and so he does not care for the death of the body and the other vehicles covering the *Atma*. He knows that he is the immortal Self. But the ignorant not knowing this go through the wheel of suffering and death endlessly. They take birth after birth and die again and again. The brief interval of life is a horrible dream of sorrow and misery. This is the so-called life that man clings to desperately.

Therefore the seeker should be constantly in contact with the Self. *Paramatma*, who exists equally in all beings. This Self is universal and exists everywhere, also in one's own heart. This Knowledge and realisation leads the aspirant to the highest goal (*Moksha*). There is no state higher than freedom and perfection for any man anywhere.

Question : How does the Lord pervade the universe ?

Answer : Equally.

Question: *What is the cause of Samsara ?*

Answer : Ignorance of the universal existence of the Lord.

Question: *Who is responsible for this ?*

Answer : Each man is himself the cause of his own birth and death. He identifies himself with the body and destroys his true Self. He commits 'Atma-hatya'.

Question: *What is the way out of Samsara ?*

Answer : Knowing and realising Atma, the Lord, present equally everywhere is the way to liberation.

Question: *What is the highest state of man ?*

Answer : Self-realisation, Moksha.

Question: *What is the way to Self-realisation ?*

Answer : Knowing the universal presence of the Lord, and realising Him in one's own heart, is the way to Self-realisation.

All actions are performed by Prakriti; Atma is non-doer.

30. प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ ३०

*Prakrtiyai'va cha karmani kriyamanani sarvasah ।
yah pasyati tatha'atmanam akartaram sa pasyati ॥ 30*

Meaning : यः *yah* : he, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, प्रकृत्या *prakritya* एव *eya* : by prakriti only, सर्वशः *sarvasah* : in all ways, क्रियमाणानि *kriyamanani* : are performed, तथा *tatha* : thus, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the Self, अकर्तारं च *akartaramcha* : and actionless, non-doer, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, knows, सः *sah* : he, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, knows,

Substance : Who sees that all actions in all ways are being performed by *Prakriti* only, and thus also sees that *Atma* is non-doer, he sees (realises the Truth).

Commentary : All actions in the world in every way are being performed by *Prakriti*. The real Self of man is actionless, non-doer, and only the witness of these changes and modifications that take place before Him. By His presence, *Prakriti* is empowered to act in various ways, to carry out its work according to natural laws. The man who knows the secret is really the wise man. His vision is true. The others having eyes do not see. Most people attribute action to themselves and are bound by the wheel of *Karma*. They say—'I have bad work or this good work; I am happy or I am sorrowful; I am dull or I am intelligent and so on.' This is '*Ahamkara*'—a false identification of the Self with body and mind (Vide 3-27). This ruinous identification should go. Unless the truth is clearly seen and realised, man lives in the realm of ignorance (*avidya*) and cannot go beyond *samsara*. The distinct separateness between the actionless *Atma* and the functions of *Prakriti* should be realised by every spiritual aspirant.

Question : *By what are the actions performed in the world ?*

Answer : By Prakriti.

Question : *What is the state of Atma ?*

Answer : It is actionless, non-doer (Akarta). By its presence all the vehicles of the body and mind etc. carry on their functions.

Question : *Who is the true seer in the world ?*

Answer : He who knows that Prakriti performs all actions and that he (Self) is non-doer, is the real seer. The others though having eyes do not possess the eye of knowledge.

When the Jiva attains Brahman is declared.

31. यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥

३१

*Yada bhutapṛithagbhavam ekastham anupasyati ।
tata eva cha vistaram brahma sampadyate tada ॥*

31

Meaning: यदा *yada* : when, भूत पृथक्भावं *bhutapṛithagbhavam* : the idea of beings being different and separate (the

manifold universe), एकस्थम् *ekastham* : resting in the one, च *cha* : and, ततः एव *tatah eva* : from that only, विस्तारं *vistaram* : expanding or projecting, अनुपश्यति *anupasyati* : sees well, तदा *tada* : then, (सः *sah* : he), ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, संपद्यते *sampadyate* : attains (becomes Brahman).

Substance : When man sees the manifold world placed in *Paramatma* and projecting from Him only, then he attains Brahman (becomes Brahman).

Commentary : The manifold universe with all the crores of beings, in it, combining, separating, changing, evolving and so on, is in reality the one Supreme Brahman. In that one, these things exist with apparent distinction of name and form. What about the waves on the bosom of the ocean ? Does they exist separately from the ocean ? No. It is the ocean itself, but by name and form they are projected out of the ocean. No one can look upon the wave as having a separate existence apart from the ocean. There may be millions of waves and yet in reality they are ocean, they may come out of the ocean and disappear in the ocean. The ocean exists, the waves come and go. So also, in *Paramatma* the whole universe appears to exist. It comes out of *Paramatma* and merges in *Paramatma*. He is the Reality. He who understands this mystery attains *Brahma Jnana* and then becomes Brahman.

Anupasyati : The aspirant should see the Truth clearly and firmly. He should cultivate the vision of oneness in all, till it becomes habitual to him. Thus he attains the state of Brahman. It is not enough to know it as a theory. It should be practised and realised. Then whatever he sees, he discovers it as Brahman in all places and under all circumstances.

Brahma sampadyate tada : The auspicious moment of self-realisation is declared here. There is no prescribed time-limit for it. When he sees that the manifold universe is created in *Paramatma* and is evolving in Him, when he sees the all-

pervading one, minus the name and form—that very moment he attains *Brahmajnana* and becomes Brahman. (The *Jiva* is dissolved in Brahman and survives as the residual Reality, Brahman).

From this it follows that seeing the manifold is bondage and ignorance; seeing the One is liberation and knowledge. Therefore the aspirant should transcend name and form which is the cause of manifoldness and establish himself in the vision of the one Absolute ‘*sat chit ananda*’.

Question : *When does man attain Brahman ?*

Answer : When he knows and sees that the whole manifold universe is placed in Paramatma and is projected from Him, he realises Brahman. That is Brahma Jnana and Moksha.

In three verses, the nature and excellence of Atma is declared.

32. अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३२

*Anaditvan nirgunatvat paramatma'yam avyayah ।
sarirastho'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate ॥ 32*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! अनादित्वात् *anaditvat* : being without beginning (causeless), निर्गुणत्वात् *nirgunatvat* : being devoid of qualities (Trigunarahita), अव्ययः *avyayah* : imperishable, अयम् *ayam* : this, परमात्मा *paramatma* : Supreme Self, शरीरस्थः अपि *sarirasthah api* : though dwelling in the body, न करोति *na karoti* : does not act, न लिप्यते *na lipyate* : is not tainted.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Being without beginning (causeless), being devoid of the three Gunas this *Paramatma*, the Imperishable, though dwelling in the body, does not act and is not tainted.

Commentary : *Paramatma* has no beginning and no end. He is not caused by anything. So He is beyond cause. All other things have a cause. They begin and they come to an end. Moreover, He is devoid of the three qualities, and consequent changes and modifications. He is Imperishable. He is actionless. He does not do anything. As He is the Infinite, how can He go or come or do this or that? He is not tainted by anything. How can the awakened man have any contact with the objects of the dream-world? So, though the body, mind and *buddhi* are doing many things, yet *Atma* stands apart steeped in His own bliss, as the actionless witness of the phenomenal world.

Sarirasthah api : The Lord is in the body, in everybody. He is in the secret cave of the human heart. He, this Lord of Lords, is so near us that we should seek for Him, find Him, and share His bliss and blessedness. The human body is the temple; *Atma*, the Lord is the *Deity*; knowing this one should fill himself with purity and light to know and see the Lord and be one with Him.

33. यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥

३३

*Yatha sarvagatam saukshmyad akasam no'palipyate ।
sarvatra'vasthito dehe tatha'atma no'palipyate ॥* 33

Meaning : सर्वगतम् *sarvagatam* : the all - pervading, आकाशम् *akasam* : ether, सौक्ष्म्यात् *saukshmyat* : because of its subtlety, यथा *yatha* : as, नोपलिप्यते *nopalipyate* : is not tainted (by dust etc.), तथा *tatha* : so, सर्वत्र देहे *sarvatra dehe* : everywhere in the body (or in all bodies), अवस्थितः *avasthitah* : seated, pervading, आत्मा *atma* : Paramatma, न उपलिप्यते *na upalipyate* : is not tainted (by the impurities of the body etc).

Substance : As the all-pervading ether, because of its subtlety, is not tainted (by dust etc.); so also *paramatma*, pervading the body everywhere (or pervading all bodies) is not tainted (by the qualities of the body etc.).

Commentary : Ether is the subtlest of things in the material universe. So it is taken as an illustration to point the all-pervasive, taintless, subtle nature of *Atma*. By simple comparisons to explain high philosophic truths, is the distinct feature of the Gita. It should not be misunderstood that *Atma* is ether. No. Like ether, it is subtle; that is what is meant by the comparison. Ether pervades the sky, the dust, the mire and so on, and yet it is not tainted because it is subtle. Similarly *Atma* pervades the whole body, and yet it is not tainted or affected by the birth and death of the body nor by the pleasures and pains of the mind or by anything taking place through the different vehicles (*upadhis*). More over, though storm-clouds burst into a thunder, lightning and rain, and spread out in different colours yet the sky is not tainted by the cold winds and hail storm. So also, *Atma* is seated firm and unmovable in the body and whatever changes take place in the body and mind, it is not at all touched by them in any way whatsoever. The aspirant has to maintain with faith and courage, the attitude that he is the Self and not the body, that he has nothing to do with the innumerable troubles, sorrows, pleasures and pains of the body and the mind. This practice should be continued till it is finally and immovably fixed in the mind. Then the life of the aspirant would be fearless, sublime and blissful.

Sarvatra vasthito dehe : *Paramatma* (as declared in the previous verse) is so near us in our own body, that we should realise Him in our own heart by means of purity in thought, word and deed. It is clear that no distinction is made here about race, religion, sex, age, and nationality. The Supreme Truth is present in all, and will be revealed to all, if the perfect practice is undertaken. The practice is to search for the Lord within oneself by discarding the five sheaths (*Pancha Kosas*) with which He is covered, as pure water in a lake is covered up by moss. There is no doubt that determined seekers would find Him ere long.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer : Though he is seated in the body, yet He is untainted by the changes and modifications in the same way as ether is not tainted by dust or mire or clouds etc.

34. यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥

३४

*Yatha prakasayatyekah kritsnam lokam imam ravih !
kshetram kshetri tatha kritsnam prakasayati bharata ॥ 34*

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! एकः *ekah* : One, रविः *ravih* : Sun, इमम् कृत्स्नं *imam kristnam* : all this, लोकम् *lokam* : world, यथा *yatha* : as, प्रकाशयति *prakasyati* : illumines, तथा *tatha* : so also, क्षेत्री *kshetri* : *kshetrajna* (Paramatma), कृत्स्नं *kristnam* : whole, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the Field, प्रकाशयति *prakasyati* : illumines.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Just as the One Sun illumines this whole world, so the *kshetrajna* (the Lord of the Field) illumines the entire Field (*kshetram*).

Commentary : The all-pervasive character of *paramatma* is stated previously by the illustration of ether. Now the luminosity of *Atma* is declared by the illustration of the sun. Just as the sun, who is the spectator of the world, illumines the whole world by his light, so also *paramatma* illumines the entire *kshetram*-body, mind and intellect. The Sun is only one. *Paramatma* is One. The sun gives light. *Paramatma* is light. The Sun has nothing to do with good and bad nature of men and their actions in the world. *Paramatma* similarly is not concerned with the functions of the body, mind and intellect. He is just the witness, like the Sun. If the sun is not there, the whole world becomes lifeless and dark. So also if *Paramatma* is not there, the universe would crumble to pieces and disappear in darkness and death.

Kritsnam : It implies that *Paramatma* illumines the three states of man (wakefulness, dream and sleep), and also the three divisions of time (past, present and future).

The seeker has to meditate on these basic ideas, and know that he is *Paramatma*, the all-pervading untainted, luminous self. He is not any of these objects that are inert (*Jada*). Such deep

and unmovable meditation leads one to realise *Paramatma* and free himself from the bondage of *samsara*.

Question : How does *paramatma* illumine the world ?

Answer : Like the Sun illuminating the world.

The fruit of this Knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna is declared in this last verse of the Discourse.

35. क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥

३५

*Kshetra kshetrajnayor evam antaram jnana chakshusha ।
bhutaprakriti moksham cha ye vidur yanti te param ॥* 35

Meaning : ये ye : those who, ज्ञानचक्षुषा *jnanachakshusha* : with the eye of knowledge, एवम् *evam* : thus, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः *kshetra kshetrajnayoh* : of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna, अन्तरम् *antaram* : distinction, भूत प्रकृति मोक्षम् च *bhutaprakritimoksham cha* : and the liberation from the Prakriti of beings (Avidya), विदुः *viduh* : know, ते *te* : they, परम् *param* : the state of Paramatma (Moksha), यान्ति *yanti* : attain.

Substance : Those who, with the eye of knowledge, know the distinction between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, and liberation from the *prakriti* of beings (*avidya*), they attain *Paramatma*.

Commentary : *Evam* : Thus the discrimination between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, between the *Drik* and *Drisya*, *Purusha* and *prakriti*, taught in this Discourse is declared to be the direct path to liberation (*Moksha*). Therefore, the seekers should realise the importance of the *yoga*, understand it clearly, and with faith in the Lord's declaration, they should attain *Brahma Jnana*.

Antaram : (Distinction). The intermixing of *Drik* and *Drisya*, of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, is the cause of bondage. The individual (*Jiva*) is constantly identifying himself with the *kshetram* (the Field). "I am the body, I am the mind, I am

subject to disease and death, I am suffering, I am now so and so, I belong to this caste, I am wealthy, I am poor," – in this way man, out of 'avidya' feels that he is the body, and consequently he passes through all the ills of birth and death. In truth, the real man is *Kshetrajna, Drik, Atma*. So it follows that all the troubles and sorrows pertain to the body and mind only and not to *Atma*. The thoughtful man knows the distinction clearly, and he remains unaffected by the modifications of the body and mind. The others are lost in the flood of *samsara*. It is the eye of knowledge that finds out the difference between the body and the dweller in the body. The whole of this Discourse deals with the sharp distinction between the two.

Bhuta prakriti moksham: From time immemorial, man is bound and deluded by *prakriti* (*Maya*). Now he has awakened to that fact that he is bound, and that he should free himself from bondage. To liberate oneself from the binding veil of 'avidya' is *Moksha*. *Moksha* is not something to be got from the sky or the underworld. It is not an object. It is pure knowledge, the knowledge that the real man is *Atma* and not the body. If this knowledge is gained by discrimination between *Kshetram* and *Kshetrajna* man attains freedom and perfection. If a man feels that he is the *kshetram*, he is bound by *prakriti*; if on the other hand, he feels that he is *Atma*, *prakriti* has no power over him. How to gain this knowledge is the question for all seekers. The eye of knowledge should be opened. How is this eye of knowledge to open? How can man acquire the spiritual power of discrimination between the objective world and the subjective *Drik*? The Lord has made it clear that He bestows this gift on his devotees who worship Him with faith and love (*tesham satata yuktanam ... dadami buddhi yogam*). Therefore let all people worship the Lord in every way; let them purify the mind with good work for the sake of humanity; let them think and meditate on the truth, and so striving, they shall obtain the discriminatory power to reject *prakriti* and find their identity with *paramatma*. The Lord proclaimed the path and the goal with perfect clearness.

Yanti te param : Every man whoever he is and in whatever position he may be placed, is qualified to undertake this discriminatory path and attain *Moksha* (*Yanti-param*).

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : Freedom from the power of Prakriti (Aviyya) is Moksha.

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : Those who know well the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajna attain Moksha.

Question : *How is the distinction realised ?*

Answer : By the eye of knowledge-Viveka.

Question : *Therefore what is the way to attain Moksha ?*

Answer : With the eye of knowledge, to see clearly the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajna, is the way to Moksha.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाजुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो नाम
त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade kshetra kshetrajna
vibhaga yogo nama trayodaso'dhyayah ॥

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Thirteenth Discourse entitled
Kshetra Kshetrajna
Vibhaga Yoga

(The Yoga of the Division between the field and its Knower.)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः

Atha chaturdasodhyayah

FOURTEENTH DISCOURSE

गुणत्रयविभागयोगः

GUNATRAYA VIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE DIVISION OF THE THREE GUNAS

I. The title of the Discourse :

The *Yoga* of the Division of the three *Gunas*. The characteristic features of the three *Gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*), how they bind man, what the behaviour of the man would be when these qualities predominate his nature alternately, what effects would be produced by each of these qualities, how man can transcend all of them and reach the state of the *Jivanmukta*, these aspects are explained in this Discourse, and so, it is entitled *Gunatraya vibhaga yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- 1) The excellence of *jnana* and the origin of the world by the union of *prakriti* and *purusha*. (1-4)
- 2) The nature of the three *Gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*). (5-13)
- 3) The effects of the three *Gunas*. (14-18)

- 4) The way to attain *Paramatma*. (19-20)
- 5) The qualities of *Jivanmukta* who has transcended the three *Gunas* (21-27)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the previous Discourse the Lord spoke of the division of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, *prakriti* and *purusha*. In the 20th verse, He referred to the qualities arising from *prakriti*. In three verses (20-22) the qualities of *prakriti* and their effects have been discussed. In the 22nd verse it was declared that the three *Gunas* are the cause of man's birth in good and evil wombs. Naturally, the disciple would be eager to know what these *Gunas* are, how they affect man's life, and how man could rise above them. So the Lord, even without any particular question from *Arjuna*, starts this Discourse with the excellence of *Jnana* and proceeds to speak of the three *Gunas* and the way to go beyond them.

श्री भगवानुवाच

१. परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥

१

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Param bhuyah pravakshyami jnananam jnanam uttamam !
yajjnativa munayah sarve param siddhim ito gatah । 1*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यत् *yat* : which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, सर्वे मुनयः *sarve munayah* : all sages, इतः *itah* : from the bond of Samsara (freed), पराम् *param* सिद्धिम् *siddhim* : highest realisation (Moksha), गताः *gatah* : attained, तत् *tat* : that, परम् *param* : supreme (pertaining to Paramatma), ज्ञानानां *jnananam* : of all kinds of knowledge, उत्तमम् *uttamam* : the highest, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : wisdom, भूयः *bhuyah* : again, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami* : I will tell (you).

Substance : The blessed Lord said : I will declare (to you) that supreme wisdom, the highest of all kinds of knowledge, which having known, all the sages have attained the highest realisation.

Commentary : *Bhuyah* (again)-the Lord, out of compassion for mankind, repeats and re-declares the excellence of that wisdom which takes man beyond all sorrow and death. The Lord attaches the greatest importance to this knowledge, the best and the highest. So the seekers should strive to know this Truth, and free themselves from the bondage of *samsara*.

Jnananam jnanam uttamam : Knowledge is of various kinds in the material world-knowledge of the different sciences and the different arts-each branch of knowledge leading to the understanding of a particular aspect of life and nature. Here the Lord declares that knowledge leading to Self-realisation is the best and the highest (*param*). No other knowledge can unravel the mystery of man's personality and take to the state of freedom and perfection. Without it there is no inner illumination, there is no freedom and perfection. So this knowledge is the highest.

Yat jnatva munayah sarve : The Lord cites the example of the great sages of yore. All of them have attained the Highest by means of this wisdom. There is no exception to the rule—possessing this wisdom all reach the highest goal. The efficacy of a particular medicine is proved by the number of patients who were cured by it. Such a medicine is of universal benefit. So also, this wisdom has worked the miracle on all these who have taken to it with faith and diligence. The bound soul is liberated at once by the knowledge. Such is its excellence. The sages (*munayah*: the thinkers of Truth) have devoted themselves to this knowledge by constant thought and meditation, and so they have achieved the highest perfection. Mere theoretical understanding is not enough. Deep and personal experience of the truth is necessary for Self-realisation.

Param siddhim : *Moksha* is the highest state. The Lord declares it again and again. It is a popular illusion to think of

Moksha as a state of emptiness and nothingness. No. It is a state of positive bliss and blessedness. To him who has experienced it, all other states of wealth and position, power and glamour, appear as insipid, tasteless, low and worthless. So the sages are perfect in their '*vairagya*', because they have attained the highest, and all the lower things up to *Brahmaloka* have no attraction for them at all. Let the aspirants be fully aware of the supreme excellence of the goal they have set before themselves, and be not tempted by any thing else in the world.

Question : *What is the excellence of the wisdom declared by the Lord ?*

Answer : (1) Of all kinds of knowledge, it is the highest.
 (2) Possessing it, all the sages have attained Moksha.

Question : *What is the state of Moksha ?*

Answer : It is the supreme state not comparable with any other state in the world.

The excellence of jnana is further stated.

2. इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
 सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥

२

*Idam jnanam upasritya mama sadharmyam agatah ।
 sarge'pi no'pajayante pralaye na vyadhananti cha ॥*

2

Meaning : इदं *idam* : this, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, उपाश्रित्य *upasritya* : taking refuge in, मम *mama* : My, साधर्म्यम् *sadharmyam* : union with Me (equal state with Me), आगताः *agatah* : having attained, सर्गे अपि *sarge api* : at the time of creation also न उपजायन्ते *na upajayante* : are not born, प्रलये *pralaye* : at the time of dissolution, न व्यथन्ति च *na vyadhananti cha* : and do not perish, suffer.

Substance : Taking refuge in this wisdom, they attain equal state with Me (become One with Me). They are not born

at the time of creation nor do they perish at the time of dissolution (They are not subject to birth and death).

Commentary : *Mama sadharmyam agatah* : The unparalleled excellence of *jnana* is declared most wonderfully here. The sages, possessing this knowledge, became one with God Himself. They assume the state of God. What else can man aspire for ? “*Jnani tu atmaiva me matam*” (7-18). The man of knowledge is God Himself. The devotee becomes the Deity. Such union with the Lord is the effect of this wisdom. The wise man of supreme knowledge is God in essence. There cannot be two Infinities, two Gods. If man cuts off his limiting adjuncts, he becomes the Infinite, the Immortal. It is needless to assert that the man who is seeking such union with the Lord is discharging the highest and noblest of his duties as a human being !

The union with the Lord liberates the sage from birth and death. He becomes ‘*ajah*’, ‘*nityah*’. There is no ‘return’ for him. Even at the time of creation he is not born, nor does he perish at the time of dissolution. The cycle of birth and death (‘*punarapi jananam punarapi maranam*’) stops for ever. He becomes one with the Absolute Sachidhananda. Therefore the only way to free oneself from the ills of *samsara* is to attain *Brahma-Jnana*.

Question : *What is the effect of possessing this wisdom ?*

Answer : (1) Man attains union with God, (2) He is not born at the time of creation, (3) He does not die at the time of dissolution (He is birthless and deathless).

Question : *What then is the way to union with God ?*

Answer : The attainment of supreme knowledge.

The Lord declares that the whole world comes out of the union of Prakriti and Purusha.

3. भम योनिर्महद्वा तस्मन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो मवति भारत ॥

*Mama yonir mahad brahma
tasmin garbham dadhamya 'ham'
sambhayah sarvabhu tanam
tato bhavati bharata ॥*

3

Meaning : भारत् *bharata* : O Arjuna ! महत् ब्रह्म *mahat brahma* : the great *Mulaprakriti*, मम *mama* : My, योनिः *yonih* : the originating source of all beings (the Field of origin), तस्मिन् *tasmin* : in it, अहम् *aham* : I, गर्भम् *garbham* : the seed of life (the cause of birth), दधामि *dadhami* : place, ततः *tatah* : thence, सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhu tanam* : of all beings, संभवः *sambhayah* : birth, भवति *bhavati* : is.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The great *Mulaprakriti (Maya)* is My field of origin. In it, I place the seed of life; and thence occurs the birth of all beings.

Commentary : What is the cause, the origin and source of all this universe ? Is it *Prakriti* ? *Prakriti* is *jada* (inert) and cannot be the cause by itself. It is the life-seed of the Lord, placed in *Mulaprakriti* which causes the creation of the Universe.

The union of the sentient Lord with the insentient *Prakriti*, is the source of all things. So the Lord is the Father of all. He is the seed of all beings. This secret is revealed in this verse. Knowing this, no man should think of himself as low and wretched. The Lord is the real father of all. (*Pita aham asmi jagatah*). As all are thus the children of the Lord, the seeker should look upon all beings with love, kindness and helpfulness.

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : The union of 'Paramatma' with 'Prakriti'.

4. सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं वीजप्रदः पिता ॥

8

*Sarva yonishu kaunteya murtayah sambhavanti yah ।
tasam brahma mahad yonir aham bijapradah pita ॥ 4*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! सर्वयोनिषु
sarvayonishu : in all the wombs of men and Gods etc.,
 यः मूर्तयः *yah murtayah* : whatever forms, bodies, संभवन्ति
Sambhavanti : are born, तासाम् *tasam* : for them all, महद्ब्रह्म
mahatbrahma : Mulaprakriti (Maya), योनिः *yonih* : womb, अहम्
aham : I. बीजप्रदः *bijapradah* : the giver of the life-seed,
 पिता : *pitah* : father.

Substance : O Arjuna ! What-so-ever forms (bodies) are born, men or Gods etc., for them all the *Mulaprakriti* (*Maya*) is the womb (the mother); and I, the seed giver, am the Father.

Commentary : *Prakriti* is the Mother and *paramatma* is the Father for men and Gods, and every form that is born anywhere in the universe, the Lord is the Father who gives life, and *prakriti* is the Mother, who bears the progeny in her womb.

The three Gunas are born from prakriti and they cause bondage for man.

5. सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

५

*Sattvam rajas tama iti gunah prakritisambhavah ।
 nibadhnanti mahabaho dehe dehinam avyayam ॥*

5

Meaning : महाबाहो *Mahabaho* : O Arjuna! प्रकृतिसंभवाः *prakritisambhavah* : born of Prakriti, सत्त्वं रजस्तमः इति *sattvam rajastamah iti* : as Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas (Gunas), गुणाः *gunah* : qualities, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, देहिनम् *dehinam* : Atma, देहे *dehe* : in the body (or to the body) निबध्नन्ति *nibadhnanti* : bind.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Born of *prakriti*, the three *Gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* bind the imperishable *jivatma* in the body.

Commentary : The three *Gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are born of *prakriti*. *Atma* is free from them. *Atma* is *Nirguna*,

devoid of these qualities. It transcends them. Even so, the individual man having forgotten his *Atma* and its transcendental nature, associates himself with the *Gunas*, identifies himself with them, and binds himself to the inert perishable body. Thus the Imperishable ever-free *Atma* is lost by the *jiva* who becomes an embodied being subject to all the ills of life and death. This mistaken identity is (*avidya*) ignorance. Man has to release himself from every one of these *gunas*, and rise to the *Atmic* plane which is free and perfect. The *Sattva Guna* is also mentioned as one of the bonds, because it is only in the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* that man goes beyond all the *gunas* and realises *paramatma*. In that state, there are no qualities or states or thoughts. As the aspirant rises higher and higher, he finds that *Sattva guna* also is like a screen (a thin screen but yet a screen) between him and the ultimate.

The seekers must have a longing to march. *Tamas* has to be conquered by *Rajas*; and *Rajas* has to be purified by *Sattva* and *Sattva* has to be discarded at the end to reach *Atma*. That is *Moksha*.

Mahabaho : Arjuna is addressed as the 'Mighty armed'. He has, no doubt, defeated many powerful enemies in the world, but he has yet to conquer the internal enemies, the three *gunas* with greater strength and higher courage.

Dehe dehinam avyayam: *Atma*, the Lord, the Imperishable Light, is in the body, nearest to man. Therefore, by intense search and clear discrimination one has to discover this even in this life. It is Imperishable. *Atma* is changeless, has no birth and therefore it has no death. All the other things are 'vyayam' perishable. Each man has to turn the searchlight on himself and know that he has his life and being, not in the perishable body but in the Imperishable *Atma*. He has to strive for purifying himself from the contaminating influence of the three *Gunas* and ascend to the plane of *Atma*. This is the fulfilment of life.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : Imperishable.

Question : *What binds the Jiva ?*

Answer : Though the 'jiva' is really 'Atma', yet by his ignorance he is bound by the three 'Gunas'.

Question : *What is the origin of the three Gunas ?*

Answer : 'Prakriti' (Prakriti-sambhavah).

Question : *What is the way to attain liberation ?*

Answer : To reach 'Paramatma', who is beyond the three 'Gunas'.

The three Gunas are explained in three verses. First Sattva Guna is mentioned.

6. तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बधाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥

६

*Tatra sattvam nirmalatvat prakasakam anamayam ।
sukha sangena badhnati jnana sangena cha'nagha ॥*

6

Meaning : अनघ *anagha* : O sinless Arjuna ! तत्र *tatra* : among the three Gunas, सत्त्वं *sattvam* : Sattva Guna, निर्मलत्वात् *nirmalatvat* : from its purity, प्रकाशकम् *prakasakam* : light-giving, अनामयम् *anamayam* : untroubled, सुखसङ्गेन *sukha sangena* : by attachment to joy, ज्ञानसङ्गेन च *jnana sangena cha* : and by attachment to knowledge (vritti), बधाति *badhnati* : binds (the Jiva).

Substance : O Arjuna ! of these three Gunas, *Sattva-guna*, by the purity, is light-giving and untroubled; it binds (the *jiva*) by attachment to joy (of the senses) and by attachment to knowledge (vritti).

Commentary : As the three Gunas are produced from *prakriti*, *Sattva guna* also is a part of '*avidya*'. But it is the pure aspect of *prakriti*. By its purity, it is superior or higher

than the other two *gunas*. So it is no doubt a desirable quality in spiritual progress. But in the perfect Atmic state, even this *Sattva guna* pure and light-giving as it is, is an obstacle, a covering veil to *Atma*. If a pure light is covered by glasses of three colours, different effects are produced. If the glass is dark, the light is dim. If the glass is red, the light casts a red shadow. If the glass is white the light is clear. But the white glass also is a covering veil to the pure light within. The original purity of the light itself is modified by the glass, however clean it might be. So also the *sattva guna* binds the *jiva* by attachment to happiness and knowledge. When a man says 'I am happy', he is attributing to himself the experience of the senses and the mind (*Kshetra*) to himself. The false identification is due to '*avidya*'. This happiness is *kshetradharma*, and it is superimposed on the *Kshetrajna* (*Atma*) by the ignorance of the *Jiva*. And again, when a person says 'I have knowledge of this or that', he is committing the same error in imposing on *Atma*, the quality of the intellect which is also *Kshetradharma*. Thus *Sattva guna* binds man to happiness and knowledge. Both are the modifications of the mind and intellect. They do not belong to *Atma*. So the Lord exhorts Arjuna to transcend the *Sattva guna* also and reach the Atmic state.

Anagha : Arjuna is sinless, and so, by his purity and stainlessness, he is qualified to receive the highest *Brahma Vidya*.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattva guna?*

Answer : It is pure, light-giving and untroubled.

Question : *How does it bind man?*

Answer : It binds man by the happiness of the senses, and the desire for knowledge (*vritti*)

Question : *What should the aspirant do?*

Answer : He should go beyond 'Sattva guna' also and reach '*Atma*'.

Rajo Guna is explained :

7. रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥

9

*Rajo ragatmakam viddhi trishnasangasamu bhavam
tannibadhnati kaunteya karmasangena dehinam*

7

Meaning : *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! रजः *rajah* : the *Rajoguna*, रागात्मकम् *ragatmakam* : of the nature of passion for objects, तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् *trishnasangasamudbhavam* : born of desire and attachment, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, तत् *tat* : that (*rajoguna*), कर्मसङ्गेन *karmasangena* : by attachment to action, देहिनम् *dehinam* : the jiva (Atma), निबध्नाति *nibadhnati* : binds strongly.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Know that *Rajoguna* is of the nature of passion for objects, arising from desire and attachment: that (*rajoguna*) binds man (*jiva*) by attachment to action.

Commentary : The word ‘*Trishna*’ means passion for objects not possessed by him. ‘*Sanga*’ means attachment for those things already possessed by him. *Rajoguna* causes both passion and attachment. The effect of this passion is activity to gain this or that object, wealth, name and fame, power and position etc. The mad rush that one sees in the world is all the manifestation of *Rajoguna*. Territories are gained, wars are fought, enemies are put down, name is achieved, fame is obtained and thus in a hundred ways, man works for selfish ends and aims; This is *Rajoguna*. Thus action is the outer manifestation of *Rajoguna*. The *Rajas*ic man cannot remain quiet. He is urged into action by the very force of *Rajas*. Action binds him. In this also, there is the false imposition of *Kshetradharmam* on the pure and perfect *Atma*. The Lord uses a very strong word ‘*nibadhnati*’, not simply ‘*badhnati*’, when he speaks of the binding power of *Rajoguna* and *tamoguna*.

Question: What is the nature of *Rajoguna* ?

Answer : It is passion for objects, and causes desire and attachment.

Question : *How does it bind man ?*

Answer : By desire and attachment to action.

Question : *What should the aspirant do ?*

Answer : He should free himself from the binding power of 'Rajoguna'.

Tamoguna is explained.

८ तमस्त्वज्ञानं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥

*Tamas tvajnanajam viddhi mohanam sarvadehinam ।
pramadalasya nidrabhis tan nibadhnati bharata ॥*

8

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! तमः तु *tamah tu* : but Tamoguna, अज्ञानं *ajnanajam* : born of ignorance, सर्वदेहिनाम् *sarvadehinam* : to all beings, मोहनं *mohanam* : deluding, विद्धि *iddhi* : know, तत् *tat* : that (Tamoguna), प्रमादालस्य निद्राभिः *pramadalasyanidrabhih* : by heedlessness, laziness and sleep, निबध्नाति *nibadhnati* : binds.

Substance : O Arjuna ! And *Tamoguna* is born of ignorance, and all beings are deluded by it. It binds fast man by heedlessness, indolence and sleep.

Commentary : *Tamoguna* is the direct effect of ignorance. It deludes man and throws him down into the dark prison-house of *samsara*. The state of the *Jiva* under its influence is like the sun being covered up by thick dark clouds, or like a light covered up by a dark smoke-stained glass. Its deluding power is universally felt, by all, except the *Jivanmuktas*. That is why the word *Sarvadehinam*' is used. Even the most intelligent are sometimes blind to the realities of a situation. They err, fall into lethargy, and forget themselves in beastly sleep. The common run of mankind is directly under its power. Sleep, idleness, incapacity, inefficiency, neglect of duty, shirking of work, all these are *Tamasic* qualities. Each individual can

easily find out for himself what his nature is. If he is negligent, idle and sleepy, it is a sure sign that *Tamas* predominates in his nature.

It is to be understood that no man is dominated only by one *Guna*. The three *Gunas* attending express themselves in the mind, at one stage or other. When *Tamas* dominates, he sleeps, when *Rajas* dominates he acts, and when *Sattva* comes up, he is calm and enjoys the bliss of power.

The seekers should first of all free themselves from *Tamas* and *Rajas*. These qualities bind man and fling him into the mire of *samsara*. By understanding the nature of these qualities, man should rise above them slowly and gradually.

Bharata : Arjuna is addressed as '*Bharata*' five times repeatedly in this Discourse (vide verses 3, 8, 9, 10 and 12). There should be some special significance to the repetition of this word '*Bharata*'. '*Bha*' means Light, '*rata*' means desire. So *Bharata* means one who desires to possess light i. e. Knowledge. The Lord inspires Arjuna to wake up and strive for true knowledge. "O Arjuna ! Remember your true self, pure, luminous, and free from the taint of the three *Gunas*. You are not the body and mind, the *Kshetra*. You are the imperishable, ever-free and ever-perfect *Atma*. You are *Sachidananda*. Wake up from the sleep. It does not befit you. Realise your true self and be free from all bondage." Such is the Lord's exhortation to his beloved disciple. Hence, probably, the Lord addresses Arjuna as '*Bharata*' repeatedly.

Question : *From what does Tamo guna arise ?*

Answer : From ignorance (*Ajnana*).

Question : *What is its nature ?*

Answer : It deludes all men.

Question : *How does it bind the Jiva ?*

Answer : By heedlessness. Indolence, too much sleep, it binds the *Jiva*.

The Lord concludes the explanation of the three gunas.

9. सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारतः ।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥ ९

Sattvam sukhe sanjayati rajah karmani bharata ।

jnanam avritya tu tamah pramade sanjayaty uta । 9

Meaning भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! सत्त्वं *sattvam* :

Sattva guna, सुखे *sukhe* : to happiness, सञ्जयति *sanjayati* : attaches, रजः *rajah* : Rajoguna, कर्मणि *karmani* : to action, (*sanjayati*—attaches), तमः तु *tamah tu* : but Tamoguna, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, आवृत्य *avritya* : covering, प्रमादे *pramade* : to heedlessness, सञ्जयति *sanjayati* : attaches, उत *uta* : but.

Substance : O Arjuna ! *Sattvaguna* attaches (the *Jiva*) to happiness; *Rajoguna* to action and *Tamoguna*, shrouding knowledge attaches to error.

Commentary : This verse is just a summary of the above three verses. The three *Gunas* and their main qualities are restated for easy understanding. *Sattva guna* leads man to knowledge and happiness of a worldly nature: *Rajoguna* prompts man to worldly action prompted by selfishness and *Tamoguna* leads to wrong understanding, sleep and laziness. *Sattvaguna* is like the covering of a pure glass over the light, *Rajoguna* is like the covering of a cane-basket over the light; and *Tamoguna* is like the covering of a pot over the light. In the first instance, light comes out through the glass, the medium being quite pure. In the second instance, some rays of light escape through the chinks of the basket. But in the third instance, the pot being opaque, the light within is totally covered. The state of *Tamas* is utter darkness. The man in darkness stumbles and falls, mistakes objects, takes one thing to be another, and thus commits a number of mistakes.

The pure light of *Aima*, a blissful and ever blessed, is thus shrouded by the three *Gunas*. Man is bound by them. The Lord expresses wonder, how deluded man suffers on account of the powerful influence of *Prakriti* and its qualities.

The Lord explains how the Gunas dominate one another.

10. रजस्तमशाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्वैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥

१०

*Rajas tamas cha'bhishuya sattvam bhavati bharata !
rajaḥ sattvam tamas chai'va tamah sattvam rajas tatha ॥ 10*

Meaning : भारत *bharatha* : O Arjuna ! सत्त्वं *sattvam* : Sattvaguna, रजः *rajaḥ* : Rajoguna, तमः च *tamah cha* : and Tamoguna, अभिभूय *abhibhuya* : having overpowered, भवति *bhavati* : functions, रजः *rajaḥ* : Rajoguna, (*abhibhuya*=having over-powered), सत्त्वं *sattvam* : Sattva guna, तमः च *tamah cha* : and Tamoguna, (*bhavati*=functions), तथा *tatha* : so also, तमः *tamah* : Tamoguna, (*abhibhuya*=have over-powered), सत्त्वं *sattvam* : Sattvaguna, रजः च एव *rajaḥ cha eva* : and even Rajoguna, (*bhavati*=functions).

Substance : O Arjuna ! *Sattvaguna* functions having overpowered *Rajoguna* and *Tamoguna*, *Rajoguna* functions having overpowered *Sattvaguna* and *tamoguna*; so also *Tamoguna* functions having over-powered *Sattva guna* and *Rajoguna*.

Commentary : It is a psychological truth that the three qualities function alternately in every individual, although each man is characterised by the predominance of one of the three qualities. When *Sattvaguna* functions, the other two *gunas* are over-powered. So also when *Rajoguna* functions, the other two are suppressed; when *Tamoguna* is powerful the other two *gunas* are overpowered. Therefore the seekers have to strengthen *Sattvaguna* and by its power suppress the other two *Gunas*. That is the first thing to be done in spiritual practice. *Rajas* and *Tamas* should be eliminated and it can be done only by nourishing *Sattvaguna* at all times. If *Sattva* dominates the seeker has ascended to a very high plane, and from there, it would not be far away to rise above it in the realisation of God.

The Lord explains by what means one could find what guna is dominating at a particular time. Sattva guna is taken first.

11. सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाशं उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥

११

*Sarvadvareshu dehe'smin prakasa upajayate ।
jnanam yada tada vidyad vivriddham sattvam ity uta ॥ 11*

Meaning : यदा *yada* : when, अस्मिन् देहे *asmin dehe* : in this body, सर्वद्वारेषु *sarvadvareshu* : through all the gate-ways of the senses, प्रकाशः *Prakashaḥ* : light (in the form of the intellect), ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, उपजायते *upajayate* : shines, तदा *tada* : then, सत्त्वम् *sattvam* : sattvaguna, विवृद्धम् *vivriddham* : (is) predominant, इति *iti* : thus, विद्यात् *vidyat* : may be known, उत *uta* : indeed.

Substance : When through the gateways of all the senses in the body, the light of knowledge (in the form of intellectual understanding) shines, then it may be known indeed that *Sattva-guna* is predominant.

Commentary: According to the dominant quality in man, his actions are framed. The food he eats, the words he speaks, the way he thinks or walks or acts, – all these activities clearly show what quality is predominant in him at any particular time. When *Sattva* dominates, his speech is soft and pleasing. He walks steadily, he thinks nobly and peacefully, he eats pure food, he reads good books, he keeps the company of the wise. This truth is declared in this verse. We can easily identify the man of *Sattva-guna* and in the same way we can identify people of *Rajo-guna* and *Tamo-guna* by their activities. *Sattva* is light and knowledge. The intellect (*Buddhi*) is then sharp and clear. He sees things as they are, and is not perturbed or troubled by the happenings around him. Such balanced conduct is the quality of *Sattva*. In fact, the external life of a man is itself the measuring metre to find out what his nature is. With some degree of introspection and self-examination, it is quite possible for each

one to find out where he stands in the scale of the *Gunas*. He should proceed from *Tamas* to *Rajas* and from *Rajas* to *Sattva* and from *Sattva* to *Visuddha Sattva* and thence to the transcendental state of Self-realisation.

Question : *What will be the nature of man's life when Sattva-guna dominates ?*

Answer : His senses and mind are filled with the light of knowledge and his conduct is balanced and full of peace. Whoever possesses such conduct, can be discovered as a man of Sattvic nature.

The Lord describes the nature of man under the power of Rajo guna.

12. लोभः प्रवृत्तिराम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥

१२

*Lobhah pravrittir arambhah karmanam asamah spriha ॥
rajasy etani jayante vivriddhe bharatarshabka ॥* 12

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : O Arjuna ! रजसि *rajasi* : in Rajoguna, विवृद्धे *vivriddhe* : having become predominant, लोभः *lobhah* : greed, प्रवृत्तिः *pravritti* : attachment to objects, कर्मणाम् *karmanam* : of actions (desireful and prohibited), आरम्भः *arambhah* : the undertaking, अशमः *asamah* : restlessness (want of restraint); स्पृहा *spriha* : longing, एतानि *etani* : these, जायन्ते *jayante* : arise.

Substance : O Arjuna ! From *Rajo-guna* predominating, greed, activity, the undertaking of (desireful) actions, restlessness and longing,—arise.

Commentary : When *Rajo-guna* dominates, man burdens himself with a hundred kinds of activities. The result is he is restless. Greed and longing urge him to undertake many actions for the fulfilment of his desires. These desires are sometimes selfish and prohibited by the *Sastras*. Longing for objects

drives him into acts of evil and sin. He employs tricks and strategems to realise his ambitions. He has no regard to truth. His mind is externalised. He has no introspection. He is like the ocean troubled by a tempest. His words are harsh and proud. He walks unsteadily because of his mental restlessness. His mind is full of desire for this and that. So he lives a life of passion, and does not know what is peace and real joy. Ravana is an example of *Rajoguna*. *Rajo-guna* therefore leads to evil and self-destruction. It should be overcome by perseverance and firm effort. Peace and joy cannot be found in *Rajo-guna*.

Question : *What is the nature of man dominated by Rajo-guna ?*

Answer : Greed, activity, undertakings (prompted by desire and prohibited by the *Sastras*), restlessness, longing for worldly enjoyments—these are the qualities of the Rajasic man.

Question : *Who attains peace ?*

Answer : He who has freed himself from *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

The qualities of Tamo-guna are described.

13. अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥

१३

*Aprakaso'pravrittis cha pramado moha eva cha ।
tamasy etani jayante vivriddhe kurunandana ॥* 13

Meaning : कुरुनन्दन Kurunandana : O Arjuna ! तमसि *tamasi* : from Tamo-guna, निवृद्धे *vivriddhe* (*sati*), predominating, अप्रकाशः *aprakashah* : darkness (of intellect), अप्रवृत्तिः च *apravritthih cha* : and inaction (laziness), प्रमादः *pramadah* : heedlessness, मोहः एव च *mohah eva cha* : and also delusion (false understanding), एतानि *etani* : these, जायन्ते *jayante* : arise.

Substance : O Arjuna ! From Tamo-guna predominating, darkness (of intellect), inertness, heedlessness, and also delusion (false understanding) arise.

Commentary: The predominating quality of *Tamas* is darkness (i. e.) absence of reason and true understanding. Inertness, disinclination towards activity of any kind, delusion and erroneous thoughts and opinions about things, - all these arise from *Tamo-guna*. The man whose nature is dominated by this *guna* can be discovered by what he eats, what he speaks, and by his general behaviour. The sourness of an unripe mango is a suitable comparison for *Tamo-guna*. Kumbhakarna is an example of *Tamo-guna*. It is quite possible for each individual to understand his own nature, whether it is *Sattvic* or *Rajasic* or *Tamasic*. It has already been pointed out that these qualities function in an endless cycle. The same man is *Sattivic* some times, *Rajasic* some times, and *Tamasic* some times. When the *Sattvic* spell comes, to recognise it and confirm it in one's nature is the way to eliminate the other two qualities gradually. Nothing can be done in a day. Perseverence will ultimately conquer all obstacles. So, the seekers have to be vigilant, and when the darker quality tries to dominate him, he should overcome it with all the strength and force of his will-power. The tree should be watered at the roots; If this is done, the unripe fruits become gradually ripe, their sourness is turned into sweetness, and they drop off from the tree of their own accord. The aim is to transcend the three *Gunas* and reach *Atma*. Devotion to the Lord, prayer, meditation and good work, - all these are essential factors in *Sadhana*. By these the *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* tendencies are eliminated from the mind. *Sattva* is purity; This state is very near to *Atma*, And so to come up to the plane of *Sattva* is the first necessary step. And later, the aspirant has to go beyond it also, and become a *Jivanmukta* by Self-realisation.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamo-guna ?*

Answer : (1) Darkness (want of reason), (2) inertness, (3) heedlessness, (4) delusion, are the marks of the Tamasic man.

The future life of man under the influence of the three Gunas is explained—First Sattva-guna.

14. यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥

१४

*Yada sattve praviddhe tu pralayam yati dehabhrit
tado'uttamavidam lokan amalan pratipadyate* 14

Meaning : यदा तु *yada tu* : when verily, सत्त्वे *sattve* : Sattva-guna, प्रवृद्धे *praviddhe* (*sati*) : predominating, देहभृत् *dehabhrit* : the Jiva, प्रलयं *pralayam* : death, याति *yati* : meets, तदा *tada* : then, उत्तम विदाम् *uttama vidam* : of the knowers of the highest, अमलान् *amalan* : of the pure, लोकान् *lokan* : worlds, प्रतिपद्यते *pratipadyate* : (the Jiva) attains.

Substance : When verily *Sattva-guna* is predominating, the *Jiva* (embodied one) meets death, he then attains the worlds of the highest and of the pure.

Commentary : It is declared that the future birth of man is determined by the *Guna* that dominates in him at the time of death. If *Sattva-guna* predominates, then the *Jiva* attains the pure worlds which the wise go to. *Sattva-guna* is the effect of long practice in self-perfection. *Tamas* and *Rajas* have to be eliminated by *Nishkama Karma*, by devotion and by studious understanding of the Truth. If man cultivates *Sattva-guna* through a long life-time of steady practice, then, even at the time of death, his mind remains pure, calm, and full of peace. Leaving the body in that state is good, because it takes him to higher worlds of purity and knowledge. So the seekers have to be vigilant and cautious, and observe how they are progressing on the path of self-purification. They should remember that their future life in other worlds will be strictly determined by their state of mind in this life. They should refrain from any evil and sinful acts, because they are caused by impure *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Otherwise, they shall have to suffer in low worlds of a painful nature.

Dehabhrit : (The embodied being, man). This word is significant, because it shows that man holds the body. The house is different from the tenant who lives in it. The tenant is

not the house itself. He uses the house. So also, the *Jiva* is placed in the house of the body, but he is not the body. He changes the body by death, even as a tenant leaves one house and goes to dwell in another one.

The man who wears a particular dress or ornament is different from the dress and ornament that he wears. By keen intellectual perception, this truth becomes clear to man. When the body-identification (*dehatmabuddhi*) is given up, man naturally discovers that he is the untainted, pure and perfect *Atma*.

Uttamavidam lokan : The man of *Sattva-guna* attains the pure worlds of the wise. But that is not the end. He has to reach the birthless and deathless state of *Paramatma*.

Question : Where does he go who dies with *Sattva-guna* predominating at the time of death ?

Answer : He goes to the spotless worlds attained by the knowers of the Highest.

The future life of the Rajasic and Tamasic man is declared.

15. रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।

तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मृदयोनिषु जायते ॥

१५

*Rajasi pralayam gatva karmasangishu jayate ॥
tatha pralinah tamasi mudhayonishu jayate ॥*

15

Meaning : रजसि *rajasi* : in Rajo guna (predominating), प्रलयं *pralayam* : death, गत्वा *gatva* : meeting, कर्मसङ्गिषु *karmasangishu* : among those attached to action, जायते *jayate* : is born, तथा *tatha* : so, तमसि *tamasi* : in Tamo guna, प्रलीनः *pralinah* : dying, मृदयोनिषु *mudhayonishu* : in the wombs of the senseless, जायते *jayate* : is born.

Substance : Meeting death in *Rajo-guna* (predominating) he is born among those attached to action; dying in *Tamo-guna* he is born in the wombs of the senseless (of animals, birds and so on).

Commentary : The man of *Rajo-guna* is born among men attached to action. So he acts continuously, binds himself by such desireful actions and is reborn in the same state. Thus continuously, birth after birth, urged by his own selfish desires and passions, he leads a restless and agitated life. He is bound to the wheel of *karma*.

The *Tamasic* man is born in the wombs of the senseless birds, beasts and reptiles and so on. What horrible punishment it is to be born as a wolf or a jackal or a snake etc.? What rational man is there who does not shudder at this horrible prospect of his future life? Is there any man who would willingly be born in the wombs of the wretched and the ignorant? No. Every man wants to go up, and not fall down. Human nature aspires for higher and higher things. So let the aspirants beware of the horrible consequences of their future life. If they fail to heed the warnings of the Lord, Sri Krishna Paramatma they have to suffer. The Lord is revealing the future in the present. Having eyes one should see. Having ears one should hear. Having reason, one should understand. Devotion, dispassion, and knowledge (*Bhakti*, *Vairagya* and *Jnana*), one needs to save himself from future misery and wretchedness.

Question : Where is the *Rajasic* man born after death?

Answer : Among men attached to action.

Question : Where is the *Tamasic* man born after death?

Answer : In the wombs of the senseless of (animals, birds reptiles, and so on).

The fruits of the Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are declared.

16. कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम्।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥

१६

*Karmanah sukritasya'huh sattvikam nirmalam phalam!
rajasas tu phalam duhkham ajnanam tamasah phalam ॥ 16*

Meaning : सुकृतस्य कर्मणः : *sukritasya karmanah* : of good actions, सात्त्विकम् *sattvikam* : of a Sattvic nature, निर्मल

nirmalam: pure, फलम् *phalam*: (is) the fruit, रजस् तु *Rajasah tu*: of Rajas verily, दुःखम् *dukkham*: (is) suffering, फलम् *phalam*: the fruit, तमसः *tamasah*: of Tamas, अज्ञानम् *ajnanam*: is ignorance, फलम् *phalam*: the fruit, आहुः *ahuh*: (they the elders) say.

Substance : The fruit of good actions of *Sattvic* nature is pure; the fruit of *Rajas* is suffering verily; the fruit of *Tamas* is ignorance (*ajnana*):

Commentary : Every man wants happiness and not suffering. But he should do only those actions from which peace and joy arise. His actions should be pure, beneficent, and selfless. Then he enjoys peace and joy which is the fruit of *Sattva-guna*. Suffering and ignorance arise from *Rajo-guna* and *Tamo-guna*. So the wise man should avoid all actions of a Rajasic nature, because they verily produce suffering. Knowing this, no thoughtful man would willingly do wrong things in anger and passion. Knowing that fire burns, who would thrust his hand into it? No one. So also, one should clearly perceive that the terrible effects of *Rajas-Kama* and *Krodha* (*Rajo guna samudbhavah*) are very dangerous. Through them man is passing through hell even in this world. He suffers from pain, restlessness, horrid dreams, fears, deluding hopes, disappointments, despair, desperation and despondency. Such is *Rajo-guna*.

And now when we come to *Tamoguna*, it is all darkness and ignorance. Under its power man lives like an animal. He eats, sleeps, and copulates. He has no idea of any thing pure and holy. He lives an animal life. Nay, he is worse than animals. Being born as man and yet live the life of animals is against one's own humanity. The human form then counts for nothing. The saint and the sinner are both clad in the human garb. But there is the difference of pole to pole between the two. *Tamas* is the enemy of most men. It should be overcome in every way possible.

Rajasastu phalam duhkham: Let this declaration of the Lord be kept in view by every seeker, whatever he thinks and acts. If one wants peace and joy, *Rajas* should be given up. There is no other way.

Ajnanam tamasah phalam: Ignorance is the seed-bed of all other evils. *Rajas* arises from *Tamas*. Knowledge removes both *Tamas* and *Rajas*. Knowledge pure and perfect! That should be our goal. *Tamas* should be given up as enemy number one for all mankind.

Question: *What is the fruit of Sattvic work?*

Answer : Pure joy.

Question: *What is the fruit of Rajas?*

Answer : Suffering.

Question : *What is the fruit of Tamas?*

Answer : Ignorance (Ajnana).

Question : *What then is the way to peace and joy?*

Answer : Man should avoid Tamasic and Rajasic actions and take refuge in pure Sattva.

The effects of the three Gunas are declared.

17. सत्त्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥

१७

Sattvat samjayate jnanam rajaso lobha eva cha ।

pramadamohau tamaso bhavato'jnanim eva cha ॥ 17

Meaning : सत्त्वात् *sattvat* : from Sattva, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, सञ्जायते *sanjayate* : arises, रजसः *rajasah* : from Rajas, लोभः एव च *lobha eva cha* : greed only, (arises), तमसः *tamasah* : from Tamas, प्रमाद मौहौ *pramadamohau* : heedlessness and false understanding (Bhrama), भवतः *bhavatah* : arise, च *cha* : and, अज्ञानम् एव *ajnanam eva* : ignorance it-self, (from it arises).

Substance : From *Sattva*, Knowledge; from *Rajas*, greed, and from *Tamas*, heedlessness, moha and ignorance itself arise.

Commentary : The Lord is an expert in methods of instruction. He wants to impress on the mind of the disciple, the effects of the three *Gunas*. And for this purpose he repeats the same ideas in different ways. A good teacher, when he is instructing children, follow the same method. When these ideas are fundamental truths, they should be repeated and re-asserted, so that they sink into the mind of the hearers. So Lord Krishna is re-declaring the same law again and again for the better understanding of his beloved disciples.

Ajnanam eva cha : Ignorance itself arises from *Tamas*. And *Ajnana* verily is the cause of bondage, and *samsara*. The lovers of freedom and knowledge should wage eternal war with that demon till victory is achieved.

Question : What arises from *Sattva-guna* ?

Answer : Knowledge.

Question : What arises from *Rajo-guna* ?

Answer : Greed.

Question : What arises from *Tamo-guna* ?

Answer : Heedlessness, forgetfulness, delusion and ignorance itself arise from *Tamas*.

The future life of man of the three Gunas is stated.

18. ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिषुन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥

१८

*Urdhvam gacchanti sattvastha madhye tishanti rajasah
jaghanya guna vrittistha adho gacchanti tamasah* ॥ 18

Meaning : सत्त्वस्थाः *sattvasthah* : (men) in Sattva guna placed, ऊर्ध्वं *urdhvam* : upwards (the world of the Devas,) गच्छन्ति *gacchanti* : go, राजसाः *rajasah* : the Rajasic, मध्ये *madhye* : in the middle (the world of men), तिषुन्ति *tishanti* :

dwell (are born), जघन्य गुण वृत्तिस्थाः : *jaghanyagunavrittisthah* : abiding in the functions of the lowest Guna (Tamo guna), तामसाः : *tamasah* : the tamasic, अधो *adho* : to lower worlds (born as animals and so on), गच्छन्ति *gachanti* : go.

Substance : The *Sattvic* people (after death) go the higher worlds; the *Rajasic* dwell (are born) in the world of men (the middle one); the *Tamasic*, abiding in the functions of the lowest *Guna*, go down into the lower worlds (or born in the wombs of animals, birds, and so on).

Commentary : *Sattva-guna* takes man to the higher worlds, and *Rajo-guna* to the middle worlds, and *Tamo-guna* plunges man into the lower worlds. So it is the duty of man to take refuge in *Sattva* and ascend to the purer worlds of light and knowledge.

Question : After death where do the *Sattvic* people go ?

Answer : To the higher worlds of light and knowledge.

Question : Where do the *Rajasic* stay ?

Answer : They dwell in the middle world (of men).

Question : Where do the *Tamasic* go ?

Answer : To the lower worlds.

The path to Moksha is declared.

19. नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।

गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥

११

*Na'nyam gunebhyah kartaram yada drasta'nupasyati ।
gunebhyas cha param vetti mad bhavam so'dhigacchati । 19*

Meaning : यदा *yada* : when (man), द्रष्टा *drashta* (*bhutva*) : knowing that he is the witness, the seer, गुणेभ्यः *gunebhyah* : than the Gunas, अन्यम् *anyam* : other, कर्तारम् *kartaram* : agent, न अनुपश्यति *na anupasyati* : does not see, (Atmanam=

himself), गुणेभ्यः च *gunebhyah cha*: from the Gunas, परम् *param*: distinct, वेत्ति *vetti*: knows, सः *sah*: he, मद्भावं *madbhavam*: My being, अधिगच्छति *adhicacchati*: attains to.

Substance : When (man) sees no agent other than the *Gunas* and knows that which is higher than the *Gunas*, he attains to My being.

Commentary : This verse and the next are very important. The seekers who are enquiring into Truth should understand the idea and keep it always in their mind. It is the direct path to *Brahma jnana* (*Moksha*), liberation from the bondage of *samsara*. Whatever actions are performed by man, the agent invariably, is the *Gunas* (i. e.), the mind which is composed of the three *Gunas*. Except the three *Gunas* there is no other thing as the mind. The mind through the agency of the senses and the body, causes all actions. The senses and the body, are instruments. The mind is the directing agent. What is bound is the mind; and what attains liberation is the mind. There is no other agent or enjoyer. *Atma* is distinct from this mind.

Therefore, the seeker has to understand that he is entirely distinct and separate from the three *Gunas*, that he is *Atma*, and hence that he is not at all the agent (*karta*) or enjoyer (*bhokta*). When this distinction is clearly seen, man remains as the seer (*Drik*). He realises *Atma*. So the first step towards liberation is to know that the real man is the seer (neither *Karta* nor *Bhokta*). ‘O *Jiva* ! do not get mixed up with the three *Gunas*, which constitute the mind; keep aloof from them: see what they do; but never get confused with them; they are not you; you are distinct from and separate from them. You are in truth, *Atma*.’ – This is Lord’s compassionate teaching.

In the spectacular drama of the universe, the real actor is the mind, the three *gunas*. And the *Atma*, like the lighting in the theatre, is shedding its light on all, while remaining unattached to any thing that is taking place on the stage. He is like the screen of the theatre on which the picture is projected.

The picture is constantly changing and displaying various colours, characters and actions. The screen is not affected by the picture, whether it is a tragedy or a farce or anything else. Even so, the *Atma* stands really unattached and unaffected by the wailings and laughters of the mind, by the functions of the senses, and by the activities of the body. This is the highest Truth. All that is considered happiness or sorrow is only the modifications of the three *gunas*. Out of delusion, the *Jiva* identifies himself with the *gunas*, and attributes to himself what is *Deha-dharma* and *Mano-dharma*. He says, 'I am born; I am sick or healthy; I die; I am old or young.' Thus he is clearly identifying himself with the body. He says again, "I am happy; I am sad; I am angry; I am calm; I am dull or I am bright." Thus he is identifying himself with the mind and its changes. That is bondage. This idea of false identification is what is called '*avidya*'. The moment when the falsehood is found out, that very moment the *Jiva* knows that he is *Atma*, and there is no more a '*Karta*' or a '*Bhokta*' to be bound to the world. All bondage is shattered at one stroke.

Madbhavam so adhigacchati : Knowing that the *gunas* are the cause of all actions and knowing that he is the '*drashta*', the *Jiva* becomes Siva, the *nara* (man) becomes Narayana, the *Jana* (man) becomes Janardana. So from this very moment onwards, the seeker should give up all foolish notions that he is this or that, and firmly fix himself in the state of *Paramatma*, beyond all the modifications of the body and the mind.

Adhi gacchati : The Lord declares that man attains God by this discrimination. Let the aspirants have faith in the Lord's words, drive away all weakness and cowardice and attain the highest.

Anupasyati : The Lord uses this term to suggest that one should see clearly and doubtlessly that he is not the *Karta* (the doer).

The truth is that man is really free from all the actions of the body and the mind. They are all caused by *Prakriti*, the mind composed of the three *gunas*. But there is a danger here. Any

one, even a vile sinner, can claim guiltlessness or freedom from his criminal acts on the ground that he does not commit anything as he is only a 'sakshi' (witness). They do foul and filthy things in the name of religion and philosophy. Such imposters and pretenders suffer the fate that awaits them. Let it be known once for all that the man of Self-realisation can never indulge in any of the mean and wretched, foul and filthy things, pertaining to the flesh. He is pure like the Sun, pure like Ganges, pure like the purest that the human mind can conceive of. This purity in word, thought and deed is the hall-mark of the real *Sadhu*. He cannot cheat or hate any one; he cannot be tempted by the attractions of the flesh; he cannot utter lies, he cannot injure others; he cannot be selfish in anything whatsoever. He is serene, calm, knowing, full of bliss, kind and compassionate, and his perfection is recognised by the wise, even as the bees recognise the honeyed flowers.

Question : *What is the real cause of all the actions that man does ?*

Answer : The three Gunas (the mind composed of the Gunas).

Question : *What is the real nature of man ?*

Answer : As soon as man knows that the three Gunas are the cause of all actions, and that he is the Sakshi (witness) he attains Paramatma. He is liberated. He is a Jivanmukta.

Question : *From this, what is the way to self-realisation, Moksha ?*

Answer : "The three Gunas are the real doers of all actions; I am different from them; I am Atma." — This clear knowledge is the way to Moksha.

The Lord declares that he who transcends these Gunas attains liberation (Moksha).

20. गुणानेतानतीन्य त्रीन्दंही देहसमुद्धवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥

२०

*Gunan etan alitya trin dehi dehasamudbhavan !
janma mrityu jara duhkhaire vimuktio'mritam asnate ॥ 20*

Meaning : देही *dehi* : the embodied one (*Jiva*), देहसमुद्धवान् *dehasamudbhavan* : cause of the body, एतान् *etan* : these, त्रीन् गुणान् *trin gunan* : three gunas, अतीत्य *ativitya* : having transcended, जन्ममृत्यु जरादुःखैः *janmamrityu jaraduhkhaih* : from birth, death, oldage, pain, विमुक्तः *vimuktah* ! freed, अमृतम् *amritam* : immortality, (Moksham : the Atmic state, अश्नुते *ashnute* : attains.

Substance : Having transcended these three *Gunas*, the cause for the birth of the body, the *Jiva*, freed from birth, death, decay and pain, attains immortality.

Commentary : *Gunan* : *Sattva* is included here, because it is also one of the *Gunas*. As it is pure and transparent, it allows us to perceive *Atma* through the thin veil. But even *Sattva* has to go, before man attains the Atmic state, which is above the functions of the mind and '*Buddhi*'.

Why are these *Gunas*, man's enemies ? They cause birth, and so they are enemies. They cause *samsara*, and man cannot free himself from bondage on account of them. If one body drops, another comes, and this goes on endlessly. Many millions of births have already come and gone from these *Gunas* as the seed. Many more will come unless the seed and the tree are totally destroyed by *Jnana*.

But what is the harm if birth comes to a person ? There is the greatest danger. With birth comes death also. Who loves death ? No one. With the body comes old age and disease. Who likes old age and disease ? No one. With the body comes different kinds of sorrow. Who wants sorrow ? No one. No man likes death, disease, old age and sorrow. And yet, with the birth of the body, all these evils come inevitably. When there is no body, these evils are not there. So to be perfectly free, man has to give up the attachment to the body. There is no other way. So, the aspirant is here taught, the way to attain to the deathless and therefore birthless state of *Paramatma*. It is immortality (*amritam*).

Vimuktah : Freedom from the three *Gunas* should be complete and perfect. Hence the more emphatic form is used.

Question : *By what is the body caused ?*

Answer : By the three *Gunas*.

Question : *How can man attain Immortality ?*

Answer : By transcending the three *Gunas*.

Question : *What is the harm of the birth of the body ?*

Answer : Old age, death, disease, pain, suffering and sorrow— are all caused by the birth of the body. So the aspirant should strive for Immortality by attaining the Atmic state.

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : It is free from birth and death.

Arjuna desires to know the marks of the man who has transcended the three Gunas.

अर्जुन उवाच

21. केलिङ्गेत्वीन्दुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांत्वीन्दुणानतिवर्तते ॥

२१

Arjuna uvacha

*Kair lingais trin gunan etan atito bhavati prabho !
kimacharah katham chaitams trin gunan ativartate ॥* 21

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : प्रभो *Prabho* : O Lord ! एतान् *etan* : these, त्रीन् दुणान् *trin gunan* : three Gunas, अतीतः *atitah* : transcended, कैः लिङ्गैः *kaih lingaih* : by what marks ? (possessing), भवति *bhavati* : becomes ? किं आचारः *kim acharah* (*bhavati*) : What is his conduct ? एतान् त्रीन् दुणान् *etan trin gunan* : these three gunas, कथम् च *Katham cha* : and how, अतिवर्तते *ativartate* : goes beyond, crosses.

Substance : O Lord ! What are the marks of the man who has crossed over those three *Gunas* ? What is his conduct ? How does he go beyond these three *Gunas*.

Commentary : Arjuna naturally wished to know the qualities and conduct of the man who has transcended the *Gunas*. In the 2nd Discourse also, Arjuna wanted to know the manner and conduct of the *Sthitaprajna*, and the Lord gave an elaborate discription of the state of the *Sthitaprajna*. Here also, once again, Arjuna desired to know the character and conduct of the sage who has gone beyond the three *Gunas*.

Kairlingaih : By what marks can he be distinguished from others ? This is a necessary question. For, one comes across quite a good number of impostaers and pretenders who are filled with all objective desires, attachments and tendencies and yet who claim to be free and perfect. Such spurious sages and prophets cannot betray the world any more when we can test their conduct by the Lord's measuring scale. Further if the conduct of the real sage is clearly known, the aspirants may strive to follow their example in their own personal conduct and model their life accordingly. Arjuna desires to know the actual way of life followed by the sage who has transcended the three *gunas*. The description of the *Sthitaprajna* (Chp. 2), of the *Jnani* (Chp. 13), and now of the *Gunatita*,-these are vivid pictures of the conduct of the great sages, *bhaktas* and *Jnanis*. By comparison and contrast one may know where he stands in the scale of spiritual values. The real *Sadhu* is distinguished from the imposter. Dry philosophy is separated from direct experience. The false atmosphere of spirituality spread over the country shall be dispelled, and true devotion and *Jnana* shall reign supreme in the hearts of all men.

Kim acharah : A similar question was asked by Arjuna in the second chapter about *Sthithaprajna* (*Kim asita vrajeta kim*. Chp. 2). Conduct, practical life is the essence of all religion and philosophy. The Gita particularly insists on practical life according to highest Truth. This is very essential, for there is the delusion that mere reading of a few religious books

is all that is needed to become a *Jnani*. Such false notions have left people mere theoreticians, who quail and fail by the least crisis of loss and bereavement. While asserting that *Atma* is deathless, people tremble at the thought of death. While asserting that the world is an illusion, people desperately cling to all their positions and possessions. This is not practical religion. In fact, religion is intended to lift man out of all the fearful delusions of life. When this is not realised, religion remains as mere talk and nothing more. That is why the Gita wants to test man's wisdom or devotion by practical conduct in every-day life.

More over, while it is necessary to know the goal clearly, it is even more necessary to know the path leading to the goal with perfect clearness. When once the goal is fixed, all that is needed is practice (*sadhana*). When the place to reach is decided the next thing is to know the way leading to it. There is no use of thinking of the destination always without starting on the journey. When the journey begins and continues the destination is reached automatically. When the *Sadhana* is sincere and truthful, the *Sadhyā* is realised of its own accord. So the Gita lays more emphasis on *Sadhana* than *Sadhyā*. The supreme goal is stated briefly, and the path leading to it elaborately. This is the special distinction of the Lord's teaching.

The Lord's answer to Arjuna's question is one of the most illuminating part of the Gita. Those who aspire for liberation should study, understand and practice this aspect of the Gita message.

Question : What did Arjuna want to know from the Lord ?

Answer : (1) The marks of the Gunatita, and (2) his conduct.

The Lord explains the marks and conduct of the Gunatita (the Jivanmukta) :

श्री भगवानुवाच

22. प्रकाशं च प्रदृष्टिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रदृत्तानि न निप्रदृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥

23. उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचालयते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३
24. समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाशमकाश्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४
25. मानाममानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो भित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Prakasam cha pravrittim cha moham eva cha pandava ।
na dvesti sampravittani na nivrittani kankshati ॥ 22

Udasinavat asino gunair yo na vichalyate ।
guna vartanta ity eva yo'vatishtati ne'ngate ॥ 2

Sama duhkha sukhah svasthah samsi lostasm । kanchanah ।
tulyapriya priyo dhiras tulyanindatmasamstutih ॥ 24

Manapamanayos tulyas tulyo mitrari paksayoh ।
sarvarambhaparityagi gunatitah sa uchyate ॥ 25

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava* : O Arjuna ! यः *yah* : who, संप्रवृत्तानि *sampravittani* : when (they) occur, प्रकाशं च *prakasam cha* : happiness, (derived from Sattva Guna), प्रवृत्तिम् च *pravrittim cha* : and action (derived from Rajo Guna), मोहम् एव च *moham eva cha* : and also delusion (arising from Tamo Guna), न द्वेष्टि *na dveshti* : does not hate, निवृत्तानि *nivrittani* : when they (the functions of the Gunas) are absent, न काङ्क्षति *na kankshati* : does not long for them, उदासीनः *udasinaḥ* : like one indifferent, unconcerned, आसीनः *asinah* : seated, यः *yah* : who, गुणैः *gunaiah* : by the Gunas, न विचालयते *na vichalyate* : is not agitated, गुणः *gunah* : the Gunas, वर्तन्तः *vartantah* : are functioning, इति एव *iti eva* : thus only, यः *yah* : who, अवतिष्ठति *avatishtati* : (knowing) is self-centred,

नैङ्गते *na ingate* : does not move, समदुःखसुखः *samaduhkhasukhah* : equal-minded in sorrow and happiness, स्वस्थः *svasthah* : established in Atma, समलोष्टाश्म काञ्चनः *samaloshtasma kanchanah* : regarding a clod a stone and gold alike, तुल्यप्रिया प्रियः *tulya priya priyah* : the same to the dear and to the non-dear, धीरः *dhirah* : firm (possessing knowledge of Atma and Anatma), तुल्य निन्दात्म संसुतिः *tulya nindatma samstutih* : the same in censure and praise, मानावमानयोः *manavamanayoh* : in honour and dishonour, तुल्यः *tulyah* : the same, मित्रारि पक्षयोः *mitrari pakshayah* : towards friends and enemies, तुल्यः *tulyah* : the same, सर्वारम्भ परित्यागी *sarvarambha parityagi* : abandoning all undertakings (all sense of doership) or renouncing all karmas being established in Brahman), सः *sah* : he, गुणातीतः *gunatitah* : crossed over the Gunas, इति *iti* : thus, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said,

Substance : The blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! He (the *Gunatita*) does not hate when the three *Gunas* bring happiness (from *Sattva*), action (from *Rajo-guna*), and delusion (from *Tamo-guna*); nor does he long for them when they are absent.

He sits like one unconcerned, unaffected by the *Gunas*, knowing that the *Gunas* are functioning, and is not moved.

He is equal-minded in joy and sorrow, established in Self; regards a clod, a stone, and gold alike; the same in pleasant and unpleasant things; heroic, equal in censure and praise.

He is the same in honour and dishonour; the same towards friends and enemies; abandons all action; he is said to be *Gunatita*.

Commentary : In the 22nd verse, it is declared that the *Gunatita* is indifferent to the functioning of three qualities. *Sattva* may bring happiness; *Rajas* may bring action; *Tamas* may cause delusion. When these effects are produced, he does

not hate them. Nor does he long for them, when they are absent. In other words, he is indifferent whether the *Gunis* are existing or not. They may function or they may cease to function; he is not at all concerned. He does not hate them when they function, nor does he long for them when they cease to function.

The effects of the three *Gunas* are mentioned here to lend force to the idea that the *Gunatita* is above the *Gunas*, and so their functioning or non-functioning is no concern for him. We have to understand that the *Gunatita* would not be subject to the power of the *Gunas* like the common people. Otherwise he would not be a *Gunatita*. The point is that one should be regardless of these qualities, and their functions, having established himself in the Self. Whether it is the knowledge of *Sattva*, or the activity of *Rajas*, or the delusion of *Tamas*, he (the *Gunatita*) neither hates nor longs for them. He has nothing to do with them at all.

The permanent characters of the *Gunatita* strike our attention. (1) Immovable firmness (*Nischalatvam*), (2) Equal-mindedness (*samatvam*).

(1) The difference between the *Yogi* and the common man is seen in critical moments. Small things perturb the common man. Little disappointments, worries, anxieties, throw him off the balance. He becomes restless, discontented and dispirited by any kind of adversity. The *Gunatita* is exactly the opposite type. He is imperturbable, undaunted by anything that may happen. The waves may dash against the mountain endlessly, but the mountain remains immovable. So, difficulties and dangers may come to the *Gunatita* but he remains immovable. Is the sun in any way troubled by the storms and tempests, the thunders and lightnings that occur under him? So is the *Gunatita*. He is above these storms and tempests, resting firmly in *Atma*. He does not move away from *Atma*. He knows full well that whatever happens in the world is only a mental phenomenon with which he has no contact whatsoever. Such a man is the very embodiment of courage and boldness. It is not the bravado

of the ordinary mortals, but the courage that comes from *Brahma Jnana*. This is the first and the greatest mark of the *Gunatita*. The *Gunatita* is in this sense a *Sthithaprajna*.

(2). Equal-mindedness is the next distinguishing quality of the *Gunatita*. Towards friends and enemies, in pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, censure and praise, toward worthless and valuable things like stone or gold, he is equal-minded. *Suka*, when he visited the Court of *Janaka*, was put to severe test by the latter. He was made to stay without food for some days, he was not even recognised for some days, he was provided the highest luxuries for some days,—in these ways, his equanimity was tested by the King. *Suka* stood the test, because he was a perfect *Jnani*, a *Gunatita*. Such great sages have their life and being in *Atma* and so they do not recognise the objective world and react to it in the way that common people do. To them the objective world and all that is occurring in it, is merely a grand show without any reality in it. They are only reflected images of the mind. The pairs of opposites can touch the mind, but they cannot touch *Atma*, which is beyond *Buddhi* (*Yo buddheh parastu sah*).

Sarvarambhaparityagi : It would be appropriate to interpret this as a person who has given up the sense of doership in all undertakings, a person who has given up all desire-prompted actions. (*Kamya Karma*) or a person who is in constant absorption in the Self, and so does not act in any way.

Yah : The state of *Gunatita* can be achieved by any one who possesses the above-mentioned qualities. There is no bar for any earnest soul to attain this state by the accident of birth or wealth or position. In fact, the aim of the *Gunatita* is to transcend all distinctions caused by *Prakriti*. Such a man who has gone beyond the three *Gunas* is the *Gunatita*.

Question : *What are the marks of the Gunatita ?*

Answer : The *Gunatita* does not hate when the three *Gunas* bring happiness, action and delusion; nor does he

long for them when they are absent. He sits like one unconcerned, unaffected by the *Gunas*, knowing that the *Gunas* are functioning and is not moved. He is equal-minded in joy and sorrow, in a stone and gold alike; the same in pleasant and unpleasant things, heroic, and equal in censure and praise. He is the same in honour and dishonour, the same towards friends and enemies; He abandons all action. Such a person is said to be *Gunatita*.

Those who worship Lord with undivided devotion, transcend the Gunas and attain realisation (Brahmasakshatkara).

26. मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥

२६

*Mam cha yo'vyabhicharena bhaktiyogena sevate¹
sa gunan samatityal'tan brahmabhyuyaya kalpate¹ 26*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, मां च *mam cha* : and Me, अव्यभिचारेण *avyabhicharena* : undivided, sole, भक्तियोगेन *bhakti yogena* : the yoga of devotion, सेवते *sevate* : worships, सः *sah* : he, एतान् *etan* : these, गुणान् *gunan* : *Gunas*, समतीत्य *samatitya* : having crossed, ब्रह्मभूयाय *brahmabhyuyaya* : to become Brahman (*Jivanmukta*), कल्पते *kalpate* : is fit.

Substance : He who worships Me only with undivided mind by the *yoga* of devotion, having crossed the three *Gunas* completely, is fit for becoming Brahman (the state of the *Jivanmukta*).

Commentary : *Paramatma* is beyond the three *Gunas*. To go beyond them is the way to become Brahman. But how to cross over the *Gunas*? A great deal of enquiry, self-control, meditation, is necessary for it. But here, the Lord declares that self-realisation is possible for one who is devoted to Him with single-minded devotion (*Bhakti*). *Bhakti* helps the devotee to transcend the *Gunas*. It is to be noted that in every Discourse, whatever may be the *yoga* taught in it, the Lord emphasises

Bhakti as the universal element in all kinds of practices. In this Discourse in which pure knowledge is taught, the Lord introduces the idea of *Bhakti* and the need for devotion at the end. Whether man takes to *Karma Yoga*, *Jnana Yoga* or *Dhyana Yoga*, he should cultivate *Bhakti*, devotion to the Lord. This devotion is the life-force for all *yogas*. Without it, no spiritual progress is possible. *Bhakti* of the lower type is not enough. It should be 'avyabhicharini' (i. e.) undivided, not attached to anything else except the Supreme Lord. Pure *Bhakti* requires the highest renunciation. The mind should be centred in the Lord totally and completely. The world has no place in the mind of the true devotee. The Lord only and nothing else—that is the devotee's attitude. When this attitude is confirmed, the devotee easily goes beyond the *Gunas*, and the *Brahmanubhuti* comes to him of its own accord. To be constantly thinking of the Lord, his wonderful power, beauty, joy, peace, bliss and blessedness, to love Him as the life of his life and the soul of his soul, to see Him in all beings, in all actions, and thoughts, to sing His name and glory, to offer up every thing to Him,—this is *Bhakti*. As *Bhakti* is more congenial for embodied human beings, the Lord emphasises the need for it in attaining the highest state of the *Gunatita* and *Brahmajnana*.

Samatitya : This term is used to show that the devotee can transcend the *Gunas*, totally and completely.

This verse is the Lord's answer to Arjuna's question "Kathum c'hai ta n stringunan ativartate" (How can a person go beyond those three *Gunas*?). By firm devotion, man acquires knowledge which takes him beyond the *Gunas* to *Paramatmam*. This is the way to transcend the *Gunas*.

The Lord declares that He is the Supreme Brahman.

27 ब्रह्मो हि प्रतिष्ठामृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यकान्तिकस्य च ॥

२७

*Brahmo hi p-^aatistha'ham amritasya'vyayasya cha ।
sasvatasya cha dharmasya sukhasyai'kantikasya cha ॥ 27*

Meaning : हि *hi* : because, अहम् *aham* : I, अमृतस्य *amritasya* : of the immortal, अव्ययस्य च *avyayasya cha* : and of the immutable, शाश्वतस्य धर्मस्य च : *sasvatasya dharmasya cha* : and of the eternal *Dharma*, एकान्तिकस्य सुखस्य च *ekantikasya sukhasya cha* : and of absolute bliss, ब्रह्मणः *brahmanah* : the Brahman, प्रतिष्ठा *pratishta* : abode (i. e. I am Brahman).

Substance : Because I am verily the abode of the immortal, of the immutable, of the eternal *Dharma*, of bliss Absolute, of Brahman indeed.

Commentary : Having declared that His devotee crosses the three *Gunas* and attains *Paramatma*, the Lord here reveals his true nature as the Supreme Brahman Himself. Lord Krishna, the teacher of the Gita is not a mortal, but *Paramatma* Himself, the Supreme Brahman. Sri Krishna is not simply the son of Yasoda, the cow-herd boy of the Brindavan, He is verily *Paramatma*. He is the eternal *Dharma*; He is bliss Absolute; He is the Immortal and the Immutable. Therefore who worships Him with undivided mind, by the law (*Yadbhavam tadbhavati-*) that man becomes That which he contemplates, transcends the *Gunas* and becomes one with the Lord. What is that *Paramatman*? The Lord explains by three attributes :

- 1) That is Immortal (deathless and therefore birthless); That is Immutable (unchanging).
- 2) That is eternal *Dharma*;
- 3) That is bliss absolute.

By the first (Immortality and Immutability), the 'sat' aspect of Brahman is stated; by the second (Eternal *Dharma*), the 'chit' aspect of Brahman is stated; and by the third (Bliss absolute), the 'ananda' aspect of Brahman is stated. Thus the Lord declares that He is Brahman, Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss (*Ananda*) Absolute.

For the sake of easy forms of worship, the Lord appears as the son of Yasoda, as the Cow-herd boy of Brindavan, as the

lover of the Gopis, as the Charioteer of Arjuna (*Parthasarathi*) and in a hundred other detectable forms. He, the Lord, is again all the 'Avatars'. He is Rama, the son of Dasaratha; He is Narasimha, the destroyer of Hiranyakasipu and the saviour of Prahlada; He is Vamana; He is all this Universe, and all its spectacular manifestations. There is nothing beyond Him. He is all. The devotees should always remember that whatever form they may worship, the Lord is the supreme *Sachidananda* Brahman.

By this verse, Dualism, Qualified *monism* and *Advaita* are declared to be One in the end. The end is the same though the means are different. The Lord whom the Dualists worship as the repository of all blessed qualities (Ananta kalyana gunabhirama) is not different from the Brahman of the sages. While the 'Sat' aspect of Brahman is common to both, the devotee emphasises the 'ananda' aspect of Brahman, and the *Jnani* the 'chit' aspect. But it is declared here that 'Chit' (Knowledge) is not separate or distinct from 'Ananda' (bliss). There is no essential difference between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*; for, both types of *sadhana* culminate in the realisation of the Supreme. Each man can choose his own method and form of worship and reach the goal.

Question: *Who is Lord Krishna?*

Answer : He is the Supreme Brahman.

Question: *What is the nature of Brahman?*

- Answer :** 1) Immortal and Immutable (*Sat*).
 2) Eternal 'Dharma' (*Chit*)
 3) Bliss Absolute (*Ananda*).

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतास्त्वपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
 श्रीकृष्णाज्ञनसंज्ञादे गुणत्रयनिभागयोगो नाम
 चक्रदेशोऽभ्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade gunatraya vibhaga
yogo nama chaturdaso'dhyayah"*

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Fourteenth Discourse entitled
· Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga

(The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas.)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः

Atha panchadasadhyayah

FIFTEENTH DISCOURSE

पुरुषोत्तमप्राप्ति योगः

PURUSHOTTAMA PRAPTI YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SUPREME PURUSHA

I. Title of the Discourse :

Purushottama means *Paramatma*. The Lord is known as *Purushottama* because he is distinct and higher than the perishable (*kshara*) being of the body (*Kshetram*) and the Imperishable (*akshara*) being known as *Jiva*. Who *Purushottama* is, what his nature and form is, by what path He could be attained, what the fruit by attaining Him is, - all this theme is explained and declared in this Discourse, and so it is called *Purushottamaprapti yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- 1) The tree of *Samsara* and the way to attain God. (1- 6)
- 2) Enquiry into *Jivatma*. (7-11)
- 3) The Universal Existence of God, and the power of the Lord. (12-15)

- 4) Explanation of the *Ksharapurusha* and
Aksharapurusha and *Purushottama*. (16-20)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In connection with the Division of the *Gunas*, the Lord declared that undivided devotion to Him is the sure way to transcend the *Gunas*. Such a devotee would go beyond the *Gunas* and attain liberation (*Brahmasakshatkara*). The 26th verse (14th Discourse) proclaims the Lord to be none other than the Supreme Eternal *Satchidananda Parabrahman*. This Discourse is a natural sequence to the previous one. How can man attain such single-minded devotion ? What is the nature of *Purushottama* ? How to attain Him ? What is its fruit ? These questions are answered in this Discourse. Pure *Bhakti* demands complete renunciation of all worldly things and attachments. Perfect *Vairagya* is the mark of the true devotee. The Discourse, therefore opens with a description of the tree of *Samsara*, and the need to cut it by the sword of detachment.

The tree of Samsara is described.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखं अश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
 छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥

१

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Urdhvamulam adhahsakham asvattham prahur avyayam ।
chandamsi yasya parnani yas tam veda sa vedavit ॥ 1

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यस्य *yasya* : to which, छन्दांसि *chandamsi* : Vedas, पर्णाणि *parnani* : leaves, अश्वत्थं *asvattham* : (that) Asvattha tree of Samsara, ऊर्ध्वमूलम् *urdhvamulam* : with roots above, अधः शाखं *athassakham* : with branches down, अव्ययम्. *avyayam* : not perishing (till knowledge is attained, प्राहुः *prahuh* : (the elders or the Vedas) say, तत् *tat* : that, यः *yah* : who, वेद

Veda : knows, सः sah : he, वेदवित् Vedavit : (is the knower of the Vedas).

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : They (the wise or the *Vedas*) speak of the *Asvattha* tree (of *Samsara*) having its roots above and branches below, the *Vedas* its leaves, and indestructible (till knowledge is gained); He who knows that is the Knower of the *Vedas*.

Commentary : *Samsara* is compared to a tree. It is unlike any other tree that we see in nature. All trees have roots below and branches above. But this tree of *Samsara* has roots above and branches below. What is the explanation ?

1) From *Paramatma* originate *Avyakta*, *Mahadahankara* and from them arise the whole universe along with all beings. So *Paramatma* is the highest source (above), and down below we find the Universe and the beings in it. So this tree is said to have its roots above (in *Paramatma*) and its branches below. *Paramatma* is the root, and the universe the branches of this tree of *Samsara*.

2) Another explanation may be offered. The work of *Maya* is to show everything upside down. The impure appears pure and the pure impure; the good appears to be bad, and the bad good, the unreal appears to be real and the real unreal; pain appears to be pleasure and happiness pain. Accordingly *Patanjali* describes *avidya* thus— “*anitya asuchi duhkha anatmasu niṣaya* *suci sukhutmakhyatir avidya*”. A tree reflected in water appears upside down. So is the tree of *Samsara* reflected through *Maya*.

3) A tree by the side of the road in its natural form is not an obstacle. But if it is torn up by the roots and falls across the road, it becomes an obstacle to the way-farers with its branches down and the roots sticking up. To the pilgrims on the path of *Brahmavidya*, this tree of *Samsara* is definitely an obstacle.

Asvattham : ‘*svah*’ means ‘tomorrow,’ and ‘*na sthah*’ means ‘not existing’. So *Asvattha* means ‘not existing tomorrow’

This tree of *Samsara* is of doubtful existence. No one can say whether it exists the next day or even the next hour, or even the next minute. It is perishable. It is rightly described as '*Asvatthah*', because of its perishable and mutable character. But it is described here as '*avyayam*'—not perishing. How? The explanation is, here *Samsara*, like a flood, flows ceaselessly, birth and death occurring in an endless series for man. It continues till the moment when true knowledge is attained. It stops and disappears then. So it is in one sense imperishable and in another sense perishable. To the ignorant it exists continuously. To the wise it ceases to exist. So the word '*avyayam*' here should not be interpreted as eternal. If it is eternal, nothing can destroy it. In the third verse, the Lord instructs Arjuna to strike down the tree with the sword of *Vairagya*.

Yas tam vedasa vedavit : He who understands the nature of *Samsara*, is the knower of the *Vedas*. The essence of the *Vedas* is known by him. The *Vedas* declare that this reflected Universe proceeds from *Paramatma*, who is the origin and source of all. From Him, this Universe is projected as the tree is projected from the seed. So the sage who knows this is the real knower of the *Vedas*.

Question : *Describe the tree of Samsara?*

Answer : It has its roots above and the branches down. It is imperishable till '*jnana*' is attained. The '*Vedas*' are its leaves.

Question : *Who is the knower of the Vedas?*

Answer : He who understands the nature of the tree of '*Samsara*' (i. e.) who knows that the tree is projected out of '*Paramatma*', who knows that '*Paramatma*' is its seed and origin, is the knower of the '*Vedas*'.

The tree of Samsara is further described.

2. अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य ज्ञात्वा ।

गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालः ।

अधश्च सुलान्यनुसंततानि ।

कर्मसुषमधीयि महाप्यलोके ॥

*Adhas cho'rdhyam prasritas tasya sakha
gunapraviddha vishaya pravalah !
adhas cha mulany anusamtatani
karmanubandhini manushyaloke !*

2

Meaning : तस्य *tasya* : of the tree (of Samsara), शाखाः *sakhaḥ* : branches, गुणप्रवृद्धाः *gunapraviddah* : nourished by the three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), विषयप्रावलः *vishayapravalah* : sense-objects (colour, sound etc.) are its (buds) tender shoots, अथः च *athah cha* : and from below (inert matter), ऊर्ध्वं च *urdhyam cha* : upwards (upto Brahma loka), प्रसूताः *prasritah* : spread, मनुष्यलोके *manushya loke* : in the world of men, कर्मनुबन्धीनि *karmanubandhini* : causing bondage of action, मूलानि *mulani* : its roots, अथः च *athah cha* : below (and upwards), अनुसंततानि *anusantatani* : are stretched forth (firmly or deep-rooted).

Substance : The branches of this tree (of *samsara*) are nourished by the *Gunas*, and the sense-objects are its tender buds; it spreads downwards (from inert matter) and upwards (to *Brahmaloka*); its roots, causing bondage by action are stretched forth (deeply stuck) downwards and upwards also.

Commentary : The tree of *samsara* is vividly described here. It is not a small tree. It has grown strong and firm from millions of births, and has deeply established its roots in the world. Its branches spread upto *Brahma loka*. Its roots are the past *samskaras* of action. The three *Gunas* are its branches. Its tender shoots grow by enjoyment of sense-objects. How then to cut this mighty tree? The branches should be struck by purifying the mind of the three *Gunas*; the tender shoots should be cut by dispassion towards sense-enjoyments; and the roots should be destroyed by removing the past tendencies of the mind. As all trees are sustained by their roots, this tree of *samsara* is sustained by deeply impregnated '*samskaras*' or '*vasanas*', and when they are destroyed, the whole tree falls to

the ground being struck at the roots. It is there that the operation should be conducted. When the roots are cut, the branches, shoots and buds wither away in a short time. The wise man therefore should cultivate dispassion (vairagya) towards sense-objects. Dispassion brings about the cessation of the impulses and urgings of action. Where there is no action, there is no bondage, resulting from *Karma*. If, on the other hand, man nurtures the *vasanas* with *raga* and *dvesha*, he can never cut the tree and gain his freedom. He will be bound to *samsara* almost endlessly.

Question: *How is the tree of samsara further described?*

Answer : Its branches are nourished by the three Gunas. Sense-objects are its buds. It spread upwards and downwards. Its roots are actions prompted by desires. It is firmly established in the world of men.

This tree of samsara should be cut by the sword of detachment, and man should strive to reach the state of Paramatma.

3. न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते ।

नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।

अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरुद्धमूल ।

मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्वा ॥

३

4. ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं

यस्मिन्नगता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये

यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसुता पुराणी ॥

४

*Na rupam asye'ha tatho'palabhyate
na'nto na cha'dir na cha sampratistha ।
asyattham enam suvirudhamulam
asangasastrena dridhena chittva ॥*

3

*Tatah padam tat parimargitavyam
yasmin gata na nivar tanti bhuyah ।
tam eva cha'dyam purusam prapadye
yatih pravrttih prasrita purani ॥*

4

Meaning : अस्य *asya* : of the tree of *samsara*, रूपम् *rupam* : form, तथा *tatha* : in that manner (as described above), इह *iha* : in this world (by men attached to *Samsara*), न उपलभ्यते *na upalabhyate* : is not perceived, अन्तः *antah* : (its) end, न *na* : is not seen, आदिः च न *adih cha na* : and beginning, is not seen, संप्रतिष्ठा च न *sampratishta cha na* : and (middle) existence also is not seen, सुविरुद्धः मूलः *suvirudhamulam* : firm-rooted, एनम् *enam* : this, अश्वथं *asvatham* : tree of *Samsara*, द्वेष्ट *dvidena* : strong, असङ्गशस्त्रेण *asanga sastrena* : the axe of non-attachment, (to sense-objects and possessions), छिक्षा *cchitva* : having cut asunder, ततः *tatah* : then, यस्मिन् *yasmin* : in which state, गतः *gatah* : having entered, भूयः *bhuyah* : again, न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante* : (men) do not return (to *Samsara*), यतः *yatah* : from whom, पुराणी *purani* : beginningless, प्रवृत्तिः *pravrittih* : action (*Samsara*), प्रसृताः *prasrita* : steamed forth, तम् एव च आद्यं पुरुषम् *tam eva cha adyam purusham* : that primeval *Purusha* alone, प्रपद्ये *prapadye*, take refuge in, (thus thinking), तत् पदम् *tat padam* : that state (*Paramatma*), परिमार्गित व्ययम् *parimargitavyayam* : should be sought (searched for).

Substance : The real form of this tree of *Samsara* is not perceived (in the manner described above) in the world (by men attached to the world). Its beginning, its end and its middle (existence) is not seen. Cut this firm-rooted *Asvatha* tree of *Samsara* with the strong axe of non-attachment.

Then, that state of *Paramatma*, entering which there is no return (to *Samsara*) and from whom this ancient tree of *Samsara* has been projected, having taken refuge in that primeval *Purusha* (with *Bhakti*), should be sought for.

Commentary : This tree of *Samsara* is not seen by man in the form described in the first and second verses. Why ? Attached to *Samsara*, the ignorant do not see it as such. They do not see its beginning or end or its present state of existence.

They have not made any attempt to enquire into its real nature. They are immersed in the flood of *Samsara* and do not really know what it is, how it has come, and what its nature is etc. In darkness, the real nature of objects cannot be seen. Thus people live in *Samsara* and die in *Samsara* without understanding its true nature. This is *Maya*. Only a few awakened souls try to enquire into its true nature. Among them only a few try to release themselves from its bondage, and among them a few are able to cut the bond and attain liberation. The idea is that the darkness of ignorance is such that man is not able to realise the slavery and bondage which *Samsara* has imposed on him from time immemorial.

This tree of *Samsara* is described as '*suvirudhamulam*' with roots deeply and firmly fixed in the world, and it has spread its branches far and wide, even upto *Brahma loka*. But its firmness and strength need not frighten us. Provided the weapon is sufficiently sharp and powerful, any tree can be felled to the ground. The Lord shows the weapon with which this tree can be cut. It is '*asanga sastram*'. Non-attachment to the world, and its sensual attractions and temptations is the axe which cuts the tree of *Samsara*. In other words, it is dispassion (*vairagya*). What a wonderful weapon to smash the tree of *samsara*! But the axe should be sharp and strong. Lukewarm and fitful *vairagya* (*manda vairagya*) is not enough. It should be blazing, burning, all-consuming '*vairagya*'. How else can this mighty tree be cut? That is why the Lord uses the word '*dridhena*' as attribute to '*asanga sastra*', This axe of dispassion cuts the very root of the tree and there is no more delusion or bondage. It is like destroying the main wheel of a huge factory-machine. When the main wheel is stopped, all the innumerable smaller wheels stop automatically. We need not stop every small wheel. So also, when the roots of the tree are cut, the branches, the buds and all other things wither away of their own accord. This non-attachment should be both external and internal.

But the aim is yet to be realised. *Vairagya* eliminates the obstacles on the path of Self-realisation. Having given up the '*drisya*', the objective world, the next step is to hold fast to the

'Drik' the seer. This is important. It is not enough to clear the debts; one should acquire property, and then only he will be safe. The rejection of the sense-world is like clearing the debts. So along with 'vairagya' the seeker should possess *jnana*, knowledge of *Paramatma*. He should know that his real nature is *Atma*. Then his bliss is full and unhindered. That is why the Lord teaches-then, the *Atma* is to be searched for (*parimargitavyayam*).

This is the highest state for a human being, because, having once attained it, man does not return to *samsara* again (*na nivartanti bhuyah*). It is the law that man has to return to this world again and again whatever world he goes to by his good work until he realises *Paramatma*. That is the eternal state of bliss and blessedness. The wise attain it and are forever at rest.

The path to take for this search for the highest Truth is clearly stated here. The secret is revealed—"tam eva purusham prapadye"—"I take refuge in that *Purusha* alone." This is the spirit prompting the aspirant in his search for *Paramatma*. It is a deeply devotional attitude, a surrender unto the Lord, in the search for *Atma*. To him who has pure devotion, *Brahma-jnana* is easily attained.

Question : *What is the nature of the tree of samsara ?*

Answer : Its roots are firmly fixed in the world.

Question : *How should it be cut ?*

Answer : It should be cut with strong axe of non-attachment to the objective world.

Question : *What should be done after the tree is cut ?*

Answer : He should search for the state of 'Paramatma'.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : Having attained Him, man does not return to this world (utno *Samsara*). From Him, the universe is projected. He is the primeval God.

The Lord declares the qualities of those who attain Paramatma.

५. निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
 अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तरामाः।
 द्वन्द्वैविमुक्ताः सुखदुखसंज्ञैः
 गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥

५

*Nirmanamoha jitasaṅgadoshā
 adhyatma nityā vinivṛittakamah ।
 dvandvair vimuktah sukhaduhkhasamjnair
 gacchānty amudhah padam avyayam tat ॥ ५*

Meaning : निर्मानमोहा: *nirmanamohah*: free from pride (Ahamkara) and delusion, जितसङ्ग दोषाः *jitasaṅga doshah*: victorious over the evil of attachment to the objective world, अध्यात्म नित्याः *adhyatma nityah*: dwelling constantly in the Self, विनिवृत्त कामाः *vinivṛitta kamah*: turned away from all desires (free from Vasanas), सुखदुख संज्ञैः *sukhaduhkha samgyaith*: known as happiness and suffering, द्वन्द्वैः *dvandvaih*: from pairs of opposites, विमुक्ताः *vimuktah*: freed completely, अमूढाः *amudhah*: the undeluded (wise), तत् *tat*: that (declared before), अव्ययम् *avyayam*: eternal, पदम् *padam*: state (Moksha), गच्छन्ति *gacchanti*: reach (attain).

Substance : Free from pride (*ahamkara*) and delusion, conquering the evil of attachment (to the sense-world), dwelling constantly in the Self, freed from the pairs of opposites called pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that eternal state (*Moksha*).

Commentary : In this verse, the qualities of the wise who attain the non-returning state *Moksha*, are clearly described. Six qualities are mentioned (1) Freedom from pride (*ahamkara*) and delusion, (2) Conquest of the evil of attachment to the sense-world. ‘*Sanga*’ is attachment; it is evil. This evil should be given up by detachment and dispassion. (3) Dwelling

constantly in the Self. Here the word ‘*nitya*’ is to be noted. Constant memory and understanding are necessary. At first, the seeker spends some time in *Atma nishta* and then he comes out into the objective world. This period of Self-centered meditation should be extended gradually till he is firmly established in the Self always. Constancy is emphasised many times by the Lord, because ‘*avidya*’ overtakes man the moment when he forgets *Atma*. To forget *Atma* is itself ‘*Avidya*’. So, constancy is prescribed as a rule for the seekers. We come across three types of men in the world. The first and the highest are those who are constantly in contact with Self; the second are those who contemplate *Atma* for some time, and then go into worldly activities; and the third are those who remain immersed in worldly life always. The second type have the opportunity of rising to the highest state. The third type of people are the lowest and most miserable. They are plunged in ignorance and totally devoid of any enlightenment what-so-ever.

4) *Vinivrittakamah* : This, the fourth quality is essential for all seekers. This is combined with ‘*adhyatmanityah*’ in the same line in the verse. The two qualities are thus brought together, and they are the very essence of enlightenment. The aspirants for *Moksha* should repeat this line, think of it, meditate on the idea and model their life accordingly. The first is ‘*tathvajnanam*’ and the second is ‘*Vasanakshyam*’. So the line, ‘*adhyatma nitya vinivrittha kamah*’ is the sum and substance of all spiritual practice. The first is the state of the ‘*Drik*’, and the second is the state of *drisyarahitram*. The *Sastras* declare that both these are to be practised simultaneously. In fact, they are the two sides of the same coin (*Moskha*). When *Drik* (*Atman*) is attained, there is no *Drisyam*. (5) Freedom from the pairs of opposites, known as pleasure and pain.

6) *Amudhah* : Freedom from delusion. The spiritual *sadhana* undertaken constantly keeps away delusion, and thus the sages live in the light of perfect knowledge.

What is the reward of following the above practices ? People reach the immortal state of *Paramatma*. They leave

away all other things as they are unreal, impure, sorrow-breeding and perishable.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : It is unchanging and eternal.

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : He who acquires the above six qualities.

The state of Paramatma is further described.

6. न तद्वासयते सूर्यो न शशङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्वाम परमं मम ॥

6

Na tad bhasayate suryo na sasanko na pavakah ।

yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama ॥ 6

Meaning : तद् *tat* : that (state of Paramatma), सूर्यः *suryah* : Sun, न भासयते *na bhasayate* : cannot illumine, शशङ्कः *sasankah* : Moon, न *na* (*bhasayate*) : cannot (illumine), पावकः *pavakah* : Fire, म *na* (*bhasayate*) : cannot (illumine), यत् *yat* : what, गत्वा *gatva* : having reached, न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante* : (Men), do not return (not take birth), तद् *tat* : that, मम *mama* : My, परमम् *paramam* : supreme, धाम् *dhama* : abode.

Substance : Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the fire can illumine that (state of *Paramatma*), which having reached, (men) do not return (take birth again); That is My Supreme Abode.

Commentary : The Sun, Moon and Fire illumine the material objects. The eye illuminates the Sun; and the *buddhi* (intellect) illuminates the eye; and *Atma* illuminates the intellect (*buddhi*). So the whole universe including the shining objects like the Sun and the Moon, are illuminated by perceiving senses and the intellect, which receive their light ultimately from *Atma*. So *Atma* is the light that illuminates every thing. All other things shine by the reflected light of *Atma*. In the *Mundakopanishad* this is clearly explained and proved (*Na tatra suryo bhati*).

Yad gatva na nivartante : Those who have reached the state of *Atma* do not again fall into the miserable pit of *Samsara*. From any other world in the universe, man has to return and take birth again. They have not the power to end sorrow. Only *Paramatma* has that power. The blessed state of Self-realisation, full of bliss, is *Moksha*. The same idea has been expressed in the previous verse also. (*Yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah*).

The Lord declares that state to be the Supreme Abode.

The Jiva is a portion of Paramatma, the Lord.

7. ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥

७

*Mama'va'mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah !
manah sashthani'ndriyani prakritisthani karshati ॥*

Meaning : मम एव *mama eva* : even My, सनातनः *sanatanah* : eternal, अंशः *amsah* : portion, part, जीव लोके *jiva loke* : in the world of life, जीवभूतः *jivabhutah* : having become a soul, प्रकृतिस्थानि *prakritisthani* : abiding in Prakriti, मनः षष्ठानि *manah shashthani* : with mind as the sixth, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : the senses, (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching), कर्षति *karshati* : (the Jiva) draws (to itself).

Substance : Only a portion of My eternal Self has become the soul (*Jiva*) in the world of livings; he (the *Jiva*) draws (to itself) with mind as the sixth sense, the five senses, abiding in *Prakriti*.

Commentary : *Mamaivamsah* : The *Jiva* (*Jivatma*) in truth, is not different from *Paramatma*. The *Jiva* is directly *Paramatma*. Both are eternal.

But the *Jiva* (*Jivatma*) being deluded by *Maya*, is identifying himself with the vehicle of the body and the senses and consequently suffers all the ills and pains which come to the body. The *Jiva* is imposing on himself all the limitations of the body and the mind. If the body is weak or sick, the *Jiva* says "I am

sick;" if the mind is sad, the *Jiva* says 'I am sad'. Thus the *Jiva* who in truth, is *Paramatma* Himself, has developed a false identification and a fictitious personality, limited by time, space and causation. This is ignorance (*avidya* or *Maya*).

All the qualities of limitless ether are to be found in the ether of the pot; But the limiting form of the pot seems to limit the limitless ether. This limitation is not true. It is illusory. Ether is not bound by any thing. When the pot is broken, ether remains as it is. There is no change. Thus all the blessed attributes of *Paramatma* are present in the *Jiva* (*Jivatma*). When the *Jiva* gives up this false identification and remembers his original state, he realises that He is *Paramatma*, and nothing other than He.

When the *Jiva* is himself *Paramatma*, what are these ideas of high and low, good and bad and so on ? All men are divine, all men are equal. So knowing the wise are filled with love for all, and consider all as equal. The Lord's declaration gives infinite strength to everyman. For, the same individual who formerly was dreaming of himself as big and small, happy and unhappy, living and dying, now is awakened to the tremendous understanding of his own true nature. Now he simply laughs at the foolish little self which he was displaying in the world on his personality. No more is there any fear of death or suffering, for he, is not the body (*upadhi*).

Karshati : The *Jiva* in his ignorance draws the senses to himself with the mind. The senses are in *Prakriti*. The deluded *Jiva* draws *Prakriti* to himself and lives a kind of existence confined by the activities of the senses. The body is (*jada*) inert, and so does not claim *Jiva* as its own. It is the *Jiva* who claims the body to be his. He says "this (body) is mine". So also he says of many things. 'This house is mine, this wealth is mine, this man is my father or son' and so on. All this is gross misappropriation of things which do not really belong to him. So the word '*Karshati*' is used by the Lord.

What the *jiva* has to do now is to give up the false role which he has been playing on the stage of the world. He should

give up calling himself Mr so and so. This Mr so and so refers to the body which the *Jiva* is not. He should know that this world is not his real Abode. He is *Paramatma*. That is his real state. With firm and unflinching determination, he should contemplate his true Self, where he would attain the highest bliss and blessedness. This false world and false self bring misery, and death.

This verse is the Lord's assertion about the Divine nature of man. May this idea give courage, strength and peace to all mankind.

Question : *What is the nature of the Jiva ?*

Answer : He is a portion of 'Paramatma'. He is eternal.

Question : *How does he think of himself ?*

Answer : He thinks of himself as the body and the senses, and lives a physical existence full of pain and suffering.

Question : *Why does he think so ?*

Answer : By the power of 'Avidya'.

Question : *What should the jiva do now ?*

Answer : He should give up the impure sense-world and remember his identity with 'Paramatma' and remain in that state. That is 'Moksha'.

What happens when the Jiva leaves the body and takes a new birth.

8. शरीरं यद्वाप्रोति यच्चाप्युक्तामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥

*Srīm yad avaproti yac cha'py utkramati'svarah
grihitvai'tani samyati vayur gandhan iva'sayat ॥ 8*

Meaning : इश्वरः *isvarah* : The *Jiva* who is the Lord of the aggregate of the body, senses and the mind, यत् च अपि *yat cha api* : and even when, उत्क्रमति *utkramati* :-- leaves the body,

यत् *yat* : when, शरीरं *sariram* : (another) body, अवाप्नोति *avapnoti* : takes, (tada : then), आशयात् *asayat* : from their seats, (the flowers), वायुः *vayuh* : wind, गन्धान् इव *gandhan iva* : like (taking) the scents, एतानि *etani* : these (six senses), गृहीत्वा *grihitva* : having taken, संयाति *samyati* : goes.

Substance : When the Lord (the *Jiva* who is Lord of the senses and the mind) obtains a body and when He leaves it, he takes these and goes (with them) as the wind takes the scents from their seats (the flowers).

Commentary : As the *Jiva* leaves one body and takes another, like one dropping old clothes and wearing new clothes, it is clear that he is not the body at all. Therefore this body-identification (*dehatma-buddhi*) should be given up once for all. ‘I am *Atma*’ is the *Mahamantra*.

More over, the word *Isvara* (Lord) is used with reference to *Jivatma*. The *Jiva* in truth, is the Lord of the senses, the mind, and the body and all that pertains to it. He is the master and not the slave and bondman as he is now thinking and behaving. What a fall is there-from the state of the supreme ruler to the humiliating state of a servant ! This is what has happened to man. He, the ruler, has no freedom or will of his own. He has to behave according to the dictates of the mind and the senses. He has reduced himself to this wretched position, by gross ignorance. “So, give up the slavery. Awake, arise and affirm your real nature ? Thou art *Paramatma* !” This is the trumpet call of Lord Krishna to all mankind.

Grihitvaitani samyati : It is said here that the *jiva* when he leaves one body and obtains another, takes the mind and the senses (the *vasanas*) with him. He cannot take any thing else with him, neither his house nor his relations and friends. They are all dropped off in the world. But what does he really take with him ? He takes the mind and the five senses in the form of (*vasanas*), tendencies and predispositions. These determine the nature of the next birth. If these are pure,

naturally the *jiva* is born to pure parents and enjoy a pure life. If these are impure, he is born to impure, and sinful wombs, may be, the wombs of beasts, birds or reptiles. So one's future life is in his own hands. He should therefore take to spiritual *sadhana* even now immediately and escape from the miserable fate of being born as beasts and reptiles hereafter.

These 'vasanas' are the only provision for the journey of the *Jiva* to other worlds and bodies. Nothing else can he take from here. Nothing else can be of help to him. Nothing else follows him. They cannot even if they wish to. The journey is alone and lonely. But there is no fear, for, the good that he has done and the spiritual *sadhana* that he has performed will be with him. The mind carries the essence of his whole life, imbedded in it in subtle form. It is his body-guard in his journey. So people are themselves the makers of their future birth, good or bad or birthlessness. The last is the goal, for, it is the state of *Paramatma*. The wise attain it by Brahma Jnana.

Vayur gandhanivasayati : This simile is used to illustrate the idea of the *Jiva* carrying the mind and senses with him at the time of birth and death. The wind carries all kinds of scents sweet or foul, from all kinds of objects. From flowers, sweet fragrance, from flesh, foul odour, the wind carries by absorbing the subtle essence of those objects. The wind has no likes or dislikes towards these sweet and foul scents. As the message-bearer carries good and bad news, as the wind blows sweet or foul as the case may be the *jiva* carries this essence of his whole life, in the subtle form of 'vasanas' and enters a new body. The body taken depends on the quality of the mind which the *jiva* is carrying. If it is impure, he goes into impure, wombs, if it is pure, he enters enlightened wombs. Therefore, there is no partiality for God or the Divinities of *Karma* in the transmigration of the *jiva*. If the mind becomes so pure as to be rid of all 'vasanas', there is no further birth for the *jiva*. He attains union with *Paramatma* even here. So it is the primary duty of every seeker to purify the mind and the senses by constant *sadhana*. Thus they shall attain purer birth, and even Brahma jnana here and now.

Question : When the *jiva* leaves a body or takes a new body, what does he take with him ?

Answer : He takes the mind and the senses and the subtle Vasanas with him. Nothing else.

Question : How ?

Answer : Like the wind that carries sweet or foul scents from different objects.

How the jiva enjoys the sense-objects ?

9. श्रोतं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं ग्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चाय विषयानुपसेवते ॥

९

*Srotram chakshuh sparsanam cha rasanam ghranam eva cha ।
adhishthaya manas cha'yan visayan upasevate ॥*

9

Meaning : अयं *ayam* : this Jiva, श्रोत्रम् *srotram* : the ear, चक्षुः *chakshuh* : the eye, स्पर्शनं च *sparsanam cha* : the organ of touch, रसनम् *rasanam* : the organ of taste, ग्राणम् एव च *ghranam eva cha* : and also the organ of smell, मनः च *manah cha* : and mind, अधिष्ठाय *adhishthaya* : taking refuge in, विषयान् *vishayan* : sense-objects like colour, sound etc., उपसेवते *upasevate* : enjoys.

Substance : The *jiva* enjoys the sense-objects taking refuge in the sense objects like colour, sound etc., through the ear, the eye, the organ of touch, the organ of taste, and also the organ of smell and mind.

Commentary : As it is said here that the *jiva* takes refuge in the mind and the senses for the enjoyment of the sense-objects, it is clear that the *jiva* is distinct from the senses and the mind. They are the vehicles of the *jiva*. By his ignorance he takes refuge in them, and experiences the pleasures and pains of material existence. Therefore, the experience of the mind and the senses, do not really pertain to the *jivatma*. He wears these vehicles for the purpose of enjoying the objects of the

sense-world. He functions through them, and thus identifies himself with their changes and modifications. In truth, *Atma* is independent of the mind, body and the senses.

Question : *What are the instruments with which the jiva enjoys the objective world?*

Answer : With the organs of (1) ear, (2) eye, (3) touch, (4) taste, (5) smell and the mind, the sixth organ taking refuge in them, the *jiva* enjoys the sense world.

The deluded do not see the jiva (jivatma), only the wise see Him.

10. उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वाषि भुज्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमृद्धा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १०

*Utkramantam sthitam va'pi bhunjanam va gunanvitam ।
vimudha na'anupasyanti pasyanti jnana chakshushah ॥ 10*

Meaning : उत्क्रामन्तं *utkramantam* : departing from one body to another, वा *va* : or, स्थितं *Sthitam* : dwelling in the body, वा *va* : or, भुज्जानम् *bhunjanam* : enjoying the sense-objects, गुणान्वितम् *gunanvitam* *api* : even united with the Gunas (This Jivatma), विमृद्धः *vimudhah* : the deluded, न अनुपश्यन्ति *na anupasyanti* : do not see, ज्ञानचक्षुषः *jnana chakshushah* : those who possess the eye of knowledge, पश्यन्ति *pasyanti* : see.

Substance : The *jivatma*, departing (from one body to another), or dwelling in the body, or enjoying the sense-world, - united with the three *Gunas*, - is not seen by the deluded; those who possess the eye of knowledge behold (Him.)

Commentary : ‘Why do we not see the Lord?’ – This question is asked by many. The Lord answers it. ‘You can see the Lord – now in the body by acquiring the eye of knowledge’ One need not go far and search for Him here and there. In

his very body tenanted by the *jiva*, who is eating, drinking, sleeping, acting, enjoying and suffering, that *Paramatman* can be seen by right discrimination which opens the eye of knowledge (*Jnanachakshushah*). On account of the domination of the objective phenomena, the deluded are not able to see Him. If he turns the mind outside, the world is reflected in it; if he turns it inside God is realised. If the mirror is turned to us, we see ourselves. If it is turned outside the world is seen. So also, when the mind is turned outside, the whole of the phenomenal world is seen. If the mind is turned within, kept calm, pure and firm, *Atma* is beheld. This *Atma* is seen only by such sages who can discriminate between the real and the unreal, the seer and the seen. (Seeing the *Atma* means, self-realisation.)

Utkramantam: The *jivatma* enjoys in one body and after discarding it takes up another and so on he migrates from body to body. It is clear that the seekers need to look into themselves to find the Lord there even in this body.

The first duty of man is to know who he is, what his true nature is, how he is dwelling in the body, and what he is doing with the sense-organs and the mind. This is the search for the Lord, through discrimination and dispassion. The externalised mind which is beholding any other thing except the seer, should turn its concentrated look at the seer Himself 'the Lord.' Thus the true nature of the real man within is known. Knowledge is the Light by which all things are seen clearly. The Lord is thus seen and realised with the eye of knowledge. The *Jiva* then knows that he is *Paramatma*, the Lord.

Question : Who can see Paramatma, and who cannot ?

Answer : Those who possess the eye of knowledge behold Him, the ignorant do not. (The eye of knowledge means right discrimination between *Atma* and *Anatma*.)

Without purity of heart, no effort can enable man to see Atma.

11. यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।

यतन्तोऽप्यकुरुतात्मानो मैनं पश्यन्त्यधेतसः ॥

*Yatanto yoginas chai'nam pasyanty atmany avasthitam
yatanto'py akritatmano nai'nam pasyanty achetasah* 11

Meaning : यतन्तः *yatantah* : striving (for self-realisation, Atma jnana), योगिनः *yoginah* : sages (yogis), आत्मनि *atmani* : in themselves, अवस्थितं *avasthitam* : dwelling, एनम् *enam* : this Atma, पश्यन्ति *pasyanti* : see (realise), यतन्तः अपि च *yatantah api cha* : and though striving, अकृतात्मानः *akritatmanah* : the impure (unrefined), अयेतसः *achetasah* : unintelligent, एनम् *enam* : this Atma, न पश्यन्ति *na pasyante* : do not see.

Substance : The sages striving (for *Atma jnana*), see this *Atma* dwelling in themselves; though striving, the impure and the unintelligent do not see the *Atma*.

Commentary : The Lord explains why some *yogis* are able to behold the *Atma*, whereas others fail in their efforts. The effort is common in both cases. Why should some succeed and others fail? The impure-minded people (*akritatmah*) do not see the *Atma*, in spite of their *sadhana*. These also do *japa*, *dhyana* and other practices, but they fail because the heart is impure, (i. e. vitiated by powerful *vasanas* binding them to the external world). Some people attempt to realise *Atma* by a study of *sastras*, without eradicating the impurities of the heart. Some others carry on a show of external devotion and meditation. They do not possess real self-control, and so they fail in their search for *Paramatma*. We see here that the Lord insists on *purity* of heart as the essential condition for *Atmajnana*. If there is no *Purity*, there is no *Atmajnana*. When *Purity* is attained, *Atma* is realised. The path is clear.

The field should be cleared of rubbish, properly tilled and watered and then the seeds grow and the harvest is gathered. Otherwise the seeds are buried in the earth and have no chance of sprouting into life. They are wasted, for no harvest is gathered from that untilled, unwatered field (*kshetram*).

The four elementary principles of *sadhana* (*s-dhana charushtaya*) should be cultivated first, The heart is then

purified of its unholy desires, passions, and emotions. The bodily organs and the sense organs and the mind are brought under control. When these disturbing forces are kept under check, the mind is full of peace, and in that state, the enquiry into the Self continues without any hindrance and Self-realisation becomes easily possible.

The Lord makes it clear that two things are needed (1) Effort, (2) Purity. 'Yatantah'-the *yogis* strive to discover the truth, *Aima*. The striving must be there for Self-realisation. Without it, nothing can be gained. But this striving should be accompanied with Purity (*Chitta-suddhi*). Then the reward is immediate. The word 'achetasah' does not here refer to illiterate, ignorant men who have no idea of spiritual life at all. It refers to persons who have some ideas of spirituality, who believe in God, who have studied the *Sastras*, who understand the truth intellectually. These qualifications are good no doubt, but they are not enough for direct Self-realisation. They have to acquire self-control and dispassion (*vairagya*); otherwise, there is no progress. If the seekers do a bit of self-examination, they will find out how strong the bonds are which bind them to the objective world, and how weak their *vairagya* is. Let them concentrate on how to purify the heart of all its impure sensual tendencies. The company of the wise, the correct way of *Sadhana*, faith in the words of the Lord,—all these are necessary for the aspirant to reach the goal.

Question : *Where is Paramatma?*

Answer : In one's own Self.

Question : *Who can see Him?*

Answer : He who practices *Sadhana*, having purity can see Him.

Question : *Who cannot see Him?*

Answer : Those who strive without purity of heart (*Chitta-suddhi*) cannot see Him.

Question : *So, what are the conditions for God-realisation?*

Answer : Purity and effort.

The excellence of Paramatma is described in four verses.

12. यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्ग्रामयते विलम् ।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाप्नौ तत्तेजा विद्धि मामकम् ॥

१२

Yad adityagatam tejo jagad bhasayate'khilam ॥

yacchandramasi yacchi'gnau tat tejo viddhi mamakam ॥ 12

Meaning : आदित्यगतं *adityagatam* : residing in the Sun, यत् तेजः *yat tejah* : which radiance (light and life), अखिलं *akhilam* : the whole, जगत् *jagat* : world, भासयते *bhasayate* : illuminess, जन्द्रमसि *chandramasi* : in the moon, यत् *yat* : which (radiance), अग्नौ च *agnau cha* : and in fire, यत् *yat* : which, तत् *tat* : that, तेजः *tejah* : light (all that radiance in the sun, moon and fire), मामकम् *mamakam* : (to be) mine, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : Which radiance (light and life), residing in the sun, illuminates the whole world; (which radiance) is in the moon, and in the fire, know (all) that light to be Mine.

Commentary : The Lord declares that the sun and the moon and the fire shine by His Light. They have borrowed His Light. Thus when we see the illumination of the various objects in the world, we should be filled with deep adoration for the Lord, whose glory is expressing itself in these mighty and spectacular manifestation.

Some elements have the power of illuminating others. The pot is not luminous; it shines by the reflected light of the sun. The tree is not luminous, it shines by the reflected light of the sun. The Sun, the Moon, and the Fire have the powers of light. They shine, and cause other objects to shine. But whence is the light of the Sun, the Moon and the Fire? The Lord answers that it is His Light that is shining in the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire. *Paramatma* alone is the One Light, and that is reflected through different media like the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. This should be clearly understood by the aspirants. *Paramatma* is Self-luminous; He is Light itself.

Question : What is the nature of the Light residing in the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire ?

Answer : It is the Light of Paramatma. It is the Divine Light of the Supreme Brahman

The Lord declares that he enters the earth and nourishes the herbs and plants by His energy.

13. गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि औषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥

१३

Gam avisya cha bhutani dharayamy aham ojasa ।

pushnami chau'sadhih sarvah somo bhutva rasatmakah ॥ 13

Meaning : च *cha* : and, अहम् *Aham* : I, गाम् *gam* : the earth, आविश्य *avisya* : permeating, ओजसा *ojasa* : with (My) energy, भूतानि *bhutani* : (all) the beings (moving and non-moving), धारयामि *dharayami* : (I) support, रसात्मकः *rasatmakah* : the watery, सोमः *somah* : Moon, भूत्वा *bhutva* : having become, सर्वः *sarvah* : all, औषधीः *oshadhih* : herbs (Plants, corn etc.), पुष्णामि *pushnami* : (I) nourish.

Substance : And I, having permeated the earth, sustain all beings with My energy; having become the watery moon, I nourish all herbs (plants and corn etc.).

Commentary : *Ojasa dharayami* : The energy that is anywhere exhibited by any being is derived from the Lord Himself. The whole world is sustained by His all-pervading energy (*sakti*). The ignorant may ascribe that energy to themselves, but the wise know that it is all the Lord's inexhaustible power exhibiting through the multitudinous beings of the universe. From this declaration of the Lord, we come to know that Sri Krishna, the Charioteer of Arjuna, is not simply the child of Devaki (a little '*upadhi*' like innumerable other beings), but the all-pervading, all-supporting *paramatma*. More over, the food one eats is nourished by the Lord's energy, permeating the world. Without Him there would be no food for man. So when man feeds himself he should remember the Lord from whom the food has

come to him. He is the mightiest producer and also distributor. He is the giver of the food. Should we not be grateful to Lord ? Should we not offer to the Lord what belongs to Him ? Eating is not animal-activity, but divine work, if one knows the secret of the Lord's indivisible hand in its production. So also, if the light of the sun and the moon is not there, the universe would be plunged in darkness. It is the light of *Paramatma* that shines through the Sun, Moon and Fire. Man's life has become possible by the immeasurable energy (*sakti*) of the Lord. He is the supporter, the nourisher, and the dispensor. May people remember it always and remain steadfast in their love and devotion to Him.

Question : *How does the Lord help mankind ?*

Answer : He permeates the earth and sustains all beings with His energy (*sakti*). He becomes the watery moon and nourishes the plants and herbs.

Question : *What then is the duty of man ?*

Answer : He should remember the Lord in all the activities of life, by Japa, Dhyana, Samkirtan and worship.

The Lord declares that He is the digesting Fire in all living beings.

14 अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्म चतुर्विधम् ॥

१४

*Aham vaisvauaro bhutva praninam deham asritah ।
pranapanasamayuktah pachamy annam chaturvidham ॥ 14*

Meaning : अहम् *Aham* : I, वैश्वानरः *vaisvanarah* : the digestive fire (Jatharagni), भूत्वा *bhutva* : having become, प्राणिनाम् *praninam* : of beings, देहम् *deham* : the body, आश्रितः *asritah* : abiding in, प्राणापान समायुक्तः *pranapananamyuktah* : associated with the vital forces of Pana and Apana, चतुर्विध *chaturvidham* : four-fold, अन्नम् *annam* : food, पचामि *pachami* : (I) digest.

Substance : Abiding in the body of beings, having become the digestive fire (*jatharagni*) called 'vaisvanara', I digest the four-fold food, associated with the vital forces of *Prana* and *Apana*.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the Lord said that He produces the food by his energy (*sakti*) and that He is the supporter and nourisher of all beings. Not only does the Lord produce food, He is also the digestive energy in all living beings. The body is built by food, and the food eaten should be properly digested before it turns into blood and vital energy. The digestive Fire (*Jatharagni*) is the Lord Himself in the form of *vaisvanara*. So the Lord is the Creator as well as the nourisher of the body. In this way man is wholly the product of the Lord and all the energy which he possesses comes to him from the Lord. He who eats the food without offering to the Lord is a thief, misappropriating to himself what is not really his (*yo bhunkte stena eva saha. 3-12*). That is why there is the *sadachara* in the world of offering food to God as *naivedyam* before eating. What is eaten without such offering is impure food. So every one should offer his food fist to God, and then a part of it to other hungry beings, and eat only the rest of it with Godly feelings. Then the very act of eating would become a *yajna*, and the food taken becomes nectar (*Amritam*).

Praninam deham asritah : The Lord is in the body, very near, nay, nearest to him. Realising His presence with him one should live a pure, blissful and blessed life.

Pachamyannam chaturvidham : The four-fold food (1) *Bhakshyam*-Food which has to be eaten by mastication, (2) *Bhojyam*-Soft food which has to be sucked in, (3) *Lehyam* that which has to be licked, (4) *Choshyam*: that which has to be swallowed.

One can imagine how cautious he should be when he knows that the Lord is Himself the eater and the digester of food. Regulation of food-habits is a necessary pre-requisite of spiritual life. The body is the instrument of *yogasadhana*,

and food builds the body and sustains it. So every one should practice restraint and moderation in this matter. The following principles should be observed (1) He should not eat too much (2) *Sattivic* food alone should be taken, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* food should be avoided (vide 17-8, 9, 10 verses for a definition of the *Sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*, types of food). (3) The food taken should first be effered to the Lord. (4) The food should be earned by righteous means.

It is certainly better to live on roots and leaves obtained by righteous means than on luxurious dishes got by cheating, stealth and other unrighteous (*adharmonic*) ways. The Lord is observing from within every morsel that one eats. The law of moderation has already been enunciated by the Lord (*Yuktaharaviharasya* 6-17).

As the Chapter deals with food it has become a *sadachara* to recite it collectively or separately at the time of eating. In *Asramas*, Matts and houses, this pratice is followed by most people. Food eaten in this spirit is a real offering to the Lord. He accepts it. Besides, such food permeates every particle of the body with divine purity and energy. Generally after reciting this Discourse, the wise take water in their palm, repeat the 24th verse in the IV Chapter (*Brahmarpanam brahmahavir—*) sprinkle the water on the food, and then start eating. This is *Brahma Karma Samadhi*.

Question : *How does the Lord dwell in the body?*

Answer : In the form of Vaisvanara (Jatharagni).

Question : *What does He in that form?*

Answer : He digests the food, associated with the vital forces of Prana and Apana.

Question : *What then should men do?*

Answer : They should think of the Lord, offer the food to Him, and afterwards eat with pure and holy thoughts.

The Lord declares that He is present in the hearts of all beings.

15. सर्वस्य चां हृदि सन्निविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेववेदो
वेदान्तकृद्देवविदेव चाहम् ॥

१५

*Sarvasya cha'ham hriddi sannivisto
mattah smritir jnanam apohanam cha ।
vedais cha sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedantakrid vedavid eva cha'ham ॥*

15

Meaning: अहम् *aham* : I, सर्वस्य च *sarvasya cha* : of all beings, हृदि *hriddi* : in the heart, सन्निविष्टः *sannivishtah* : dwell (am seated), मत्तः *mattah* : from Me, स्मृतिः *smritih* : memory, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, अपोहनं च *apohanam cha* : and forgetfulness, (bhavanti : occur), सर्वैः *sarvaih* : with all, वेदैः च *vedaih cha* : and the Vedas, वेद्यः *Vedyah* : to be known, *aham eva* : I alone, वेदान्तकृत् *vedantakrit* : the author of the Vedas. वेदवित् एव च *Vedavit eva cha* : and also the knower of the Vedas, अहं एव *aham eva* : I alone (am).

Substance: And I am seated in the hearts of all beings; from Me (arise) memory, knowledge and their absence; I am verily that which is to be known by all the *Vedas*; I am the author of the *Vedanta*; and verily I am the knower of the *Veda*.

Commentary: *Sarvasya* : Without distinction of caste, creed, religion, race and nationality, the Lord is present in the hearts of all beings. No one need feel desperate that he is devoid of the Lord's presence. The worst sinners and outcastes can ennable their lives by giving up their evil ways, and feeling the presence of the Lord within themselves. Even the worst sinner can attain perfection, if he remembers that the background for him also is the mighty universal Lord, and he is one with Him.

Thus the Gita opens the door of the highest realisation to all beings. The Lord is the background, the source, and the foundation for all. What does it matter whether the wave is small or big, for, both is the same to the ocean. The small *Jiva* need not fear. The *Jiva* is part of the Lord Himself, in the same way as the wave is part of the ocean. The trumpet call of the Lord is 'I am in all, come to Me, I am yours.'

Hridi: He, the Lord, is seated in the hearts of all. He is the nearest to all. It is gross foolishness to imagine that the Lord is not with beings, or He is far away from them. Repeatedly does the Lord declare 'I am in the hearts of all', thus urging man to realise his divine nature and give up all thoughts of weakness, vileness and wretchedness. He is the witness of all that one does, and He is also the punisher, if he does wrong. So thinking, everyone should evolve towards higher planes of righteousness and perfection.

Smritir jnanam apoham: Memory, knowledge, loss of memory, all these are different forms of mental energy. The Lord is the foundation of the mind, and so all these mental states are caused by the Lord Himself. He is the observer of the subtlest mental processes and nothing can be hidden from Him. So, let every seeker be fully aware of the thoughts that are coming up in his mind, check them up, and entertain only those which are pure, uplifting, and inspiring.

Vedais cha sarvaih aham eva vedyah: The *Vedas* and the *Sastras* speak of different Gods and Goddesses, but the supreme Being to be known is *Paramatma*, the Lord only. This one supreme Being is manifesting as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, Indra, Varuna, Yama and so on. The ultimate goal for all mankind is the one indivisible *Sachidananda Para Brahman*. All others are the manifestations of His wonderful Glory.

Vedantakrit: He is the author of *Vedanta*. The *Vedas* and the Upanishads are products of that One Divine intelligence. They are the words of *Paramatma*. Sincere seekers have to read them with faith and devotion. Such faith in the word of God is the only, way for spiritual progress and realisation. One's

faith in them should be firm and immovable. In tracing the line of *Gurus*, it is the *sadachara* to start with Narayana (*Paramatma*). ("OM Narayanam Padmabhuvam"). He is the source of all knowledge from the highest to the lowest.

Question: *Where is Paramatma?*

Answer : He is in the hearts of all beings.

Question: *From whom proceed memory, knowledge and their absence?*

Answer : From Paramatma alone.

Question: *Who is the author of Vedanta? Whom does the Vedas proclaim? Who is the knower of the Vedas?*

Answer : Paramatma alone.

The kshara and Akshara Purushas are described.

16. द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षयाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥

१६

*Dvav imau purusau loke ksharas cha'kshara eva cha
ksharah saryani bhutani kutastho'kshara uchyate । 16.*

Meaning : लोके *loke* : in the world, क्षयः च *ksharah cha* : the perishable, अक्षरः एव च *aksharah eva cha* : and also imperishable, द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ *dvavimau purushau* : these two Purushas (are), सर्वाणि भूतानि *sarvani bhutani* : the bodies of all beings, क्षरः *ksharah* : perishable Purusha, (uchyate : is said), कूटस्थः *kutasthah* : the imperishable Purusha, (remaining till Moksha) Jiva, अक्षरः *aksharah* : imperishable, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance Two Purushas are there in the world, the perishable and the imperishable; all the bodies of beings are perishable and the *Jiva* (*Kutasthah*) is called the Imperishable.

Commentary : *Kshara Purusha, Akshara Purusha and Purushothama*-This Discourse deals with these three *Purushas*.

First the *Kshara Purusha* is explained. He who identifies himself with the physical body is *Kshara Purusha*. He who identifies himself with the mind is called *Akshara Purusha*. Compared with the body which perishes every time it is born, the mind, which endures birth after birth till the moment of liberation (*Moksha*), is said to be *Akshara* or *Kutasihah* (the immovable). This *Akshara Purusha* (*Minobhimani*) *Jiva* is not the same as the *Akshara Parabrahman* described in the 8th Discourse. These are poles apart. Brahman is the original Sun and the *Jiva* is the reflection of the Sun in water. The *Jiva* mentioned here is different from Brahman of the 8th discourse. In the coming verse the Lord describes *Purusha* who is different from *Kshara Purusha* and the *Akshara Purusha* (*Jiva*) who is the reflected consciousness of *Paramatma* in the body.

Question : Who are the Purushas in the world ?

Answer : They are two, the *Kshara Purusha* and the *Akshara Purusha*.

Question : Who is the *Kshara Purusha* ?

Answer : The bodies (upadhis) are said to be *Kshara Purushas*.

Question : Who is the *Akshara Purusha* ?

Answer : The *Jiva*

The Lord speaks of Purushottama.

17. उत्तमः पुरुषस्तन्यः यो लोकात्रयाद्युद्धिः ।
यो लोकात्रयाविश्वा विवर्यव्यया ईश्वरः ॥

१७

*Uttamah purushus ivanyah paramame'vyudahritah ।
yo lokatrayam avisya bibhartyavyaya isvarah ।*

17

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, लोकात्रयः *lokatrayam* : three worlds, आविश्वा *avisya* : permeating, विश्वा *bibharti* : sustains, अव्ययः *avyayah* : imperishable, ईश्वरः *isvarah* : Lord (controller), अन्यः *anyah* : distinct (from the two above-mentioned Purushas), उत्तम पुरुषः *uttama purushah* : supreme Purusha, Purushottama, परमात्मा इति *paramatma iti* : as Paramatma, उदाहृतः *udahrittah* : is called.

Substance : He who, permeating the three worlds, sustains them, who is different from the two *Purushas* (*Kshara* and *Akshara*), who is the Indestructible Lord (controller) of the universe, is called *Paramatma*, the Supreme *Purusha*.

Commentary : Different from the perishable bodies, and the *Jiva*, migrating from body to body, is the Supreme *Purusha*. He is distinct from the *Jiva*, who is only a reflected being of *Paramatma*. Is not the Supreme *Purusha* higher than the perishing bodies, and the *Jiva* bound by delusion to the vehicles of the body, senses and mind ? The Supreme *Purusha* is ever free (*nityamuktah*), whereas the *Jiva* attains *Mukti* by knowledge of the Supreme *Purusha*. The *Jiva* is associated with the three *Gunas*, but *Paramatma* is free from the *Gunas*; He is *Gunatita*. Therefore He is known as the Supreme *Purusha* or *Purushottama*.

Some people live in the state of the body (have *dehasthiti*), and some in the state of the *Jiva* (have *Jivasthiti*). He who lives in *Atma* alone is the Supreme *Purusha*. This is the goal to be attained by all with determined effort. The thoughtful man should not waste his life in the bound conditions of the *Jiva*. He should find his freedom and perfection. He should go beyond the body-state, the *Jiva*-state and realise the *Atmic* state (i. e.) the state of the Supreme *Purusha*. That is the end and aim of life. Nothing else can fulfil the true purpose of life.

Anyah : He is distinct from the body and mind. He is the witness (*sakshi*). The *Jiva* should realise that He is not affected by the modifications of the body and mind, and that he is the changeless imperishable *Atma*. This determined thought of his own *purity*, immutability, and immortality is to be cultivated, strengthened and confirmed till he comes to rest in *Atma*, apart from every thing else.

When one understands the nature and power of *Paramatma* his faith in Him would become firm and unshakable. Two attributes are mentioned here—(1) He is the supporter, the controller, and the Lord of the three worlds (2) He is indestructible. Having permeated the world, He is controlling all, the forces in the universe. When all the bodies (*upadhis*) and

the *Jiva* cease to exist, He shines alone eternally. The *Jiva* ceases to exist when he realises his true nature.

Question : Is *Paramatma* distinct from *Kshara* and *Akshara Purushas* ?

Answer : Yes. He is. He is the Supreme Purusha.

Question : What is His nature ?

Answer : (1) Having entered the three worlds, He sustains them. He is the Ruler of the Universe.

(2) He is indestructible.

Question : What then is man's duty ?

Answer : Transcending the *Kshara* and *Akshara* states, man should attain the plane of *Purushottama*.

Why Paramatma is known as Purushottama is explained.

18. यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

१८

*Yasmāt ksharam atito'ham aksharad api cho'ttamah !
ato'smi loke vede cha prathitah purushottamah ॥ 18*

Meaning : यस्मात् *yasmat* : as, अहं *aham* : I, क्षरं *ksharam* : the perishable Purusha, अतीतः *atitah* : transcend, अक्षरात् *aksharat* *api* : to the imperishable purusha also, उत्तमः *uttamah* च *cha* : superior also, अतः *atah* : for that reason, लोके *loke* : in the world, वेदे च *vede cha* : in the Vedas also, पुरुषोत्तमः *Purushottamah* : the higher Purusha, प्रथितः *prathitah* : declared, अस्मि *asmi* : I am.

Substance : As I transcend the perishable and am higher than the imperishable (*Jiva*), for that reason, I am declared as the highest *Purusha* in the world and in the *Vedas*.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is called the Highest *Purusha*, because he transcends the perishable body and the imperishable *Jiva*. The *Jiva* should go beyond his limited *jivatvam*-imprisonment

in the cell of the body and mind-vehicles and attain his true nature as the Highest *Purusha*. In truth, *jivatvam* is an illusion. The *Jiva* is no other than the Supreme *Purusha*.

Question: *Why is Paramatma declared to be the highest purusha?*

Answer : Because He is higher than the perishable body (Kshara) and the Jiva (Aksharam).

He who knows Paramatma to be the Highest Purusha worships Him with pure devotion.

19. यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति बुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्वज्ञति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥

१९

*Yo mam evam asammudho janati purusottamam
sa sarvavid bhajati mam sarva bhavena bharata ॥ 19*

Meaning : भारत *bharata*: O Arjuna! यः *yah*: who, असंमूढः *asammudhah*: freed of delusion, एवम् *evam*: thus, माम् *mam*: me, पुरुषोत्तमम् *purushottamam*: the highest purusha, जानाति *janati*: knows, सः *sah*: he, सर्वविद् *sarvavit*: all-knowing, सर्वभावेन *sarvabhavena*: with his whole being (heart) in every way, माम् *mam*: me, भजति *bhajati*: worships.

Substance : O Arjuna ! He, who freed from delusion knows Me thus as the Highest *Purusha*, is the all-knowing; He worships Me with his whole being.

Commentary : One's devotion to a person or thing is formed by his understanding of his true nature to some extent. The more he knows the excellence of a person, the more he loves him and the more he is devoted to him. Thus if a person knows the true nature of *Paramatma*, his devotion would be real and immovable. The Lord is Eternal, the essence of all bliss and blessedness. He is higher than the perishable body and the imprisoned *Jiva*. He is freedom and He is perfection. Such is the Supreme *Purusha*. It is declared here that he who knows the Lord as such, would worship Him with his whole being.

Asammudhah: He should be free from delusion. Ignorance is nothing else but the feeling of attachment to perishable things. Understanding of *Atma* as the only Eternal Reality is Knowledge.

Sah sarvavit : He who understands the Supreme *Purusha* is declared to be all-knowing. He is the knower of all. *Brahma-jnana* alone is complete knowledge. Knowledge of all other things does not confer perfection of knowledge on man.

Knowledge of *Paramatma* brings with it knowledge of every thing in the world. *Paramatma* being known, every thing is known. All the sciences and arts, all the *Sastras* and the *Vedas*, are in Him. So to know Him is to know all. Such a man becomes all-knowing ('*sarvavit*').

Sarvabhavena : As one realises the true nature of *Paramatma*, his faith in Him becomes strong and firm. Then he worships Him in every way, with all his heart and soul. When it is clearly seen that the objective world is every moment a vanishing dream, one naturally turns to the only reality, the *Drik* (seer) *Atma*. The whole-hearted and undivided worship of the Lord is emphasised here, and in many places too (Vide 18-62 *tameva saranam gaccha sarva bhavena bharata*). The mind should not split into two channels—God and the world, because where the world rules, God is far away, and where God rules the heart, the world is far away. It would be utterly foolish to imagine that one can attain *Atma*, while every moment he is oppressed by the demands of the flesh and the desires of the mind. The seeker should have perfect mental non-attachment to the world and think of the Lord only. This fulness of devotion, the hundred percent concentration on the Lord, should be acquired by long practice and ceaseless effort.

Question : Who worships the Lord with the whole-heart ?

Answer : He who is freed from delusion, and understands that the supreme Purusha is higher than the Kshara and Akshara Purushas, worships him with heart and soul.

Question : How should the Lord be worshipped ?

Answer : With a full and undivided mind (Sarvabavena).

The fruit of understanding this Discourse is stated.

20. इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयाऽनघ ।

एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥

२०

Iti guhyatamam sastram idam uktam maya'nagha ।

etad buddhva buddhiman syat kritakrityas cha bharata ॥ 20

Meaning : अनघ *anagha* : O sinless Arjuna ! इति *iti* : thus, गुह्यतमम् *guhyatamam* : greatest secret, इदं *idam* : this, शास्त्रम् *sastram* : Sastram, मया *maya* : by me, उक्तं *uktam* : is said, भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! एतत् *etat* : this, बुध्वा *buddhya* : knowing (man), बुद्धिमान् *buddhiman* : wise, कृतकृत्यः च *kritakrityah cha* : and of accomplished duties, स्यात् *syat* : becomes.

Substance : O Sinless Arjuna ! Thus I have declared unto you this most secret *Sastra*; he who understands it well, becomes wise and has accomplished all his duties.

Commentary : The Lord declares the fruit of understanding the Supreme *Purusha* as distinguished from the *Kshara* and *Akshara*. He says that this *Sastra*, science taught by Him is the greatest secret (*guhyatamam*). The superlative form is used to show that this truth is the highest secret, greatest mystery to be known by man. Generally no wise man reveals any thing to a fool or a braggart. He selects his hearer by knowing his nature and character. Then only he reveals the secret. Here also the Lord has chosen Arjuna to be the recipient of this divine knowledge, because he is sinless (*anagha*). It is stated as a rule that *Brahmavidya* is not taught to persons who are devoid of the essential qualities of self-control. The seeker should first acquire of mental purity (*chittasuddhi*) and then he gets the qualification (*adhikara*) to be initiated into the highest secret. If any one like Arjuna, becomes sinless by devotion, austerity, '*dhyana*' and other practices, he is certain to obtain the Highest Knowledge.

from some great-souled teacher (*Guru*) or by some incidental factor in his life. Or the Lord Himself confers the subtlety of the intellect capable of perceiving the truth (*dadami buddhi yogam tam*).

What is the fruit of acquiring this knowledge ? He becomes (1) wise (having Self-knowledge), (2) he has accomplished all his duties. The performance of all other works in the world do not lead man to the highest state of perfection and freedom. All other works may confer merit (*Punyam*) by which one enjoys fruits of good life in other worlds. But still liberation is not attained. He has to be born again and again. When *Brahma jnana* is attained, he receives the merit of having accomplished all his duties, and has no further work to do with the body in this or in any other world. Therefore it is the duty of all seekers to rise to this plane of liberation and realise the fulness of bliss and blessedness. Without it the cycle of birth and death continues and sorrow envelops them endlessly.

Question : *What is the nature of this spiritual knowledge taught by the Lord ?*

Answer : It is the greatest secret and the highest mystery.

Question : *Why did the Lord teach it to Arjuna ?*

Answer : Because Arjuna is free from sin.

Question: *What is the fruit of acquiring this knowledge ?*

Answer : Man becomes (1) wise and (2) has accomplished all his duties.

Question : *What then is the way to become wise and of fulfilled purpose ?*

Answer : To understand this secret knowledge is the way.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाज्ञेनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमप्रसिद्धो नाम
पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Purusottamaprapti
yogo nama panchadaso'dhyayah॥*

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Fifteenth Discourse entitled Purushottamaprapti Yoga
(The Yoga of the attainment of the Supreme Purusha.)

६३

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ षोडशोऽध्यायः

Atha shodasodhyayah

SIXTEENTH DISCOURSE

दैवासुरसंपद्विभाग योगः

DAIVASURASAMPADVIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE DIVISION BETWEEN THE DIVINE
AND THE DEMONICAL

I. Title of the Discourse :

Sampada means treasure. Divine Treasure (*daivi sampada*) would mean the possession of divine qualities, a mass of sacred virtues. It is character equipment drawing the man towards God. Opposed to this is '*asurasampada*', undivine or demonical qualities and character which draw man away from God. In this Discourse the Lord explains the two natures—the Divine and the Demonical—very vividly. The seeker will then be in a position to examine himself and find out what his real nature is. If it is good, he should strengthen it and make himself pure still, and move forward to reach God. If his nature is blackened by undivine forces, he should try to clear them away from his mind and body. So this Discourse is of great importance for all seekers on the spiritual path. As it deals with the Divine and Demonical nature, it is entitled "*Daivasurasampadvibhaga yoga*".

II. Important points of the Discourse :

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|--|---------|
| 1) The qualities of Divine nature | (1-3) |
| 2) The qualities of Demonical nature | (4) |
| 3) The fruit of the two opposed natures | (5) |
| 4) The qualities of man of demonical nature
and the destruction that comes to them. | (6-29) |
| 5) The gateways to Hell. | (21) |
| 6) The laws of the <i>Sastras</i> , the violation of
the <i>Sastric</i> laws and the Lord's instruction
to accept the <i>Sastras</i> . | (22-24) |

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the 7th and the 9th Discourses, the Lord has already referred to people of evil and demonical natures, who fail to understand Him, who deny Him even.

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|------------------------------------|----------|
| (<i>na mam dushkritino mudhah</i> | 15 - 7) |
| (<i>avajananti mam mudhah</i> | 11 - 9) |
| (<i>moghaso moghakarmano</i> | 12 - 9) |

Soon after, the Lord again refers to the good souls who think of Him and worship Him with faith and devotion.

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|----------------------------------|----------|
| (<i>mahatmanastu mam partha</i> | 13 - 9) |
| (<i>satajam kirtayanto mam</i> | 14 - 9) |

Naturally a fuller explanation of the two hostile forces would be helpful to His disciple. So the Lord elaborately describes the man of Divine Qualities and the man of Demonical qualities. Moreover from the '*Purushottamī prapti yoga*,' it is clear that the possession of divine qualities is absolutely essential to realise the Supreme *Purusha*. What are the qualities to adopt and what are the qualities to be abandoned, — these questions are of immediate concern for all seekers. Hence the Lord presents a vivid picture of the two types of beings. He starts first with the qualities of Divine nature.

श्री भगवानुवाच

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|----|---|---|
| १. | अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञेष्व स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ | १ |
| २. | अदिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलत्वं मार्दवं हीरचापलम् ॥ | २ |
| ३. | तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ | ३ |

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Abhayam sattvasamsuddhir jnanayoga vyavasthitih ।
danam damas cha yajnas cha svadhyayastapa arjavam ॥* १

*Ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah santir apaisunam ।
daya bhutesva lolatvam mardavam hrirachapalam ॥* २

*Tejah kshama dhritih saucham adroho na'timanita ।
bhavanti sampadam daivim abhijataasya bharata ॥*

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna! अभयं *abhayam* : fearlessness, सत्त्वसंशुद्धिः *sattva samsuddhiḥ* : purity of mind, ज्ञान योग व्यवस्थितिः *jnana yoga vyavasthitah* : steadfastness in knowledge and yoga, दानं *danam* : charity, दमः च *dāmāḥ* च : control of external organs, यज्ञः च *yajnah* च : and (jnana) yajna, स्वाध्यायः *svadhyayah* : study of Vedas and the Sastras, तपः *tapah* : austerity, आर्जवम् *arjavam* : integrity, अहिंसा *ahimṣā* : non-injury, सत्यं *satyam* : truthfulness (taking refuge in Paramatma), अक्रोधः *akrodhah* : freedom from hatred, त्यागः *tyagah* : sacrifice, शान्तिः *santih* : peace, अपैशुनम् *apisunam* : absence of crookedness, दया भूतेषु *daya bhuteshu* : kindness towards beings, अलोलत्वं *alolatvam* : absence of desire for enjoyment, मार्दवम् *mardavam* : gentleness, ह्रीः *hrīḥ* : modesty, अचापलम् *achaupalam* : absence of fickleness, तेजः *tejah* :

brightnesss (light of Brahman), क्षमा *kshama* : forgiveness, धृतिः *dhritih* : fortitude, सौचम् *saucha n* : purity, अद्रोहः *adrohah* : absence of hatred, नातिमानिता *natimanita* : not over-pride (that he is fit to be revered or worshipped), दैवीम् *daivim* : to Divine, सम्पदम् *sampadam* : state, अभिजातस्य *abhi jatasya* : of the born, भवन्ति *bhavanti* : belong.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and *yoga*, alms-giving, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the *Sastras*, austerity and straight-forwardness,

Harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness,

Energy, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of over-pride, (these qualities) belong to one born of a divine state.

Commentary: The *Gita* gives prominence to practise (*sadhana*). The spiritual goal is very near when the mind is purified. So the manner and means of purifying the mind are clearly stated in many places and here, '*daivisampat*' is particularly intended to teach the disciple the science of self-purification. Twenty six qualities are mentioned here. The aspirant for *Mokshi* like the good student at his desk, should cultivate those qualities with determination and assiduous practice (*abhyasa*). He should not only acquire them but protect them as one would protect a treasure safely, never allowing anything to drop away from it.

Daivisampat is divine wealth, and the Lord scatters it among the people at large and says, "O ye mortals ! Do not set your heart in worldly treasures, do not get entangled in the meshes of sense-enjoyments, for they shall cause misery birth after birth. Here are the precious jewels of spiritual illumination. Take them, take them all, for they are yours, and you

shall be truly rich and wealthy when you possess them." Therefore the wise and the thoughtful should quickly take hold of the treasure, and with the knowledge-treasure attain oneness with *Paramatma* !

Abhayam : Among all the virtues, the Lord first takes up what may be described as the 'lion' among good qualities-fearlessness (*abhayam*). One should pause and think why fearlessness is given the first place among a number of other virtues equally great and adorable. (1) Fear is the source of all evil, and from fear arises all other bad qualities. Men cheat, betray, fight, kill, dominate, suppress truth, and do every evil thing, out of fear. All weakness is caused by fear. Man suffers misery by fear. Men clings to this life, wife and children, houses and positions on account of fear. The whole Samsara is built on fear. So if this fear is eradicated all other evil and weakness, disappear gradually. Fearlessness will bring with it all the other shining virtues which lead to liberation. So it is the virtue of 'daivisampat'. In the game of Tug-of-war, the first man and the last man are selected for their strength and weight. In this tug-of-war with the evil forces, fearlessness is chosen as the captain to lead the team of virtues on the battle-field of everybody's heart. The Upanishads declare that '*abhayam*', is the state of Brahman.

Abhayam vai Janaka praptosi.

Thus, *Abhayam*, the first virtue declared by the Lord should be practised by every seeker for spiritual realisation.

Sattvasamsuddhih : Perfect purity of the mind is stated next. The mind should be as pure as the purest mirror. Not a speck of dust should be there. Not a trace of worldly thoughts, sensual tendencies, vicious inclinations should be there. As the mind gets pure, the Atmic light is clearly perceived in it. True knowledge and joy fills the mind.

Jnanayogavyavasthitah : Though different *yogas* are taught in the Gita, here and there the superior excellence of *jnanayoga* is mentioned as *Atmajnana* is the goal of spiritual life.

(*Sarvam karma khilam Partha jnane parisamapyate.*) All works and *yogas* culminate in *jnana*. Therefore the Lord mentions it in the beginning, and the seekers should take to knowledge and cross over delusion and ignorance.

Danam : Charity which includes every kind of help offered to others without expectation of any return from them. Gift of lands, money, food, water service, education, knowledge, all offerings come under, 'danam.'

Damah : The control of the internal organs is included in '*Sattva samsuddhih*', and so here the control of external organs is mentioned. Self-restraint both internal and external is the pre-requisite of all spiritual progress. Proper emphasis is given to these virtues in the Gita.

Yajnah : *Tapo-yajna*, *yoga-yajna*, *svadhyaya-yajna*, *jnana-yajna*—these are the yajnas most necessary for spiritual life.

Svadhyayah : The study of the Gita, Upanishads, Brahma-sutras, *Yoga-Vasishta*, *Bharata*, *Bhagavata*, *Ramayana*, etc. and books of this type should be read and their essence absorbed through deep thought and meditation. This is *Svadhyaya*.

Tapah : This is explained in the 17th Discourse. It is absolute purity in word, thought and deed and not the mortification of the flesh.

Arjavam : Straight-forwardness in thought, word and deed. This is called 'Trikaranasuddhi,'—because thinking, speaking and acting form the triple function of all men. Where there is harmony among the three, there is truth. Poisonous reptiles are crooked in their movements, and hence if man is crooked in his character, he is like a reptile.

Ahimsa : Non-injury towards any creature in thought, word or deed.

Satyam : (1) Truth in thought word and deed,
 (2) Adherence in *Atma*, the One Reality.

Akrodhah : Absence of anger. *Krodha* is man's deadly foe in every way. Obsessed by it man loses all discrimination and destroys himself by cruel behaviour towards elders and *Gurus*. So the Lord has already warned man against it (*Krodhat bhavati sammohah*). Under its power man is transformed into a demon, horrible to look at, with red eyes, sweating, shaking, abusing and attacking. Freedom from this Demon is therefore the primary duty of man in his life, both secular and spiritual.

Tyagah : *Tyagenaikē amritatva manasuh*-By *Tyaga* alone, *Moksha* is attained-so says the Upanishads. Taking refuge in *Paramatma* by giving up attachment for objects is *tyaga*. Giving up evil thoughts, evil actions, evil ways of life, is *tyaga*. Renunciation of all desires for enjoyments is *tyaga*. Surrendering all the fruits of actions to God is *tyaga*. Internal renunciation is of more significance than formal external renunciation.

Santih : Peace, calmness of mind. The mind should be like a waveless lake and not like a turbulent ocean. Perfect peace is attained only when the mind merges in *Atma*. Where there is no peace there is no happiness (*asantasya kutah sukham*). Taking refuge in God and giving up desires is the way to peace.

Apaisunam : Not pointing out bad qualities in others, not carrying tales against others. Why should one concern with the evil of others ? It is enough if he cleanses his own heart filled with innumerable evils.

Daya bhuteshu : Kindness and compassion towards all beings is mentioned several times in the Gita. *Brahmajnana* is most closely associated with universal compassion. The seekers should cultivate this virtue along with *Bhakti*, *Jnana* and *Vairagya*.

Alolatyam : Indulgence in several pleasures should be abandoned completely. The sense-organs lose their power by yielding to the temptations of the flesh and are incapacitated to think and grasp higher truths. So they should be withdrawn from sense-objects (*pratyahara*) and established in *Atma*. The mind should not waver from the chosen ideal.

Mardavan : Gentleness in word and deed. Hardness and harshness should be abandoned. This is the attitude of a man of Sattvic nature.

Hrih : This is the mark of an evolved human being. (1) He is ashamed of himself if he does anything wrong, when he utters a lie, or when he injures another, or when he acts contrary to Sastraic injunctions. (2) The seeker should question himself about his spiritual progress, and when he has not made proper advance, he should feel ashamed of his niggardly and sluggish attempts in securing his own good. (3) When one comes across great men of purity and perfection, experienced in *Brahmajnana*, he should feel ashamed of himself, and strive for perfection like them.

Achapalam : The wandering mind should be brought to rest in *Atma*.

Tejah : The light of *Brahman*.

Kshama : Forbearance, forgiveness. One should think of God-men like Suka and their exceptional forbearance and love for all. When the pairs of opposites overtake him he should remain firm and unmoved.

Dhritih : The seekers should be steadfast and firm. As man thinks of the unreality of the world and the blessedness of *Paramatma*, he becomes bold and firm in all the functions of his life. Like the Meru mountain he should be immovable under the most difficult circumstances.

Saucharam : (1) External purity of the person, house etc. (2) Internal purity of the senses and the mind, and freedom from bad thoughts and feelings.

Adrohah : Abandoning hatred and betrayal of others.

Natimanita : One should not be proud and imagine that he should be adored and worshipped by others. This is a very important point for all seekers to remember. Lacking in this, many advancing souls in spiritual life have fallen down before attaining Self-realisation.

One should think of Hanuman, his humility and devotion, his egolessness, his utter self-surrender to Rama. Such a man alone can achieve the Highest.

Thus *Daivisampat* includes twenty six virtues. These should be cultivated carefully and assiduously by all people who wish to advance in spiritual life.

Question : *How many and what are the qualities of Daivisampat?*

Answe: They are twenty six—1) Fearlessness, 2) purity of heart, 3) steadfastness in knowledge and *yoga*, 4) alms-giving, 5) control of the senses, 6) sacrifice, 7) study of the *Sastras*, 8) austerity, 9) straightforwardness, 10) harmlessness, 11) truth, 12) absence of anger, 13) renunciation, 14) peacefulness, 15) absence of crookedness, 16) compassion to beings, 17) absence of greed, 18) gentleness, 19) modesty, 20) absence of fickleness, 21) energy, 22) forgiveness, 23) fortitude, 24) purity, 25) absence of hatred, 26) absence of pride—these are the qualities born of a divine state.

Now Asurasampat is explained.

4. दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थं संपदमासुरीम् ॥

४

*Dambho darpo'bhimanashcha krodhah parushyam eva cha ।
ajnanam cha'bhiyatasya partha sampadam asurim ** 4

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! दम्भः *dambhah* : pretension (of greatness, holiness etc.), दर्पः *darpana* : pride, arrogance, अभिमानः च *abhimanaḥ cha* : and self-conceit, क्रोधः *krodhah* : wrath, पारुष्यं एव च *parushyam eva cha* : and also harshness, अज्ञानम् च *ajnanam cha* : and ignorance, आसुरीम् *asurim* : demonical, संपदम् *sampadam* : state, अभिजातस्य *abhiyatasya* : of the born.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Pretension, pride, self-conceit, anger, harshness, and ignorance belong to those who are born with demonical nature.

Commentary : The wise value the good qualities described as *Daivisampat* and try to cultivate them in their life. Opposed to this, men of demonical nature embrace the wicked qualities mentioned in this verse. That is why they are spoken of as *Asurasampat*. Really speaking, the demonical state is not *sampat* (treasure) at all. And yet people are so deluded that they hug these wicked qualities and think of themselves as great men. The Lord mentions six qualities of the demonical nature. They are elaborately discussed in this discourse. In the great war with *Maya*, it is necessary to know and understand the power of the enemy forces as well as the forces of one's own. Only then it would be possible to wage a successful war with the enemy. If anybody wants to live in a house, he should first of all clean it of the dust, cobwebs and other foul things, and then light some scented sticks to purify the atmosphere. So also, man should keep the body pure, the foul things in it should be ejected and nourishing food should be taken in. In the same manner, purity of mind should be cultivated by abandoning the bad qualities which have been possessing the heart for a long time in one's ignorant state. The removal of vicious taints from nature and the formation of healthy patterns of character and conduct, is the duty of all men.

Dambhah : Pretension is mentioned as the captain of the enemy forces (*Asurasampat*). The inclination to appear bigger and greater than what one is, is natural to all common people. This tendency should be checked completely as it stands directly in the way of the seeker, whose aim is to know the real Self, and not masquerade under a false garb. Such pretension may cheat the world but not *Paramatma*, who is ever present in the heart and observing every movement of the mind and the body. So this demonical quality should be eradicated. If honour and position should come to any one, he should consider it to be the grace of God, and remain humble. Besides this, *Krodha* (wrath) should be abandoned completely. The man of Divine nature

is free from wrath. He should be gentle in word and deed. Starting with *Dambha* the *asuric* nature ends with ignorance *ajnana*, as the last. Out of ignorance grows the demonical nature with all its evil qualities.

Question : *What are the qualities of the Demonical nature ?*

Answer : They are six—1) Pretension, 2) pride, 3) self-conceit, 4) hatred, 5) harshness, 6) ignorance.

Question : *How should one deal with these ?*

Answer : They should be rejected and totally eradicated from the mind.

Divine Nature leads to liberation (Moksha) and the demonical leads to bondage.

5. दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।

मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥

५

*Daivi sampad vimokshaya nibandhaya'suri mata ।
ma suchah sampadam daiyim abhijatah asi pandava ॥ 5*

Meaning : दैवीसंपद् *daivisampat* : divine nature, विमोक्षाय *vimokshaya* : for liberation, (Moksha), आसुरी *asuri* (*sampat*) : demonical nature, निबन्धाय *nibandhaya* : for bondage, मा *mata* : determined, (as cause), पाण्डव *pandava* : O Arjuna ! (tvam : you), दैवीं संपदम् *daivim sampadam* : for the divine nature, अभिजातः असि *abhijatah asi* : are born, मा शुचः *ma suchah* : do not grieve.

Substance : The Divine nature is deemed for liberation (from *samsara*). O Arjuna ! you are born for the divine nature, and so do not grieve.

Commentary : Having described the divine and demonical nature, the Lord now declares the fruits of each. When a man knows the effects of the things, he is induced to accept things, which yield good results and abandon others which yield bad results. Divine nature leads to liberation, the demonical leads

to bondage. The two natures function in opposite directions, and yield opposite results. One liberates and the other binds, enslaves. The thoughtful know what to choose, between freedom and slavery. No one wants pain and suffering, ignorance and darkness, slavery and bondage. Therefore it is our duty to dispel darkness with light, to remove ignorance with knowledge, and to crush demonical nature with divine.

These two hostile natures, the divine and the demonical are not racial or national or family qualities. After a man is born, these two natures develop gradually in him. By right type of control, guidance and training, the mind falls into the groove of divine qualities, and then it attains the highest rewards of self-realisation. On the other hand, if the mind falls into the wrong groove, it acquires all evil qualities and the man falls into lower planes of life. Arjuna is assured by the Lord Himself, that he is born for divine nature and full of divine qualities. Otherwise how could he receive the supreme truth directly from the lips of the Lord Himself ?

Ma suchah : 'Do not grieve.' This is the Gita message, simple, straight, direct and decisive. "O Arjuna ! you are born for the divine nature and therefore, do not grieve.". From this it is clear that the cultivation of good qualities, purity of mind, is the way to peace and bliss. It is also clear that the demonical nature is the cause of sorrow, misery and death. Therefore the aspirants for spiritual light should strive for divine nature and resolutely abandon the demonical impulses.

The stronger terms *vimokshaya* and *nibandhaya* are used here to suggest that the Divine liberates completely and the Demonical binds fast.

Question : *What is the fruit of Daivisampat ?*

Answer : 'Moksha' – liberation.

Question : *What is the effect of Asurasampat ?*

Answer : Bondage.

Question : *What is the path to Moksha ?*

Answer : 'Daivi sampat' : Practice of the good qualities, mentioned in 1 to 3 verses.

Question : *By what is bondage (sorrow) caused ?*

Answer : By the demonical nature.

Question : *What is the nature of Arjuna ?*

Answer : He is born for the Divine nature.

Question : *Who can conquer sorrow in the world ?*

Answer : The man who possesses Divine nature.

Men are divided into two types, of the Divine and the Demonical natures.

6. द्वौ भूतसर्गाँ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे श्रुणु ॥

६

*Dvau bhutasargau loke'smin daiva asura eva cha ।
daivo vistarasah prokta asuram partha me srunu ॥*

6

Meaning : पाय *partha* : O Arjuna ! अस्मिन् लोके *asmin loke* : in this world, दैवः *daivah* : Divine, आसुरः एव च *asurah eva cha* : and also Demonical, द्वौ *dvau* : two kinds of. भूतसर्गाँ *bhūta sargau* : creation of beings (are), दैवः *daivah* : Divine, विस्तरशः *vistarashah* : extensively, प्रोक्तः *proktah* : is said, आसुरं *asuram* : (now) the demonical, मे *me* : from Me, श्रुणु *srunu* : hear.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There are two kinds of beings created in the world, the Divine and the Demonical. Of these, the Divine is said extensively. Now hear from me about the Demonical.

Commentary : From this, we understand that there are only two races of beings, 1) the Divine, 2) and the Demonical. The Aryans and non Aryans are divided distinctly by the qualities, which they exhibit. All other distinctions of races and creeds are subsequent divisions brought about by men, by geographical and other external considerations. Whatever may be the birth of man, the field of the Divine is open for all to

enter by the practice of the blessed qualities described by the Lord in *daivisampat*.

In twelve verses, the Lord explains the Demonical nature in detail.

7. प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥

७

*Pravrittim cha nivrittim cha jana na vidur asurah ।
na saucham na'pi cha'charo na satyam teshu vidyate ॥ 7*

Meaning : आसुराः *asurah* : demonical nature, जनाः *janah* : people (of), प्रवृत्तिं च *pravrittim cha* : either righteous action, निवृत्तिं च *nivrittim cha* : or freedom from unrighteous, न विदुः *na viduh* : do not know, तेषु *teshu*, in them, शौचम् *saucham* : purity, न विद्यते *na vidyate* : is not, आचारः च *acharah cha* : and right conduct, न *na* : is not, सत्यं अपि *satyam api* : also truth, न *na* : is not.

Substance : People of demonical nature do not know righteous conduct or freedom from unrighteous action. They do not have either purity, or good conduct or truth.

Commentary : People of the demonical nature do not know what is right action, and do not refrain from the wrong way of life. Even if they are advised, they do not heed the advice. These are the worst type of men. The middle type listen to advice and try to refrain themselves. The highest type are already on the Divine path. Here two words *Pravitti* and *Nivitti* are used. *Pravitti* means what should be done and *Nivitti* means what should not be done. The wise man should know both. He knows that the Divine nature is the way to the highest goal and the demonical leads to destruction. Even this is not known to people of the Asuric type.

Question : *What is the nature of the Asuric type of people ?*

Answer : They do not know what is the virtuous(Dharmic)way of life and how to refrain from evil (Adharmic) action. They have no purity, no good conduct, no truth.

८. असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥

*Asatyam apratistham te jagad ahur anisvaram
aparasparasambhutam kim anyat kamahaitukum*

8

Meaning : ते *te* : they, जगत् *jagat* : the world, असत्यं *asatyam* : without authority (of the *Vedas* etc.), अप्रतिष्ठं *apratishtam* : without Dharma and Adharma, अनीश्वरं *anisvaram* : without the supreme Lord (the creator), कामहैतुकं *kamahaitukam* : caused by sexual desire, अपरस्पर सम्भूतम् *aparasparasambhutam* : born of copulation of man and woman, अन्यत् *anyat* : other, किं *kim* : what, आहुः *ahuh* : (they) say.

Substance : They say that the world has no basis in the truth of the *Vedas* etc., that there are no *Dharma* and *Adharma*, that there is no *Isvara*, that the world is caused by the copulation of men and women urged by sexual desire only and nothing other than that.

Commentary : People of demonical nature can see only what their eyes behold. That is the truth for them. They think that the world is simply the result of the sexual desire of the male and the female. They deny the *Vedas*, the *Dharmic sastras*, and nay, they go to the extent of denying the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

That is the thesis of the people of *asuric* nature. What else can man think, blinded by ignorance, urged by sexual desires, torn asunder by evil passions? They see the world as merely the play-house of the lowest forces without truth and *Dharma*, without the Blessed Lord.

Question : *What further are the qualities of the people of demonical nature?*

Answer : They say that the world has no truth and it has no foundation in the 'Vedas', that there is no *Isvara*, (God) and that the world is caused by the sexual act of men and women urged by sensual desires.

९. एतां दृष्टिमवष्टुभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥ ९

*Etam dristim avashtabhyu nastatmano'lpabuddhayah ।
prabhavantyugrakarmanah kshayaya jagato'hitah ॥ 9*

Meaning : (*te* : they, of the demonical nature), एतां दृष्टि *etam drishtam* : this attitude of denying Isvara, अवष्टुभ्य *avashtabhyu* : holding, नष्टात्मानः *nashtatmanah* : ruined souls, अल्पबुद्धयः *alpabuddhyah* : of little understanding, small intellect, उग्रकर्माणः *ugrakarmanah* : of fierce actions (attacking the good), अहिताः *ahitah* : enemies to the world, जगतः *jagatah* : of the world, क्षयाय *kshayaya* : for the destruction, प्रभवन्ति *prabhavanti* : are born, come forth.

Substance : Holding this view, these ruined souls of small understanding and fierce deeds, come forth as the enemies of the world for its destruction.

Commentary : *Nashtatmanah* : By the denial of Isvara, and the affirmation of sensual desire as the cause of this world, they have wholly identified themselves with the body and its lowest impulses. They are ruined souls. They are of little intellect, because they are not able to see anything beyond their eyes. Hence they deny the Supreme Self, *Paramatma* and destroy themselves. They are men of fierce deeds, always harassing and attacking the good and righteous. They are born for the destruction of the world. They are destroyers and not constructors of any thing. They are the demonical people, the Rakshasas in the human form.

Question : *What further are the qualities of people of demonical nature ?*

Answer : They are 1) ruined souls, 2) of little intellect, 3) of fierce deeds, 4) and are born for the destruction of the world.

१०. काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वा॒सद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्ते॑शुचिव्रताः ॥

१०

*Kamam asritya dashpuram dambhamanamadanvitah ।
mohad grihitva'sadgrahan pravartante' suchivratah ॥ 10*

Meaning : दुष्पूरं *dushpuram* : impossible to satisfy, कामम् *kamam* : desire, आश्रित्य *asritya* : abiding in (enslaved by), दम्भमान मदान्विताः *dambhamanamadanvitah* : full of hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, मोहात् *mohat* : by delusion, असद्ग्राहान् *asadgrahan*: evil ideas (not held by the wise), गृहीत्वा *grihitva* : having held, अशुचिव्रताः *asuchivratah* : with impure vows, प्रवर्तन्ते *pravartante*: they act.

Substance : Enslaved by insatiable desire, full of pretension, pride and arrogance, holding evil ideas by delusion, they act with impure resolves.

Commentary : *Dushpuram* : Desire is insatiable. The more it is fed, the more it wants. Its hunger multiplies with every enjoyment. In the 3rd Discourse, the Lord has already described it as 'insatiable like fire' (*dushpurenanalenacha*). Therefore those who are enslaved by it, lead a restless and frustrated life.

Dambhamanamadanvitah : Pride, self-conceit, arrogance, these are the real enemies of man, separating him from all others by the assertion of superiority. Why should man subject himself to these evils? The answer is given, -*mohat*. Ignorance is the cause. He deludes, denies truth, accepts false ideas, and does things which ought not to be done.

Asuchivratah : *Vrata* refers generally to vows of a *sattvic* nature, like fasting, silence etc. Such are (*Suchi-Vratas*) auspicious vows helpful to man in self-purification. But men of demonical nature adopt impure and unholy habits like flesh-eating, liquor and persist in them as sacred practices. Determination, performance of vows are no doubt good, but it should be

for pure and sacred purposes and not for foul and unholy things.

Question : *What is the nature of Kama ?*

Answer : It is insatiable.

Question : *What further are the qualities of persons having demonical nature ?*

Answer : 1) They yield to insatiable desires, 2) They are the victims of pride, self-conceit and arrogance, 3) They are ignorant, 4) They adopt impure and unholy vows.

11. चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥

११

12. आशापाशःशब्दाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनाथसञ्चयान् ॥

१२

*Chintam aparimeyam cha pralayantam upasritah ।
kamopabhogaparama etavad iti nischitah ॥*

11

*Asapasasatairbaddhah kamakrodhparayanah ।
ihante kamabhogartham anyayena'rthasamchayan ॥*

12

Meaning : ज *cha* : and, अपरिमेयान् *aparimeyan* : limitless, प्रलयान्ताम् *pralayantam* : till death, (or endless till the time of dissolution), चिन्ताम् *chintam* : thinking of objects (desires), उपाश्रिताः *upasritah* : holding to, कामोपभोगपरमाः *kamopabhoga-paramah* : thinking of enjoyments as the only purpose of life, एतावत् इति *etavat iti* : thus, that is all, निश्चिताः *nischitah* : determined, आशापाश शतैः *asapasa sataih* : by a hundred ties of hope, बद्धाः *baddah* : bound, कामक्रोध परायणाः *kamakrodha-parayanah* : with desire and anger as their way of life, कामभोगार्थ *kamabhogartham* : for enjoining the objective world, अन्यायेन *anyayena* : by wicked methods, अर्थ सञ्चयान् *artha-samchayan* : multitudes of wealth, ईहन्ते *ehante* : desire for.

Substance : And they-(men of demonical nature) held by boundless desires unending till death (or dissolution of the world), thinking of sensual enjoyments as the goal of life, decided that there is nothing more to realise, bound by the cords of innumerable desires, prompted by passion and anger,-seek for wealth by unrighteous means to satisfy their thirst for enjoyment.

Commentary : The worldly man finds no end for his desires, wants and enjoyments. They can end only with the man's death, or the dissolution of the world. Let us understand clearly that desires do not end themselves at any time. They should be cut by the sword of discrimination, and burnt in the fire of *Jnana*. Otherwise they continue for ever. Being ignorant and deluded by *Maya*, they think and decide that there is nothing more than sensual enjoyment in the world, there is no such thing as *Dharma* or *Moksha*, and *Artha* and *Karma* alone exist for man. They see nothing beyond the body and the senses and so they conclude that sense-enjoyments, and bodily pleasures, are the only things to be sought for in the world. They are enslaved by innumerable desires. And so they have no rest or peace of mind. The desires clamour for satisfaction, and to satisfy the desires, they should have wealth. To secure the means of enjoyment they follow unrighteous means; By treachery, falsehoods etc., they get wealth and spend it in securing physical enjoyments. Thus they live a life of *kama* (lust) and *krodha* (anger), for, where there is *kama*, *krodha* follows as its closest associate.

The Lord's description of the demonical nature is vivid and horrible to contemplate. The devotees and the aspirants for *Jnana* should guard themselves carefully from these evils-
1) Desires, 2) unrighteous way of earning money. The second is the inevitable consequence of the first.

Question : What further are the qualities of men of demonical nature ?

Answer : 1) Their desires are endless, 2) They regard enjoyment as the goal of life, 3) They deny any thing

higher than that, 4) They are bound by innumerable wants, 5) They are possessed by pride and arrogance, 6) They gather wealth by unrighteous means for the purpose of satisfying their lust for enjoyment.

- | | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 13. | इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥ | १३ |
| 14. | असौ मया हतः शत्रु निष्ये चापरानपि ।
ईश्वरोहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥ | १४ |
| 15. | आद्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ | १५ |
| 16. | अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ | १६ |

*Idam adya maya labdham idam prapsye manoratham ।
idam asti' dam api me bhavishyati punar dhanam ॥* 13

*Asau maya hatah satrur hanishye cha'paran api ।
Isvaro'ham aham bhogi siddho'ham balavan sukhi ॥* 14

*Adhyo'bhijanavan asmi ko'nyo'sti sadriso maya ।
yakshye dasyami modishya ityajnanavimohitah ॥* 15

*Aneka citta vibhranta moha jala samavritah ।
prasaktah kamabhogeshu patanti narake'suchau ॥* 16

Meaning: इदं *idam* : this, अद्य *adya* : now, मया *maya* : by me, लब्धं *labdham* : is gained, इदं मनोरथम् *idam manoratham* : this desire, प्राप्स्ये *prapsye* : (I) shall obtain, इदं *idam* : this (wealth), अस्ति *asti* : is, इदं अपि धनम् *idam api dhanam* : this wealth also, मे *me* : to me, पुनः *punah* : again, भविष्यति *bhavishyati* : shall be, असौ शत्रुः *asau satruh* : this enemy, मया *maya* : by me, हतः *hatah* : is destroyed, अपरान् अपि च *aparan api cha* : and others also, हनिष्ये *hanishye* : (I) shall kill, अहम् *aham* : I, ईश्वरः *iswarah* : (am) the Lord, अहम् *aham* : I, भोगी *bhogi* :

(am) enjoyer, अहम् *aham* : I, सिद्धः *siddhah* : (am) capable of achieving things desired, बलवान् *balavan* : mighty, सुखी *sukhi* : happy, आद्यः *adhyah* : rich, अभिजानवान् *abhijanayan* : born in great family, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, मया *maya* : with me, सदृशः *sadrisah* : equal, अन्यः *anyah* : another, कः *kah* : who, अस्ति *asti* : is, यक्ष्ये *yakshye* : (I) will perform sacrifice, दास्यामि *dasyami* : (I) will give, मोदिष्ये *modishye* : (I) will rejoice, इति *iti* : in this way, अज्ञान विमोहितः *ajnanavimohitah* : deluded by ignorance, अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्तः *aneka chitta vibhrantah* : bewildered by many fancies and notions, मोहजाल समावृतः *mohajala samayritah* : surrounded by the snare of delusions (of possessions), कामभोगेषु *kamabhogeshu* : in sensual enjoyments, प्रसक्तः *prasaktah* : deeply attached, (*santah* : having becom.). अशुचौ *asuchau* : foul, नरके *narake* : into hell, पतन्ति *patanti* : fall.

Substance : Now this is gained by me; this desire I shall obtain; this wealth I have and this wealth also shall be to me hereafter.

This enemy is destroyed by me; and others also I shall kill; I am the Load; I am the enjoyer; I am capable of achieving my ambitions; I am mighty and happy.

I am rich; I am born in a great family; who is there another equal to me? I will perform sacrifice. I will give; I will rejoice,-in this way, deluded by ignorance,

Bewildered by many fancies and notions, caught in the snare of delusion (of possessions), deeply immersed in sensual enjoyment, they (the men of demonical nature) fall into foul hell.

Commentary : The Lord gives a dramatic picture of the man of demonical nature. What he thinks is stated in direct speech, so that one can understand the spirit animating these

unfortunate men who go down into foul hell. These words reveal the pride, greed, hatred, lust and delusion of these men of demonical nature.

Desires are never satisfied by enjoyment. With every luxury provided, more desires crop up for more refined luxuries. Wealth finds no end for the greedy men. He calculates what he has and hopes to get more and more in future. His mind is full of plans, plots and schemes to get more money by crooked means. He is proud of his power. He says 'I have killed this enemy and other enemies also I shall destroy.' So he is puffed up with the idea of his own invincibility. He thinks he is mighty and happy, born in a great family, the Lord of all, strong, powerful, unequal to any other. 'Who is there equal to me?' is his challenge to the world.

What is the end for all this demonical pride, hatred and lust? The end is hell. Foul hell. Such men go down into the lowest worlds. They have no rest or peace, for, their minds are like the ocean tempest, lost by the winds of desires and bashed by lustful passions of sensual enjoyments. They appear to be great men, because they are wealthy and powerful, but if one has a glimpse into their self, he finds that they are like men stung by a hundred scorpions. If they do sacrifices and offer gifts, it is all done for self-glorification only. There is no truth in them. The bloated ego puffed up with pride, dominates them to such an extent that they declare themselves 'I am Isvara'.

They are deluded by ignorance. The 'rajasic' nature overpowers them and ignorance (*tamas*) shrouds them in complete darkness, and they are unable to understand the true end of human life. They have no idea of the true nature of men and the world, and the Supreme behind all. They are deeply attached to earthly objects and live a life of restless ecstasy.

The true nature of the 'sattvic' man who is pure-hearted is never understood by them. Even if it is explained to them, they will not understand it. They consider the great teachers of the world as mad-caps, and their message as empty and foolish. What

is their fate ? The Lord emphatically declares that such men fall into foul Hell. That is the right royal road to Hell, the primrose path to eternal bonfire'. Let the spiritual aspirants beware of it.

Question : *What further are the qualities of people of demonical nature ?*

Answer : "This is gained, by me now, this desire I shall obtain, this wealth I have and this wealth also shall be to me hereafter, this enemy is destroyed by me and others also I shall kill, I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am capable of achieving my ambitions, I am mighty and happy, I am rich, I am born in a great family, who is there another equal to me ? I will perform sacrifice, I will give, I will rejoice"—in this way deluded by ignorance, bewildered by many fancies and notions, caught in the snare of delusion (of wife, sons, house and possession), deeply immersed in sensual enjoyment they fall into foul Hell. These are the qualities of the man of demonical nature.

17. आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥

६७

18. अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यपूर्यकाः ॥

६८

*Atmasambhavitaḥ stabdha dhanamana-nadanvitah ।
yajante namaya jnaiste dambhena'vidhi purvakam ।*

17

*Ahamkaram balam darpam
kamam krodham cha samsritah ।
mam atmaparadeheshu
pradyishanto'bhyasuyakah ।*

18

Meaning : आत्मसंभाविताः *atmasambhavitaḥ* : gloryfying themselves, स्तब्धाः *stabdhah* : devoid of humility before elders, धनमान मदान्विताः *dhanamanamadanvitah* : possessed by

the pride and arrogance of wealth, अहंकारं *ahamkaram* : egoism, बलं *balam* : strength, दर्पं *darpam* : pride, कामं *kamam* : desire, क्रोधं च *krodham cha* : and hatred, संश्रिताः *samsritah* : possessing, आत्मपर देहेषु *atmaparadeheshu* : in themselves and others, माम् *mam* : Me (the Eternal Lord), प्रद्विषन्तः *pradvishantah* : hating, अभ्यसूयकाः *abhyasuyakah* : envious, ते *te* : they (men of demonical nature), दम्भेन *dambhena* : with pretension, अविधिपूर्वकम् *avidhipurvakam* : against the Laws of the *Sastras*, नामयज्ञैः *namayajanaih* : by sacrifices only in name, यजन्ते *yajante* : sacrifice (worship).

Substance : Self-conceited, devoid of humility, filled with pride and intoxicated with wealth, they perform sacrifices only in name with great ostentation, contrary to 'sastraic' injunctions;

Given over to egotism, power, pride, lust and hatred, they (men of demonical nature) filled with malice, hate Me in their own bodies and in those of others.

Commentary : *Atmasambhavitaḥ, pradyishantah* : By these two words, two great evils are exposed 1) Self-glorification, and 2) humiliating others. This is the first sign of ignorance. The ignorant consider themselves learned, wise, great and glorious. On the other side, they belittle other people and try to expose their defects and humiliate them. They hate God, the ruler of the universe because they cannot be reconciled to any one greater or higher than themselves. They oppose the laws of God as declared in the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*. They are blinded by their own wealth, power and prosperity. They perform sacrifices with great ostentation to glorify their own name. They have no devotion. Such sacrifices are contrary to the ordinances prescribed in the *Sastras*.

Mam atmaparadeheshu : They hate *Paramatma* who is dwelling in the hearts of all beings, as well as in their own hearts. The Lord is present in every being as the Eternal

witness. Not realising this truth, men of demonical nature hate others and are hated by others of such nature. To hate another being is to hate the Lord who is present in him. In the same way, to love another being is to love the Lord Himself. Men who worship the Lord do not hate others at all (*adveshtasarvabhutanam*). Men who hate and injure others are hating God Himself who is ever present in them.

The stronger terms *Samsritah* and *Pradvishantah* are used to suggest that they are held powerfully by *kama* and *krodha*, and hate the Lord intensely.

Question : *What further are the qualities of men of demonical nature ?*

Answer : 1) They glorify themselves, 2) They are devoid of humility towards elders, 3) They are intoxicated with the pride of wealth, 4) They perform sacrifices ostentatiously for the sake of name and fame. 5) Pride, (animal) strength, lust greed, and hatred, possess them. 6) They hate the Lord who is dwelling in their hearts, and in the hearts of others 7) They are full of jealousy (envious of other's prosperity).

Question : *Where is God ?*

Answer : He is present as the Eternal Lord in all beings.

The Lord, having declared the fate of diabolical men in the 16th verse continues the description of such men, in these two verses also.

Evidently, the teacher of the Gita wants His disciple to understand the horrible nature and the terrible fate that shall overtake such men. Nothing can save such men from self-destruction. They may be rich, powerful and learned also, but nothing can change the course of their life, because they deny the existence of *Paramatma* and consider life only as a field for sensual gratification. Mere cleverness, worldly intelligence and wisdom do not take them outside the category of the *Rakshasas*. They possess many powers as we find in the case of Ravana and

Hiranyakaspu, but they are ignorant of the one basic truth, namely, that all they possess is derived from the Lord Himself, and He is the supreme *Purusha* present in all beings. These demonical characteristics poison the hearts of many people in this world. Such men are all Rakshasas in the human form. The impure impulses of *kama* and *krodha* are demons having taken possession of man's being. The seekers should thoroughly search their hearts and find out these dark and evil spirits, and drive them out by the sheer force of will and the grace of the Lord. The *sattvic* power of men is capable of destroying these *rajasic* and *tamasic* forces. The *sattvic* power has already been described by the Lord as *Daivisampat*, beginning with *abhayam* as it's first principle. These divine qualities should be grafted into one's own nature and as they grow stronger and stronger, the enemical forces are quelled and vanquished. Victory will be sure.

The scriptural call for the divine, 'O ye Devas! come, O ye Rakshasas go'-should be followed by all the aspirants. The evil spirits should quit and the Divine beings should come to occupy the heart. Thus man's heart is transformed into the temple of God, in which *Atmajnana* dawns in due time.

The Lord declares the fate of the men of demonical nature.

19. तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्यजस्तमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥

१९

*Tan aham dvishatah kruran samsareshu naradhaman
kshipamy ajasram asubhan asurishveva yonishu ॥ 19*

Meaning : द्विषतः *dvishatah* : hating Me (in themselves and in all beings), क्रूरान् *kruran* : cruel, अशुभान् *asubhan* : thinking and doing evil thoughts and deeds (impure in body and mind), तान् *tan* : those, नराधमान् *naradhaman* : worst of men, अहम् *aham* : I, संसारेषु *samsareshu* : in the path of birth and death, आसुरीषु योनिषु एव *asurishu yonishu eva* : in the wombs of demons only, अजस्रम् *ajasram* : for ever, क्षिपामि *kshipami* : (I) hurl.

Substance : The haters of Me (in themselves and in other beings), cruel, thinking and doing evil thoughts and deeds, the worst men, I hurl (them) always into the wombs of the demons in the endless process of birth and death.

Commentary : *Dvishatah*: Those who hate others hate the Lord, for, He is in the hearts of all beings.

What terrible punishment comes to these diabolical men is declared here. That righteousness should yield its own good fruit and *Adharma* should yield its own evil fruit in the eternal law of the Almighty, operating in Nature. No one can escape punishment when the law of *Dharma* is violated. Such men shall be responsible for their own down-fall. The Lord has already described the Divine qualities of righteousness. If people deny them, and adopt the opposite way of life, they shall be hurled into lower and lower planes of existence. They shall be tossed about in the flood of *samsara*, and undergo all the ills and pains of birth and death. So all people should be vigilant and cautious about what nature they cultivate in the course of their life. They should take to the Divine nature and obtain liberation.

Tan aham : The Lord proclaims that He hurls them into the wombs of demons of cruel beasts and poisonous reptiles. He, the Lord, is the controller of the universe. He is the Law-giver; He is the dispenser of man's actions, good and bad; He is the decider of the fate of every *Jiva* in the universe.

Naradhaman : The Lord condemns these men of demonical nature, as the worst and lowest of men. He is indignant with them, and takes many shapes and forms to destroy them (*Vinasaya cha duskritan*). He has already declared why He takes birth in the world. It is both to protect the righteous and destroy the wicked. Man is endowed with reason and discrimination. He should be the best of men and not the worst of men; he should strive to be *Purushottama* and not to be *Purushadhma*. So all people should have devotion and fear of the Lord, for He is ever watchful to find out the wicked and hurl them into demonical wombs.

Samsareshu asurishveva yonishu : The plural form is used to indicate that these diabolical men have to pass through many many births, as beasts and reptiles and *Asuras*. As the effect of their own actions they are caught in the whirlpool of *samsara*, live beastly lives and die. And again they are born as beasts and continue in this state for many many births. They cannot escape punishment. Like the goat that tries to run away from the butcher but is caught by him and killed, these men are seized by the Lord and punished till the last moment of their unrighteous lives. In the Garuda Purana the fate of evil-doers and the different punishments that they suffer in hell for different crimes, are clearly described. So, it is the duty of all real men to avoid this fate by adopting the Divine qualities, the *sattvic* way of life, and attain *Moksha*.

Kshipami : [The Lord says, 'I hurl them,' as one would hurl a stone or impure thing away from him. The seekers should clearly understand the Lord's idea about those who deny Him and follow *Adharmic* way of life. The Lord is full of grace to those who follow His injunctions and those who deny Him and act against His command should face the penalty by the unalterable decree of God.

Ajasram : (Always) - As long as evil tendencies occupy the mind and urge man to evil deeds, he shall have to suffer the fate of beasts and reptiles. Their pain and suffering has no end. Sorrow follows them like their own shadow. Some people usually ask the question, 'Sir, How long are we to bear the pains of *samsara*?' The answer is—as long as ignorance and delusion covers their mind, as long as they are provoked into evil ways by their own unbridled and impure *samskaras*, as long as they forget God, as long as they are proud, hateful and cruel—they shall not be liberated from *samsara*. 'Give up the Satanic tendencies in you, gain the divine qualities, and you shall thereafter quickly attain peace.—This is the Lord's advice to the sincere aspirants. The word '*ajasram*' (always) indicates that the Divine law is eternal and operates for all time.

Question : What is the fate of these men of diabolical nature, who hate God ?

Answer : They shall be hurled into demonical wombs, the wombs of beasts and reptiles, till their bad *karma* is exhausted.

Question : How long does the Divine law operate ?

Answer : For all time (ajasram).

Born in demonical wombs they go down and down into lower states.

20. आसुरीं योनिमापना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधामं गतिष् ॥

२०

*Asurim yonim apanna mudha janmani janmani
mam aprapyai'va kaunteya tato yantyadhamam gatim* ॥ 20

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! आसुरीं *asurim* : demonical, योनि *yonim* : womb (birth), आपना : *apannah* : obtaining, मूढ़ा : *mudhah* : the ignorant, जन्मनि जन्मनि *janmani janmani* : in birth after birth, माम् *mam* : Me, अप्राप्य एव *apravya eva* : not attaining, ततः *tatah* : then (after that birth), अधमाम् *adhamam* : lower, गति *gatim* : condition, यान्ति *yanti* : (they) fall into.

Substance O Arjuna ! Entering into demonical wombs, in birth after birth, deluded, they thus fall into lower state than that.

Commentary : The Lord describes the progress of these wicked men after they are hurled into demonical wombs. They do not attain Him because they are deluded. So they go down into lower and lower states of existence. They are born as cruel beasts and then as reptiles and then again as beasts and poisonous trees and so on. That is their fate. As the rubber ball dropped on the top of the stair-case rolls down step by step, these evil souls go down in lower and lower conditions. Hearing this exhortation of the Lord, and the graphic description of

the fate of evil doers, who would not wake up to the realities of life and action ? Who would not turn away from evil ? Who would not surrender to the Lord ? Who would not pray to Him to be saved ? We can understand why the Lord presents the fate of evil-doers so picturesquely, so intensely and with such terrific force. He warns mankind, a terrible warning it is indeed which only the most abandoned souls could fail to understand. Let mankind wake up to truth, and know where they are, what they are, and what their fate would be. Let them not go down into hell, but lift themselves up by devotion to the Lord, and by the steady cultivation of the Divine qualities.

Question : *What is the fate of those who are born in demonical wombs ?*

Answer : Failing to reach God, they go down into lower and lower births.

Question : *What then is the way to be saved ?*

Answer : Rejection of the demonical qualities and adoption of the Divine Natute.

The Lord explains the way to escape from the triple gateway to Hell.

21. त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

२१

*Trividham narakasye'dam dvaram nasanam atmanah ।
kamah krodhas tatha lobhas tasmad etat trayam tyajet ॥ 21*

Meaning : कामः *kamah* : desire, क्रोधः *krodhah* : anger, तथा *tatha* : so also, लोभः *lobhah* : greed, इदं *idam* : this (three evils together), त्रिविधं *trividham* : triple, नरकस्य *narakasya* : of hell, द्वारं *dvaram* : gateway, आत्मनः *atmanah* : -of oneself, नाशनम् *nasanam* : destruction, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, एतत्त्रयं *etat trayam* : these three (evils), त्यजेत् *tyajet* : (one should) abandon.

Substance : Triple is the gateway of Hell-desire, anger, and greed,—destructive of one's self; therefore one should abandon the triple evil.

Commentary : The Lord reiterates what has been said already. *Kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha* form the triple opening into Hell. They are the three evils (*Dushtatrayam*) which directly lead man into the lower worlds. When these gates are shut by dispassion, love and detachment, there is no fear for man. The demonical qualities so elaborately described so far, are epitomised and classified into three essential evils 1) Desire, 2) Wrath, 3) Greed. Desire is to be conquered by dispassion, wrath by love, greed by discrimination and detachment. There is hope for the awakened souls who have become conscious of the evils in them, and the horrible future that awaits them if they do not destroy these evils. Striving for purity and the higher way of life they shall shut down the gateways to Hell. These evils lurking in the heart like thieves in darkness, should be detected by the torch-light of knowledge and should be driven out with the help of the Divine qualities.

Question : *What are the three gateways to Hell ?*

Answer : They are 1) Kama, 2) Krodha, 3) Lobha.

Question : *How do they injure the Jiva ?*

Answer : They are self-destructive.

Question : *What then should the spiritual aspirants do ?*

Answer : They should abandon these three evils.

Question : *What are the evils of demonical nature ?*

Answer : Kama, Krodha and Lobha, are the fundamental evils of the Asuric nature.

He who frees himself from these three evils accomplishes his own well-being.

22. एतंविष्णुकः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैऽभिमिन्दः ।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

*Etair vimuktah kaunteya tamodvaraistribhir narah :
acharatyatmanah sreyas tato yati param gatim || 22*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! एतैः *etaih* : from this, त्रिभिः *tribhīḥ* : triple, तमोद्वारैः *tamodvaraiḥ* : gateways of darkness (leading to Hell), विमुक्तः *vimuktah* : freed, नरः *narah* : man, आत्मनः *atmanah* : his own, श्रेयः *sreyah* : well-being, आचरति *acharati* : works out, ततः *tataḥ* : and then, परं *param* : supreme, गतिम् *gatim* : goal, याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Freed from the triple gateways of darkness (leading to Hell) man accomplishes his own well-being, and attains the highest goal.

Commentary : So long as the triple evil of desire, anger, and greed poison the heart of man, he cannot do any good. He cannot accomplish his own well-being. Therefore man should first purify his heart by reducing and eliminating these corrosive evils. Then he spontaneously rises to higher planes of spiritual life and attains Moksha. Like the sun and moon freed from the darkening grip of Rahu and Ketu, like the Gajendra freed from the death hold of the crocodile (*Makara*), like the prisoner brought out into the sunlight from the darkness of the prison-cell, the *Jiva* should liberate himself from the strangle-hold of these three evils. He should become *vimuktah* (i.e.) completely free from them. The idea is that there should not be any trace of these evils anywhere in the mind. They are the gateways of darkness (i.e.) they are forms of ignorance (*avidya*) where there is no gleam of light, where every thing is plunged in darkness. Such a man is like one living in a closed house full of darkness. He lives in sorrow and perishes in sorrow.

Acharatyatmanah sreyah: The well-being of self requires thoughtful discrimination of the real and the unreal. What is this life ? What is this world ? What is the end and aim of life ? These questions arise in the mind of the *sattvic* man who is

partially awakened to find out the truth. But the man who is possessed by lust, anger and greed, cannot think of these things at all, because his whole mind is absorbed in sensual cravings, is agitated by anger, and confounded by inordinate greed. So, the seeker should keep away from these evils and that is in itself the great good that man can do unto himself. For, where these evils are not, the mind is pure, and when the mind is pure, he enjoys bliss of the Self.

Param gatim : *Moksha* is the highest goal and there is no state higher than that. It is implied that the lowest state is that of demonical ignorance resulting in *Kama* and *Krodha*.

Question : *Where do the triple evils of lust, anger and greed lead to ?*

Answer : To Hell. They are the gateways to darkness.

Question : *Who aspires for Moksha ?*

Answer : The man who is freed from these three evils.

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : It is the perfect state of freedom from all kinds of bondage.

Who act contrary to the injunctions of the Sastras cannot attain the goal.

23. यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

२३

Yah sastravidhim utsrijya vartate kamakaratah ।

na sa siddhim avapnoti na sukham na param gatim । 23

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, शास्त्रविधि *sastravidhim* : scriptural ordinances, उत्सृज्य *utsrijya* : casting aside, कामकारतः *kamakaratah* : under the impulse of desire, वर्तते *vartate* : acts, सः *sah* : he, सिद्धि *siddhim* : perfection (either Purushartha or Jnana), न अवाप्नोति *na avapnoti* : does not attain, न सुखं *na sukham* : does not get happiness, न परां गतिं *na paramgatim* : does not attain the supreme goal.

Substance : He who, casting aside *Sastric* injunctions, acts under the impulse of his desires, attains not life's good (*purushartha*) nor happiness, nor the supreme goal (*paramartha*).

Commentary : Indisciplined conduct under the impulse of one's own desires and passions is condemned here. We come across people who act in their own way, and try to make a philosophy out of it. This is wrong. It is only a mask to cover up their own unbridled passions and evil desires. They deny the authority of the *Sastras*, because they are deluded by ignorance and agitated by sensual desires. The *Sastras* embody the laws of life both secular and spiritual, which have been discovered after long research into the meaning and purpose of human life by the greatest of men, the *Rishis*, whose only aim was the welfare of humanity. They stated the laws following which man attains the best things in secular life and the highest goal in spiritual life. So, every true seeker should test his way of life, his thoughts, feelings and actions by referring them to the scriptural laws. Where they do not conform to the *Sastras*, they should be checked and restrained, and right methods should be adopted. The Lord declares that no good can be achieved by acting contrary to the commands of the *Sastras*, because the *Sastras* express the will of God. So, the seekers should carefully study the *Sastras* and mould their life accordingly, so that they can secure both worldly happiness and spiritual realisation.

Question : *What is the rule of conduct for man ?*

Answer : The laws of the scriptures.

Question : *How should man act ?*

Answer : He should act according to scriptural ordinances.

Question : *What will happen if man acts contrary to the laws of the *Sastras* ?*

Answer : He cannot attain either worldly happiness or spiritual realisation.

Question : *What then is the way to happiness and spiritual welfare ?*

Answer : Following the scriptures.

Question: *What is the highest goal of humanity ?*

Answer : Moksha (perfection).

The Lord instructs Arjuna to follow the injunctions of the Sastras.

24. तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्यकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

२४

*Tasmacchastram pramanam te karyakaryavyavasthitau !
jnativa sastravidhanoktam karma kartum iha'rhasi ॥ 24*

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, ते *te* : to you, कार्यकार्यं व्यव स्थितौ *karyakaryavyavasthitau* : in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, शास्त्रं *sastram* : the scripture, प्रमाणं *pramanam* : (is) authority, शास्त्रविधानोक्तं *sastravidhanoktam* : what is prescribed by the laws of the Sastras, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, इह *iha* : in this world, कर्म *karma* : action, कर्तुम् अर्हसि *kartum arhasi* : you should do.

Substance : Therefore, in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, the Scripture is your authority; having known the laws of the Scripture, you should do work in this world.

Commentary : What ought to be done or what ought not to be done in any particular situation ? The decision is by the *Sastras* and not by individual opinion. The Scripture is the authority. As it is declared in the previous verse, man can achieve all the good things of life, happiness and *moksha* also, if he acts strictly according to the scriptural injunctions. Action contrary to them leads to unhappiness, frustration, and death. One can understand how the Lord values the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*, when He, *Paramatma* Himself declares them to be the highest authority. Let everybody then put his faith in the *Sastras*, and model his life in harmony with their laws. This is enough. That will lead him to the goal.

Sastravidhanoktam : The method of action, *Karma*, is clearly stated in the *Sastras* with all the minutest details. They should be studied and understood first, before plunging into action. Knowledge of the *Sastras* will help people to perform *Karma* in the best way possible, and by such *Karma* the mind is purified, and then *Aimajnana* is revealed in due course.

Karmakartum iharhasi : The Lord teaches Arjuna to act, to work, and to perform *Karma*. The condition is that it should conform to the ordinances of the scripture. The Discourse ends with special emphasis on *Karma Yoga*, and the performance of one's duty in the special circumstances in which a man is placed.

Question : *What is the authority to determine what ought to be done and what ought not to be done ?*

Answer : The *Sastras*. One should act according to the declarations of the *Sastras*.

Question : *How should man act ?*

Answer : He should act after understanding the laws of the *Sastras*.

Question : *What should be the method of action ?*

Answer : As it is determined by the *Sastras*.

इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासुपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णज्ञेनसंवादे दैवासुरसंपद्विभागयोगो नाम
षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam voga tre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Daivasurasampadvibhaga
yoga nama shodaso'dhyayah¹*

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the

Sixteenth Discourse entitled
Daivasurasampadvibhaga Yoga
(The Yoga of the division
between the Divine and the Demonical)

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ सप्तदशोऽध्यायः

Atha saptadasodhyayah

SEVENTEENTH DISCOURSE

श्रद्धात्रयविभाग योगः

SRAADDHATRAYA VIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THREEFOLD FAITH

I. Title of the Discourse :

Sraddha (faith) is threefold—*Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*. The qualities and actions of the three types of men endowed with the threefold faith are described in this Discourse, and so it is entitled “Sraddhatraya vibhaga yoga”.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) The threefold Sraddha | (1-3) |
| 2) The threefold forms of worship; Austerity contrary to the Sastras | (4-6) |
| 3) Threefold types of food | (7-10) |
| 4) Threefold types of Yajna | (11-13) |
| 5) Threefold types of Tapas | (14-19) |
| 6) Threefold types of Dana | (20-22) |
| 7) Commentary on the mantra OM Tat Sat | (23-27) |
| 8) Work devoid of Sraddha | (28) |

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the end of the previous Discourse, the Lord declared categorically that no good could be achieved without adhering to the Scriptural ordinances. A doubt cropped up in Arjuna's mind when he heard it, and he presents his doubt to the Lord at once. "What would be the position of a person who is conducting worship with faith (Sraddha) though it is contrary to the *Sastras*? How would it be described—*Sattvic*, *Rajasic*, or *Tamasic*?" The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. ये शास्त्रविधिषुत्सुज्य यजन्ते अद्वयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥

१

Arjuna uvacha

*Ye sastravidhim utsrifya yajante sraddhaya'nvitah !
tesham nishtha tu ka krishna sattvam aho rajas tamah ॥ 1*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : कृष्ण Krishna : O Krishna ! ये ye : those who, शास्त्रविधिम् *sastravidhim* : the ordinances of the Sastra, उत्सुज्य *utsrifya* : setting aside, अद्वयान्विताः *sraddhayanvitah* : endowed with faith, यजन्ते *yajante* : worship, तेषां *tesham* : their, निष्ठा तु *nishtha tu* : condition verily, का *ka* : what, सत्त्वं *sattvam* : sattva, आहो *aho* : or, रजः *rajas* : Rajas, तमः *tamah* : Tamas.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! What is the condition of those who perform worship with faith, though contrary to the law of the Scriptures, *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* or *Tamasic* ?

Commentary: It was declared that action contrary to *Sastric* commands cannot lead to perfection. But there are people who have not read the *Sastras* either by indifference or incompetance or other reasons, and yet who believe in a higher power and carry on some form of worship and perform sacrifices.

These men are different from the demonical type, because the latter entirely deny the existence of the Higher power. These people have faith, but it is not in conformity with the *Sastras*. What is their condition ? What is the nature of their worship ? This is Arjuna's question.

The Lord's explanation—

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां श्रुणु ॥

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Trividha bhavati sraddha dehinam sa svabhavaja ।
sattviki rajasi chai'va tamasi che'ti tam sruṇu ॥*

2

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : देहिनां *dehinam* : of beings, स्वभावजा *svabhavaja* : born of nature, (past Samskaras,) सा श्रद्धा *sa sraddha* : that faith, सात्त्विकी *sattviki* : sattvic, राजसी एव च *rajasi eva cha* : and also Rajasic, तामसी च *tamasi cha* : and Tamasic, इति *itt* : thus, त्रिविधा *trividha* : threefold, भवति *bhavati* : is, तां *tam* : that, श्रुणु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : Born of the nature (past Samskaras) of beings, that faith (Sraddha) is threefold *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*. Now hear about it.

Commentary : *Svabhavaja* : Men are born with different objects of faith, according to their practice and experience in past births. It comes to them as an inherited quality, and determines the nature of their worship and sacrifice.

Question : *What is the threefold Sraddha ?*

Answer : It is Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

Question : *What is the cause of this difference ?*

Answer : Nature (i.e.) the Samskaras of the previous births, is the cause of the distinction.

Sraddha (past Samskara) or quality is the essence of man, is man himself.

3. सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥

३

Sattvanurupa sarvasya sraddha bhavati bharata'

sraddhamayo'yam purusho yo yacchraddhah sa eva sah 3

Meaning : भारत *Bharata* : O Arjuna ! सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all beings, सत्त्वानुरूपा *sattvanurupa* : according to the nature (previous Samskaras) of their mind, श्रद्धा *sraddha* : quality (faith), भवति *bhavati* : is, अयं *ayam* : this, पुरुषः *purushah* : Jiva (man), श्रद्धामयः *sraddhamayah* : of the form of (Sraddha) qualities, यः *yah* : who, यत् श्रद्धा *yat sraddha* : what quality (faith), सः *sah* : he, सः एव *sah eva* : that (Sraddha) only, (bhavati : is).

Substance : O Arjuna ! the faith of each man is in conformity with his nature (past Samskaras); the very essence of the *Jiva* is faith; as a man's faith is, so is he. (He adopts that faith and becomes that)

Commentary : The mind (the inner organ) is alone the *Jiva* (man). So if the mind is pure, purity becomes the essence of that man. Here the word 'sattva' means mind. Every individual acquires that nature which he has brought with him from his experience in former births. And his faith takes on that quality only. He is that faith, qualified by his Samskaras. So, it is the duty of man to instil Sattvic disposition into his character and by practice transcend that also to reach the highest state. The *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* kinds of *Sraddha* should be abandoned, because they pull man downwards into lower forms of existence. Among the qualities *Sattva* is the nearest to *Atma*, and in *Suddha-sattva*, man directly perceives *Atma*, and enters the *Nirguna* state. That is the real self of man, that is his final goal.

Question : *What kind of Sraddha does man acquire ?*

Answer : It is in conformity with the disposition of his mind.

Question : *With what is man filled ?*

Answer : Sraddha.

Question : *What is the state of man ?*

Answer : It is just what his mind is. This state is called *Jiva*. (The real man is the supreme Self and not the reflected personality created in the mind).

The nature of man's worship is in accordance with the quality of his faith.

4. यजन्ते सत्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ते यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥

8

*Yajante sattvika devan yaksharakshamsi rajasah ।
pretan bhutaganamscha'nye yajante tamasa janah ॥ 4*

Meaning : सत्त्विका: *sattvikah* : men of Sattvaguna, देवान् *devan* : Devas, यजन्ते *yajante* : worship, राजसाः *rajasah*:men of Rajoguna, यक्षरक्षांसि *yaksharakshasamsi* : the Yakshas and Rakshasas, यजन्ते *yajante* : worship, अन्ये *anye* : others, तामसा जनाः *tamasah janah* : men of Tamoguna, प्रेतान् *pretan* : the hosts of departed souls, भूतगणां च *bhutaganah cha* : and the hosts of Bhutas, यजन्ते *yajante* : worship.

Substance : Men of Sattvaguna worship the Devas; men of Rajoguna worship the Yakshas and Rakshasas; men of Tamoguna worship the hosts of departed souls and Nature-spirits.

Commentary : In the 14th Discourse, the Lord has already described the three Gunas, and how men dominated by each think and act in the world. The Lord is explaining the same idea in a different context.

The Lord condemns the frightful body—mortifying austerties of the Asuric type of men.

5. अशास्त्रविहितं धोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥

५

6. कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तः शरीरस्थं तान्विद्युथासुरनिश्चयान् ॥

६

Asastravihitam ghoram tapyante ye tapo janah

dambhahankara samyuktah kama raga balanvitah 5

Karsayantah sarirastham bhutagramam achetasah

mam chaivantahsarirastham tan viddhyasuranischayan 6

Meaning : ये जनाः *ye janah* : which people, शरीरस्थं *sarirastham* : dwelling in the body, भूतग्रामम् *bhutagramam* : the aggregate of the elements (or the senses), कर्शयन्तः *karsayantah* : torturing, अन्तः शरीरस्थं *antassarirastham* : dwelling within the vehicle of the body, माम् च एव *mam cha eva* : even Me also, कर्शयन्तः *karsayantah* : torturing, दंभाहङ्कार संयुक्ताः *dambhahankarasamyuktah* : possessed by pretension and pride, कामराग बलान्विताः *kamaragabalavitah* : combined with lust, longing, and animal strength, अचेतसः *achetasah* : devoid of understanding, अशास्त्र विहितम् *asastravihitam* : contrary to the laws of the *Sastras*, धोरम् *ghoram* : horrible (both for themselves and other beings), तपः *tapah* : austerity, तप्यन्ते *tapyante* : practice, तान् *tan* : them, आसुरनिश्चयान् *asurani-schayan* : to be of demonical resolve, विद्धि *vidhi* : know.

Substance : Those who torture the aggregate of the elements (senses) in the body, (and thereby) torture even Me dwelling within the vehicle of the body, who are possessed by pretension and pride, combined with lust, longing, and animal strength, who practise austerities horrible (to themselves and other beings) contrary to the ordinances of the *Sastras*, devoid of understanding—know such men to be of demonical resolve.

Commentary : Asastravihitam : The Gita insists an adherence to the *Sastras* for spiritual advancement. Austerities which are prohibited by the *Sastras* should not be undertaken. They are only *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* types of *Tapas* frightful and horrid to themselves and other beings. Such inhuman forms of austerity show that these men are devoid of understanding.

Tapyante ye tapojanah : The true purpose of *Tapas* is the purification of the mind and not the torturing of the body. The evil tendencies of the mind should no doubt be burnt up before spiritual illumination dawns on man. But cruel mortification of the flesh is not sanctioned by the *Sastras* as a means to self-purification.

Kamaragabalanvithah : Worldly power and physical powers count for nothing without Divine strength. Such men who are devoid of the Godly spirit in them are *Asuras*, whatever other qualities they may possess. Lust and longing for sensual pleasures wither away the Divine elements in man. The Divine is covered up by foul and filthy passions and impulses. Therefore those who seek for spiritual illumination should annihilate these demonical qualities and take to devotion and knowledge from which flows divine strength and power.

Karsayantath bhutagramam : Those who wither away the body and sense-organs by fasting are of *Asuric* nature. Of course, fasting for the sake of bodily health and on holy days for acquiring self-discipline are good. But the law of moderation should not be violated (*yuktahara viharasya*). Beyond a certain limit, fasting becomes cruelty to the body and the senses. This will not take man to the goal. One cannot kill the snake by striking the bush. The real enemy to be destroyed is the impurity of the mind, and this cannot be done by torturing the body. One has to be extremely cautious in this matter. *Tapas* is an act of self-discipline and ego-annihilation. To boast of one's own capacities, to go without food and rest, or to perform physical gymnastics by keeping the heels in the air and the head on the ground, may show off his physical endurance, but is

not a mark of devotion or *jnana*. Fasting and other forms of self-discipline are led to keep the body and senses under control, so that they may not impede man's progress towards the Divine. They are means to this end and are not ends in themselves. The way of *Yoga* is moderation. Horrible forms of torturing the body are *Tamasic* austerity.

Mam chaiva anthah sarirastham : The Lord is dwelling within the body. So torturing the body is torturing the Lord Himself. The man who feels the presence of the Lord in all the limbs and senses, will not willingly injure them by demonical self-mortification. Of course, the Lord being the witness only is not affected by what happens to the body whether it is nourished or tortured. But from the point of view of the individual, it is injury to the Lord. That is why men are called upon to practice '*ahimsa*'—non-injury to all beings, because the Lord is present in all beings. The same truth applies to one's own person. Self-torture is thus '*himsa*' of the Lord Himself. It is clearly declared here that nothing truly spiritual could be achieved by these *Tamasic* austerities. In fact, the Asuras, when they practice these austerities, do so, not for God-realisation, but for gaining some miraculous powers and personal enjoyments in this world or in other world. This aim is *Kama* and *Raga*, the thirst for sense-gratification. Thus the aim of these men of demonical nature is entirely different. The real seekers should cultivate pure Sattvic virtues, discriminate between the real and unreal, separate the five sheaths, and realise *Paramatma* in themselves.

Question : *What is the nature of the Asuric type of people ?*

Answer : (1) They are subject to pride, self-conceit and pretension; (2) They are possessed by lust and attachment; (3) They have no discrimination; (4) They torture the body and the senses and so they torture the in-dwelling Lord.

The Lord explains the nature of the threefold types of food, yajna, tapas and dana.

7. आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥

७

*Aharastvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyah
yajnas tapas tatha danam tesham bheda n i n.m sruu : 7*

Meaning : आहारस्त्वपि *aharah tvapi* : and also food, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all people, त्रिविधः *trividhah* : threefold (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic), प्रियः *priyah bhavati* : is dear, तथा *tatha* : so also, यज्ञः *yajnah* : sacrifice, तपः *tapah* : austerity, दानं *danam* : charity, तेषां *tesham* : of them, इमं भेदम् *imam bhedam* : this distinctions, शृणु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : The food dear to each of the three types of men is also threefold; so also, sacrifice, austerity and charity. Now hear their difference.

Commentary : It is to be noted that the Lord first takes up the threefold kinds of food dear to the three types of men. In spiritual *sadhana*, food is of very great importance, because the mind is formed by the food that is taken. Pure food develops the pure mind, and the pure mind easily grasps the spiritual truth. So all the seekers should be extremely careful about their food.

The Sattvic food :

8. आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्क्षियाः ॥

८

*Ayuh sattva balarogya sukha priti vivardhanah
rasyah snigdham sthira hridya ahara sattvikapriyah* ॥ 8

Meaning : आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्य सुख प्रीति विवर्धनाः *ayuh sathvaba
larogyasukha priti vivardhanah*: those which augment life vitality, purity, strength, health, joy, cheerfulness and good appetite, रस्याः *rasyah* : savoury, स्निग्धाः *snigdham* : oleaginous, स्थिराः *sthirah* : substantial, हृद्याः *hridyah* : agreeable, आहाराः *ahara*:

food, सत्त्विक प्रिया: *sattvikapriyah* : (are) dear to the Sattvic type of people.

Substance : Foods which augment life, purity, strength joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury, oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, are dear to the *Sattvic* type of men.

Commentary : The *Sattvic* nature relishes only pure and agreeable food, as described in this verse. Food has a direct bearing on spiritual life. It is not a negligible matter as some indulgent people imagine. It should be within the experience of everyone that when impure and offensive food is taken the mind immediately reacts by generating sensual tendencies, irritability, anger etc. If men take a little more care about their food and its regulation, not only will they be more healthy and happy, but they will also gain insight into the subtler truths of the spiritual realm. Such being the importance of food, the Lord first prescribes the type of food which is dear to the *Sattvic* type of men.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic food ?*

Answer It augments life, vitality, purity, health, joy and cheerfulness; It is savoury, oleaginous, substantial and agreeable. The wise should take this type of food.

The Rajasic type of food :

9. कट्टवाम्ललवणात्युष्ण तीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥

९

*Katvamla lavanatyushna tikshna ruksha vidahinah
ahara rajasasye'sta duhkha sokamaya pradah* ॥ 9 ॥

Meaning : कट्टव *katu* : bither, आम्ल *amla* : sour, लवण *lavana* : saline, अत्युष्ण *atyushna* : excessively hot, तीक्ष्ण *tikshna* : pungent, रूक्ष *ruksha* : dry, विदाहिनः *vidahinah* : burning, causing thirst, दुःख शोकामयप्रदाः *dukhhasokamaya-pradah* : productive of pain, sorrow and disease, आहारः

aharah : foods, राजसस्य *rajasasya* : to the *Rajasic* men,
इष्टाः *ishtah* : (are) dear.

Substance : Foods which are bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, pungent, dry and causing thirst, which produce pain, sorrow and disease, are dear to the *Rajasic* type of men.

Commentary : Such is the food relished by the *Rajasic* people. The effect of such food is immediately felt by pain in the body and consequent mental discomfort. The word 'ati' is applied to all the adjectives used, by some commentators. Sour, bitter, and burning food-stuffs should be abandoned, if spiritual progress is to be kept up by the *Sadhaka*.

In the eighteenth Discourse (in the thirty eighth verse) the Lord explains that *Rajasic* happiness appears to be pleasing in the beginning but turns out to be extremely painful in the end. Similarly hot and sour food may be relishing to some palates, but they produce grievous discomfort, pain and disease, in the end. This is experienced by many in every day life. Besides, *Rajasic* food disturbs *Dhyana Sadhana*. The mind becomes distracted and agitated and so it cannot remain steady in contemplation. Among the animals, lions, tigers and wolves are restless and foul, whereas cows, goats and others of their kind are calm and non-injurious.

amayapradah : *Rajasic* food produces disease. What can man achieve with a disease-sticken body? He has neither worldly nor spiritual welfare. So the seekers should abandon all such varieties of food and strive in everyway to keep the body light, pure and strong. The choice of food is in itself a part of self-discipline and an important aspect also. We find real *Sadhakas* extremely fastidious about their food. They take food and water at regular intervals, and do not load the stomach at all odd times with all odd food-stuffs. Such discipline goes a long way to secure self-control easily and these men rise to higher planes of spiritual experience. That should be the standard to be followed by all earnest seekers.

Question : What is the nature of Rajasic food ?

Answer : It is bitter, sour, hot, pungent, dry and burning. It causes pain, discomfort and disease. Realising the evil effects of such food, the real seekers should abandon it completely.

The Tamasic type of food —

10. यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १०

*Yatayamam gatarasam puti paryushitam cha yat :
ucchishtam api cha'medhyam bhojanam tamasapriyam ॥ 10*

Meaning : यातयामम् *yatayamam*: stale food, or badly cooked food, गतरसम् *gatarasam*: dried, tasteless, पूति *puti*: putrid, पर्युषितं च *paryushitam cha*: and rotten being kept overnight, उच्छिष्टं अपि *ucchishtam api*: and remnants after being eaten by others, अमेध्यं *amedhyam*: impure (not offered to the Lord), यत् *yat*: which, भोजनम् *bhojanam*: food, (asti: is) (tat: that), तामसप्रियं *tamasapriyam*: (is) to the liking of the Tamasic.

Substance : That which is stale (having been cooked a long time before it is taken), dry, putrid and rotten, refuse and impure, (that food) is to the liking of the *Tamasic*.

Commentary : Even according to the principles of health such food is bad. Not only does it damage the system corrupting the blood but it unhinges the mind also. The mind is made of the subtle elements of the body. Therefore for physical health and joy, only *Sattvic* food should be taken.

The Sattvic Yajna :-

11. अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सान्त्विकः ॥ ११

*Aphalakankhibhir yajno vidhidrishto ya ijyate
yastavyam eve'ti manah samadhaya sa sattvikah ॥ 11*

Meaning : यष्टव्यम् एव *ishtavyam eva* : verily, ought to be offered, इति *iti* : thus, मनः *manah* : mind, समाधाय *samadhaya* : having decided, विधिदृष्टः *vidhidrishtah* : as enjoined by the *Sastras*, यः यज्ञः *yah yajnah* : which sacrifice, अफला काङ्क्षिभिः *aphalakamkshibhish* : (performed) by men desiring no fruit, इज्यते *ijyate* : is offered, सः *sah* : that (*yajna*), सत्त्विकः *sattvikah* : (is) Sattvic.

Substance : That *Yajna* is *Sattvic* which is performed by men desiring no fruit, as enjoined by the *Sastras*, with their mind fixed on the *Yajna* only for its own sake.

Commentary : The Lord has already laid down the law that the *Sastras* are the authority about what ought to be done or what ought not to be done. Therefore it is said here that the *Yajna* should be 'vidhidrishtah'. More over it should be decided after deep consideration whether to perform the sacrifice or not, according to time, place and other circumstances. Above all this, it should be performed without any selfish motive. It should be an act of *Nishkama karmayoga*. Such *Yagna* is called *Sattvic*. Here the word 'Yajna' does not mean sacrifice of animals and other living beings. It refers to all charitable and beneficial acts of a divine character. Any good done in that spirit becomes a *Yajna*.

Manah samadhaya : It is imperative that the act to be performed should be carefully considered, decided, and fixed before doing it. Otherwise, the wavering mind creates hundred doubts and fears at the time of performing it. Such actions do not bear any good fruit at all. They are sometimes half done and left incomplete. The doer gains no peace or satisfaction from such works. So one should consider the pros and cons, satisfy himself about the *Sastric* laws, take the advice of the elders and well-wishers, and then only go into action. Such work is *Sattvic* and yields the best rewards to the doer and to the world. The point is that there should not be any longing to

taste the fruits of work. They should be offered to the Lord. Such work is the highest and the noblest.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic Yajna ?*

Answer : It is performed without desire for the fruit. It is performed according to the ordinances of the Scriptures. It is well-considered and clearly decided by the mind.

The Rajasic Yajna :—

12. अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् :

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥

१२

*Abhisandhaya tu phalam dambhartham api chai'va yat
ijyate bharatasreshtha tam yajnam viddhi rajasam । 12*

Meaning : भरत श्रेष्ठ *bharatasreshtha* : O best of the Bharatas ! फलं *phalam* : fruit, अभिसंधाय तु *abhisandhaya tu* : verily seeking for, दम्भार्थ मपि चैव *dambhartham apicha eva* : and also for ostentation only, यत् *yat* : what, इज्यते *ijyate* : is performed, तम् यज्ञं *tam yajnam* : that Yajna, राजसम् *rajasam* : Rajasic, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that *Yajna* which is performed with desire for fruit, and which is done only for the sake of ostentation, know that to be *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The principle of *Nishkarmakarma* is once again emphasised here. The *Rajasic* man performs these sacrifices with a view to get some worldly reward. And also, he hopes to win name and fame by such acts of merit. Thus the *Yajna* loses its purity and divinity by the attachment and pretension of the doer. Any work if it should yield spiritual benefit should be done free from desire and free from pride and self-conceit. The *Rajasic* spirit should be annihilated. Then the same work becomes *Sattyie*.

Question : What is the nature of the Rajasic Yajna ?

Answer : It is performed for the sake of some reward, and only for the sake of ostentation, pride and self-conceit.

The Tamasic Yajna is described —

13. विधिहीनमसृष्टाचं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।

श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥

१३

Vidhihinam asrishtannam mantrahinam adakshinam ।

sraddhavirahitam yajnam tamasam parichakshate ॥

13

Meaning : विधिहीनं *vidhihinam* : without scriptural ordinance, असृष्टाचं *asrishtannam* : without distribution of food, मन्त्रहीनम् *mantrahinam* : without Mantras, अदक्षिणम् *adakshinam* : without gifts of money, cloths etc., श्रद्धाविरहितं *sraddhavirahitam* : devoid of faith, यज्ञं *yajnam* : yajna, तामसं *tamasam* : Tamasic, परिचक्षते *parichakshate* : (they) declare.

Substance : *Yajna* performed without scriptural ordinance, without distribution of food, without Mantras, without gifts of money and cloths to the poor, devoid of faith, is declared to be *Tamasic (Yajna)*.

Commentary : *Asrishtannam* : Distribution of food to the hungry and the needy is an important aspect of practical *Vedanta*. In this is implied the grand truth of the Lord's presence in all beings. It is *Vedanta* brought down to the plane of practical work in the world. That is why the elders have prescribed distribution of food as an important item on all auspicious and holy occasions. Poor-feeding, respectful offering of food to deserving people, is an aspect of spiritual *Sadhana*, if its spirit is properly understood and kept in mind. So a sacrifice where there is no offering of food is only the lowest *Tamasic yajna*.

Adakshinam : Offering of money and gifts to the *Ritviks* and poor people is another feature of a well-performed *yajna*. The sacrificer ought to give away a part of his wealth to the

needy. It is *Tyaga* implied in *Yajna*. That which is done without the real spirit of sacrifice is indeed *Tamasic Yajna*.

Sraddhavirahitam : Any work yields the best reward only when it is done with faith, devotion and complete self-surrender to God. In the twentyeighth verse of this Discourse, the Lord declares that any act of merit done without faith is as good as not having been done at all. Faith is the vital element in all good works. *Yajna* performed without faith is *Tamasic*. It is as good as a dead thing because it is devoid of the life-force of faith.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic Yajna ?*

Answer : It is not sanctioned by the *Sastras*. There is no distribution of food. Gifts are not offered. There are no *Mantras*. There is no faith. Such is *Tamasic Yajna*.

The threefold austerity (tapas) is explained here. First the austerity pertaining to the body as it is practised by the Sattvic is taken up—

14. देवद्विजगुरुप्राञ्जपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥

१४

*Deva dvija guru prajna pujanam saucham arjavam ।
brahmacharyam ahimsa cha sariram tapa uchyate ॥ 14*

Meaning : देवद्विज गुरु प्राञ्जपूजनं *devadvijaguruprajnapujanam* : worship of the Devas, the twice-born, the Guru, the wise, शौचं *saucham* : purity, आर्जवम् *arjavam* : freedom from crookedness in thought word and deed, ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacharyam* : celibacy, अहिंसा च *ahimsa cha* : and non-injury, शारीरं *sariram* : of the body, तपः *tapah* : austerity, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said.

Substance : Worship of the Gods, the twice-born, and the wise (*Mahatmas* and *Jnanis*), purity (internal and external), straight-forwardness charmony in thought, word and deed), celibacy, non-injury— these constitute the austerity of the body.

Commentary: Verses 14, 15 and 16, which deal with the restraint and discipline of the body, speech, and mind, are of the greatest importance for all seekers. They should practise the three-fold austerity, and attain perfect purity of body, speech and mind. Such purity at once leads to self-realisation.

Tapas is intended to purify the body and mind through which the individual has to function and strive for *Atmajnana*. Unless the body is purified internally and externally, the highest knowledge cannot be experienced. The word *Tapas* is generally associated with severe self-denial and self-mortification. People think that *Tapas* is suffering in heat and cold, abstaining from food, standing on one leg or keeping hands uplifted, and such other feats of physical endurance. Such horror-producing practices are not at all mentioned by the Lord. No one need be terrified by that word *tapas*. The Lord's interpretation is practical and within the easy reach of any seeker who is striving for *Atmainana*. Men and women can practise it. So, it is the duty of all sincere aspirants to undertake the discipline mentioned here and attain the goal.

The austerity of the body consists in five clear practices, (1) Reverence towards and worship of elders, *Mahatmas*, and devotees. By such worship two great rewards are reaped by the worshipper. He acquires their grace and his egoism vanishes. Spiritual development is not possible without the grace of God, *Guru* and *Mahatmas*. *Maya* does not easily give way for man to cross over. The obstacles cannot be cleared without their grace. So the real seeker should win their blessing by humility and reverence, by service and devotion, by worship and selfless service. Their grace is infinitely helpful for man. He becomes humble, wise, unselfish and the super-obstacle the Ego lets go its strangle-hold on the heart of man. That is why the Lord mentioned such worship as the first type of austerity for the body.

Dvijah: (The twice-born) - Twice-born means that man after he acquires *Atmajnana* takes a new birth quite distinct from the body and mind with which he was born. It is indeed a

second birth, for, having attained *Atma Jnana* he discards the former life of the senses and the mind as alien to his true nature. Such men are twice-born. They reflect the glory and majesty, light and perfection of *Paramatma*. They are Divine in human form.

Prajna : (One who has 'prajna' i. e. a *Jnani*) '*Prajnanam Brahman*'— that is the *Upanishadic* declaration. It is the essence of *Brahmam*, it is knowledge supreme, and the man who possesses it is *prajna* (knower of *Brahmam*). Worship of such *jnanis* is declared to be the austerity of the body.

Saucham : Mental purity, bodily purity, and purity of the surroundings are all necessary. Impurities of the body not only produce diseases but also weakens the mind and makes it incapable of ascent into higher spiritual regions. And to the impure even the idea of a higher life does not occur. Therefore the *sadhaka* should clean the surroundings, purify the body by regular bathing and good food, and clean the mind by rejecting all sensual thoughts and feelings, and by associating it with the Divine.

Arjavam : Every one should cultivate harmony between thought, word and deed. This is integrity. Crookedness like the crawling reptiles is the sign of a poisonous heart filled with selfish and cruel motives. When the three functional modes of thought, word and deed are straight and harmonious, man is said to follow truth, and truth is the open gateway to Self-realisation.

Brahmacharyam : The Lord says that the vow of celibacy in thought, word and deed is the highest *tapas*. It means perfect non-attachment with the objective world, freedom from lustful thoughts, passions and acts, and meditation on the Supreme *Brahmam*. Celibacy is the foundation for all other *Sadhanas*. Therefore its importance is several times mentioned in the Gita. It is like the main-switch for the entire illumination in the spiritual realm.

Ahimsa. (Non-injury to any creature in thought word and deed)-Ignorance of Truth is injury to one's own self. So man should acquire knowledge of what he really is, what this world is, and who the ruler and controller of this universe is. By this understanding, man frees himself from constant self-injury. It is needless to say that injuring other being is strictly prohibited by the *Sastras*. Such harmful thoughts and acts are a negation of the basic truth of the Lord's presence in all beings.

Question: *What is the austerity of the body?*

Answer : (1) Reverence and worship of the *Devas*, *Gurus* and *Brahmanishthas*, (2) purity of body and mind, (3) integrity, (4) continence, (5) non-injury - these five constitute *Tapas* of the body.

The austerity of speech-

15. अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

१५

Anudvegakaram vakyam satyam priyahitam cha yat ! svadhyayabhyasanam chai'va vangmayam tapa uchyate ॥ 15

Meaning : अनुद्वेगकरं *anudvegakaram* : causing no excitement in others, सत्यं *satyam* : truthful, प्रियहितं च *priyahitam cha* : pleasing and helpful, वाक्यं *vakyam* : speech, स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव *svadhyayabhyasanam chai ya* : and also the study of the scriptures, यत् *yat* : which (tat : that), वाङ्मयं *vangmayam* : pertaining to speech, तपः *tapah* : austerity, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : Speech which does not excite others, which is truthful, delighting and beneficial, and the study of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Puranas* are called the austerity of speech.

Commentary : *Anudvegakaram vakyam* : Speech should conform to the four principles enunciated here. First, it should not excite, trouble or injure others. It should be gentle and peaceful.

Secondly, it should be truthful; thirdly, it should be beneficial on all side. This four-way test of speech is a most important aspect of social conduct. One may speak the truth but it may be harsh, painful and exciting. So even in speaking truth, the words chosen and the manner should be pleasing and delightful. This is the *Tapas* of speech.

Svadhyayabhyasanam : The need for practising the study of the *Sastras*, is emphasised here. Everyday some parts or portions of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and the *Puranas* should be read. This is a clear reply to those who question—"Meditation is important, why all this study?" of course, Meditation is important, but during the intervals, the aspirant should take to the studies of the *Sastras* to clarify his ideas and keep up the fire of inspiration. *Svadhyaya* is like the wind to the fire of meditation. By truthfulness, and *Svadhyaya*, speech acquires mysterious power. What is spoken even casually comes out true in actual life.

Question : *What is the austerity of speech ?*

Answer : Unexciting, truthful, delighting and beneficial speech, and the study of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and the *Puranas*, are called austerity of speech.

The austerity of mind is explained.

16. मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्पो मानसमुच्यते ॥

१६

*Manahprasadah saumyatvam maunam atmavinigrahah ।
bhavasamsuddhir ity etat tapo manasam uchyate ॥* 16

Meaning : मनः प्रसादः *manah prasadam* : serenity of mind, (keeping it untroubled, unexcited), सौम्यत्वं *saumyatvam* : pleasing expression (free from cruelty, treachery ill-will etc.) मौनम् *maunam*: silence (i. e.) the silence of the mind by meditation on God, accompanied with silence of words, आत्मविनिग्रहः *atmavinigrahah* : self-control, भावसंशुद्धिः *bhavasam-*

suddhih : purity of mind, इति *iti* : thus, एतत् *etat* : this, मानसं *manasam* : of the mind, तपः *tapah* : austerity, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : Keeping the mind serene (untroubled and unexcited), pleasing facial expression (without ill-will or cruelty), silence (meditation on God), self-control, purity of thought and feeling are called the austerity of the mind.

Commentary : *Manah prasadah* : The mind should be clear, calm, and light. If *Tamoguna* dominates, it is dull, heavy, and morose. If *Rajoguna* dominates, it is troubled, distracted and unbalanced. So the seeker has to cultivate *Sattvaguna*, and keep the mind in that calm serene state. The aim should be to prevent the disturbing elements, dark passions (impure Samskaras) from taking root in the mind. This can be achieved by unfailing devotion and clear knowledge which leads to dispassion. Serenity of mind implies internal purity. This practice consciously undertaken and kept up continuously is what is called austerity of the mind.

Saumyatvam : Face is the index of the mind. The fleeting thoughts and passions of mind cast shadows in the face. Anger, hatred, lust, fear, greed - all these darken and twist the countenance into worried states, most unpleasant for others to see. When the mind is serene and peaceful, the face is bright and delightful. The seekers should examine themselves how far they could keep up the cheerfulness of spirit, and produce an impression of joy and love. It should be clearly noted that a gloomy and forbidding face is not a mark of spiritual advancement. On the other hand, we find the *Mahatmas* beaming with joy, cheerful and humourous, radiating that indefinable joy and knowledge all around.

Maunam : Silence is of two kinds - (1) restraining external sounds; (2) stillness of the inner organ (mind). Here silence of the mind is mentioned. The first is of great importance as a means to achieve the second. Of course, mere stopping the external organ is useless when the mind is distracted by hundreds

of worldly thoughts. In that case, external silence comes under "Midhyachara". The aim is to acquire perfect stillness of mind, and detachment from the objective world. Therefore the Lord speaks of *Mouna* as austerity of mind and not of the body. So one should understand that internal silence is the aim and restraint of speech is a means to that end.

Atmayinigrahah : Here the word 'atma' means the mind and senses. Restraining the mind from running after worldly pleasures is *Tapas* in the highest sense of the word. The word 'vinigrahah' implies that the mind should be fully controlled, so that there cannot be any trace of attachment to objects. So also, 'bhavasamsuddhi' implies perfect purity of thought and feeling. Not a speck of dirt should there be in the mind. Such mental purity reflects 'Atma' clearly, as the sun is clearly reflected in a calm lake of pure water.

Question : *What is the austerity of mind ?*

Answer : Serenity, delightful countenance, stillness of mind (stilled in meditation on Paramatma)—these constitute austerity of mind.

The Lord explains the threefold austerity of the three types of men – first the Sattvic.

17. श्रद्धया परया तसं तपस्तत्रिविधं नरैः ।

अफलाकाङ्गभियुक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥

१७

*Sraddhaya paraya taptam tapas tat trividham naraih¹
aphalakankshibhir yuktaih sattvikam parichakstate¹* 17

Meaning : अफलाकङ्गभिः *aphalakamkshibhih* : desiring no fruit, युक्तैः *yuktaih* : single-minded in Divine contemplation, नरैः *naraih* : by men, परया *paraya* : highest, श्रद्धया *sraddhaya* : with faith, तपः *taptam* : practised, तत् *tat* : that, त्रिविधम् *trividham* : threefold, तपः *tapah* : austerity, सात्त्विकं *sattvikam* : Sattvic, परिचक्षते *parichakstate* : "(they) declare.

Substance : The threefold austerity (mentioned above of body, mind and speech) performed by men desiring no fruit, with the highest faith, and with single-minded devotion, is declared to be *Sattvic*.

Commentary : *Sraddhaya* : The attribute *paraya* indicates that supreme faith is needed in the performance of *Tapas*. Otherwise, common failures and well known obstacles in the way, might shake the will of the seeker and make him unfit for further effect. Highest faith in the Supreme is needed. When once the final goal is accepted and fixed in the mind, no obstacle can shake him from the path of spiritual advancement. He marches onwards and onwards, unmindful of failures and backslidings, till the light is revealed.

Yuktaiah : The seeker should unite himself with *Atma* and keep away from all worldly objects. Such people are every conscious of their true Self, and so they are serene and calm whatever may be the troubles and temptations of life.

Naraiah : Of all beings, man is the highest, because *Moksha* is possible for the human being and to no other species. The Lord does not make any distinction among men. All human beings, whatsoever caste, creed or race they belong to, are qualified for the highest state by austerity, self-control, and knowledge.

From this verse, we understand that austerity of the *Sattvic* type requires three conditions. The aspirant should possess immovable faith; he should not have any desire for rewards; he should unite himself with *Paramatma* by an act of will. Fulfilling these conditions, if a man performs the triple austerity of the body, mind and speech, he attains the highest goal.

Question : *What is Sattvic austerity ?*

Answer : Performing the triple austerity of body, mind, and speech, with faith, desiring no fruit and with harmonised mind is called *Sattvic Tapas*.

The Rajasic austerity :

18. सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमधुवम् ॥

१८

*Satkara mana pujarthatam tapo dambhena chai'va yat
kriyate tad iha proktam rajasam chalam adhruvam ॥ 18*

Meaning : सत्कार मान पूजार्थं *satkaramanapujarthatam* : with the object of gaining name, honour and reverence, दम्भेन च एव *dambhena cha eva* : and also hypocritically, यत् *yat* : which, तपः *tapah* : austerity, क्रियते *kriyate* : is performed, तत् *tat* : that, चलम् *chalam* : unstable, अध्रुवम् *adhruvam* : transitory, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic (austerity), इह *iha* : in this world, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is said.

Substance : That austerity which is practised hypocritically with the object of gaining reputation, honour, and reverence in this world, is said to be *Rajasic*; it is unstable and transitory.

Commentary : This is spiritual pretension which does not yield any good fruit at all, because the performer does it insincerely for show, and for gaining good name and reverence in society. It is hypocrisy and cheating the world. Such men are not truthful to themselves, and so their austerity is unstable and of short duration. The true aspirant has nothing to gain from name and fame in the world. His worship is sincere and deeply felt as an act of self-fulfilment.

Question : *What is Rajasic austerity ?*

Answer : Austerity performed for the sake of gaining good reputation, honour and reverence in society, and which is performed for show is called *Rajasic*.

Question : *What is its effect ?*

Answer : It is unstable (i. e.) it is given up when the performer thinks that no worldly distinction is gained by it.

The Tamasic austerity :—

19. मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्त्वामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

१९

*Mudhagrahena'tmano yat pidaya kriyate tapah ।
parasyo'tsadanartham va tat tamasam udahritam ।* 19

Meaning : यत् तपः *yat tapah* : which austerity, मूढग्राहेण *mudhagrahena* : out of foolish resolution, आत्मनः पीडया *atmanah pidaya* : with self-torture, परस्य *parasya* : of another, उत्सादनार्थं वा *utsadanartham va* : or for the destruction, क्रियते *kriyate* : is performed, तत् *tat* : that, तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic. उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is said.

Substance : That austerity which is practised with a foolish obstinacy, with self-torture or for the destruction of another, is said to be *Tamasic*.

Commentary : *Mudhagrahena*: Determination is no doubt good, but it should be right and wisely set up. Otherwise it results in self-destruction or in the destruction of others.

Atmanah pidaya : The Lord has already said that torturing the body is the sign of a demonical nature. Fasting, silence and other vows should be adopted after due consideration and discrimination. Otherwise, they turn out to be harmful and injurious to one's own self. And, austerity undertaken for the purpose of destroying another is most objectionable. *Tapas* is a means for self-realisation, and to use it for injuring and killing others should be strongly condemned. It is *Asuric* nature. It is due to dark ignorance and evil passions. The seekers should abandon them completely, and take up the *Sattvic* austerity, practise it sincerely, and reach the goal.

This verse is a warning to all those who tread the path of *Tapas*; (1) There should not be any foolish obstinacy and hasty resolution regarding the austerity practises; (2) No one should torture the body and cause injury to one's self by horrid practices of self-mortifications; (3) No austerity should be under-

taken for injuring other beings. It is the very negation of all spiritual ideals.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic austerity ?*

Answer : That which is performed with foolish obstinacy by self-torture and for the purpose of destroying others is called *Tamasic* austerity.

The three-fold charity is explained—first the Sattvic :

20. दातव्यमिति यदानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे
देशे काले च पात्रे च तदानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २०

*Datavyam iti yad danam diyate'nupakarine !
dese kale cha patre cha tad danam sattvikam smritam ॥ 20*

Meaning : दातव्यम् *datavyam* : ought to be given, इति *iti* : thus (resolved), यत् दानं *yat danam* : which gift, देशे *dese* : in holy places, काले च *kale cha* : and on auspicious occasions, पात्रे च *patre cha* : and to deserving person, अनुपकारिणे *anupakarine* : who can do no good in return, दीयते *diyate* : is given, तत् *tat* : that, दानं *danam* : charity, सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् *sattvikam smritam* : is held to be Sattvic.

Substance : That charity which is decided “ought to be given”, offered to a deserving man from whom no return is expected, in proper time and place, is declared to be *Sattvic*.

Commentary : *Datavyam iti* – Every man should offer charity as a sacred duty, and not for gaining honour and fame in the world. “It is my duty to offer this gift to this man, and therefore I am giving it”—such should be the spirit behind all acts of a beneficial nature. In truth, whatever good we do to others, whatever sacrifice we make for the sake of others, is a good done unto one’s own self. So, when we help poor and needy people, let us remember that we are not supporting them, for, the Lord is the support to all, but adding to the pile of our own righteousness which will greatly advance our own spiritual aim.

Anupkarine : Charity offered to persons from whom no return benefit is expected, is the highest. The utterly poor, the blind, the lame, the disease, the neglected are fit subjects of charity. It is done out of sheer compassion, and such feelings soften the heart and enable men to understand the secret of oneness of all beings. Gifts offered to the rich and powerful are vitiated by the secret motive of receiving some benefit from them in due time. Hence it is not an act of spiritual merit.

Dese : Gifts offered in holy places, temples and hermitages are the best. 'Kale'-charity given on auspicious and sacred occasions like the eclipse (*grahanam*) Sankranti, or one's own birthday, or anniversary of elders, is the best.

Patre : The recipient of *charity* should be fit and worthy to receive it. The hungry man at the door is the fittest person for '*annadana*'. So the giver should consider the time, place and the person when he offers charity, and he should give it without expecting anything in return.

Question : What is *Sattvic Charity* ?

Answer : (1) It should be decided upon after due consideration. (2) It should be offered to persons from whom no return is expected. (3) It should be in conformity with time, place and the fitness of the recipient.

The Rajasic charity :—

21. यतु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तदानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ 21

*Yat tu pratyupakarartham phalam uddisya vi punah
diyate cha pariklistam tad danam rajasam smritam ॥ 21*

Meaning : प्रत्युपकारार्थं *pratyupakarartham* : with the object of getting some benefit in return, पुनः *punah* : again, फलं *phalam* : fruit, उद्दिश्य वा *uddisya va* : or looking for, परिक्लिष्टं च *pariklistam cha* : and (giving) reluctantly, यत् तु *yat tu* : which indeed, दीयते *diyate* : is given, तद् दानं *tad danam* : that charity, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, स्मृतम् *smritam* : is called.

Substance : That which is given with a view to receive some benefit in return, or looking for fruit or gain, given reluctantly— that charity is called *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The Lord insists on charity, being pure and uncontaminated by hopes and expectations of return benefit here or hereafter. Such calculated gifts come under some kind of commercial transaction. Such charity is *Rajasic*. Such gifts and presents given to persons do not come under *Dana* at all. It is just a social celebration and no more. What we are concerned with here is spiritual purity and realisation. For, this charity done with true compassion, with a heart overflowing with love, as an end itself, as an act of service to God, who is present in the form of suffering humanity is the highest type.

Pariklishtam : Charity is sometimes done grudgingly. The giver is troubled, that he is loosing his property or valuable things. Or he may be acting under pressure from others. Such charity leads nowhere. It is suffering both for the giver and the receiver. Charity should be done out of the fulness of heart, with joy and a high sense of duty. All men should practice this type of *Sattvic Dana*.

Question : What is Rajasic Charity ?

Answer : (1) It is done with a view to receive something in return (2) It is done to get some reward (3) It is done grudgingly and painfully.

Tamasic charity is explained.

22. अदेशकाले यदानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्त्वामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

२२

*Adesakale yad danam apatrebhyas cha diyate ।
asatkritam avajnatam tat tamasam udahritam ॥*

22

Meaning : अदेशकाले *adesakale*:on improper occasions and in improper places अपात्रेभ्यश्च *apatrebhyas cha* : and to unworthy people, असत्कृतं *asatkritam* : without respect अवज्ञातं *avajnatam*:

insultingly, यत् दानं *yat danam* : what charity, दीयते *diyate* : is given, तत् *tat* : that, तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is called.

Substance : Charity, which given on unproper occasions and in unproper places, to unworthy persons, without respect, insultingly is declared to be *Tamasic*.

Commentary : Charity (*Dana*) should be offered with respect to the recipients. To throw coins at beggers in the street, abusing and insulting them, is no charity at all. It degrades the giver and the receiver. Such charity defeats its own purpose, because the Lord declares in this Discourse that anything done without 'Sraddha' is as good as not having been done at all (*asraddhaya hutam dattam.... asat ityuchyate*)

Question : *What is Tamasic Charity ?*

Answer : (1) It is done without any consideration of time and place (2) It is given to unworthy persons (3) It is given without respect, insultingly.

The Lord explains the triple designation of Brahman :-

23. ओं तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणस्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥

२३

*Om tat sad iti nirdeso brahmanastrividhah smritah
brahmanas tena vedas cha yajnas cha vihitah pura ॥ 23*

Meaning : ब्राह्मणः *Brahmanah* : Of Brahman ! ओं हति *Om iti* : thus Om, तत् *tat* : Tat, सत् *sat* : Sat, त्रिविधः *trividhah* : threefold, निर्देशः *nirdesah* : names and designations, स्मृतः *smritah* : has been declared, तेन *tena* : by that, ब्राह्मणः *brahmanah* : Brahmaṇas (Brahmajnanis), वेदाः च *vedah cha* : and Vedas, यज्ञाः च *yajnah cha* : and Yajnas, पुरा *pura* : formerly, विहिताः *vihitah* : created.

Substance : *Om Tat Sat*— this has been declared the triple designation of *Brahman*; by that *Brahmanas*, *Vedas* and *Yajnas* were created formerly.

Commentary : Though *Brahman* has no name and form, yet for the comprehension and worship of the devotees the threefold designation *Om Tat Sat* has been declared. Through these names, *Brahman* the goal is thought of and meditated. Since these three sounds stand for *Brahman*, they contain absolute purity and power, as *Mantra*. In the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*, the *Pranava* and other associated *Mantras* have been explained for the benefit of all spiritual aspirants.

Tasya Vachakah pranavah :

Om is the sound symbol of *Paramatma*.

Tajjapas tadartha Bhavanam (Patanjali)

“The name (*Om*) should be uttered repeatedly and its meaning should be deeply contemplated.”— If there are any errors and mistakes in the practice of *Karma* (*Yajna*, *Japa*, *Dhyana* etc.) all of them are rectified by the utterance of these three symbols of *Brahman* *Om Tat Sat*. Therefore, the utterance of *Om* has become the practice at the beginning of any form of *Karma*. Every *Mantra* has the symbol *Om* prefixed to it. But when the symbols *Om Tat Sat* are uttered, their meaning should be kept in mind, and the Supreme *Brahman* should be meditated through these symbols. All *mantras* acquire power when their meaning and significance are clearly contemplated in the mind.

It is declared that *Vedas* and *Yajnas* were created from this triple designation (*Om Tat Sat*). So it is the origin, the source of the *Vedas*. The very essence of all the *Vedas* is, as it were, distilled into that one symbol ‘*Om*’. So, the utterance of this sacred syllable is equal to the study of all the *Vedas*.

Another interpretation for *Om Tat Sat-Om*: *Para Brahman*; *Tat*: That (*Brahman* alone); *Sat*: is (reality) Every-

thing else in the entire objective universe is only a shadow, unreal (*Mithya*). Therefore the *Mantra Om Tat Sat*, implies the very highest truth of all the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*—*Brahma satyam jagan mithya* (Brahman is real, the universe is unreal). Thus the aspirants should utter this unique *Mantra*, contemplate the reality of Brahman, reject the unreal world, and develop dispassion and knowledge. They should firmly establish themselves in Brahman, the only reality.

Two meanings could be given to *Om Tat Sat* as follows :

- 1) *Om* : Brahman (is); *Tat* : that (Brahman); *Sat* : Reality;
- 2) *Tat* : that; *Sat* : Reality; *Om* : (is) Brahman.

Question : *What is the triple designation of Brahman ?*

Answer : Om, Tat, Sat.

Question : *What is its power ?*

Answer : From that (Brahman) were created Brahmanas (Brahmajnanis), the *Vedas*, and the *Yajnas*.

Question : *What therefore is the source of the *Vedas* etc. ?*

Answer : Brahman designated by the sound symbol Om.

24. तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपः क्रियाः ।

प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥

२४

*Tasmad om ity udahritya yajna dana tapah kriyah ।
pravartante vidhanoktah satatam brahmavadinam ॥ 24*

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmad* : therefore, ब्रह्मवादिनाम् *brahma-vadinam* : of the knowers of Brahman, विधानोक्ताः *vidhanoktah* : declared in the *Sastras*, यज्ञदान तपः *yajnadana tapah* *kriyah* : the acts of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, सततं *satatam* : always, ओं *Om* : *Om*, इति *iti* : thus, उदाहृत्य *udahritya* : uttering, प्रवर्तन्ते *pravartante* : are begun.

Substance : Therefore, the knowers of *Brahm-*n, always begin the various acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity, enjoined by the *Sastras*, with the utterance of the sacred syllable '*Om*'.

Commentary : The importance of the first syllable 'Om' is declared here. Knowing the sacredness and power of this single syllable *Om* as the name of *Brahman*, the sages begin every *Karma*, only after uttering it. And at the end of every *Karma* also the syllable *Om* is uttered. Thus, both at the beginning and at the end of every work, the *Parama Mantra* is repeated by the knowers of the *Vedas*. Whatever defects there may be in the work done, by negligence or ignorance, all these are burnt up by the utterance of *Pranava*, and the little that is done, yields the highest reward.

Satatam : The utterance of *Om* is invariably practised by the learned, because they know that *Brahman* as designated by the symbol *Om*, is the Intelligence power that gives truth and substance to all acts of sacrifice, charity austerity etc. Just as the engine by its power draws all the coaches attached to it, just as the number one gives value to all the zeroes that come after it, even so *Om* (*Brahman*) gives life and light to every sacred act performed by man.

Question : What is the power of *Om* ?

Answer : The knowers of the *Vedas* always begin every sacred act by the utterance of OM the *Pranava* symbol of *Brahman*.

25. तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपः क्रिया॑।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः॒ क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः॑॥ २५

*Tad ity anabhisandhaya phalam yajna tapah kriyah !
dana kriyas cha vividhah kriyante mokshakankshibhih !* 25

Meaning : मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः॑ *Mokshakankshibhih* : by those who aspire for liberation, तत् *tat* : that (*Brahman*), इति *iti* : thus, (*udahritya* : uttering), फलं *phalam* : fruit, अनभिसंधाय *anabhisandhaya* : without desiring, विविधाः॒ *vividhah* : various, यज्ञ तपः॑ *yajnatapahkriyah* : acts of *Yajna* and austerity, दान क्रिया॑ च *danakriyah cha* : and acts of charity, क्रियन्ते *kriyante* : are performed,

Substance : Uttering *Tat* (the name of *Brahman*) without aiming at fruit, acts of *yajna* and austerity, and also acts of charity are performed by the seekers of *Moksha*.

Commentary : It is declared here that the seekers of liberation, perform acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity, without seeking for their fruit. Thus performed without any longing for personal rewards, these acts purify the mind and pave the way for *Moksha*. The renunciation of the fruits of actions is one of the main tenets of the *Gita*, and it is absolutely the pre-condition for Self-realisation.

Moreover, we understand that the aspirants of *Moksha* should perform all these acts of sacrifice, and charity, while remaining unconcerned about their fruit. These acts are not to be abandoned, because they are helpful to purify the mind, and to reach the goal of liberation. The Lord insists on action as the purifying agent indispensable for spiritual realisation. The same idea is repeated in the next discourse also—

*Yajna dana tapah karma
na tyajyam karyam eva tat*

Some are of the view that no good acts should be done because even good acts bind man. The teacher of the *Gita* does not subscribe to this view. On the other hand, He emphasises that good acts should not be abandoned; they should be performed. Therefore, the seekers of liberation should undertake all good actions like sacrifice, charity; austerity etc., purify themselves, and attain *Brahmajnana*.

Question : *How should the seekers of liberation act ?*

Answer : Uttering the name of *Brahman* (OM) they should perform all acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity.

Question : *What about the fruit of action ?*

Answer : They do not seek for it.

Question : *So, what is the way to Moksha ?*

Answer : Uttering the sacred designation of *Brahman* (OM Tat Sat) and performing righteous acts of *Yajna*, *dana*,

etc. without desire for their fruit, is the way to liberation. Having acquired purity by renunciation of the fruits of action, they attain Brahmajnana.

26. सद्गावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ॥
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थं युज्यते । २६

*Sadbhave sadhubhave cha sad ity etat prayujyate ।
prasaste karmani tatha sacchabdhah partha yujyate ॥ 26*

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna, सद्गावे *sadbhave* : in the sense of reality—‘isness’, साधु भावे च *sadhubhave cha* : and in the sense of goodness, सत् इति एतत् *sat iti etat* : This as ‘sat’ (name of Brahman), प्रयुज्यते *prayujyate* : is used, तथा *tatha* : in the same way, प्रशस्ते कर्मणि *prasasti karmani* : in the sense of the highest (most auspicious acts), सत् शब्दः *sat sabdah* : the word ‘Sat’ युज्यते *yujyate* : is used.

Substance : O Arjuna ! the word ‘Sat’ is used in the sense of reality (*Brahman*) and of goodness; and so also the word ‘Sat’ is used in the sense of an auspicious act.

Commentary : The word ‘Sat’ indicates both ‘isness’ and ‘Supremacy.’ For example, ‘Sat+karma=good act; Satbhava=the idea of Reality.’ What is, is *Sat*; what is good is ‘*Sat*’.

Question : How is the word ‘Sat’ used ?

Answer : In the sense of Reality and in the sense of goodness, the word ‘Sat’ is used. It is also used in the sense of auspicious acts.

27. यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ २७

*Yajne tapasi dane cha sthitih sad iti cho'chyate ।
karma chai'va tadarthiyam sad ity eva 'bhidhiyate ॥ 27*

Meaning : यज्ञे *Yajne* : in sacrifice, तपसि च *tapasi cha* : and in austerity, दाने च *dane cha* : and in charity, स्थितिः

sthithi : (reality) steadfastness, सत् *sat* : Sat, इति *iti* : thus, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called, तदर्थीयं कर्म एव च *tadarthiyam karma eva cha* : and also action performed for the sake of Supreme Brahman, सत् इति एव *sat iti eva* : as Sat even, अभिधीयते *abhidhiyate* : is called.

Substance : Steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity, and charity is also called *Sat*; and an action for the sake of the Supreme Brahman (*Tat*) is also named ‘*Sat*’.

Commentary : The Lord affirms the performance of sacrifice, austerity and charity, again and again. Steadfastness in performing these acts itself is the *Brahman*, designated by the word ‘*Sat*’. Thus we can imagine the holiness of these acts. They are ‘*Sat*’. Moreover all auspicious acts done for the sake of the Supreme are also named ‘*Sat*’. All such acts of inner purification, lead to the same goal—*Brahman*. In this manner, *Brahman* whose form is existence (isness) (*Sat*) is to be realised by these acts which are also called ‘*Sat*’. The condition to be carefully noted is that these acts should be performed for the sake of that *Brahman*, renouncing the fruits to God, and with no motive of personal gain. Then only they are ‘*Sat*’ and lead to *Tat* (That). Otherwise the plane of action does not change. They are just like the hundred and one other actions that are usually done for personal profit and bind them to the wheel of *Samsara*. Action in itself cannot bind. It binds when one is attached to its fruits and desire to enjoy worldly benefit through them. Then they are not ‘*Sat*’, because they are practised for the sake of the world (*Asat*) and not for the sake of *Brahman* (*Sat*). The Lord teaches the Divinity of action in this verse. Knowing this, the seekers of truth should perform the best forms of action like *Yajna*, *Tapas* and *Dana*, with the ultimate aim of realising *Brahman* and attaining perfection and freedom.

Question : What is the significance of *Sat* ?

Answer : Steadfastness in the performance of *Yajna*, *Tapas* and *Dana*, is *Sat*. All acts performed for the sake of *Brahman* are *Sat*. Thus the sages transform every good act into *Sat*, by renunciating the fruit of action.

Action performed without faith is 'asat'.

28. अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपसः कृतं च यत् ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थं न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥

२८

*Asraddhaya hutam dattam tapas taptam kritam cha yat ।
asad ity uchyate partha na cha tat pretya no iha ॥* 28

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! अश्रद्धया *asraddhaya* : without faith, हुतं *hutam* : what is sacrificed, दत्तं *dattam* : (what) is given in charity, तप्तं तपः च *taptam tapah cha* : and austerity performed, कृतं च *kritam cha* : and (other) acts done, यत् *yat* : whatever, (*tat* : that) असत् इति *asat iti* : as 'Asat', उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, तत् *tat* : that, प्रेत्य *pretya* : for hereafter (other worlds after death), न *na* : is not, इह च *iha cha* : and for this world, न *na* : is not.

Substance : O Arjuna ! what is sacrificed without faith, what is given in charity (without faith) what austerity is performed (without faith) and whatever acts are done (without faith) they are said to be 'asat'; they do not produce good in this world or in other worlds (after death).

Commentary : Faith (*sraddha*) is the Key-note of success either in worldly life or in spiritual life. Without it nothing is achieved even in small matters concerning every day life. In spiritual life where man tries to ascend to the highest state the need for unswerving faith is greatly emphasised. That is why the Lord insists on faith in many places and He has devoted a whole Discourse to elaborate the theme of faith (*sraddha*). Whatever may be the act performed either *Yajna* or *Dana* or *Tapas*, or other good works, if there is no faith in the heart of the doer, it becomes utterly useless. It does not acquire the status of 'Sat'. It is just 'Asat' (i.e.) something equal to zero, something not performed at all. Such acts bring no good either here or hereafter. A person may gather all materials for preparing food, and yet, if the cook has no '*sraddha*' in what he is doing, the

whole thing goes to waste. So also, in the spiritual field, whatever other qualities the aspirants may possess, if he is void of faith, his austerities, sacrifices and charities bear no fruit at all. It remains only in the realm of the 'Asat' and cannot be transformed into 'Sat'. Therefore it is the duty of all seekers to do their 'sadhana' with faith and realise the goal. Even a little of such 'sadhana' with faith will help to realise the Self. And such 'sadhana' does not at all go in vain. Thus, holding on to faith as the support, propelling force, and the guiding light, man has to march forward towards the ultimate reality, the supreme *Brahman*.

Question : *What will be the effect of Yajna, Dana, and Tapas, if they are performed without faith ?*

Answer : They yield no fruit. They are 'Asat', as acts not performed at all.

Question : *Do they bear fruit in the next world ?*

Answer : No, Neither here nor hereafter do they bring any good.

Question: *What then is man's duty ?*

Answer : Every one should carry on his Sadhana with redoubled confidence and faith, and reach the goal quickly.

इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासुपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशस्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाजुनसंवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभाग योगो नाम
सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Sraddhatraya vibhaga
yogo nama saptadaso'dhyayah ॥*

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the
 Seventeenth Discourse entitled
 Sraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga
 (The Yoga of the division
 of Threefold Faith.)

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ अष्टादशोऽध्यायः

Atha Ashtadasodhyayah

EIGHTEENTH DISCOURSE

मोक्षसन्न्यास योगः

MOKSHASANNYASA YOGA

THE YOGA OF LIBERATION BY RENUNCIATION

I. Title of the Discourse :

Moksha means liberation, liberation from bondage, liberation from the sorrows and delusions of worldly life, liberation from the wheel of birth and death. Such liberation is attained by renunciation (*tyaga*) only.

Tyagenaike amritatvamanush (Kaivalyopanishad)

The words *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa* have both the same meaning and significance. The rejection of attachment for the objective world, detachment from any kind of contact with the world, is *Tyaga*. Renouncing the world, the body and the mind and all such objective phenomena, and taking refuge in *Paramatma* alone, in the Supreme Self, is *Tyaga*. The moment when contact with material and objective universe (*Drisya*) is cut off, man attains the state of *Drik* and remains free and perfect. That is the state of *Moksha*. When the *Kshetra* is renounced, the *Kshetrajana* alone exists, when *Drisya* is renounced, the *Drik* alone remains. In any case, the renunciation (*tyaga*) of the phenomenal

world with all attachments to it is the way to *Moksha*. As this Discourse explains the principle and practise of liberation through renunciation, it is called *Mokshasannyasa Yoga*.

2. Another interpretation :

Moksha is the Supreme Lord; *Sannyasa* means renunciation of all acts along with their fruits to the Lord. Thus *Mokshasannyasa* means the surrendering of all *Karma* and *Karmaphala* to the Supreme Lord.

3. Another interpretation :—

Mokshasannyasa means renunciation of *Moksha*. Would anyone renounce *Moksha*? Are not all men seeking for *Moksha*? True. But who is it that seeks for *Moksha*? — the bound soul. The man in bondage seeks for liberation. But, having understood the Lord's magnificent message of freedom and perfection through the Seventeen Discourses, who can remain still a bound soul? “*Ajonyassasvato'yam purano*”— Thus, knowing the birthless, the deathless, ever-free, ever blissful, omniscient, omnipotent, ever-glorious *Atma*, where is bondage, where is the bound soul? There is no such entity as the *Jiva*, the bound soul. It is fiction. When the truth is known, the *Jiva* understands that his bondage was a myth, that he was never bound, that freedom and perfection are his true self.

In that state, the idea of liberation is gone, because he has discovered that he was not bound at all at any time, and the idea of seeking for liberation is given up because he is already free.

Or, the Lord Himself confers liberation on his disciple and devotee who has put his faith in Him, and gone through the various forms of discipline explained by Him in the Seventeen Discourses. There is no need for the devotee still to aspire for liberation, because it comes to him spontaneously by the grace of the Lord.

All the *Yogas* fully dealt with in the former Discourses are mentioned here briefly. Other ideas not so far touched are included in this last chapter. So this Discourse may be

described as the essence of the Gita or the epitome of the *Gita Sastra*. Having heard directly from the Lord the highest spiritual teaching, who can remain yet a bound soul ? One can renounce the lingering thought of *Moksha* because he now experiences the bliss of freedom and perfection. So, the title *Moksha sannyasayoga* might have been given to this Discourse.

4. The names of the previous Discourses, like *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga*, *Jnanayoga* etc., have been so far interpreted as union with *Paramatma* through *Karma* or *Bhakti* or *Jnana* etc. On the same analogy, *Moksha sannyasa yoga* has to be interpreted as union with *Paramatma* through liberation by renunciation. Thus the theme of the Discourse is— (1) *Moksha* is attained by complete renunciation of every kind of contact with the objective world. (2) Give up even the thought of attaining *Moksha*. (3) Surrender all *Karma* with all its fruits to *Paramatma* by an act of *Tyaga*. (4) By Supreme renunciation which is the very essence of *Moksha*, union with *Paramatma* is attained. These teachings form the sum and substance of this Discourse, and so it is entitled *Mokshasannyasa yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

- 1) The theme of *Tyaga* (1-12)
- 2) Stating the cause for the accomplishment of all *Karma* according to *Samkhya* theory; the non-doership of *Atma* (13-18)
- 3) Knowledge, action, reason, courage, happiness—their threefold aspects. (*Sattva, Rajas and Tamas*) (19-40)
- 4) The duties of the four castes (41-48)
- 5) The means to attain *Brahmasakshatkara*; *Jnananishta* (49-55)
- 6) *Nishkama karma* associated with *Bhakti* (56-60)
- 7) Surrender to the Lord; the essence of the *Gita* (61-66)
- 8) Sanjaya's adoration for the *Gita* (74-78)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one:

The Lord taught Arjuna different *yogas* in the preceding chapters. Now Arjuna wants to know the essence of all of them, and questions the Lord about the meaning and significance of *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa*. The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question. As this is the last Chapter, the substance of all that has been already said is summed up in it.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. सन्यासस्य महाबो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥

१

Arjuna uvacha

Sannyasasya mahabaho tattvam icchami veditum ।
tyagasya cha hrishikesa prithak kesinishudana ॥

1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty armed Krishna ! हृषीकेश *hrishikesa* : controller of the senses ! केशिनिषूदन *kesinishudana* : killer of the demon Kesi ! संन्यासस्य *sannyasasya* : of Sannyasa, त्यागस्य *tyagasya* : of renunciation, abandonment, तत्त्वं *tattvam* : essence (true meaning), पृथक् *prithak* : separately, वेदितुम् *veditum* : to know, इच्छामि *icchami* : I wish.

Substance : Arjuna said : O mighty armed ! I desire to know what *sannyasa* is and what *tyaga* is, in essence. Tell me of them separately O controller of the senses, the slayer of *Kesi*, Krishna !

Commentary : In different contexts in the Gita, the Lord has used the word *Sannyasa* and *Tyaga* several times (3-30; 4-20; 4-41; 9-28; 12-6; 12-11; 12-12; 12-16; 14-25). But the two terms have not been explained distinctly. Hence Arjuna's question.

In the *Upanishads*, the two concepts of *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa* are mentioned as means to liberation.

- (1) *Tyagenaike amritattvamanusuh.*
 (2) *Sannyasayogad yatayas Sudhasattvah.*

Arjuna addresses the Lord thrice in different ways, revealing his high adoration for the Divine Teacher from whom he is learning the ultimate Truth. Such reverence for the teacher of *Brahmavidya* is essential for attaining spiritual illumination. The respectful questioning of Arjuna is what is known as '*pariprasna*'; The proper way to approach the *Guru*, and place one's doubts before him should be known by the disciple. Being pleased with such faithful devotion and reverence, the teacher showers his grace on the disciple, and unravels the mystery of Divine Realisation.

Question : *What is Arjuna's question ?*

Answer : He desired to know from the Lord the distinction between *Sannyasa* and *Tyaga* in their essence.

The Lord's Answer :

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं सन्न्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
 सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥

२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

*Kamyanam karmanam nyasam
 sannyasam kavayo viduh ।
 Sarva karma phalatyagam prahu
 tyagam vichakshanah ॥*

२

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : काम्यानां *kamyanam* : (of) desireful, कर्मणां *karmanam* : of actions, न्यासं *nyasam* : renunciation, सन्न्यासं *sannyasam* : Sannyasam, कवयः *kavayah* : the sages (Jnanis), विदुः *viduh* : understand, सर्वकर्म फलत्यागं *sarvakarma phalatyagam* : abandoning the fruits of all works, त्यागं *tyāgam* : Tyaga, विचक्षणाः *vichakshanah* : the learned, प्राहुः *prahuh* : declare.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said: (O Arjuna !) the sages understand *Sannyasa*, as the renunciation of all desireful actions; the learned declare *tyaga* as the abandoning of fruits of all works.

Commentary : The Gita defines *Sannyasa* as the renunciation of desireful actions; and not, going into forests and mountain-caves in search of some unknown thing. The man who renounces actions prompted by personal desire for enjoyment is practically a *sannyasi*, though he lives with his wife and children as a householder. Similarly, the man who abandons the fruits of actions, is a *Tyagi* whatever may be his social position.

Question : What is Sannyasa ?

Answer : Renunciation of all desireful actions is *Sannyasa*.

Question : What is Tyaga ?

Answer : Abandoning the fruits of all works is *Tyaga*.

Difference of view among the learned about the performance of Karma and its non performance is stated.

3. त्यज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः।

यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्यज्यमिति चापरे ॥

३

*Tyajyam doshavad ity eke karma prahur manishinah ।
yajna dana tapah karma na tyajyam iti cha'pare ।* 3

Meaning : एके *eke* : some, मनीषिणः *manishinah* : learned people (Samkhyas), दोषवत् *doshavat* : as evil, कर्म *karma* : action, त्यज्यं *tyajyam* : should be abandoned, इति *iti* : thus, आहुः *prahuh* : declare, अपरे *apare* : others, यज्ञदान तपः *karma yajnadanatapahkarma*: the acts of sacrifice, austerity, and charity, न त्यज्यं इति च *na tyajyam iti cha* : should not be abandoned and thus, (Prahuh : declare).

Substance : Some philosophers declare that action should be abandoned as an evil; and others (declare) that acts of *yajna*, and *Tapas* should not be abandoned.

Commentary : The *samkhya* philosophers declare that all work (*Karma*) should be abandoned as an evil. They say that work implies the existence of the body, senses, and the mind (*Upadhi*) as the instruments of action. *Atma* is the eternal witness, and hence the *upadhi* is to be discarded as non-existent, and when there is no *upadhi*, no action can take place at all.

Others argue differently. They say that there is no other way except *Karma* to purify the mind. Even bare existence is impossible without *Karma*. So, they declare that righteous work, purifying acts like sacrifice, austerity and charity should be performed. They ought not to be abandoned. Thus there is difference of view about the performance and non-performance of *Karma*. Having stated the difference, the Lord proceeds to give his decisive opinion on this question.

Question : *What is the view of some philosophers about Karma?*

Answer : They (the Samkhyas) say that *Karma* should be abandoned as an evil.

Question : *What is the view of the others ?*

Answer : They declare that righteous acts like sacrifice, austerity, and charity should not be abandoned.

The Lord gives His decisive opinion about the problem of Karma in the following verses.

4. निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तिः ॥

४

*Nischayam srinu me tatra tyage bharata sattama ।
tyago hi purusha vyaghra trividhah samprakirtitah ॥* 4

Meaning : भरत सत्तम *bharata sattamma* : O best of the Bharatas, Arjuna ! तत्र *tatra* : there, त्यागे *tyage* : in abandoning action, (about which there is difference of opinion), मे *me* : My, निश्चयं *nischayam* : decision, शृणु *srinu* : hear, पुरुषव्याघ्र *purushavyaghra* : O best of men ! त्यागः *tyagah* :

Tyaga, त्रिविधः *trividah* : three-fold, संप्रकीर्तिः हि *samprakirtitah* : has been declared, हि : indeed.

Substance : O best of the Bharatas, best of men, Arjuna ! hear now my final decision about (this problematic) *tyaga* (the abandoning of *Karma*); *Tyaga* has been declared to be three-fold.

Commentary : The Lord states the difference very clearly (1) give up all *Karma* as evil, say the philosophers, (2) perform sacrifices, austerities and charity, do not abandon them"— others say.

Nischayam srunu me : "Now listen to my decision", says the Lord. The great Master does not leave the disciple in doubt about any spiritual problem. "This is my decision", says Krishna. Who can have any doubt about the Lord's decisive declaration ? Others, who are subject to *Maya*, may err in their views and opinions, however learned they might be. But how can the Lord, who is the Ruler of *Maya*, who knows all about man, his nature, and his goal, state anything mistaken or erroneous ? When He declares, "Now listen to my decision"— it is final, beyond all doubt. Let everybody understand the Lord as much as he can, let him follow His prescribed conduct as best as he can and transcend the evils of *samsara*. May the Lord be the guiding light in this darkness of ignorance. May his word be the law of conduct for all seekers.

Question : What is the nature of *Tyaga* ?

Answer : It is three-fold (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic)

5. यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यश्चैव तत् ।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥

५

*Yajna dana tapah karma na tyajyam karyam eva tat ।
yajno danam tapas chai'va pavanani manishinam ॥* 5

Meaning : यज्ञदान तपः कर्म *yajnadana tapah karma* : acts of sacrifice, austerity, and charity, न स्याज्यं *na tyajyam* : should

not be abandoned, कार्यै एव *karyam eva* : should be performed indeed, तत् *tat* : that, यज्ञः *yajnah* : sacrifice, दानं *danam* : charity, तपः च एव *tapah cha eva* : and also austerity, मनीषिणां *manishinam* : for the wise (who do not desire the fruits), पावनानि *pavanani* : (are) purifiers.

Substance : Acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity should not be abandoned; they should be performed indeed; sacrifice, charity, and austerity are purifiers for the thoughtful (who do not desire for fruits).

Commentary : The Lord gives his decision on the problem (1) *Na tyajyam* : Acts of *yajna*, *tapas* and *dana*, should not be abandoned. (2) *Karyam eva tat* : they should be performed. '*Na tyajyam*' (should not be abandoned) implies '*karyam vea*' (should be performed). But the Lord emphasises His conclusion by putting it both in the negative and positive forms. We can understand how necessary these righteous acts are for the seekers of liberation. Sometimes we come across some philosophers and religious men who deny these acts on the ground that even good acts are a bondage and lead to further births. Their position is directly opposed to the Lord's will. Righteous work of every kind is encouraged very frequently in the Gita. In this verse, the Lord warns not to abandon good acts like sacrifice, austerity and charity. He commands that they should be performed. Why should there be any doubt and why should man go down into lower planes by ignoring the Lord's command? Performed without longing for the fruits, these good works purify the mind and lead to *Atmajnana*. There is no other way.

Pavanani : These acts are purifiers. That is exactly the reason why the Lord exhorts mankind to perform them.

Manishinam : Thoughtful men who are clear in their minds about the goal to be reached, perform these acts without attachment for their fruits. Others who do not understand the secret of work bind themselves by attachment for the fruits of

Karma. Here the word *yajna* refers to the various types of *yajna* mentioned in the fourth Discourse.

Question : *What is the Lord's conclusion about righteous and sacred works ?*

Answer : They should not be abandoned. They should be performed.

Question : *What is the reason ?*

Answer : They are purifiers. They purify the mind and lead to *Atmajnana*.

Question : *How should they be performed ?*

Answer : Without attachment for their fruits. The thoughtful know the secret of work.

The Lord reiterates his decision.

6. एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थं निच्छितं भत्तमुत्तमम् ॥

*Etanyapi tu karmani sangam tyaktva phalani cha
kartavyani'ti me partha nischitam matam uttamam ॥*

6

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! एतानि कर्माणि अपि तु *etani karmani api tu* : These acts (*Yajna*, *Dana*, *Tapa*) verily also, सङ्गं *sangam* : attachment (idea of doership), फलानि च *phalani cha* : and desire for fruits, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : abandoning, कर्तव्यानीति *kartavyani* : should be performed, इति *iti* : thus, मे *me* : My, निच्छितं *nischitam* : certain, उत्तमम् *uttamam* : best, भत्तम् *matam* : opinion.

Substance : Verily these acts should be performed leaving aside attachment (doership) and the fruits; this is my certain and best opinion.

Commentary : The Lord here explains how acts of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* should be performed. The principle is that the

performer should give up the idea of doership and abandon any desire to enjoy the fruits of work. These two evils (1) the feeling 'I am the doer', and (2) 'I will get this reward for my doing this work'— bind man to the wheel of birth and death. They cause bondage. Therefore, the true seekers should learn to conduct these sacrifices, charities and austerities with a pure heart, giving up everything to the Lord. They attain liberation (*Moksha*). The Lord declares that this His decision is the 'best'. Thus inspired by the Lord, let mankind act according to His command and attain the Highest.

Question : *How should acts of Yajna etc, be performed?*

Answer : Without a sense of doership and without attachment for their fruits—

Question : *What is the Lord's decision?*

Answer : It is the best, conclusively proved by the Lord Himself.

The Lord explains the threefold Tyaga, (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic) and first explains the Tamasic.

7. नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।
मोहात्स्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तिः ॥

७

*Niyatasya tu sannyasah karmano no'papadyate
mohat tasya parityagastamasah parikirtitah*

7

Meaning : नियतस्य *niyatasya* : obligatory (by the *Sastras*); कर्मणः *karmanah* : of action, संन्यासः *sannyasah* : renunciation, तु *tu* : verily, न उपपद्यते *na upapadyate* : is not proper, मोहात् *mohat* : from delusion, तस्य *tasya* : of that (action), परित्यागः *parityagah* : abandoning, तामस *tamasah* : Tamasic (renunciation), परिकीर्तिः *parikirtitah* : is declared.

Substance : Verily, the renunciation of obligatory action (prescribed by the *Sastras*) is not proper; the abandoning of the same from delusion is declared to be Tamasic (renunciation.)

Commentary: The duties of man prescribed by the *Sastras* are intended for the uplift and welfare of mankind in their moral and spiritual life. So, they should not be abandoned. To renounce them by delusion is wrong. When the mind of the *Jiva* is overcast by the clouds of ignorance such thoughts like abandoning *Sastric* injunctions come to him. The Lord has already declared that the *Sastras* are the authority about what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (17-28). Whatever may be the cause, ignorance, negligence or laziness, abandoning the obligatory acts of the *Sastras* is *Tamasic Tyaga*.

It is to be noted that formerly when the Lord has explained the threefold *Yajna*, *Dana* etc., he followed the order- *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. But here the order is reversed, and *Tamasic Tyaga* is first mentioned. The idea evidently is that the Lord wants first to condemn *Tamasic* and *Rajasic Tyaga*, before he comes to the *sattvic* type as the most worthy to be followed.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic Tyaga ?*

Answer : It proceeds from delusion, which causes the abandoning of obligatory action by ignorance.

Question : *Why do people abandon Nityakarma ?*

Answer : Out of ignorance (mohat).

Question : *What type of men are they who abandon abligratory duties ?*

Answer : They are deluded and ignorant men.

Rajasic Tyaga is explained.

8. दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्यजेत् ।
स कृत्वा राजसं यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥

8

*Duhkham ity eva yat karma kayaklesa bhayat tyajei
sa kritva rajasam tyagam nai'va tyagaphalam labhet ॥ 8*

Meaning : यत् कर्म *yat karma* : what action, कायक्लेश भयात् *kayaklesabhayat* : from fear of bodily discomfort, दुःखं इति॒ एव

duhkham iti eva : as also painful, त्यजेत् *tyajet* : abandons, सः *sah* : he, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, त्यागम् *tyagam* : renunciation, कृत्वा *kritva* : having done, त्यागफलं *tyagaphalam* : the fruit of renunciation, न लभेत् एव *na labhet eva* : not even obtains.

Substance : He who abandons obligatory duties from fear of bodily discomfort, as painful (to the body), thus does *Tamasic* renunciation, and obtains not the fruit of renunciation.

Commentary : If the *Tamasic Tyagi* abandons action by ignorance, the *Rajasic tyagi* does so from fear of bodily discomfort. He is lazy and the dullness of the body overpowers him, preventing him from doing the practices. It is true that action which is ultimately beneficial is at first difficult to follow. So, the man of weak will-power neglects it from sheer fear of bodily pain. He renounces them as useless or beyond his power to practise. To get up at the auspicious time of *Brahmamuhurta* (4 A.M.), taking a good bath in cold water in the river or from a well, practising the vow of celibacy, and such other methods may appear difficult in the beginning, but in the long run, they yield the highest reward of joy and happiness, health and strength. The *Rajasic Tyagi* is foregoing a great good for a slight cause. Such is the power of the flesh over the spirit. We find that every great man in any field has mastered the body and made it a simple instrument for useful work. To abandon obligatory duties on account of bodily pain is nothing short of sacrificing the spirit for the sake of the body.

The Teacher of the *Gita* declares that the *Rajasic Tyagi* does not obtain the merit of renunciation by such abandonment of action.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic Tyaga ?*

Answer : Abandoning obligatory duties because they are painful to the body is *Rajasic Tyaga*.

Question : Does the Rajasic Tyagi get the merit of renunciation?

Answer : No. He does not obtain the merit of renunciation, because it is not renunciation in the true spirit.

Sattvic Tyaga is now explained.

9. कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्मं नियतं क्रियतेर्जुन ।

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यगः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ ९

Karyam ity eva yat karma niyatam kriyate'rjuna ।

sangam tyaktva phalam chai'va sa tyagah sattviko matah ॥ 9

Meaning : अर्जुन arjuna : O Arjuna ! नियतं niyatam : prescribed by the Sastras, यत् कर्मं yat karma : whatsoever work, कार्यमित्येव karyam iti eva : ought to be done indeed, सङ्गं sangam : attachment, फलं चैव phalamcha eva : and also fruit, त्यक्त्वा tyaktva : having abandoned, क्रियते kriyate : is performed, सः त्यगः sah tyagah : that renunciation, सात्त्विकः sattvikah : Sattvic, मतः matah : is regarded.

Substance : “This ought to be done as prescribed by the *Sastras*”— thus knowing, whatsoever work is done without attachment and desire for fruit, that renunciation is regarded as *Sattvic*.

Commentary : From this verse, one should clearly understand that renunciation of attachment and desire for fruit, is *Sattvic* renunciation, and not certainly the abandoning of obligatory duties. The word ‘*karyam*’ is used to show that prescribed *sastraic* duties ought to be performed. The ignorant man neglects them from delusion, and the *Rajasic* man abandons them from fear of bodily pain. The *Sattvic* man understands the real value of the duties prescribed in the *Sastras*, and performs them inspite of bodily discomfort, without a sense of doership, without attachment for their rewards. This type of renunciation is true *Tyaga*, and by such *Tyaga*, man attains purity and liberation.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic Tyaga ?*

Answer : Knowing that certain duties are prescribed by the Sastras, to perform them without attachment and desire for fruits, is Sattvic renunciation.

The Sattvic Tyagi is indifferent to the painful or pleasurable nature of karma.

10. न द्वेष्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जने ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥

१०

*Na dvesty akusalam karma kusale na' nushajjate
tyagi sattvatasamavisto medhavi chinnasamsayah ॥*

10

Meaning : सत्त्वसमाविष्टः *sattvasamavishthah* : possessed by purity, मेधावी *medhavi* : intelligent, छिन्नसंशयः *chinnasamsayah* : all doubts cut asunder, त्यागी *tyagi* : the man of renunciation (without attachment and desire), अकुशलं कर्म *akusalam karma* : disagreeable, painful, desireful action, न द्वेष्य *na dyeshti* : does not hate, कुशले *kusale* : to an agreeable one without desire, न अनुषज्जने *na anushajjate* : is not attached, has no personal inclination.

Substance : The Sattvic Tyagi possessing purity, intelligent and with all doubts cut asunder, does not hate any disagreeable work nor is he attached to an agreeable one.

Commentary : The preponderance of *Sattva* (purity) in man lifts him above the pairs of opposites, attachment and aversion. He is equal-minded towards all action. He does not abandon an action because it is painful nor does he immerse himself in action because it is pleasing and agreeable to him. When it is said that he has no aversion to desireful or painful actions, it does not mean that he loves them. He is just indifferent to them like the Jivanmukta, and carries the prescribed duties without any attachment for their fruits. He has no sense of doership, and he is not contaminated by them.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic Tyagi ?*

Answer : He possesses perfect purity. He is intelligent. He is free from all doubts. He performs all actions both Sakama and Nishkama without being attached to them in any way. He has no aversion or attachment to the one or the other.

He alone is called a Tyagi who renounces the fruits of work.

11. न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११

*Na hi dehabhrita sakyam tyaktum karmany aseshatah ।
yas tu karmaphala tyagi sa tyagi 'ty abhidhiyate ॥ 11*

Meaning: कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, अशेषतः *aseshatah* : completely, त्यक्तुं *tyaktum* : to give up, देहभृता *dehabhita* : for the embodied being, न शक्यं हि *na sakyam hi* : is not indeed possible, यः तु *yah tu* : but who, कर्मफलत्यागी *karmaphalatyagi* : renounces the fruits of work, सः *sah* : he, त्यागी *tyagi* : renouncer, इति *iti* : thus, अभिधोयते *abhidhiyate* : is called.

Substance : Indeed, it is not possible for the embodied being to give up all actions completely; He who renounces the desire for the fruits of action, is called (the true) *Tyagi* (renouncer).

Commentary : The embodied being has to perform action if only for the maintenance of the body. It is impossible for any one to renounce action altogether. Therefore, working without concern for any reward flowing from it, is the best method of life. He is not bound by action. He alone is called the real *Tyagi*. We understand clearly that *Tyaga* definitely means the renunciation of the fruits of action and not the actions. There should not be any sense of doership; there should not be any secret longing to enjoy the fruits of work. No one can be a *tyagi* by simply giving up work, nor can he obtain the merit of

renunciation—Performing all works and yet unconcerned with fruits- this is the characteristic feature of the true *Tyagi*. Abandoning external objects is not *Tyaga*. The abandoning of the mental attitude, the internal thought of enjoyment, is the 'sine quo non' of true *Tyaga*. Therefore, the Lord's command is to carry out all prescribed duties in a selfless detached spirit.

Question : *Is it possible to abandon acts altogether ?*

Answer : No. It is not possible for the embodied being.

Question : *Who is a Tyagi ?*

Answer : He who renounces the longing for the fruits of action is a *Tyagi* (and not he who abandons action).

The Lord explains how man is free from the bondage of Karma by giving up the fruits of actions.

12. अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।

भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ १२

Anistam istam misram cha trividham karmanah phalam'
bhavaty atyaginam pretya na tu sannyasinam kvachit ॥ 12

Meaning : अनिष्टं *anistam* : evil, painful, disagreeable (causing the births), इष्टं *ishtam* : good, pleasing, agreeable (causing high birth in Heaven), मिश्रं च *misram cha* : and mixed (causing human birth in the world), त्रिविधं *trividham* : threefold, कर्मणः *karmanah phalam* : the fruit of action, अत्यागिनां *atyaginam* : to those who have not renounced the fruits of action, प्रेत्य *pretya* : after death, भवति *bhavati* : accrues, संन्यासिनां तु *sannyasinam tu* : but to those who have renounced the fruits of action, क्वचित् *kvachit* : at any time, न *na* : does not (accrue).

Substance : The threefold fruits of action, evil, good and mixed accrue to the non-renouncer after death; but never to the renouncer.

Commentary : The Lord further elaborates the theme of non-attachment in action. This verse is an answer to those who argue that action should be abandoned because it causes future birth. To whom does *Karma* cause bondage ? Not for all; *Karma* binds only those who have a sense of doership (*Kartritva bhavana*) who have a desire for enjoying the fruits of work. But for those who have abandoned both these, *Karma* has no power to bind them in any way.

Threefold are the fruits action. Evil actions cause low births like beasts and reptiles etc. Good actions cause higher births in the *Devaloka*. And action mixed with evil and good produce the human birth. Such is the effect of action according to its nature. But these effects are felt only by those who are attached to work. They reap the good and evil effects of their actions in future birth after death.

But these effects are neutralised by the wise man who has no desire for enjoyment either here or hereafter, who has therefore no attachment for the fruits of actions, and who is freed from the delusion of egotism and doership. The word '*kyachit*' implies that at no time is the *Tyagi* affected by the work which he has performed. He attains *Moksha* by the very power of his renunciation. There is no question of a future birth for him. The whole machinery of birth and death stops for him, or he has got out of the terrible wheel of *samsara*. How wonderful is the reward of *Nishkamakarma*! How the Lord loves this holy path to self-realisation !

The Lord explains the five factors which lead to success in action.

13. पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥

१३

Panchai' tani mahabaho karanani nibodha me ।

Samkhye kritante proktani siddhaye sarvakarmanam ॥ 13

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna !

सर्वकर्मणाम् *sarvakarmanam* : of all actions, सिद्धये *siddhaye* : for

the accomplishment, कृतान्ते *kritante* : at the end of all actions, सांख्ये *sankhye* : in the Vedanta Sastra, प्रोक्तानि *proktani* : as declared, एतानि *etani* : these, पञ्चकारणाणि *panchakaranani* : five courses, मे *me* : from Me, निबोध *nibodha* : know.

Substance : Learn from Me, O Arjuna ! the five courses for the accomplishment of actions, as declared in the *Sankhya Sastra* at the end of *Karmakanda*.

Commentary : *Krita+ante=kritante*, (i.e.)— the *Vedanta* that is declared at the end of *Karma Kanda*. The word ‘*kritante*’ is used in the sense that when the knowledge of the Self arises, all actions terminate. In the *Vedanta Sastra*, (in the *Upanishads*), *Atma* is declared to be distinct from and transcending *Prakriti*, and all actions are performed by *Prakriti* only, and *Atma* remains as the eternal witness. The *Vedanta* is the termination of all *Karma*. “*Sarvam Karmakhilam Partha Jnane Parisamaptyate*”— With the knowledge of the Self all actions come to end, all *Karma* culminates in *jnana*. When the *Atmic* state is realised, the mind, senses and the body cease to exist, and so there cannot be any action whatsoever. That state is beyond *Karma*. Action can take place only at the lower planes of body and mind. When there are transcended by *Atma-jnana*, action automatically comes to an end. That is the reason why the word ‘*Kritanta*’ is used for the *Vedanta Sastra*, which teaches *Atmajnana*.

Question : How many factors are needed for the accomplishment of *Karma* ?

Answer : Five.

Question : Where is this taught ?

Answer : In Sankhya, the *Vedanta Sastra* in which knowledge of *Atma* is revealed.

The five causes are explained.

14. अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथविवधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्वेष्टा देवे चैकम् पञ्चमम् ॥

१४

*Adhishtanam tatha karta karanam cha prithagvidham ।
vividhas cha prithakcheshta daivam chai'va'tra panchamam ॥ 14*

Meaning : अत्र *atra* : in the accomplishment of Karma, अधिष्ठानं *adhishtanam* : body (the seat), तथा *tatha* : also, कर्ता *karth* : doer, पृथग्विधम् *prithagvidham* : various, करणं च *karanam cha* : and senses, विविधाः *vividhah* : various, पृथक् *prithak* : different, चेष्टाः च *cheshtah cha* : and functions, पञ्चमम् *panchamam* : the fifth, दैवं चैव *daivam cha eva* : and indeed the presiding deity.

Substance : In the accomplishment of *Karma*, the five factors are (1) the (seat) body, (2) the doer, (3) the various senses, (4) the various and different functions, and (5) the presiding deity, the fifth.

Commentary : The senses are twelve including the five bodily instruments (*karmendriyas*), the five senses (*jnanendriyas*), mind and intellect. Each of these has different and distinct functional capacities, and they are spoken of here as ‘*Cheshta*’. The word ‘*Daivam*’ stands for the presiding deities of these senses, or the unseen forces of past actions performed already and coming to function now.

Question : What are the five causes for the accomplishment of Karma ?

Answer : (1) The body (2) the doer (3) the various senses (4) the various functions of the senses (5) the presiding deity.

For any act performed, these five are said to be the causes.

15. शरीरवाञ्छानोभियंत्कर्मे प्रारभते नरः ।

स्याद्य वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥

१५

*Sariravangmanobhir vati karma prarabhate narah ।
syadyam va viparitam va panchai'te tasya hetayah ॥ 15*

Meaning : नरः *narah* : man, शरीर वाच्यनोभिः *sariravangmanobhih* : with body, speech and mind, न्यायं वा *nyayyam va* : either prescribed by the *Sastras* (action), विपरीतं वा *viparitam va* : or opposed to the *Sastras* (action), यत्कर्म् *yat karma* : whatever action, प्रारभते *prarabhate* : starts, तस्य *tasya* : of that (action), एते पञ्च *ete pancha* : these five, हेतवः *hetavah* : (are) causes.

Substance : Whatever action a man performs with his body, speech and mind, whether right (according to the *Sastras*) or the reverse (opposed to the *Sastras*), these five are its causes.

He who thinks of Atma, the witness as the doer, is an ignorant man.

16. तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान् स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥

१३

*Tatrai'vam sati kartaram atmanam kevalam tu yah ।
pasyatyakrita buddhitvan na sa pasyati durmatih ॥* 16

Meaning : तत्र *tatra* : here (concerning action), एवं सति *evam sati* : this being so (the five having the causes of action), यः *yah* : who, अकृत बुद्धित्वात् *akritabuddhitvat* : owing to untrained understanding, केवलं आत्मानं *kevalam atmanam* : the Self alone, (free from attachment to the body and mind), तु *tu* : verily, कर्तारं *kartaram* : (as) the doer, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees (thinks), सः *sah* दुर्मतिः *durmatiḥ* : that man of perverted intelligence, न पश्यति *na pasyati* : does not know (the Atma, and the true nature of Karma).

Substance : This being so, (the five factors being the cause of all *Karma*) whoever, on account of untrained understanding, thinks the Self as the doer, he, the man of perverted intelligence, does not know the truth about the nature of *Atma* or the nature of *Karma*.

Commentary : The Self is not the doer of any action. The five above mentioned factors are the causes of all action. The Self is witness, one, without any vehicles *upadhis*, detached from everything, matter, speech and thought. The Lord describes the ignorant man who imagines the Self to be the doer, by the attributes '*akrita buddhi*' and '*durmati*'. His understanding is confused because he has not trained it to comprehend the truth by the study of the *Sastras*. He is a man of perverted intelligence (*durmati*). Learning and scholarship, mastery of all worldly sciences and arts do not confer *Atmajnana*, and so they remain in the realm of '*Avidya*' and cannot perceive the truth of *Atma*. They are blind, having eyes; they are perversed having intelligence; they are men of little understanding, having read many things in the world. They are groping in darkness, in spite of all the light that they have gathered about the world. The Self is not understood by them. *Atmajnana* alone clears all the doubts and perversities of the body and mind. Nothing can take man beyond *Samsara* except Self-realisation. All the name and fame that man acquires is so much rubbish compared to the realisation of Truth, for truth alone confers true joy, freedom and perfection. The Lord is pleased with those who strive to know the truth. To win popularity among fellow beings is an ordinary thing, and to win the grace of God is a higher achievement.

The Lord is perfectly clear when he declares the purity and uncontaminated perfection of *Atma*. To understand it and realise *Atma* is the duty of all aspirants.

To consider *Atma* as the doer is evil; the cause of evil is the mind not trained by the study of the *Sastras*; the fruit of evil is the blindness of ignorance.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : Alone, uncontaminated, the witness is *Atma*.

Question : *Why does man think that Atma is the doer ?*

Answer : By delusion, and because the mind is not illumined by the study of the *Sastras*.

Question : *What is his condition ?*

Answer : The condition of a blind man who is not able to see the light.

Freed from egoism and the sense of doership, man is not bound by Karma.

17. यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमाँलोकान् हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥

१७

*Yasya na 'hamkrito bhavo buddhir yasya na lipyate'
hatva 'pi sa iman lokan na hanti na nibadhyate॥* 17

Meaning : यस्य *yasya* : to whom, अहंकृतः *भावः ahamkritah* *bhavah* : the idea of 'I am the doer', न *na* : is not, यस्य *yasya* : to whom, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : the intellect (the inner organ), न लिप्यते *na lipyate* is not tainted (by objects and functions), सः *sah* : he, इमान् लोकान् *iman lokan* : these worlds, all the beings, हत्वा अपि *hatva api* : having slain even, न हन्ति *na hanti* : does not slay, न निबध्यते *na nibadhyate* : is not bound (by the evil of action).

Substance : Who is free from the egoistic notion ("I am the doer"), whose intellect is not tainted (by contact with objects and functions), though having slain all the beings, he does not slay, nor is he bound (by the evil of action).

Commentary : It is declared here that the man who has no sense of doership ("I am doing this or that"), whose intellect is not contaminated by anything material, is not affected by evil though he slays all the beings in the world. This verse has to be understood correctly and interpreted very carefully. Otherwise man verily falls into the bottomless pit of ignorance.

The cause of *Karmic* bondage is the sense of doership, personal agency in all actions. The attachment of the deluded intellect to material objects is also the cause of bondage. When

the false sense of agency and attachment are left behind, action has no power to bind man. Good and evil arising from action cannot affect man. This truth is declared here. It certainly does not mean that man can kill people and escape punishment. How can the man of *Atmasakshatkara*, who sees every thing as *Atma*, who knows that he is not the doer, who is unattached, who is established in the self, and who looks upon all beings as his own Self, cause injury to others? He thinks and works for the well-being of all beings. He becomes '*sarva bhutahiteratah*'. If anybody thinks and acts otherwise, he is not a Self-realised sage.

In fact, man is not the body, and not the mind. He is *Atma*. When there is no feeling of doership and egotism, he has his life and being in the Self. Thus he is not touched by actions performed by the intellect or the body. Therefore though he slays others, he is not the slayer. This Truth is declared emphatically. The Lord wants to emphasise the absolutely pure and perfect nature of *Atma*, which is independent of every phenomenal change.

Good and evil arise from action done with a feeling of personal doership. Descending from the *Atmic* state, man identifies himself with the mind and body, and hence he gets bound by his own actions. Freed from this delusion, man knows that he is the reality *Atma*, the eternal actionless Self. There is no '*punya*' or '*papa*' for him. He has gone beyond good and evil. Any amount of good does not bind him, and so also no amount of evil can come to him. For that man the little 'I' is dead and gone, and so there is neither the doer nor the enjoyer.

Arjuna, being a *Kshatriya*, has the duty prescribed by the *Sastras* to protect the righteous and destroy the wicked. The Kauravas should be slain for their unrighteousness. The Lord says to the warrior-disciple, "O Arjuna! fight the battle and slay the Kauravas, but do so knowing fully that you are not the personal agent of action, that you are in truth the Eternal Self. Then you shall remain free". Thus here is the Lord's reply to Arjuna's original doubt- "How can I kill my own people?"

The freedom of *Atma* from all good and evil is the Truth. Those who have reached that state have gone beyond both. And yet, let it be firmly known that when the *Atmajnani* acts using the lower instruments, his actions are full of compassion for mankind. His hands do only good work. His mind thinks only good thoughts. His lips speak only good words, benedictions for all. He acts, if he so desires, for the welfare of all beings. Here is the real test of *Atmajnana*. Evil cannot dare come anywhere near him. He is like the lion of whom the lower beasts are afraid and come not near. Let the aspirants bear this clearly in mind and test their knowledge by the purity of their thoughts and actions. Let them not fall into the error of claiming *Atmic* freedom and plunging into the evils of sensual enjoyments.

Question: *What is the cause of evil and bondage ?*

Answer : (1) Egotism— “I am the doer”, (2) attachment of the intellect with material objects.

Question: *What is the way to escape from bondage ?*

Answer : To be free from the sense of doership and attachment to sense objects, is the way to Self-realisation.

The cause and foundation of action are explained.

18. ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

करणं कर्म कर्तृति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥

१८

*Jnanam jneyam parijnata trividha karmachodana ।
karanam karma karte'ti trividhah karmasamgrahah ॥ 18*

Meaning : कर्म चोदना *karmachodana* : the impulse for action, the cause for action, ज्ञानं *jnanam* : knowledge, ज्ञेयं *jneyam* : the knowable, परिज्ञाता *parijnata* : the knower, त्रिविधा *trividha* : threefold, कर्मसंग्रहः *karmasamgrahah* : basis of action, करणं *karanam* : organs of action (internal and external), कर्म *karma* : action, कर्ता *karta* : the doer, agent, इति *iti* : thus, त्रिविधः *trividhah* : threefold.

Substance : Knowledge, the knowable, and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

Question : *What is the threefold impulse to action ?*

Answer : (1) Knowledge (2) the Knowable, and (3) the Knower.

Question : *What is the threefold basis of action ?*

Answer : (1) the organs (2) the action, and (3) the agent or the doer.

The threefold (sattvic, rajasic and tamasic) aspects of knowledge, action and agent are explained.

19. ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥

१९

*Jnanam karma cha karta cha tridhai'va gunabhedatah ।
prochyate gunasankhyane yathavacchrinu tanyapi ।* 19

Meaning : गुणसंख्याने *gunasankhyane* : in the science of the Gunas of Sankhya Sastra, ज्ञानं *jnanam* : knowledge, कर्म च *karma cha* : and action, कर्ता च *kartacha* : and agent, गुण भेदतः *gunabhedatah* : according to the distinction of Gunas, त्रिधैव *tridhaiva* : threefold also, प्रोच्यते *prochyate* : are declared, तानि अपि *tani api* : them also, यथावत् *yathavat* : as the Sastras declare, श्रुणु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : Knowledge, action and agent are declared to be threefold according to the distinction of *Gunas* in the *Sankhya Sastras*; hear them also as declared in the *Sastras*.

Question : *O ! what is the Lord explaining the difference ?*

Answer : (1) Knowledge (2) Action and (3) Agent.

Question : *Where is the distinction explained ?*

Answer : In the Sankhya Sastra, the science of the Gunas.

Taking up knowledge, the Lord first explains Sattvic knowledge.

20. सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ २०

*Sarvabhuteshu yenai'kam bhavam avyayam ikshate !
avibhaktam vibhakteshu tajjnanam viddhi sattvikam॥ 20*

Meaning : विभक्तेषु *vibhakteshu* : in the separated, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings (Chara and Achara), एकं *ekam* : one, अव्ययं *avyayam* : indestructible, भावं *bhavam* : Atma, existence of the Lord, येन *yena* : by which knowledge, अविभक्तं *avibhaktam* : the unseparated (one), इक्षते *ekshate* : sees (knows), तत् ज्ञानं *tat jnanam* : that knowledge, सात्त्विकम् *sattvikam* : as Sattvic, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance: In all the beings separated into different categories, that knowledge which sees the one inseperable Reality (*Atma*), know it to be *Sattvic Jnana*.

Commentary : To the physical eye and the deluded mind, the beings of the world both moving and non-moving appear distinct and separate from one another. They are divided into separate categories. But to man in whom the knowledge is opened, the one inseparable and indivisible *Brahman* alone appears as the one Reality pervading all. That knowledge by which this oneness is dicovered, known and seen is called *Sattvic Jnana*.

Sarvabhuteshu : The Lord (*Atma*) is present in all beings of the universe. So, even the lowest of beings have the Lord as their back-ground and foundation. Knowing it every one can reach the Supreme. Though the wave is small and weak, yet the foundation for it is the mighty ocean. Merging in it, the little wave realises its mighty reality. So also, the little man, who is thinking of himself as low, weak, wretched and miserable, can realise his immeasurable power and knowledge by merging in *Atma*, the one reality behind everything in the universe. Know that you are *Atma*, and you are freed from all limitations.

The wise man sees the ocean behind the millions of waves big and small. He sees the clay in the millions of earthern pots of different shapes and sizes. He sees the string behind the hundreds of colourful flowers in the garland. This is the perception of the Reality behind the appearances. By this knowledge, man sees the one indivisible ocean of Sachidananda throughout the universe. In the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the oceans and mountains and rivers and trees, in men and women, in all the animals, birds and all beings moving and immoving, he sees the one Self, *Atma*, the Lord. In the diversity, he sees the unity; in the perishing, he sees the Indestructible; in the insentient matter, he sees the one consciousness; in the changing, he sees the changeless. This is *Sattvic Jnana*. From this we understand that ignorance is the cause of the perception of manifoldness. Knowledge sees the One, ignorance the many.

Three attributes are mentioned referring to *Atma*. (1) One, (2) Indestructible (3) Indivisible. The difference between *Atma* and the objective universe is given below.

<i>Atma</i>	<i>Objects</i>
(1) One (ekam)	(1) Manifold
(2) Indestructible (Avyayam)	(2) Subject to death
(3) Indivisible (Avibhaktam)	(3) Separated

People speak of different kinds of knowledge in the world, as knowledge of physics or mathematics, or the arts like painting and architecture etc, of the administrative and political systems, and so on. This knowledge does not take one beyond the objective world. The unity is not perceived or apprehended by this knowledge. What science can teach people to know the one Indivisible, Indestructible *Atma*? What science can take them beyond the reach of death and destruction? What science can help them to see the Eternal and Immortal in this constantly changing universe? No material science can open this eye of knowledge. It is *Brahma Vidya* alone that will enable men to see the world as it really is. It is *Brahmajnana* alone which enables men to know what they really are, and which will shatter the binding veil of ignorance and delusion. Of what use is all the

knowledge of the world without knowing the basis, the foundation of all beings? So, let all aspire for that knowledge which alone will unravel the insurmountable mystery of life and death, and which will take beyond the horrible shadows of destruction whereunder all people are moving with fear and sorrow. Let us not be content with a little bit of intellectual culture and imagine it to be the be all and end all of life. All other kinds of knowledge cannot give a person the Absolute Truth. As a result, man lives and dies in *samsara*, and goes through the endless suffering of birth and death again and again.

The *Upanishads* declare the same truth.

"Mrityo'ssamrityumapnoti ya iha naneva pasyati"

"He who sees here the manifold only goes from death to death".

Therefore, whatever being we see, we should try to go beyond the external name and form, and look at the reality, *Atma*, invariably present in all beings. To see only the object, its shape, form and size, is the lowest, to see its qualities is a better developed vision, and to see the *Atma*, the basis and the foundation of all objects, is the highest vision. By the last, man realises the Self in himself and in all beings. This *Sattvic Jnana* is the highest state, and the ultimate goal of all spiritual endeavour.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic Jnana ?*

Answer : It is knowledge which enables man to see the one in the manifold, to see the eternal in the perishable, and to see the inseparable in the separated.

Question : *Where is God ?*

Answer : In all beings (moving and unmoving)

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It is one, indestructible and indivisible.

Question : *Is the manifold real ?*

Answer : No, oneness is the Reality, like water in the waves, like clay in different pots, like gold in different jewels, and like string in the garland.

Rajasic Jnana is explained.

21. पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।

वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥

२१

*Prithaktvena tu yajjnanam nanabhavan prithagvidhan ।
vetti sarveshu bhuteshu tajjnanam viddhi rajasam ॥ 21*

Meaning : यत् ज्ञानं *yat jnanam* : which knowledge, सर्वेषु *sarveshu* : in all, भूतेषु *bhuteshu* : beings, पृथग्विधान् *prithagvidhan* : of distinct kinds, नाना भावान् *nanabhavan* : various entities, पृथक्त्वेन तु *prithaktvena tu* : as different from one another, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, तत् ज्ञानं *tat jnanam* : that knowledge, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : That knowledge which sees in all beings various entities (*Jivas*) of distinct kinds as different from one another, know that knowledge as *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The knowledge which is guided by separateness is *Rajasic*. By this knowledge one sees only separateness everywhere as—"He is good, he is bad, he is rich, he is poor, this is dog, this is elephant; this is water, that is stone" etc—Thus the idea of separateness persists everywhere for the *Rajasic* man. This knowledge is the cause of all friction and conflict everywhere. When mankind is separated by religion, race, nationality, political doctrines, the result is conflict as we see it everywhere in the world. This knowledge is not knowledge, because it does not enable one to see the underlying unity of all beings. The *Advaitic* vision of the universal existence of *Atma* is the true vision, and it is this vision only which can put an end to all frictions and conflicts in the world. So long as man is contented with *Rajasic* knowledge and thinks of it as the only knowledge available for mankind, the world would be torn asunder by conflicting elements fighting for superiority and supremacy over one another.

Question : What is the nature of *Rajasic-jnana* ?

Answer : Seeing the manifold one entity as different from another, is Rajasic knowledge.

Tamasic-jnana is explained:

22. यत्तु कृत्त्ववदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्त्वामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

22

*Yat tu kritsnavad ekasmin karye saktam ahaitukam ।
atattvarthavad alpam cha tat tamasam udahritam ॥ 22*

Meaning : यत्तु *yat tu* : which (knowledge) verily, एकस्मिन् कार्ये *ekasmin karye* : in one such act (body or image), कृत्त्ववत् *kritsnavat* : as all (that alone in all), सक्तं *saktam* : attached, अहैतुकम् *ahaitukam* : without any reason, अतत्त्वार्थवत् *atattvarthavat* : without foundation in Truth (not knowing the Truth), अल्पं च *alpam cha* : and trivial (producing trivial result), तत् *tat* : that (knowledge), तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is declared.

Substance : The knowledge by which, man clings to one thing (body or image) as if it were the whole, without reason and foundation in Truth, and which is trivial, that is declared to be *Tamasic (Jnana)*.

Commentary : *Tamasic Jnana* is narrow and blind. The man attaches himself to one single thing considering it to be the whole. Such narrowness is the result of ignorance. Attached to money, the greedy man considers it as the whole of the universe; attached to lust, the immoral man clings to the body as the whole of life; attached to some doll, the ignorant man considers it as the whole Truth. Thus we find that a single thing occupies the entire being. Besides, it is a trivial thing producing very little result. It is a thing which has no basis in Truth. Thus *Tamasic jnana* is narrow and blind to Truth. He sees matter and thinks there is nothing beyond it.

Rajasic knowledge is higher; He sees many things distinctly and separately. His vision goes deeper into the qualities of each thing which divides one from another. But he has not yet arrived at the basic Reality. He loses himself in multiplicity and manifoldness and sees separateness everywhere.

Sattvic knowledge reveals the basic Truth of the One Indivisible *Atma* pervading the whole universe. In all things, he sees the One *Atma*. The external coatings of matter, colour, size, qualities are all transcended and the one *Sat* appears to him in everything. Arriving at this knowledge of Oneness, man knows the ultimate truth and is no longer deluded. He attains *Atma*, and goes beyond the cycle of birth and death. In the midst of the many, who sees the One,-he alone sees (Knows the Truth about himself and everything in the universe.)

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic jnana ?*

Answer : Holding one single thing and thinking of it as the whole is Tamasic jnana. (For example, seeing the body and thinking of it as the whole Truth). There is no rational judgment behind this knowledge. It is not founded on Truth. It is trifling, producing trivial result.

Sattvic karma is explained.

23. नियंतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्रेष्टः कृतम् ।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तस्माच्चिकमुच्यते ।

२३

*Niyatam sangarahitam aragadveshatah kritam ।
aphalaprepsuna karma yat tat sattvikam uchyate ।*

23

Meaning : नियंतं *niyatam* : ordained by the Sastras. यत् कर्म *yat karma* : which action, अफल प्रेप्सुना *aphalaprepsuna* : by one not desiring the fruit, सङ्गरहितम् *sangarahitam* : without the sense of doership, अरागद्रेष्टः *aragadveshatah* : free from desire and aversion, कृतम् *kritam* : is performed, तत् *tat* :

that (Karma), सत्त्विकम् *sattvikam* : Sattvic, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : Ordained by the *Sastras*, that action, performed by one not desirous of the fruit, without attachment, free from love and hate, is called *Sattvic karma*.

Commentary : Wherever the word ‘*karma*’ is used, the Lord invariably employs the attribute ‘*niyatam*’ or its equivalent, thereby emphasising the authority of the *Sastras* about all the activities of mankind. No one should consider his personal opinion as the measure of Truth. Every seeker should know what is ordained in the *Sastras*, examine it by personal experience, and then act rightly in all matters. Half-digested notions, fanciful theories, personal likes and dislikes, are now a days taken as basic truths by individual members in society. Independent judgment has come down to the level of personal feelings of men who are subject to a hundred vile passions and prejudices. So, without deluding oneself by clinging to his own views, notions, and opinions, men should act according to the *Sastras*, as the *Sastras* embody the combined wisdom of sages who have gone beyond ‘*raga*’ and ‘*dvesha*’, and whose only aim is to work for the welfare of humanity.

As no man can live without action, as action is life itself as we see, it is necessary to know the principles of action.

- 1) Action should be as prescribed by the *Sastras*.
- 2) It should be performed without attachment, without any feeling of doership.
- 3) It should be performed without attraction or aversion
- 4) It should be performed without desire for the fruit.

This is the four-way test of *Sattvic* action. It purifies the mind, washes away the evils of the heart, corrects all defects, confers knowledge, and leads to *Moksha*.

Formerly, the Lord has declared that action should be without the sense of doership ‘*Sanganyatam*’ and also the actor

should be free from the taint of egotism. There should not be the feeling "I am doing this or that, this is my work". This is the secret of work. Such work does not bind. The message of the *Gita* is this secret of work. The call to act and the way how to perform action, are the chief instructions of the *Gita*.

Aragadveshatah : No action can be pure, if it is performed by the impulses of desire and hatred. The motive behind action vitiates it. All actions generally are the effects of the impulses of *Raga* and *Dvesha*. When there is no such longing for objects, action becomes pure and perfect.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic Karma ?*

Answer : (1) It is ordained by the Sastras; (2) It is performed without attachment; (3) It is not motivated by passions and prejudices; (4) It is done without desire for fruit. Such is Sattvic Karma.

Rajasic Karma is explained.

24. यत् कामेषुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसभुदाहृतम् ॥

24

*Yat tu kamepsuna karma sahamkarena ya punah ।
kriyate bahulayasam tad rajasam udahritam ॥*

24

Meaning : कामेषुना *kamepsuna* : by one who desires firut, पुनः *punah* : again, साहंकारेण वा *sahamkarena ya* : or by one who is egotistic (feels "I am the doer"), बहुलायासं *bahulayasam* : with great effort, यत् कर्मत् *yat karma tu* : which action, क्रियते *kriyate* : is performed, तद् *tat* : that, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is declared.

Substance : That action which is done by one longing for desires, or again with egotism, or with much effort, is declared to be *Rajasic (Karma)*.

Commentary : Action performed with a longing for its

fruit and with the egotistic feeling of personal agency is *Rajasic* action. It is performed with great effort (*bahulayasam*).

The passionate man burdens himself with such work that causes unnecessary labour and effort. And it implies that the fruit is not commensurate with the effort put into the work. The action becomes restless and troubled in the course of the action, because his eye is on the rewards to be obtained from it, and also the pride of having brought the action to a successful end. Both these inner motives make the work painful and burdensome. He cannot have the self-sacrifice of the *Sattyic* man, who performs equally great action but without losing his balance and equanimity. He acts because the *Sastras* have sanctioned the action, and is not conscious of any personal feeling or attachment to its end. He is therefore free and joyous. Desire for reward is bondage; egoism is bondage. The seekers should learn to avoid these two great evils which bind the self to the wheel of *Karma*.

Question : What is the nature of *Rajasic Karma* ?

Answer : (1) It is done with a desire for fruit; (2) It is performed with the egotistic feeling "I am the doer"; (3) It causes much exertion.

Tamasic Karma is explained.

25. अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ॥
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तचामसमुच्यते ॥

२५

*Anubandham kshayam himsam anapekshya cha paurusham !
mohad arabhyate karma yat tat tamasam uchyate* 25

Meaning : अनुबन्धं *anubandham* : the consequence of action, (like sorrow etc.) क्षयं *kshayam* : loss (of money, etc.), हिंसाम् *himsam* : injury (to himself and others), पौरुषम् च *paurusham cha* : and (his own) ability, अनपेक्ष्य *anapekshya* : without considering, मोहात् *mohat* : from delusion, यत् कर्म *yat karma* : whatever action, आरभ्यते *arabhyate* : is undertaken, तत् *tat* : that, तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic, उच्यते *uchyate* :-is declared.

Substance : Whatever action is undertaken from delusion, without regard to consequences of loss (of money etc), injury (to himself and others), and (one's own) ability, is declared *Tamasic (Karma)*.

Commentary: *Tamasic* action is every way dark and deluded. It is action proceeding from ignorance. The consequences of the action are not thought over by the doer. He does no consideration of his own ability to perform the work. He does not foresee the dangerous effects of his actions, like loss of money and honour, injury to himself and to others. From every point of view such action is irrational.

Whatever action is performed without dedication to God and with the object of amassing material things is either *Rajasic* or *Tamasic*, because the doer does not consider the evil done to himself by slavery to *Samsara*.

Mohat : The origin of all *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* action is delusion. The delusion should first be cleared by right understanding and the actions thereafter become purified of its evil and binding nature.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic Karma ?*

Answer : Whatever work is done without regard to the ensuing effects, without regard to the loss or injuries to oneself and others, and without regard to one's own ability, is *Tamasic*.

Question : *What is the cause of such blind action ?*

Answer : Ignorance - want of discrimination.

The Lord explains the nature of the Sattvic Karta.

26. मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६

*Muktasango 'nhamvadit dhriiyuisahasamanvitah ।
siddhyasiddhyor nirvikarah karta satvika uchyate ॥ 26*

Meaning : मुक्तसङ्गः *muktasangah* : freed from attachment, अनहंवादी *anahamvadi* : who does not say 'I am the doer', धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः *dhritiyutsahasamanvitah* : endued with firmness and enthusiasm, सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः *siddhyasiddhyoh* : in success or failure, निर्विकारः *nirvikarah* : unaffected. कर्ता *karta* : the agent, सत्त्विकः *sattvikah* : Sattvic, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : An actor agent who is freed from attachment, non-egotistic, unaffected in success and failure, endued with firmness and enthusiasm, is called *Sattvic* (*karta*).

Commentary : As man is constantly acting in everyday life, it is necessary for him to know what the best qualities of an agent should be. Here, four conditions are prescribed for the *Sattvic* agent.

(1) He should be free from longing for the fruits of his work. This detachment unables the agent to maintain his freedom in the midst of the work he is doing. In fact, it is this spirit of freedom which is to be safeguarded at every turn in this course of earthly life. Freedom is the very essence of spiritual realisation.

(2) The absence of the egotistic feeling 'I am the doer; I am doing this or that' is the second quality of the *Sattvic* agent. It is a clear perception that all action is performed only by the *Gunas* and the instruments of action. When a man attains this clearness of understanding, he is finally aware that he is not the real actor or agent. He has no egotistic feeling. He remains a witness of all that he is doing with his body, senses and mind.

(3) The third attribute of the *Sattvic* agent is firmness and enthusiasm. Timidity and despondence have no place in the spiritual field. Such a man cannot make any progress towards the goal. In fact it was despondence that overtook Arjuna on the battle field as described in the opening chapter of the *Gita*. The effects of such low-spirits are vividly described there. The message of the *Gita* is to lift up the fallen soul by asserting the

inherent divinity of human beings. "I am the ever pure (*suddha*), intelligent (*buddha*) free (*mukta*) *Atma*"—this thought kept up frequently gives infinite strength and courage to man. In truth, man is not the perishable body or the fickle mind or the deluded intellect. He is *Atma*, the indivisible ocean of *Sat Chit Ananda*. What can frighten and terrify him? So thinking and realising, man moves forward with courage and resolution.

4) The fourth attribute is equanimity in the midst of success and failure. If failure comes, he is not deterred, but strives again and again till success comes to him. The seeker comes across severe hurdles in the course of his journey to the ultimate, but undaunted by obstacles which may appear super-human, he moves forward, for he knows that the spirit shall finally triumph over matter. Thus the *Sattvic* agent is firm as a rock in the midst of the trials and shocks of life. He is full of hope and courage. He knows the ephemeral nature of the world and the reality of the Self, transcending all that is phenomenal in this world and in all the worlds altogether.

Question : What is the nature of the Sattvic Agent ?

Answer : (1) He is unconcerned with the fruits of action; (2) He has abandoned the notion that he is the actor; (3) He is firm and enthusiastic in all work; (4) He is unaffected by success or failure.

The nature of the Rajasic Karta is explained.

27. रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुरुद्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।

हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकृतिः ॥

२७

*Ragi karma phala prepsur lubdho himsatmako'suchih
harshasokanvitah karta rajasah parikirtitah* 27

Meaning : रागी *ragi* : passionate (being attached to relations), कर्म फल प्रेप्सुः *karmaphala prepsuh* : desirous of the fruits of action, लुधः *lubdah* : miserly, हि हिंसकः *himsatmakah* : cruel, अशुचिः *asuchih* : impure, हर्ष शोकान्वितः *harshasokan vitah* : moved by joy (in success) and sorrow (in failure), कर्ता *karta* :

agent, राजसः: *rajah*: Rajasic, परिकीर्तिः *parikirtitah*: is called.

Substance: Passionate, longing for the fruits of action, greedy, cruel, impure, moved by elation (when successful) and despair (when unsuccessful)— such an agent is called *Rajasic*.

Commentary : It is clear that the seeker who is aspiring the higher good should abandon all the weaknesses and evils described about the *Rajasic* agent. There should not be an passionate attachment to relations. There should not be any longing for the fruits of actions. No injury should be caused to others. All impurities, external and internal, should be thoroughly cleansed. The mind should be steady and balanced when pleasant things happen and when undesirable things occur. He should bear all the pains of opposites with perfect forbearance. Having examined one's own self, every one should try to elevate himself to the plane of *Sattvic* actor.

Question : *What is the nature of the Rajasic karta ?*

Answer : (1) He is passionately attached to relations; (2) He is always thinking of the fruits of action; (3) He is greedy, cruel, and impure; (4) He is easily upset by success and failure.

The nature of the Tamasic karta is explained.

28. अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥

२८

*Ayuktah prakritah stabdhah satho naiskritiko 'lasah ।
vishadi dirghasutri cha karta tamasa uchyate ॥*

28

Meaning : अयुक्तः: *ayuktah* : unsteady, प्राकृतः: *prakritah* : vulgar, स्तब्धः: *stabdhah* : unbending, without modesty, शठः: *sathah* : cheating, नैष्कृतिकः: *naishkritikah* : deceiving others and ruining their life, अलसः: *alasah* : lazy, विषादी: *vishadi* : desponding, pessimistic, दीर्घसूत्री य: *dirghasutri cha* : and procrastinating,

taking a long time to complete a work that could be done in a short time), कर्ता *karta* : agent, तामसः *tamasah* : Tamasic, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said.

Substance : One who has no self-restraint (concentration of purpose), vulgar, immodest, cheating, deceiving others and ruining their life, lazy, always pessimistic (full of doubts and fears), procrastinating (leaving incomplete even a small work that could be performed in a short time),—such an agent is said to be *Tamasic*.

Commentary : *Ayuktah* : One whose mind is externalised and wandering, is not centred in the Self, who is devoid of self control, is called '*Ayuktah*'. He has no integrated personality and hence his energies are frittered away in restless and useless avocations.

Prakritah : One who is swayed by natural instincts of the lower type, and therefore vulgar is called a *Prakritah*. It is man's duty to transform himself by training and education, and make himself the image of divinity.

Naishkritikah : These wicked people deceive and ruin the life of others, without deriving any benefit for themselves. Four classes of men in order of merit are described by Bhartrihari—

- 1) Those who sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others;
- 2) Those who respect their interests and help others;
- 3) Those who sacrifice the interests of others to gain their own ends;
- 4) Those who ruin others without any advantage to themselves.

The '*naishkritikah*' mentioned here belongs to the last two classes of men.

Alasah : Laziness is a sign of *Tamas*, and the Lord exhorts Arjuna to overcome this obstacle in any field of activity. There is no place at all for idlers in the spiritual field.

Vishadi : The *Tamasic* agent is dispondent and pessimistic in every matter. It is certainly due to ignorance that man who is in essence the very embodiment of supreme joy should weep and wail like a weak and wretched being. Through knowing his nature, *Atma*, every one should rise above sorrow and despondency.

Dirghasutri : Procrastination, mental indecision, want of alertness—these are the signs of a *Tamasic* agent. He never starts any good work, and even after starting, he never completes it. Doubting and fearing, he works his life without doing anything good to himself or to others. In the *Santi parva* of *Mahabharata*, Bhishma describes three types of characters under the names of three fishes ‘*Dirghadarsi*,’ ‘*Praptakalajna*’ and ‘*Dirghasutri*’. *Dirghadarsi* is far-sighted, and so anticipates anger and avoids it even before it overtakes him. *Praptakalajna* is less active. *Dirghasutri* does not act at all. The last falls into the net of the fisherman in the story and dies. The *Tamasic* agent loses the battle of life even without any action. He falls an easy victim to circumstances and comes to an inglorious end.

Question : What is the nature of the *Tamasic* agent ?

Answer : (1) He is devoid of self-control or concentration; (2) He is vulgar; (3) He is immodest and stubborn; (4) He is a cheat; (5) He deceives others and ruins their life; (6) He is always pessimistic and despondent; (7) He is procrastinating.

The Lord explains the threefold aspects of Buddhi and Dhriti.

29. बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्वैव गुणत्रिविधं भृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥

२९

*Buddher bhedam dhrites cha'va gunatas trividham sruṇu
prochyamanam aseshe'na prithaktvena dhanamjaya ॥ 29*

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna ! बुद्धेः *budhah* : if *budhi* (intellect), धृतेश्वैव *dhritescha eva* : and also of

firmness, courage, भेदं *bhedam* : division, गुणः *gunatah* : according to the qualities, त्रिविधं *trividham* : threefold, पृथक्त्वेन *prithaktyena* : distinctly, अशेषेण *aseshena* : fully, प्रोच्यमानम् *prochyamanam* : is being declared, स्रुतु *srinu* : (you) hear.

Substance : Hear you, O Arjuna ! The threefold division of intellect (*buddhi*) and firmness (*dhriti*) according to qualities; I will declare it to you fully and distinctly.

The Sattvic buddhi is first explained.

30 प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्यकार्ये भयाभये
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सत्त्विकी ॥ ३०

*Pravrittim cha nivrittim cha karyakarye bhayabhaye !
bandham moksham cha ya vetti buddhih sa partha sattviki !* 30

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! या बुद्धिः *ya bhuddhih* : that intellect (which), प्रवृत्तिं च *pravrittim cha* : and the way of righteous action, (or Karma Marga), निवृत्तिं च *nivrittim cha* : and cessation from unrighteous (or the way of renunciation—Sannyasa Marga), कार्यकार्ये *karyakarye* : what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, भयाभये *bhayabhaye* : fear and fearlessness, बन्धं *bandham* : bondage, मोक्षं च *moksham cha* : and liberation, वेति *vetti* : knows, सा *sa* : that (intellect), सत्त्विकी *sattviki* : (is) Sattvic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! That intellect which knows what is righteous action (or *karma marga*) and cessation of unrighteous action (or *Sannyasa marga*), what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, is *Sattvic*.

Commentary : The *Sattvic* intellect discriminates between what is good and what is bad, adopts that which is good, and

gives up what is evil. So also, it discriminates between bondage and liberation, gives up the former and follows the path of *Moksha*. It gives up the world which causes fear, takes to the path of *Brahman* and attains fearlessness and joy. The *Sattvic* intellect is the highest instrument for self-realisation. Every one should examine himself and find out whether his intellect is pure in the eyes of God. Intellect by itself however short and powerful it may be in worldly matters, does not help men to reach the highest goal.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic intellect ?*

Answer : It is capable of discriminating—

- 1) between *Dharma* and *Adharma*
- 2) between what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done,
- 3) between fear and fearlessness; and
- 4) between bondage and liberation.

The Rajasic intellect is explained.

31. यया धर्मधर्मे च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थं राजसी ॥

३१

*Yaya dharmam adharmam cha
karyam cha 'karyam eva cha'
ayathavat prajanati
buddhih sa partha rajasi ॥*

31

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! यया *yaya* : by what intellect, धर्म् धर्म् *dharmam* : Dharma (good), अधर्म् च *adharmam cha* : and Adharma (evil), कार्यं च *karyam cha* : and what ought to be done, अकार्यं एव च *akaryam eva cha* : and also what ought not to be done, अयथावत् *ayathavat* : erroneously, (not as they are), प्रजानाति *prajanati* : knows, सा बुद्धिः *sa buddhih* : that intellect, राजसी *rajasi* : Rajasic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that intellect by which one understands erroneously what is good and evil, what ought to be done and what ought no to be done, is *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The *Sastras* and the elders have prescribed the laws of righteousness, and action. The purified mind knows their value and adopts them as the rule of conduct in life. But the *Rajasic* intellect, clouded by passion, gets a wrong view of life and man is drawn away from the true goal of life, *Brahmajnana*. The seekers should carefully test their understanding and follow the approved laws of the *Sastras* in their life.

Question : What is the nature of the *Rajasic* intellect ?

Answer : The *Rajasic* intellect, darkened by passion, wrongly understands *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

The Tamasic intellect is explained.

32. अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थं तामसी ॥ ३२

*Adharmam dharmam iti ya manyate tamasa 'vrita ।
sarvarthan vi paritams cha buddhih sa partha tamasi ॥ 32*

Meaning : पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! या *ya* : which intellect, तामसा *tamasa* : by darkness, आवृता *avrta* : enveloped, अधर्मं *adharmam* : evil, धर्मं इति *dharma iti* : as good, सर्वार्थान् *sarvarthan* : all things, विपरीतांश्च *vi paritams cha* : as perversed, मन्यते *manyate* : thinks, सा बुद्धिः *sa buddhih* : that intellect, तामसी *tamasi* : Tamasic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that intellect, enveloped in darkness, which thinks *Adharma* as *Dharma*, and all things perverted is *Tamasic*.

Commentary : All things appear topsy-turvy to the man of *Tamasic* intellect. Like the reflection which appears upside

down, and like the reflection in a feeble mirror which appears distorted, the whole world gives a wrong picture to the *Tamasic* intellect. The open path of *Dharma* is closed for him, and he treads the path of *Adharma* thinking it to be *Dharma*. Neither the teachings of the elders nor the injunctions of the *Sastras*, are acceptable to them. They follow their own way and destroy themselves. What is the cause for such self-destruction ? Their reason is clouded by ignorance, and darkened by passion. To the drunkard, the world appears to reel and whirl about and so also to the deluded man, the whole world appears in a perverted light. For example :-

(1) the unreal world and the body appear real to them; and the Supreme Reality *Atma* is non-existent (to them). (2) The pleasures of the body appear enjoyable to them; and the bliss of *Atma* has no relish for them; (3) They find beauty in a bit of human flesh whereas they have no thought of the eternal beauty of *Sachidananda* (*Satyam Sivam Sundaram*).

They see *Dharma* as *Adharma* and *Adharma* as *Dharma*. This is due to the delusion caused by ignorance. Therefore such dark intellect is the worst form of bondage. Worldly knowledge, power and position are utterly useless to clear the clouds of ignorance. One should acquire purity of mind which sees the Truth as it is, and attain liberation.

Question : *What is the nature of the Tamasic intellect ?*

Answer : It is enveloped by ignorance, and therefore interprets every thing in a wrong way.

The three-fold Dhriti (firmness) is explained—First the Sattvic.

33. धृत्या यया धारयते मनः प्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थं सात्त्विकी ॥ ३३

*Dhritya yaya dharayate manah pranendriya kriyah ।
yogena 'vyabhicharinya dhritih sa partha sattviki । 33*

Meaning : पाथे *partha* : O Arjuna ! अव्यभिचारिण्या
avyabhicharinya : unswerving, यया धृत्या *yaya dhritya* (*yuktah*) :
 endowed with which firmness, मनः प्राणेन्द्रिय क्रियाः *manahpranendriyakriyah* : the functions of the mind, the vital forces,
 and the bodily organs, योगेन *yogena* : by yoga, (or steady
 concentration), धारयते *dharayate* : holds (in self-knowledge
 or in the righteous way of the Sastras), सा धृतिः *sa dhritih* :
 that firmness, सत्त्विकी *sattviki* : (is) sattvic (pure).

Substance : O Arjuna ! that unswerving firmness which,
 by *Yoga*, holds the functions of the mind, Prana and bodily
 organs, is called *Sattvic* (pure).

Commentary : Firm courage is exhibited by men in various directions in the world. Some fight harmless, some roam about freely in dark and dangerous forests, some climb mountain peaks, some reach the moon in rockets, and so on. We are able to see and understand this style of courage and firmness. But here, the firm holding of the internal forces is explained. The mind, the vital forces, the external and internal instruments of the body, should be held, controlled, by unswerving Yogi concentration. This is '*Sattvic Dhriti*'. The *yogi* is determined to conquer the whole of the inner universe and keep it under his control. He draws the mind back from the innumerable temptations of the sense-enjoyment; he frees himself from the tremendous delusion of the objective universe. This is *Sattvic* courage and firmness. Besides worldly courage which helps man to overcome external difficulties and dangers, one should cultivate firmness of *Yoga* in the conquest of the internal forces.

This courage should be unswerving, firm, and immovable. Therefore it is described as '*avyabhicharinya*'. We see that the courage of renunciation is strong some times and weak at other times. It stays for some period and when its hold is loosened, the seeker once again reverts to the old enslaved way of life. Such sporadic fits of courage or firmness are not of much use in the spiritual path. So, it is declared by the Lord that the '*Sattvic dhriti*' is unswerving, firm, immovable under all circumstances.

Question : *What is the nature of 'Sattvic Dhriti' ?*

Answer : That courage by which man conquers all the internal forces and establishes himself firmly in the Self, is called Sattvic.

The 'Rajasic Dhriti' is explained.

34. यया तु धर्मकामार्थन्धृत्या धारयतेर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थं राजसी ॥

३४

*Yaya tu dharma kamarthan dhritya dharayate'rjuna !
prasangena phalakankshi dhritih sa partha rajasi ॥ 34*

Meaning: पार्थं *partha* : O Arjuna ! यया धृत्या तु *yaya dhritya tu* : but by which firmness, फलाकाङ्क्षी *phalakamkshi* : desirous of fruits, धर्मकामार्थन् *dharma marthan* : Dharma, Kama and Artha, प्रसङ्गेन *prasangena* : with great attachment, धारयते *dharayate* : performs, सा धृतिः *sa dhritih* : that courage, राजसी *rajasi* : (is) Rajasic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that firmness by which, with attachment to the fruits of action, man holds to *Dharma*, wealth and desire, is called *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The aim of human life is fourfold (1) *Dharma*; (2) *Artha*, (3) *Kama*; (4) *Moksha*. Of these, the first three only are mentioned here. The fourth '*Moksha*' is not mentioned. From this, we understand that *Rajasic* courage does not think of liberation as the goal of life. So, from the point of spiritual realisation, this type of courage is not the highest. Only that courage which sees and knows the Truth as it is, is the highest. He who has it is the best of men. *Atmajnana* is the highest duty of man.

Prasangena : The *Rajasic* man is strongly attached to the fruits of action. Hence the emphatic form '*prasangena*' is used here.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic Dhriti ?*

Answer : That courage by which man performs actions with attachment to the fruits of Dharma, Kama and Artha is known as 'Rajasic Dhriti'.

The Tamasic 'dhriti' is explained.

35. यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।

न विमुचति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥

३५

*Yaya svapnam bhayam sokam vishadam madam eva cha ।
na vimunchati durmedha dhritih sa partha tamasi ॥ 35*

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! यया *yaya* : by which firmness, दुर्मेधः *durmedhah* : a stupid man, स्वप्नं *svapnam* : sleep, भयं *bhayam* : fear, शोकं *sokam* : grief, विषादं *vishadam* : despair, मदमेव च *madameva cha* : and also pride and conceit, न विमुचति *na vimunchati* : does not abandon, सा धृतिः *sa dhritih* : that firmness, तामसी *tamasi* : (is) Tamasic (dark).

Substance : O Arjuna ! that by which a stupid man holds fast to sleep, fear, grief, despair and also pride and egoism is called *Tamasic*.

Commentary : Firmness is a virtue indeed. But it can be misused and produce evil effects. The *Tamasic* man is overcome by sleep, fear, grief and despair, and pride and conceit never leave him. Thus his firmness wastes itself in self-destructive ways. Therefore, the true seeker should strive to attain spiritual virtues by a proper orientation of his mental attitude. He should strive to cultivate kindness, compassion, devotion and knowledge, and acquire God's grace. Sage Valmiki at first misused his faculties in evil ways. But later on, by his companionship with perfected men, he was able to know what was *Dharma*, and what God-realisation was, and from that onwards, he spent his life in singing the Glories of Rama and attained the highest state.

Durmedha : Intelligence is capable of gross misuse in every field of activity. The intelligence of the *Tamasic* men always runs in evil ways.

Svapnam : This word here refers to excessive sleep, and not the moderate rest of the body which is quite essential for normal and healthy life.

Question : What is the nature of 'Tamasic Dhriti' ?

Answer : It induces sleep, fear, grief and despair. It produces too much pride and self-conceit.

The three-fold joy is explained and first the Sattvic-

36. सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ !
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥

36

*Sukham tvidanim trividham sruṇu me bharatarshabha !
abhyasad ramate yatra duhkhamtam cha nigacchati ॥ 36*

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : O best of the Bharatas, Arjuna ! यत्र *yatra* : in which, अभ्यासात् *abhyasat* : by habit, रमते *ramate* : men finds joy, दुःखान्तं च *duhkhamtam cha* : and the cessation of pain, निगच्छति *nigacchati* : attains to, सुखं तु *sukham tu* : (that) joy indeed, इदानीं *idanim* : now, त्रिविधम् *trividham* : threefold, मे *me* : of Me, शृणु *sruṇu* : hear.

Substance : O Arjuna ! and now hear from Me the three-fold pleasure in which man finds delight by habit, and attains to the end of pain.

Commentary : *abhyasat* : The Lord declares that divine happiness (Brahmananda) is to be attained by practice. Realisation does not come to man by mere learning or power of speech. It is a practical science and should be understand by personal experience. Then alone man realises esteemed peace and bliss. Many people ask the question—"How can we realise *Atma*, transcend pain and suffering, and attain bliss"? The Lord answers the question here. "Practise, and you shall attain that

state" says the Lord. Nothing can be achieved by mere talk and mere study of books. You can get butter only by churning the curd. You can get sweet juice only by crushing the sugar cane. You can get oil only by crushing the seeds. Therefore, by practice alone can man come to the end of pain and attain bliss.

Dukhantam cha nigacchati: This is the fundamental question for all living beings. Where is true joy and how is it to be attained? From the lowest germs and worms upto the creator *Brahma*, this question is asked, and the answer to this question is escaping mankind inspite of repeated efforts to find it. Where is the place to search for true joy? Is it anywhere in the world? Can these objects of the material universe give it? Can anybody purchase true joy with money or lands or kingdoms? Man is searching for it with all his skill and intelligence. But he is not able to find it anywhere in the material objective world. True joy is only in *Atma*, in the Divine. Man finds true joy when the mind attains to the state of true *Sattva*. The moment when the mind reaches the *Sattvic* state, all sorrow comes to an end. So, the Lord's declaration should be constantly kept in mind, and man should know clearly that all *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* tendencies and actions lead to pain and sorrow. Thus knowing, he should strive his best to keep the mind in the *Sattvic* state and experience the bliss of *Atma*. By the constant practice of Divine virtues, by eliminating the ego, by constant contemplation of the real Self, man attains true joy which is the very essence of *Atma*.

Question : *What is the threefold pleasure?*

Answer : (1) *Sattvic*; (2) *Rajasic*; (3) *Tamasic*.

Question : *What is the way to end sorrow?*

Answer : Sorrow is transcended by the acquisition of *Sattvic* purity by constant practice.

The Sattvic pleasure is explained.

37. यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽसृजोऽसृज् ।
स्तुत्युत्तं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मनुद्दिश्यादजन् ।

*Yat tad agre visham iva pariname 'mritopamam'
tat sukham sattvikam proktam atmabuddhiprasadajam 37*

Meaning : यत् *yat* तत् *tat* : which pleasure, अग्रे *agre* : in the beginning, विषमिव *visham iva* : like poison, परिणामे *parina me* : in the end, अमृतोपमम् *amritopamam* : (is) like nectar, आत्म बुद्धि प्रसाटजम् *atmabuddhiprasadajam* : born of the purity of one's own mind, तत् सुखं *tat sukham* : that pleasure, सत्त्विकं *sattvikam* : pure, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is said.

Substance : That pleasure which is like poison at first but in the end is like nectar, born of the purity of one's own mind of Self-realisation, is declared to be *Sattvic*.

Commentary : In spiritual life, the practice of self-restraint, mind-control, and the destruction of impure tendencies produce a slight feeling of unrest, physical and mental pain. But the pain is turned into pure joy at the end. As the seeker acquires facility in *sadhana*, he begins to experience *Sattvic* joy. This is like nectar. The aspirant should never forget that the pain which he is enduring will yield the richest and the most plentiful joy in the end. So he should remain strong and determined and should not waver in continuing his *sadhana*. The pain is like poison, and certainly not poison (*visham iva*). The struggle with the impure tendencies accumulated in innumerable past births, would be naturally severe and painful, but the pain is only apparent and not real. This should be clearly kept in mind so that the seeker is not depressed by the painful experience of self-discipline in the early stages of the *sadhana*. The struggle is inevitable. It is a part of spiritual life and no one can hope to attain the highest without going through the conflict between the lower and higher natures. But one can rest assured that the higher nature is the real power behind everything and so it shall come out victorious in the end, however deep-roofed the impure *vasanas* might be in the mind of the *Sadhaka*. The apparent pain of self-denial is only the prelude to the attainment of *Brahmananda*.

For certain diseases very bitter medicines are administered. Though the medicine is bitter to the taste, it gives good health. One has to take the medicine for his own good. When a shapeless stone is transformed into a beautiful image of God, it receives the hard knocks of the sculptor's hammer. When a lump of gold is transformed into a beautiful ornament, it receives the sharp strokes of the jeweller's hammer. So also to attain *Brahmananda* man has to practise self-denial and sacrifice. The little sense pleasures which man gives up give him some pain in the beginning. They have been with him as relations in home during a long series of births. When they are given up, some slight pain is caused as when a dear relation passes away. The *Sadhaka* should not be disheartened. A little persistence and pursuance will bring about the necessary change and when the difficulty passes away the joy of the spirit begins to manifest slowly.

Hard work and study in student-life results in prosperity and joy in later life. We see that in the lives of many people. So also in spiritual life, the aspirant has to endure some initial discomfort and pain, and move forward with firm determination. He should not be deterred by the obstacles of the early passing phase. That is why the Lord here declares that 'sattvic happiness' which apparently appears painful contains the seeds of divine bliss. To throw away the inherent divine bliss by fear of the external discomforts would be very foolish. So, the seekers should constantly remind themselves of the pure bliss that awaits them when the initial obstacles are overcome by firm resistance, and indomitable will. One should be a hero on the spiritual path. The *Upanishads* declare that only a hero (*Dhirah*) can obtain the vision of *Paramatma*. The lives of Lord Buddha, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and others reveal this truth. This Atmic bliss is not like the drink of the Gods which enables them to live longer than the mortals. It is pure nectar, conferring everlasting bliss unaffected by anything whatsoever. It takes mankind beyond the whirlpool of birth and death, and establishes in the original state of freedom and perfection.

Aitabuddhi prasaaajam : This *Sattvic* joy is born of the purity of the intellect, freed from all sensual contacts, pleasures

and delusions. So, the seeker should keep the ‘*buddhi*’ clean and clear, and thus he perceives, and experiences the bliss of *Atma*. Freedom from all sorrow and suffering is not to be found everywhere in the upper or the underworlds. It is directly present in the purified ‘*Buddhi*’. Maharshi Vasishta declares the same truth in *Yogavasishta*.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic joy ?*

Answer : It appears bitter like poison in the beginning but turns out to be sweet and blissful like nectar in the end.

Question : *How can man experiences this bliss ?*

Answer : It flows from the purified intellect (“*buddhi*”). So, man has to give up the hankering for sense-pleasures and purify his mind.

Question : *What then is the duty of man ?*

Answer : He should not be deterred by the initial difficulties on the spiritual path, but continue his *Sadhana* with firm faith in God. He should wash the mind thoroughly of all impure tendencies which bind him to the material world.

Rajasic pleasure is explained.

38. विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥

३८

*Vishayendriyasamyogad yat tad agre'mritopamam'
pariname visham iva tat sukham rajasam smritam' 38*

Meaning : यत् तत् *yat tat* : which pleasure, विषयेन्द्रिय संयोगात् *vishayendriyasamyogat* : by contact of the sense organs with objects, अग्रे *agre* : at first, अमृतोपमम् *amritopamam* : (is) like nectar, परिणामे *pariname* : in effect (after the enjoyment is over), विषमिव *visham iva* : like poison, (*bhavati* : becomes), तत् सुखं *tat sukham* : that pleasure, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, स्मृतम् *smritam* : is said.

Substance : That pleasure arising from contact of the sense organs with objects, which is like nectar at first and which in effect is like poison, is declared to be *Rajasic*.

Commentary : Sense-pleasures are momentary. They are produced by the contact of sense organs with material objects. Moreover, the sense-pleasures, though they appear sweet and attractive on the surface, lead to pain, sorrow and suffering in the end. So, *Rajasic* pleasure is like a cup of poison with a thin film of milk over it. It is dangerous and fatal to seek it. Man is deluded by the superficial glitter and glamour of sense-attractions and rushes to his own destruction by running after them with foolish zeal and enthusiasm. Knowing it as such, who will pursue them ? Who will love them ? Who will hanker after them ? The wise man takes the hint from the Lord's command and abandons all unworthy ends and purposes in life.

All that glitters is not gold. The glitter of sense-pleasures is easily understood even by an uncritical mind in the daily course of human life. What is necessary is to pause for a moment and enquire into the nature of such pleasure and its consequence. Such enquiry repeatedly carried out will enable the seeker to know the true nature of the sense pleasures, and when it is known the mind ceases to run after them. Of course, by the force of past *samskaras*, man runs after such pleasures, and so a persistent and resolute effort is to be made to clear up the rubbish and make the mind clean and pure. Repeated efforts alone can turn the mind back from pursuing external objects. The path may be difficult, but not impossible. The Lord will sustain the effort of man and give him the necessary strength. Such is the Lord's assurance to the sincere seeker. No defeat, no despair, no pessimism, no lethargy can overtake the man of steady and unswerving faith.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic pleasure ?*

Answer : It appears sweet as nectar in the beginning and turns out to be poison in the end. Such is the nature of *Rajasic* pleasure.

Tamasic pleasure is declared.

39. यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

३९

*Yad agre cha 'nubandhe cha sukham mohanam atmanah!
nidralasya pramadottham tat tamasam udahritam" 39*

Meaning : निद्रालस्य प्रमादोत्थं *nidralasya pramadottam* : arising from sleep, lethargy, and error, यत् सुखं *yat sukham* : which pleasure, अग्रे च *agre cha* : in the beginning, अनुबन्धे च *anubandhe cha* : and in the sequel, (after enjoyment), आत्मनः *atmanah* : into one's self, मोहनम् *mohanam* : causing delusion, तत् *tat* : that (pleasure), तामसं *tamasam* : Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is said.

Substance : That pleasure which arising from sleep, idleness, and error causes delusion during the enjoyment and in the sequel, is said to be *Tamasic*.

Commentary : Too much sleep, indolence, heedlessness are the marks of a *Tamasic* nature. Such a man live and die under the darkest delusion. Ignorance in its worst form clouds their minds and their actions are like those of beasts. Therefore *Tamasic* pleasure is of the worst type. Those who crave for it are not men at all. Their life is devoid of understanding. Precious human life is then wasted in beastly pleasures. The seed of ignorance continues to exert its power over man, and drives him on from birth to birth, everytime drawing man in the downward path of destruction. Therefore, those who are enlightened should follow the Lord's command and abandon all *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* pleasures. Holding on to *Sattva*, man should purify himself and rise to the highest state.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic pleasure ?*

Answer : It arises from sleep, indolence, and heedlessness. It causes delusion. During the time of enjoyment and in its sequel, it binds man to ignorance and delusion.

The Lord declares that there is no being free from these three Gunas in the three worlds.

40. न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।

सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैमुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्विभिरुणैः ॥

४०

*Na tad asti prithivyam ya divi deveshu va punah ।
sattvam prakritijair muktam yad ebhiih syat tribhir gunaih ॥ 40*

Meaning : प्रकृतिजैः *prakritijaih* : born of Prakriti (Maya), एभिः त्रिभिः गुणैः *ebhiih tribhih gunaih* : from these three qualities, मुक्तं *muktam* : freed, सत्त्वं *sattvam* : being, यत् सात् *yat syat* : what is, तत् *tat* : that (being), पृथिव्याम् वा *prithivyam va* : either in the earth, पुनः *punah* : again, दिवि *divi* : in Heaven, देवेषु वा *deveshu va* : or among the Devas, नास्ति *nasti* : is not.

Substance : There is no being, either on the earth or in Heaven among the *Devas*, who is freed from the three qualities (*Gunas*) arising from *Prakriti* (*Maya*).

Commentary : The Lord declares that there is no being anywhere in the three worlds, who is free from these three *gunas*. The Gods are also subject to these *gunas*. Only the *Jivanmukta* transcends the three *gunas*. So, to go to heaven does not solve the problem of bondage. The *Devas* are also bound by the three *Gunas*, and are not freed from the operation of the law of *Prakriti*. Sometime or other they too have to acquire the knowledge of *Atman* and get liberation.

Prakritijaih : From this, it is clear that the source of the three *Gunas* is *Prakriti* or *Maya* (ignorance). Contact with any one of these *Gunas* brings man under the power of *Prakriti*. Therefore the seeker should transcend *Rajas* and *Tamas* by unceasing personal effort, enter the region of *Sattva* and thereafter attain the transcendental Atmic State. That is *Moksha*.

Question : *From whence are born the three Gunas ?*

Answer : From *Prakriti* (*Maya*).

Question : Is there any being free from these Gunas ?

Answer : No. (except the Jivanmukta).

Question : Does this apply to beings in other worlds ?

Answer : Yes. Even the Devas are subject to the three Gunas.

People are divided into different castes by the predominance of these qualities in various degrees.

41. ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप
कर्मणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥

४१

*Brahmanakshatriyavisam sudranam cha parantapa¹
karmani pravibhaktani svabhava prabhava air gunaih² 41*

Meaning : परन्तप *parantapa* : O Arjuna ! ब्राह्मण क्षत्रिय विशां *brahmaṇa kshatriyavisam* : to the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, शूद्राणां च *sudranam cha* : and to the Sudras, कर्मणि *karmani* : duties, स्वभाव प्रभवैः *svabhava prabhava iḥ* : born of their nature (according to their previous experiences in former births), गुणैः *gunaiḥ* : by qualities, प्रविभक्तानि *pravibhaktani* : are separately determined.

Substance : O Arjuna ! works for the different castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras) are variously determined according to their nature born of *Prakriti*.

Commentary : In the Fourth Discourse (13th verse), the Lord already declared that the differentiation of the castes is determined by the difference in the nature of men. (*chaturvarnyam maya srishtam gunakarma vibhagasah*). Here again the Lord states that the difference among the castes is due to qualities differently exhibited according to their nature. So, the accident of birth is not the real criterion to fix the special gradation of the caste system. It shows that caste is no bar for any one who aspires for Self-realisation. Though the birth is apparently in the lower castes, yet man can ascend to great spiritual heights by the purity of his character and conduct. The

Gita thus throws open the gates of *Brahmajnana* to all people who are qualified for it by virtue of their inherent predispositions and acquired merit. The accident of birth is of very little significance.

Question : *How are the four castes formed ?*

Answer : By their qualities.

Question : *How are the duties of each caste determined ?*

Answer : By the tendencies with which people are born.

Question : *Is the caste determined by birth ?*

Answer : No. It is determined by their nature, and according to their nature their duties and functions in society are fixed.

Functions of each caste are declared.

42. शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्राह्मं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

४२

*Samo damas tapah saucham kshantir arjavam eva cha
jnanim vijnanam astikyam brahmam karma svabavajam* 42

Meaning : शमः *samah* : self-control (control of the mind), दमः *damah* : control of the physical organs, तपः *tapah* : austerity, शौचं *saucham* : purity, क्षान्तिः *kshantih* : forgiveness, आर्जवमेव च *arjavam eva cha* : and also uprightness, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, विज्ञानम् *vijnanam* : realisation, आस्तिक्यम् *astikyam* : faith in God, Guru and the Scriptures, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of nature, ब्राह्मं कर्म *brahmankarma* : duties of the Brahmanas.

Substance : Control of the internal and external organs, austerity, purity, forgiveness, integrity, knowledge of the *Sastras*, direct experience of the truth, faith in God, Guru and the Scriptures- these are the duties of the Brahmins born of their own nature.

Commentary : Any one who is able to conform to the above nine prescribed duties is a Brahmana. The austerity (*tapah*) mentioned here refers to the three types of penance mentioned in the 17th Discourse. (14th, 15th and 16th verses).

Apart from knowledge of the *Sastras*, direct experience of Truth is emphasised by the Lord on several occasions. Mere knowledge of the *Sastras* is not enough. Realisation is absolutely necessary.

Question : *What are the duties of the Brahmanas born of their nature? (Or what are the qualities which determine the nature of Brahmanas?)*

Answer : (1) Serenity; (2) control of the external and internal organs; (3) austerity; (4) purity; (5) forgiveness; (6) uprightness; (7) knowledge; (8) realisation; (9) faith in God, Guru and Scriptures. These nine qualities are natural to the Brahmanas, or those who possess these qualities are Brahmanas.

The duties of the Kshatriyas are stated.

43. शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

43

*Sauryam tejo dhritir dakshyam yuddhe cha'py apalayanam'
danam isvarabhavas cha kshatram karma svabhavajam ॥ 43*

Meaning : शौर्यं souryam : prowess, तेजः tejah : splendour, धृतिः dhrithiḥ : firmness, दक्ष्यं dakshyam : dexterity, युद्धे yuddhe : in battle, अपलायनम् अपि च apalayanam api cha : and not flying also, दानम् danam : generosity, ईश्वरभावश्च isvarabhavah cha : and lordliness, स्वभावजम् svabhavajam : born of their nature, क्षात्रं kshatram : of Kshatriyas, कर्म karma : action,

Substance : Prowess, splendour (greatness), firmness, dexterity, not running away in battle, magnanimity, lordship (commanding and ruling power)-these are the functions of *Kshatriyas* born of their nature.

Commentary : *Yuddhe cha pyapalayanam* : A true *kshatriya* is not expected to fly from field of battle. But an external conflict like war happens only from time to time. The internal struggle between the forces of good and evil, of light and darkness, of the pious and the diabolical, is taking place continuously in the heart of every human being. The struggle is continuous and unceasing till final liberation is attained. Every human being needs the *Dharma* of the *Kshatriya* to remain firm, bold and unyielding, in the struggle with evil and ignorance. There should be no backward step, no looking back, no relaxation of effort, and no feeling of defeat and frustration 'March onwards' is the command till the goal is reached. It is only then that man can attain the rulership of the Empire of Freedom. So man should strive for the light of the Brahmana and the power of the *Kshatriya*.

Question : *What are the functions of the Kshatriyas ?*

Answer : Prowess, splendour (greatness), firmness, dexterity, not running away in battle, magnanimity, lordship (commanding and ruling power)-these are the functions of the Kshatriyas born of their nature.

The functions of the Vysyas and the Sudras are stated.

44. कृषिगोरक्षवाणिज्यं वैश्यं कर्म स्वभावजम् ।

परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥

44

*Krishi goraksha vanijyam vaisyamkarma svabhavajam !
paricharyatmakam karma sudrasya'pi svabhavajam !* 44

Meaning : कृषिगोरक्ष वाणिज्यं *krishigorakshavanijyam* : agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of (their) nature, वैश्यं कर्म *vyaisyamkarma* : the duties of the Vysya, अपि *api* : and, परिचर्यात्मकं *paricharyatmakam* : consisting of service, कर्म *karma* : action, शूद्रस्य *sudrasya* : of the Sudra, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of nature.

Substance : Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the Vysyas, born of their nature; action consisting of service is the duty of the Sudras.

Question : *What are the duties of the Vysyas ?*

Answer : (1) Agriculture; (2) Cattle-rearing; (3) Trade

Question : *What is the duty of the Sudras ?*

Answer : Service.

The Lord declares that people following their respective duties acquire the merit of realising the Truth.

45. स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छ्रूणु ॥

४५

*Sve sve karmany abhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah !
svakarmaniratah siddhim yatha vindati tacchrinu ॥* 45

Meaning : स्वे स्वे कर्मणि sve sve karmani : in one's own duty (above-mentioned), अभिरतः abhiratah : devoted, नरः nrah : man, संसिद्धिं samsiddhim : perfection, लभते labhate : attains, स्वकर्मनिरतः svakarmaniratah : engaged in one's own duty, यथा yatha : how, सिद्धिं siddhim : perfection, विन्दति vindati : (he) finds, तत् tat : that, श्रूणु srinu : hear.

Substance : Each devoted to his own duty, man attains perfection; Engaged in one's own duty, how man attains the highest good, that do you hear.

Commentary : Devoted to the duties and functions of his own caste derived from his own nature, man can attain the highest perfection. How this miracle is achieved is the secret of *Karma Yoga*. These duties should be performed in the true spirit of surrendering the fruit to the Lord. By performing one's own duties without attachment to the fruits, man releases himself from the binding effects of *Karma* which is the cause of *Samsara*. Since the majority of men are compelled by their very nature to engage themselves in their respective duties, the best way for such is to continue their work in a spirit of self-surrender to the Lord. By such detached action, the mind is purified and the Self is realised. Thus *Karma* is the way to *Atmajnana* through the purification of the mind.

Question : How does man attain perfection while engaged in his own duty?

Answer : By performing his prescribed duties and functions without attachment and in the true spirit of self-surrender to the Lord, man attains perfection.

The Lord explains how man attains the merit of Self-realisation while engaged in his prescribed duties.

46. यतः प्रवृत्तिभूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्थ्यं सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

46

*Yatah pravrittir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam
svakarmana tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati manavah । 46*

Meaning : यतः *yatah* : from whom, भूतानां *bhutanam* : of beings, प्रवृत्तिः *pravrittih* : manifestation or evolution, येन *yena* : by whom, इदं सर्वं *idam sarvam* : all this, ततम् *tatam* : is pervaded, तम् *tam* : him, मानवः *manavah* : man, स्वकर्मणा *svakarmana* : with one's own duty, अभ्यर्थ्यं *abhyarchya* : worshipping, सिद्धिं *siddhim* : perfection, विन्दति *vindati* : attains.

Substance : From whom is the manifestation and evolution of beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him by performing one's own duty, man attains perfection.

Commentary : *Yatah pravrittir bhutanam* : It is clear that *Paramatma* is the origin and source of all beings. All beings come from Him and return to Him. *Paramatma* is the vital Intelligence Principle without which insentient *Prakriti* can do nothing. Therefore the worship of *Paramatma* is the highest duty of man in whom *Paramatma* is manifesting in the highest degree.

Yena sarvam idam tatam : All this is pervaded by the Lord. This declaration is made thrice in the Gita. *Paramatma* is present everywhere, like cream in milk. He is not seen with

the external eye, but to the eye of knowledge He is visible. He is 'Sarvasakshi', the Seer of everything, because He is present in the innermost core of everybeing. So realising, man should be pure in thought and deed, and should be devoted to Him who is the origin and source of his very being.

Svakarmana tam abhyartha : The performance of one's own duty is itself the worship of the Lord. This is the excellence of *Karmayoga*. The tiller in the field, the worker in the factory, the judge in the court, the minister in the cabinet, the trader, the cobbler, in fact, every man who is engaged in some form of work or other, can transform and sublimate that work into worship of the Lord by offering it to Him—the action and its fruits all together. Thus every step that he takes, every breath that he breathes, every action that he does becomes worship of the Lord. Such worship automatically purifies the mind, because the mind is agitated only when man becomes attached to his work for selfish ends and by selfish motives. He who can maintain the attitude of detachment and surrender remains restful and lives in peace. Such peace leads to the vision of *Paramatma*. Of all the methods mentioned to purify the mind, this is the best and most easy to practise. As man is engaged in some form of work, the ideal is to perform it as worship of the Lord, free from fear and anxiety, free from binding egotism and binding selfishness.

Thus *Karma* becomes, the means to *Moksha*. *Karma* binds only when the performer desires to obtain this or that fruit either in this world or in other worlds. Man knows in his heart of hearts that he is attached to work by contemplating the pleasure of enjoying the rewards. This should be given up by the true seeker whose will is set on the realisation of ultimate perfection. The Lord declares that man attains perfection by following the principle of detached performance of one's own duty.

This verse explains the combination of *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana*.

1) Performance of action (*Karma*)

2) Worship of the Lord through action (*Bhakti*)

3) Purification of the mind which brings about self-realisation (*Jnana*)

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *By whom is this universe pervaded ?*

Answer : By Paramatma.

Question : *How can the Jiva attain perfection ?*

Answer : If a man performs his prescribed duties in the spirit of the worship of the Lord, surrendering the fruits to him, he gets purification of mind and when the mind is purified, he attains Brahmajnana.

The Lord declares the excellence of performing one's own duties and functions.

47. श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

४७

*Sreyan svadharma vigunah paradharmat svanushthitat
svabhavaniyatam karma kurvan na 'pnoti kilbisham' 47*

Meaning : स्वधर्मः *svadharma* : one's own duty, विगुणः *vigunah* (api) : though destitute of merits, अनुष्ठितात् *anushthitat* : well done, परधर्मात् *paradharmat* : than the duty of another, श्रेयान् *sreyan* : better, स्वभावनियतं *svabhavaniyatam* : ordained by his own nature, कर्म *karma* : action, कुर्वन् *kurvan* : performing, किल्बिषम् *kilbisham* : sin, न आप्नोति *na apnoti* : does not incur.

Substance : Better is one's own duty though destitute of merits or incomplete than the duty of another well performed;

the man who performs action ordained by his own nature does not incur sin.

Commentary : The Lord declares that one should not give up his prescribed duty though it appears difficult to perform it fully and completely. The duties of another man appear easy and attractive, but the true seeker should stick to his own method and way of life. This is certainly better than abandoning one's own duty and taking up another's and doing it even meritoriously. We have to refer this statement to Arjuna's original plea to abandon fighting and to live the life of a mendicant. Arjuna is a Kshatriya and his duty born of his own nature is to fight. He should not give up this duty. He should perform it in the true spirit of a *Karma-Yogi*. By doing so, he does not incur sin. The principle holds good to all men engaged in various forms of work each according to his nature.

The verse may be interpreted in another way. 'Svadharma' may be taken to mean 'Atma-dharma'. To think of *Atma* and meditate on that may appear difficult, and living the life of the senses in the objective world may be easy. But the real seeker should continue the 'Atma-dharma' inspite of difficulties and failures. In fact 'Atma-dharma' is the real state of man, and life in the senses and the objective world is an alien imposition,—'paradharma'. Though 'paradharma' appears easy and pleasing for the time being, it leads to bondage and sorrow in the end. 'Atma-dharma' on the other hand, though appearing to be difficult and troublesome in the beginning, leads to bliss and liberation in the end. So 'Atma-dharma' is infinitely better than 'Paradharma'.

Question : *What 'Dharma' is better for man?*

Answer : That which is born of his own nature and pertains to his own state is better than the functions of another state.

Question : *By what does man escape from sin?*

Answer : By performing one's own duties in a spirit of surrender to the Lord, man does not incur sin.

The Lord declares that man should not abandon his 'dharma' even though it is beset with faults.

48. सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥

86

*Sahajam karma kaunteya sadosham api na tyajet ।
sarvarambha hi doshena dhumena'gnir iva'vritah ॥ 48*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! सहजं *sahajam* : born of one's own nature, कर्म *karma* : action, सदोषमपि *sadosham api* : though beset with evil (either material or objective), न त्यजेत् *na tyajet* : should not be abandoned, धूमेन *dhumena* : by smoke, अग्निः इव *agnih iva* : like fire, सर्वारम्भाः *sarvarambhah* : all actions, दोषेण *doshena* : by evil, आवृताः हि *avritah hi* : are enveloped indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! one should not abandon the duty to which he is born, though it is attended with evil; all undertakings are indeed enveloped by evil, like fire by smoke.

Commentary : As action is performed by the senses and the physical organs, it is within the region of the objective world, conditioned by the three *Gunas*. Therefore all action is attended with some form of evil or other. All action is 'Anatma'; it is objective, and it is corrupted by the *Gunas*, and so all action partakes of evil. Fire is enveloped by smoke. There can be no fire without the covering veil of smoke. In spite of it, one should not abandon the duty to which he is born, because if it is performed with detachment and in a spirit of surrender to the Lord, it purifies the mind and leads to liberation.

The inevitable evils attendant in all action are purified by various rites and rituals. Enquiry into the nature of Brahman, mediation, and other sanctified methods of spiritual practice will wash off the impurities clinging to the mind. Therefore one should continue to act in the condition in which he is placed, without attachment to fruits thereof and in a spirit of self-surrender. That man attains the highest state.

Having discussed the different aspects of Karmayoga the Lord now explains the nature of Karma-sannyasa—the abandonment of Karma.

49. असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥

49

*Asaktabuddhih sarvatra jitatma vigatasprihah ।
naishkarmyasiddhim paramam sannyasena'dhigacchati॥ 49*

Meaning : सर्वत्र *sarvatra*: everywhere, in all things and matters, असक्त बुद्धिः *asaktabuddhih* : whose intellect is unattached, (free from thoughts of 'I and mine'), जितात्मा *jitatma* : whose mind is subdued, विगतस्पृहः *vigatasprihah* : who is free from desires, संन्यासेन *sannyasena* : by abandoning all attachment (or by surrendering the fruits of action, or by the path of *Jnana*), परमां *paramam* : supreme, नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धिं *naishkarmyasiddhim* : actionless state of *Atma*, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : He whose intellect is unattached, who has subdued his self, whose desires are quelled, by renunciation attains the supreme actionless state of *Atma*.

Commentary : Having propounded the principle of *Nishkama karma yoga*, the Lord now explains the doctrine of *Jnana Yoga* which frees man finally from all kinds of action and takes him to the actionless state of *Atma*. Three qualities are mentioned here.

- 1) Intellect which is not entangled in anything whatsoever;
- 2) self-conquest;
- 3) desirelessness.

Sarvatra :- The detachment of the seeker should be complete.

There should not be the least trace of attachment to any material object. It is possible to remain detached in a state of *Dhyana*, but when the mind is released and begins to function in the external world, the same old desires and attachments come

up to bind the person again. So, it is instructed to remain free from attachment under all conditions of life.

Jivatma : The conqueror of one's own self is the master of the whole universe, and the conquerer of all the worlds remains bound if he is a slave of his own self. So, the internal enemies should be subdued and annihilated. Otherwise they trouble the people like the thorn in the throat of the feeder. They never allow them to be happy and free, whatever may be their worldly possessions.

Vigatasprīhā : He is free from the desire to enjoy the pleasures which he had experienced formerly; and which remain in his memory as a deep-rooted longing. The mind is disturbed by such pleasurable memories and the longing to possess them again and again. Only when there are no longings and desires the mind remains steady and firm.

Naishkarmyasiddhim : *Moksha* is here described as 'naishkarmyasiddhi' (i.e.) the state when there are no actions either external or internal. As the *Atmic* state is beyond the body and mind, no action is possible for the man of Self-realisation. He remains as '*Atma*' and *Atma* alone is. Such state is acquired by *Sannyasa* (i. e.) renunciation. Renunciation of what ?— of the fruit of action, of desires, of all attachments. Therefore, it follows that by relinquishing the fruits of action, all attachments and desires drop off gradually, and man thereby attains *Moksha*.

Paramam : Supreme. The Atmic state is the highest state, beyond all miraculous achievements.

Question : *What is Naishkarmasiddhi ?*

Answer : It is the actionless state of *Atma*.

Question : *How is it attained ?*

Answer : That state is attained (1) by the intellect purified of all attachment; (2) by the conquest of the mind (3) by renunciation of all actions with the fruits thereof.

Question : *What is the state of Moksha ?*

Answer : It is the highest state of perfection and freedom.

Question : *How can Karma lead to Naishkarmya ?*

Answer : Karma performed without attachment to the fruits thereof purifies the mind, and when the mind; is purified and mastery is obtained over self, the pure actionless state of Atma is realised.

50. सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।

समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥

५०

*Siddhim prapto yathā brahma tatha'pnoti nibodha me
samasenai'va kaunteya nishtha jnanasya ya para ॥ 50*

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna, सिद्धिं *siddhim* : perfection in action, प्राप्तः *praptah* : one who has attained, यथा *yatha* : how: ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, आप्नोति *apnoti* : obtains, तथा *tatha* : that manner, ज्ञानस्य *jnanasya* : of knowledge, परा *para* : supreme, निष्ठा *nishtha* : condition or final goal, यः *ya* : which, समासेनैव *samasenaiva* : briefly even, मे *me* : from Me, निबोध *nibodha* : learn.

Substance : O Arjuna ! learn from Me in brief how reaching perfection in action, man attains Brahman, the consummation of supreme knowledge.

Commentary : This is the closing part of the Gita in which the Lord states in clear terms the method and goal of supreme knowledge. The seekers should go through this part most carefully as the essence of the Gita is given here.

Samasentva : The brevity of the Lord's declaration shows that He is summing up his teaching so far given in elaborate and explanatory form. The seeker indeed wants to know in a nutshell, the sum and substance of the Lord's teaching. The formula of supreme knowledge is found in the following three verses. And so, they are spoken of as Sankshipta Gita.

Realisation of Brahman and the consummation of knowledge are stated.

51. बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्रेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥

५१

52. विनिक्तसेवी लघवाशी यतवाक्यायमानसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥

५२

53. अहम्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
मितुञ्ज्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥

५३

Buddhya visuddhaya yukto dhritya'atmanam niyamva cha ।
sabdadin vishayam styaktva ragadveshau vyudasya cha ॥ 51

Viviktasevi laghvasi yatavakkayamanasah ।
dhyanayogaparo nityam vairagyam samupasritah ॥. 52

Ahamkaram balam dar pam
kamam krodhām parigraham ।
vīmuchya nirmamah santo
brahmabhuyaya kalpate ।

53

Meaning : विशुद्धया visuddhaya : pure, बुद्ध्या buddhya : with understanding, युक्तः yuktah : endowed, धृत्या dhritya : with firmness, आत्मानं atmanam : self, नियम्य niyamya : controlling, च cha : and, शब्दादीन् विषयान् sabdadin vishayan : sound and other sense-objects, त्यक्त्वा tyaktva : giving up, रागद्रेषौ ragadveshau : attraction and hatred, व्युदस्य च vyudasya cha : abandoning, and, विनिक्तसेवी viviktasevi : dwelling in solitude. लघवाशी laghvasi : eating but little, यत वाक्याय भानसः yatavakkayamanasah : speech, body and mind subdued, नित्यं nityam : always, ध्यानरोग परः dhyanayogaparah : engaged in meditation, वैराग्यं vairagyam : dispassion, समुपाश्रितः samupasritah : taking refuge in, अहम्कारं ahamkaram : egotism, बलं balam : animal strength, दर्पं arpaṇam : arrogance, कामं kānam : desire, क्रोधं krodhām : anger, परिग्रहम् parigraham : covetousness,

विमुच्य vimuchya : having renounced, निर्ममः nimamah : self-less, सन्तः santah : peaceful, ब्रह्मभूयाय brahmabhuyaya : for becoming Brahman, कल्पते kalpate : is fit.

Substance : Endowed with pure understanding, firmly controlling one's self, turning away from sound and other sense-objects, and abandoning attraction and hatred,

dwelling in solitude, eating but little, speech, body and mind subdued, always engaged in meditation, taking refuge in dispassion,

having abandoned egotism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, greed, free from the notion of 'I' and 'mine', ever in peace—he (such a man) is fit to realise Brahman.

Commentary : It is said that these three verses contain the essence of the Gita. All that is required for man to attain the highest realisation is stated here. The method and the means and also the goal are declared here. As the goal is no less than *Brahma-sakshatkara*, the aspiring soul should cultivate every one of these virtues slowly and gradually, and climb the highest peak of spiritual illumination.

Visuddhaya : Purity should be perfect, (i. e.) not a speck of worldly dust should cover the mind. Certainly, when the mirror is cleaned well, the reflection is clear !

Dhritya : Firmness of self-control is essential. It is not easy to curb the disturbances of the mind. Courage, steadfastness and iron-will are needed to subdue the mind. *Atma* is not attained by the weak and the lazy. The courageous (*dhirah*) alone can obtain the vision of *Brahman*.

Atmanam niyamya : Control of mind and senses is the very basis of spiritual life. There is no other way to liberation except through victory over the distractions of the mind and attractions of the senses. That is why it is clearly stated—'Give up sense-objects' (*sabdadin vishayamstyktva*). The outgoing

mind should be drawn within, to look into the innermost regions of the heart and remain settled in the contemplation of the Self.

Viviktasevi : The aspirant should live in an atmosphere of solitude. The place may be in one's own home if he is a householder. A small apartment should be chosen where he can carry on his *sadhana* uninterrupted. A crowded place full of noises is uncongenial for peaceful contemplation in the early stages of spiritual life. Hence dwelling in solitude is mentioned here.

Laghvasi : Moderation in food is essential for spiritual practice. Over-eating or too much fasting are both undesirable for the health of the body as well as the mind. Agreeable food in moderate quantity should be the rule. Food not only sustains the body but also controls the quality of the mind. In the previous Discourse the threefold types of food are clearly explained. The seeker should cultivate a *Sattvic* mind, and for that purpose he should adopt *Sattvic* type of nourishment. These three verses being the very essence of the Gita, we can understand the degree of importance attached to physical nourishment in the scheme of spiritual progress.

Yatavakkayamanasah : Control of speech, body and mind is another essential quality of the spiritual seeker. By devotion and discrimination, he should bring under control the entire physical body, the whole of the mental organism and the organ of speech which can cause mental destruction if left unchecked.

Dhyanyagaparonyam : Continuous meditation on the Self is necessary for the highest realisation. By systematic practice, such continuity of meditation can be acquired. In the beginning, the seeker is likely to allow the mind freely in the sense-world after a bit of concentration and meditation. Thus the effect of the former is neutralised by the latter. So incessant practice is necessary. Even when he is working in the world, he should try to retain the calm, peaceful and *Sattvic* atmosphere of the meditation state.

Vairagyam samupasritah : The word ‘*samupasritah*’ show the firmness of dispassion that should be practised by the seeker. Lukewarm dispassion is easily overwhelmed by sense-attractions. Sankara says in the *Vivekachudamani*-The aspiring soul of weak dispassion who tries to cross the ocean of *samsara* is held by the neck and turned back by the sea-monster of worldly temptations and sensual desires.

Balam : Here the word implies animal strength and violence, the asuric force of the *Rakshasas*, arising from the egoistic conscience of one’s own superiority over others. The strength used for divine purpose is good. Expenditure of energy for unwholesome ends obstinately held should be abandoned.

Kamam Krodham : These twin words occur several times in the Gita. They are mortal enemies of man. They function together. ‘*Kama*’ is the origin of ‘*Kroda*’ (*Kamat Krodhobhijayate*). These two evils should be destroyed root and branch.

Parigraham : (i. e.) Receiving gifts from others. The essential necessities of life got from charitable people may be accepted to sustain life. To seek for more is greed and covetousness. Not only does the receiver burdens himself with the bad *Karma* of the giver, but he also yields to the temptations of worldly pleasure by the acquisition of enjoyable things. So this evil should be given up along with the other evils mentioned in that line “*Ahamkaram Balam...*”

Vimuchya : Complete rejection of all the evils mentioned is implied.

Brahmabhuyay kalpate : The aspirant becomes fit to realise Brahman when he acquires the virtues and abandons the evils mentioned in the three verses.

Question : *What is the way to Brahma sakshatkara ? How should the aspirant act ?*

Answer : 1) He should purify the understanding.

- 2) He should firmly control the mind;
- 3) He should abandon all sense-objects which draw the mind out into the material world.
- 4) He should give up attraction and hatred.
- 5) He should dwell in solitude.
- 6) His diet should be moderate.
- 7) He should keep his speech, body and mind under his control.
- 8) He should practise meditation continuously.
- 9) He should possess intense dispassion.
- 10) He should abandon egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, hatred and covetousness.
- 11) He should give up the sense of 'I' and 'mine'.
- 12) He should possess peace.

Question : *How should man control the senses ?*

Answer : With firm will and courage.

Question : *Who is fit for Brahmajnana ?*

Answer : He who possesses the above mentioned qualities is fit for Brahma-jnana.

The conduct of the Brahma-jnana is explained.

54. ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥

५४

*Brahmabhutah prasannatma na sochati na kamkshati ।
samah sarveshu bhuteshu madbhaktim labhate param ॥* 54

Meaning : ब्रह्मभूतः brahmabhutah : Brahman-become, Jivanmukta, प्रसन्नात्मा prasannatma : the serene minded, न शोचति na sochati : grieves not, न काङ्क्षति na kamkshati : not

desires, सर्वेषु भूतेषु *sarveshu bhuteshu*: to all beings, समः *samah*: equal, परम् *param*: supreme, मद्भक्तिं *madbhaktim*: devotion unto me, लभते *labhate*: obtains.

Substance : Becoming Brahman, serene-minded, neither grieving nor desiring, the same to all beings, (he) obtains supreme devotion to Me.

Commentary : The serene-minded man of knowledge has nothing to seek for nor grieve for. He is the same to all beings, (i.e.) he does not see any distinction of high and low among the beings of the universe. Angles, men, animals, the creeping and crawling beings, all have the same significance from the stand-point of the highest.

Na sochati na kamkshati: When it is known that the phenomenal universe is created in *Atma* by the power of *Maya*, when the whole universe is seen as only one infinitesimal part of *Atma*, what can any man desire, and for what does he grieve.

*Yasmin sarvani bhutani
atmaivabhut vijanatah
tatra ko mohah kah soka
ekatva manupasyatah (Isavasya upanishad)*

Samah sarveshu bhuteshu: Love for all beings is the mark of a sage, or a knower of Brahman. He is equil-minded towards all beings because he sees the Self everywhere without any exception whatsoever. Therefore Self-realisation and universal love go together. When one is acquired the other is there spontaneously. That is why the Lord declares that the noble soul of Self-realisation acts with deep compassion for all beings.

Madbhaktim labhate param: This is the basic truth regarding *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. The ultimate realisation through the *Bhakti-marga* and *Jnana-marga* is the same. That is why the Lord here states that the knower of Brahman attains supreme devotion to Him.

Bhakti is of two kinds according to the degree of its intensity- (1) Ordinary (*Samanya*) *Bhakti*; (2) supreme (*Para*)

bhakti. The second is the same as the highest state of *Brahma-jnana*.

Sankara defines *Bhakti* in the following terms.

Svaswarupanu sandhanam

bhaktirityabhidhiyate.

According to this definition, the ceaseless contemplation of *Atma* is devotion. Therefore no real difference can be maintained between devotion and knowledge. Moreover it is said here that the man of highest self-realisation is full of the deepest devotion to the Lord. In Prahlada we find the embodiment of *Jnana* and *Bhakti* harmonised in the highest state.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahma-jnani ?*

Answer : He is pure and serene-minded. He neither grieves nor desires. He has the same outlook towards himself and all beings.

Question : *What does that sage obtain ?*

Answer : He obtains single-minded devotion to the Lord

Through devotion, knowledge and through knowledge union with the Lord will be obtained.

55. भक्त्या मामभिजानति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

५५

*Bhaktya mam abhijanati yavan yas cha'smi tattvatah ।
tato mam tattvato jnatva visate tad anantaram ॥* 55

Meaning : भक्त्या *bhaktya* : through devotion, माम् *mam* : Me, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah* : in essence, यावान् *yavan* : what I am, यश्च अस्मि *yascha asmi* : and who I am, अभिजानति *abhijanati* : knows, ततः *tatah* : then, माम् *mam* : Me, तत्त्वेतः *tattvatah* : in essence, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, तदनन्तरम् *tadanantaram* : afterwards, विशते *visate* : enters.

Substance : By devotion he knows Me in essence, what I am and who I am; then having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me.

Commentary : In the previous verse, it is said that knowledge leads to the highest devotion; and here it is said that devotion helps to know the Lord in truth, what He is and who He is. Therefore it is perfectly clear that devotion and knowledge sustain and strengthen each other mutually. The perfect knower of Brahman is also the perfect *Bhakta*, and the perfected *Bhakta* is also the sage of supreme wisdom. The great Sankara who propounded the highest truth that there is only One and not two, and so there is neither a devotee nor one to be devoted to, was himself the greatest of devotees, and his prayers, adorations and outpourings of heart constitute a perennial flood of sweet *Bhakti* (worship) of the Lord. In the Seventh Chapter seventeenth verse—('ekabhaktir visishyate') it is declared that the sage of true wisdom excels by his single-minded devotion

Abhijanati : Knows Me well. Knowledge arises from deep love. One cannot truly know anything that he does not love. If he wants to understand the sufferings of the poor he should love them, and that love helps him to know their difficulties, pains and sorrows truly. Mere charity without feeling is not of much value from this point of view. The mother knows the child because she loves him. The devotee knows the Lord, because he loves Him. As this love deepens and when the devotee enjoys the blissful nature of the Lord, he gradually enters that realm of supreme bliss, coming closer and closer to his chosen Deity, till he disappears and the Deity alone remains. It is like the salt doll dissolving in the ocean.

*Inatum avashtum cha tattvena praveshtum cha
paramtapa (11-54)*

It is only there and not before that the Lord is fully known. Such knowledge comes to man through devotion. From this, two important aspects of spiritual realisation are revealed--

- 1) By knowledge alone liberation is attained;
- 2) By devotion (*Bhakti*) alone such knowledge is obtained. Therefore, it is clear that for all true seekers after liberation, devotion to the Lord is essential.

Question : *How can man know the true nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : Through devotion (*Bhakti*).

Question : *What then will be man's state ?*

Answer : He becomes one with the Lord, attains union with Brahman.

Question : *From this, what do we learn to be the way to liberation ?*

Answer : By true knowledge, liberation is attained and true knowledge is obtained by faithful devotion to the Lord. Therefore through devotion knowledge is obtained and through knowledge Moksha is realised. This is the rationale of spiritual realisation.

Those who take refuge in the Lord attain eternal liberation.

56. सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥

५६

*Sarvakarmany api sada kurvano madvyapasrayah
matprasadat avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam ॥ 56*

Meaning : सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani* : all works, सदा *sada* : always, कुर्वणः *api kurvanah* *api* : performing even, मद्व्यपाश्रयः *madvyapasrayah* : who takes refuge in the Lord only, मत्प्रसादात् *matprasadat* : by My grace, अव्ययं *avyayam* : imperishable, शाश्वतं *sasvatam* *padam* : eternal state of Moksha, आप्नोति *apnoti* : obtains.

Substance : Performing all actions continually, he who takes refuge in Me only obtains the indestructible state of *Moksha* by My grace.

Commentary : It is declared here that performing actions with devotion to the Lord, man secures His grace, by which deliverance is obtained. ‘*Sarvakarmanyapi*’ means only those duties which come to man in the position in which he is placed, and not deeds which are prohibited by the *Sastras*. Though a man is engaged in the activities of the world with all the senses functioning continuously, if he remembers the Lord or if he surrenders the fruits of his works to the Lord, he obtains the grace of Iswara and liberation comes to him easily. From this we understand that action performed with true devotion leads man to the state of supreme Bliss. He who takes refuge in the Lord is not bound by any action or by all the actions done continually throughout his life. On the other hand he breaks the bonds of *Karma*, for, the binding power of *Karma* is destroyed by true devotion to the Lord. There is no agency or selfish desire behind such work. Such is the state of the true devotee whose mind is centred in the Lord and who feels that it is the power of the Lord which is functioning through him. When that attitude of mind is firmly established, man feels not the weight of work, nor the changes of fortune, nor the anxieties of the future.

Just as the court-dancer carrying on her head a brimful pitcher of water, though talking, singing and dancing, keeps her mind on the pitcher to keep it secure, so also the devotee, while engaged in a thousand activities, keeps his mind fixed on the Lord and attains liberation.

The seekers on the path of *Karma-yoga* should remember this principle. Otherwise, every act binds man to the wheel of *Samsara* and results in endless strife and suffering. If a man is propelled by selfish desires and performs actions to reap their fruits, he is binding himself with the strongest chains of action and reaction, and birth after birth, he has to undergo all the ills and evils in earthly existence.

Matprasadar : No one can free himself from *Maya*'s iron chains without Iswara's grace. Man who is subject to the power of *Maya* should seek the protection of Iswara who is the

Lord of *Maya*. He, by His grace, liberates man. Therefore everybody should try to win God's grace. How is God's grace to be obtained ?-By taking refuge in Him, and by sincere self-surrender. The Lord is pleased with such humble surrender. His grace flows into such a soul and makes him free and happy. The Lord is not partial to any one. The devotee approaches the Lord by his self-surrender. The Lord reveals Himself to such a man. Thereby, man becomes Divine. So every seeker should engage himself in good works and perform them with devotion and self-surrender.

The state of *Moksha* is described as indestructible and eternal. All else however great and mighty it may be, is subject to time, place and causation. Only *Moksha* is beyond all change, beyond all conditions. It is existence, knowledge, bliss absolute.

Question : *What is the nature of Moksha ?*

Answer : Eternal and imperishable.

Question : *How is it attained ?*

Answer : By the grace of Iswara.

Question : *How is Iswara's grace obtained ?*

Answer : By continuous memory of the Lord and surrendering the fruits of all actions to Him, man obtains His Grace.

Question : *Should man give up action to attain Moksha ?*

Answer : No. Though a man is engaged in actions arising from his position in the world, if he works with devotion and self-surrender to the Lord, he attains Moksha. Thus true devotion and detached performance of all works are necessary for liberation.

Question : *How should man act in the world ?*

Answer : He should perform good actions enjoined by the *Sastras*, and give away the rewards to the Lord. He

should remember the Lord while performing the actions.

Question: *By such devotion and selfless action, what does man acquire?*

Answer : He acquires God's grace and through His Grace, Liberation.

Having surrendered all works mentally to the Lord, the seeker should fix his mind in the Lord.

57. चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्छितः सततं भव ॥

५७

*Chetasa sarvakarmani mayi sannyasya matparah ।
buddhiyogam upasritya macchittah satatam bhava ॥ 57*

Meaning : सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani* : all actions (with their fruits), चेतसा *chetasa* : mentally, (with discrimination), मयि *mayi* : in me, सन्न्यस्य *sannyasya* : resigning, मत्परः *matparah* : having me as the highest goal, बुद्धियोगम् *buddhiyogam* : the yoga of discrimination (or single-minded concentration), उपाश्रित्य *upasritya* : resorting to, सततं *satatam* : always, मच्छितः *macchittah* : with mind fixed on Me, भव *bhava* : be.

Substance : Mentally surrendering all actions to Me, having Me as the highest goal, resorting to *Buddhiyoga*, fix your mind ever on Me.

Commentary : *Chetasa* : The body may be engaged in various activities, but the mind should be clear enough to know that all those actions are resigned to the Lord. So the Lord here teaches resignation of the fruits of actions and not actions themselves. It is useless to give up the actions of the body while the mind wanders always in all directions, thinking of so many worldly things. On the other hand, while the body carries on its prescribed duties, to be thinking of the Lord and

~~102~~ giving up the fruits of action to Him, leads to *Moksha*. Therefore the word 'chetasa' is used here. Knowing that it is the Lord's power that is running through him and that his actions have no relevance to him except as the work of the Lord, is the secret of *Karmayoga*.

Buddhiyogam : In the Tenth Discourse, the Lord has already declared that He would bestow '*buddhiyoga*' on his faithful devotee, (*dadami buddhiyogam*). Concentration of mind and enquiry into the Self are gifts of God to the devotee. This becomes clear when man attempts to clear the mystery of Self-knowledge. The enquiring mind is disturbed by a hundred doubts and fears, longings, desires and attachments. The path of enquiry is cleared up by God's grace. The wavering mind is brought to a state of steadiness. One-pointed attention on the Divine becomes possible. The enquirer then finds that the idea of 'I' and 'mine' are only fictitious creations of the mind, and what exists althrough is *Atma* (God). The word '*satatam*' shows that the memory of the supreme Reality should be constantly present in the consciousness, for otherwise, *Maya* would plunge him into *Tamas* and drag him down to the plane of sense-enjoyments. So, the sincere seeker should keep the thoughts of God fresh and clear always.

Matparah : Knowing that the whole of the objective world is insentient and ephemeral, the wise man should consider *Paramatma* as the highest goal.

Question : *What should the jiva do to attain Paramatma ?*

Answer : 1) Mentally, he should surrender all actions to God,

- 2) He should consider God as the highest goal,
- 3) He should resort to Buddhi-yoga and carry on enquiry into the Self,
- 4) He should keep his mind fixed constantly on God.

Question : *What is the Lord's teaching ? Is it the renunciation of action or the renunciation of the fruits of action ?*

Answer : It is not the renunciation of action but the fruits of action that is emphasised here. Though the body is engaged in various activities, the devotee is called up to surrender both the actions and their fruits to God.

Question : *What should man consider the highest goal and why?*

Answer : Paramatma, as He is the only permanent reality.

Question : *On what should the mind be fixed constantly?*

Answer : On Paramatma.

All difficulties and sorrows are transcended by the man whose mind is fixed on God.

58. मच्चितः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।

अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारात् श्रोष्यसि विनक्षयसि ॥

५८

Macchittah sarvadurgani matprasadat tarisyasi ।

atha chet tvam ahamkaran na sroshyasi vinankshyasi ॥ 58

Meaning : मच्चितः *macchitah* : fixing the mind on Me, मत्प्रसादात् *matprasadat* : by My Grace, सर्वदुर्गाणि *sarvadurgani* : all obstacles, born of Samsara (almost impossible for man to cross over), तरिष्यसि *tarishyasi* : (you) will transcend, अथ *atha* : now, त्वम् *tvam* : you, अहङ्कारात् *ahamkarat*, from egotism, न श्रोष्यसि चेत् *na sroshyasi chet* : (if you will) not Lear (My instructions), विनक्षयसि *vinankshyasi* : (you will) perish.

Substance : Fixing your mind on Me, by My grace, you will overcome all obstacles; now if, from egotism, you do not take My instruction, you will perish.

Commentary : *Durgani* : Durgam means obstacle in the way of spiritual realisation. Maya has created and is creating innumerable hurdles and obstacles, difficulties and dangers, by which man is frustrated in his aspiration to

attain the ultimate goal of life. This is everybody's experience in life. And this *Maya* cannot be crossed by any amount of human effort. The Lord of *Maya* is alone capable of removing *Maya*. Thus surrendering to the Lord is the only way to dispel the clouds, the illusions and delusions of the mind. There is no other way.

Matprasada : The Lord's grace is free for all. But those only who worship Him heart and soul feel the effect of His grace. Though the wind is blowing every where, only those sailors advance on the way who keep the sails of their boats unfurled. Those who seek shelter under a tree alone feel the cool-shade. Therefore surrender to the Lord is the only way for man to transcend all sorrows and difficulties.

The choice is left to man. If he surrenders, he will be happy and overcome all difficulties. If he does not, eternal bondage will be his lot, however much he may struggle in the ocean of *Samsara*.

Question : *How can man transcend the difficulties of Samsara ?*

Answer : If he surrenders to the Lord with his mind fixed on Him, all the obstacles will vanish.

Question : *What is the fate of those who refuse the Lord's command ?*

Answer : They will perish.

Question : *What prevents man from surrendering to the Lord ?*

Answer : The pride of egotism stands in the way of self-surrender.

The Lord tells Arjuna that even if he refuses to fight on account of his egoism, nature will compel him to fight whether he wants it or not.

59. यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्वं न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसा स्ते प्रकृतिस्थां नियोक्ष्यति ॥

५९

*Yady ahamkaram ashritya na yotsya iti manyase !
mithyai'shu vyavasayas te prakrtis evam niyokshyati ॥ 59*

Meaning : यदि yadi : if, अहम्कारं ahamkaram : egoism, आश्रित्य asritya : having taken refuge in, न योत्स्य इति na yotsya iti : (I) will not fight, thus, मन्यसे manyase : (thou) thinkest, एषः ते व्यवसायः eshah te vyavasayah : this your resolve, मिथ्या mithya : (is) futile, प्रकृतिः prakritih : (thy Kshatriya) nature, त्वाम् twam : you नियोक्ष्यति niyokshyati : will compel.

Substance : If prompted by egoism you think 'I will not fight', vain is this your resolve, for, nature will compel you.

Commentary : In his former teaching, the Lord advised Arjuna to give up the idea of doership and fight the righteous war. Now the Lord points out that even if Arjuna resolves to give up action, he cannot do so, for reason that his own nature will compel him to fight against his own resolve not to do so. The great secret behind all action is the sense of non-doership (i. e.) the absence of agency, in the doer. Man must act some way or other by the force of his nature and habit. How then can he be free from the binding effects of his action ? The answer is this—By giving up the sense of doership, and renouncing the fruits of action he can be free. This is the essential secret behind all action. One who has attained this feeling of detachment is not bound by any thing that he does.

The Lord says that even if a man does not wish to do a thing, he will definitely do it, by the compelling force of past habits of his own nature.

60. स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।

कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥ ६०

Svabhavajena kaunteya nibaddhah svena karm-

kartum ne'cchasi yan mohat karishyasya avaso'pi tat ॥ 60

Meaning : कौन्तेय kaunteya : O Arjuna ! स्वभावजेन svabhavajena : born of his nature (past habits of thought and action etc.) past Samskaras, स्वेन svena : his own, कर्मणा karmana : by action (former work), निबद्धः nibaddhah : bound firmly,

मोहात् *mohat* : without discrimination, यत् *yat* : that (fighting his battle), करुं *kartum* : to do, न इच्छसि *na icchasi* : (you) do not wish, तत् अपि *tat api* : even that, अवशः *avasah* : helplessly, करिष्यसि *karishyasi* : you will do.

Substance : O Arjuna ! bound by your own *Karma*, born of your own nature, that which in a deluded state you do not wish to do, even that you will do helplessly.

Commentary : *Nibaddhah* : Man is bound by his own thoughts and works (*Karma*). The Lord knew that Arjuna's nature as a *Kshatriya* is to fight. That is why he tells Arjuna that even if he does not wish to fight, he will still engage himself in the battle, prompted to it by his own nature. This is a truth that man thinks and acts according to his nature. If that is so, if man cannot but follow nature, how can there be any prospect of liberation ? He was bound in the past and the same will bind him in the present and the future. Is there no way out ? There is. The force of nature and human effort are both active forces in one's life. However much he feels that he is bound by nature, there is the opposite current of thought pointing the way to liberation. The struggle between the two goes on endlessly in the human heart. The Divine *Samskaras* slowly unfold themselves and as they become stronger, all the weaknesses of man are overcome in due course. There is no other way. Therefore every man, however degraded he may be at present, must take an upward curve one time or other. The sooner it is done the better it is for man. But there is no cause for despair in this account. "Perseverance will finally conquer" says Vivekananda.

Question : *By what is man bound ?*

Answer : By his own habits of thought and action acquired in previous births.

Question : *How does he liberate himself ?*

Answer : He will attain liberation by cultivating assiduously all good qualities by human effort in the present birth.

The Lord by the power of his Divine Maya manipulates all beings like so many dolls.

61. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृदयेर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

आमयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारुद्धानि मायया ॥

६१

Isvarah sarvabhutanam hriddese'rjuna tisthati ।

bhramayan saryabhutani yantrarudhani mayaya ॥

61

Meaning: अर्जुन Arjuna : O Arjuna ! ईश्वरः iswarah : the Lord who controls all by his invisible presence in all, मायया mayaya : by Maya, (illusion), सर्वभूतानि sarvabhutani : all beings, यन्त्रारुद्धानि yantrarudhani (iva) : like puppets mounted on a machine, आमयन् bhramayan : are caused to revolve, सर्वभूतानां sarvabhutanam : of all beings, हृदये hriddese : in the heart, तिष्ठति tisthati : exists.

Substance: O Arjuna ! the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings revolve like puppets by His illusive power (*Maya*).

Commentary: Where does the Lord dwell ? How does His powers work ? These questions are answered here. It is the most foolish delusion of man to think that the Lord is far away, some-where in the remote sky and at some such place where man cannot reach. This way of thinking has become a habit of mind for all mankind, except for a very few wise men, who know the secret. The Lord is not away from us. He is with us, in us, right in our own heart. That is the Lord's declaration. He dwells in the heart of all beings, and so one should be very careful in his thoughts and deeds. He sees all. He is the all-pervasive *Atmam*. He is the dispenser of rewards and punishments for each and every being, according to his *Punya* and *Papa Karma*. Therefore man should feel the presence of the Lord within and without and try his best to avoid evil and cling to the good only. People must follow the path of truth and righteousness, for, the Lord sees all by His invisible presence everywhere. The Lord's declaration should inspire hope to the devotee.

Where else has he to go to find the Lord who is present in his own heart ?

The Lord is present everywhere, and most so in the heart of man. He should be worshipped as the nearest of the near and the dearest of the dear. Without any distinction whatsoever, he is in all beings. The vehicle of manifestation may be a small thing like an ant, or a big thing like an elephant. This does not make any difference at all for the Lord. He is equally present in all, in the sinner as well as in the saint. His presence is felt more where the heart is pure. The difference is only in the degree of manifestation. If the mirror is clear, the sun's reflection is bright; if the mirror is unclear, the reflection is dim. This makes no difference at all to the Sun.

Yantrarudhani : The illusive power of *Maya* works on all beings. They are moved by *Maya* in accordance with their own nature. They are like puppets mounted on a machine. As the wheel moves, all the beings move helplessly. They cannot get out of the wheel. The *Jivas* are bound to the wheel of *Samsara*, the cycle of birth and death, and rotate helplessly by the inscrutable power of *Maya*. In the next verse the Lord points out the way to get out of the wheel. The way is to surrender to the Lord of *Maya*, who by His grace releases the *Jiva* from the endless cycle of *Samsara*.

Mayaya : *Maya* is the instrument of the Lord. The entire work of nature is carried on by *Maya*. The Lord, as the *Atma*, is only the witness of the activities of *Maya*.

Question : *Where does Iswara dwell ?*

Answer : In the heart of all beings.

Question : *How does he work ?*

Answer : He revolves all beings in the great wheel of *Samsara*.

Question : *How ?*

Answer : Like puppets mounted on a wheel.

Question : *What is the secret power of the Lord ?*

Answer : *Maya*—the illusive power of the Lord.

It is said that all beings are held by the mighty wheel of Samsara. In this verse the means for attaining peace and liberation are explained.

62. तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ ६२

Tam eva saranam gaccha sarva bhavena bharata ।

tatprasadat param santim sthanam prapsyasi sasyatam 62

Meaning: भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! सर्वभावेन *sarva-bhavena* : with all your being, तमेव *tameva* : Him alone, शरणं *gaccha* : take refuge in, तत् प्रसादात् *tat prasadat* : by His Grace, परं शान्तिं *param santim* : supreme peace, शाश्वतम् *sasyatam* : eternal, स्थानं *sthanaṁ* : position (i. e.) liberation, प्राप्स्यसि *prapsyasi* : you will obtain.

Substance : O Arjuna ! with all your being, take refuge in the Lord; by His grace, you will obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode (i. e.) liberation.

Commentary : It is said in the previous verse that man is bound to the wheel of *Samsara* by the power of *Maya*. What is the way for liberation ? How can he attain supreme peace ? The answer is given in this verse. To surrender with all his being, whole-heartedly to the Lord who dwells in all beings is the only way to attain freedom from the shackles of *Samsara*. If anybody wants to stop a machine he must seek the help of the mechanic. The Lord is the mechanic who holds and runs the tremendous machine of *Samsara*. Therefore *Jiva* has to take refuge in the Lord if he wants liberation. Without whole-hearted surrender to the Lord, the power of *Maya* will not give way. Only the power of the Lord is capable of terminating the power of *Maya*. To none else will *Maya* give way. Therefore the Lord advises Arjuna to surrender to Him with all his being. This exhortation is for all beings. It is the simplest and easiest path for every one to follow. All physical powers are subject to the power of *Maya* and *Maya* is subject to the power of the

Lord. Knowing this, man has to give up pride and egoism and take refuge in the Lord with humility and devotion. The same idea is expressed many times in many places in the Gita. This is one of the central ideas of the Scripture. That the idea of surrender is emphasised in the last verses of the Scripture is sufficient proof that it is the major current of thought throughout. Arjuna surrendered to the Lord before the message of Gita is offered to him. The idea is once again brought into focal point at the end.

Sarvabhavena : With all his being (i. e.) body, mind and speech. It means that the surrender should be complete and unconditional. The whole responsibility is given over to the Lord. The difficulty for the common man is that his surrender generally is conditioned by a secret and silent demand. It is not unreserved. Man's faith is generally half-hearted. He doubts the mercy of the Lord. He partly wishes to do things by himself, although his life's experience show that he has not obtained any great advantage by his own effort. After many many births, man realises that the will of the Lord is supreme, and it is He who is a trust-worthy friend and supporter for him in this life, here and now. The sooner man discovers it the better it is for him, for he will then obtain the peace which has been eluding him.

Tat prasadat : By the grace of the Lord. Divine Grace ! He who has obtained it, unto him everything is possible. All crookedness shall be straightened for him by the Lord's grace. He becomes a *Dharmatma* quickly, says the Lord. How can one obtain God's Grace ? By surrender, with a pure and clear heart, without any reservations, personal ambitions and plans for getting this or that material benefit. What does not man obtain by such surrender ? Peace, bliss and liberation from the wheel of *Samsara*. All the highest aspirations of man all fulfilled by the Lord's grace.

Param sartim : Supreme Peace. The state of *Moksha* is the highest peace and bliss. It is peace that passeth understanding. It does not depend upon external circumstances. Kings cannot have it. Even emperors cannot hold that peace.

It is not in any of the different worlds. This peace is in the Atmam, who is the real Seer behind all this phenomenal world. The phenomenal world is only an appearance, and attachment to the false, inert, and sorrowful would destroy all happiness within. He who disassociates himself from this load of matter, and takes shelter within the Lord finds the treasure of true happiness and peace.

Sasyatam : The bliss of *Moksha* is eternal. It is changeless and deathless. All other forms of enjoyment in the material world are short-lived, temporary and subject to change. Do we not see from practical experience that pleasure and pain alternately, come down day after day, hour after hour ? Of what use is it to cling to them foolishly ? 'Give it up' is the Lord's command. By giving up the temporary man attains the eternal state of liberation. It is given only to man to attain this the highest state. The human birth is the greatest asset, for, in this manifestation only it is possible for man to attain *Moksha*. It is difficult for all other manifestations, higher and lower to attain liberation. So, whoever seeks his welfare should surrender to the Lord, obtain His grace, and thereby come up to the highest state of peace and bliss.

Question : *What is the highest Divine State ?*

Answer : It is full of peace and eternal bliss.

Question : *How can man obtain it ?*

Answer : By the Grace of the Lord.

Question : *How can man obtain God's grace ?*

Answer : By complete surrender to the Supreme Deity.

Question : *What is the way to peace and the highest state ?*

Answer : By devotion, man obtains the grace of the Lord, and by such grace he obtains the reward of eternal peace and liberation.

Having taught all the secrets of true wisdom, the Lord leaves the final decision to Arjuna himself to act according to his own wish.

63. इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्यादगुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्येतदशेषे ॥ यथेच्छसि तया कुरु ॥

63

*Iti te jnanam akhyatam guhyad guhyataram maya ।
vimrisyai'tad aseshena yathe'cchasi tatha kuru ॥ 63*

Meaning : इति *iti* : thus, गुह्यात् गुह्यतरं *guhyataram* : the most secret of all, ज्ञान *jnanam* : knowledge-The Gita-Sastra containing all the principles of Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana, Jnana, dispassion and renunciation, मया *maya* : by me, ते *te* : to you, आख्यातम् *akhyatam* : is declared, एतत् *etat* : this, अशेषेण *aseshena* : completely, विमृश्य *vimrisya* : having reflected over it, यथेच्छसि *yadhecchasi* : as you wish, तथा *tatha* : so, कुरु *kuru* : act.

Substance : Thus has been declared by Me to you this secret of all knowledge (the Gita-Sastra); having reflected over it fully, act according to your wish.

Commentary : The Lord describes the *Gita-Sastra* as the most secret of all knowledge. The teachings of this wisdom should be communicated only to such disciples who are qualified to receive it. Arjuna was qualified to receive it by virtue of his great devotion to Krishna, and the virtuous qualities (Daivisampat) that he possessed. Lord Krishna has thereby done a great service to mankind. Even for learning any worldly skill or art, a great deal of preparation is necessary for the student. When that is so, what amount of internal and external preparation is necessary for receiving this highest wisdom, one can easily understand. So the Lord declares that he has taught the most secret wisdom to Arjuna, just because he is fit to receive it, and finds it most necessary in the circumstances in which he is placed.

Vimrisyaita daseshena : Fully reflecting over it. It is the practice of all great teachers to give all that the disciple wants by way of teaching and instruction, and finally leave it to the disciple to decide what he should do, and how he should act.

Only the narrow-minded teacher insists on the disciple to accept what he says without doubt or question. On the other hand, the great teachers give complete freedom of thought and reflection to the disciples. Man has to make a free choice of his course of action according to his own nature. The disciple should know and feel the truth of what was taught to him. Then only he derives the full benefit of the master's teaching. We see in this context how broad-minded the Lord was when he left the freedom of choice to Arjuna himself. Arjuna was one of the greatest devotees of Krishna. Krishna's word was law unto him. If Lord Krishna wanted Arjuna to fight in the form of a command, Arjuna would have immediately acted up without any hesitation. But the Lord takes a different view. After giving the full message of wisdom, the Lord asks Arjuna to reflect over it, to think well and deeply, and come to a voluntary decision. Such a decision would ultimately benefit him much more than a mere verbal command from the teacher. The final decision is left entirely to the individual.

Yadhechhasi tadha kuru : Act as you wish. The Lord simply explained the position to Arjuna. That is all. He has nothing more to say. The disciple is free to take it or leave it. Here is a great example of *Nishkama-karma*. Having taught the *Gita Sastra*, the Lord leaves it without a thought of the fruit of his action. Although the main objective of the Lord is to make Arjuna fight the battle, He remains unconcerned about the result of his message. The Lord seems to say "you may fight or you may not. That is your decision, not mine. I have taught you the essence of all the *Vedas*, and it is your duty in the present situation, to take it or leave it. I am unconcerned". Such is the way how great teachers act in respect of their disciples. Their message is delivered in a simple and powerful way. They pass on, leaving it to the people to think about it, draw their own conclusions and come to their own decision. This is an example of *Nishkama-karma* with which the scripture comes to a close.

Jnanam akhyatam : Although in the *Gita Sastra*, the Lord has dealt with *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana* etc., they are all implied in the simple word wisdom (*Jnana*). The various paths culmi-

nate in *Jnana*. They are all intended to purify the mind gradually, and the mind so purified by the practice of *Karma* and *Bhakti* etc., acquires *Jnana* by which man attains the highest goal of *Moksha*. *Karma* and *Bhakti* are stepping stones to *Jnana*. *Jnana* is the peak point of realisation.

Question : How is the Gita Sastra described ?

Answer : As the most secret of all secrets.

Question : Having delivered the message of wisdom, what should be the attitude of the teacher ?

Answer : He should leave it to the disciple to reflect over it deeply, and act according to his own wish.

The culmination of all Yogas and all human endeavours is enunciated in the following three verses—

64. सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे द्रढिमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ ६४

Sarvaguhyatamam bhuyah srinu me paramam vachah ।
Isto 'si me dridham iti tato vakshyami te hitam ॥ 64

Meaning : सर्वगुह्यतमं sarvaguhyatamam : the most secret of all, परमं paramam : supreme, मे me : my, वचः vachah : word, भूयः bhuyah : again, शृणु srinu : hear, मे me : of me, द्रढम् dridham : dearly, इष्टः असि ishtah asi : beloved you are, इति ततः iti tatah : thus therefore, ते te : your, हितम् hitam : what is good, वक्ष्यामि vakshyami : I will speak.

Substance : (O Arjuna!) Listen again to my supreme word, the profoundest of all. You are dear to me and faithful. Therefore I shall tell you what is for your good.

Commentary : The Lord uses superlative expression to bring out the great importance and significance of the profound secret which he now reveals to Arjuna.

Bhuyah : (again) - Out of compassion for the disciple, the Lord repeats what He has already said. Such repetition is no fault. The great Master is most anxious that his disciple should understand the essence of his teaching.

Paramam vachah : (Supreme word). The Lord says that he is speaking out the highest truth, and explaining the most profound secret. One can understand what degree of faith the disciple should have and with what concentrated attention he should hear the words of the Lord.

Ish toesi : (You are dear to me). The aim of the disciple first of all should be to win the love of the Master. Knowledge would follow automatically by the grace of the Master. With love the Master teaches, and with faith the disciple receives knowledge. Therefore the first thing that a disciple should do is to serve the master in every possible way and win his affection and love. The same idea has already been stated in the thirty fourth verse of Chapter Three. By respectful obedience, by prostration, by personal service, and by humly questioning, the disciple receives the highest knowledge from the Master who offers it to his beloved disciple with love and affection. Spiritual knowledge cannot be purchased or bought by wealth or wordly position or greatness. It is the Master's gift of love to his disciple.

Arjuna is a true devotee. So he is dear to the Lord. When the mind becomes ripe with true devotion, the Master comes and confers knowledge on his disciple. God leads the disciple to the Master or the Master himself comes in search of the disciple. No true seeker need be disheartened that he is not able to find the Master. The Master would come to him at the appointed time and initiate him into the secrets of spiritual knowledge. Therefore the real seeker should fill his mind with devotion, train himself in the methods of self-control and live a pure life. When such preparation is complete, the Master simply opens the heart of the disciple and the highest Truth so far concealed in him is revealed to him in a flash.

The *Sastras* are very clear on this point. They have repeatedly declared that without God's grace and the grace of the Teacher, no one can attain spiritual knowledge.

Question : What is the nature of the Lord's teaching to Arjuna ?

Answer : It is the highest and the most profound secret.

Question : Why does the Lord offer it to Arjuna ?

Answer : Because Arjuna was a true devotee.

In two verses the Lord gives the very essence of his teaching.

65. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैश्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

65

*Manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji mām namaskuru ।
mam evai'shyasi satya'n te pratijane priyo'asi me ॥ 65*

Meaning : मन्मना: *manmanah*: with mind fixed on me, मद्भक्तः: *madbhaktah*: devoted to me, मद्याजी *madyaji*: sacrifice to me, भव *bhava*: be, माम् *mam*: me, नमस्कुरु *namaskuru*: bow down, माम् एव *mam eva*: to me only, एश्यसि *eshyasi*: you shall come, मे *me*: to me, प्रियः असि *priyah asi*: dear you are, ते *te*: to you, प्रतिजाने *pratijane*: I promise, सत्यं *satyam*: truth.

Substance : Fix your mind on me; be devoted to me; sacrifice to me; prostrate before me; so shall you come to me only. This is My pledge to you, for you are dear to me.

Commentary : This verse and the next one contain the essence of the *Gita* teaching. The Lord has already declared that he is now revealing the most profound secret out of love for his disciple.

In this verse and the next, the first part states the path of spiritual progress, and the last part declares the goal of spiritual life. Four types of spiritual discipline are pointed out here—(1) Fixing the mind on God, (2) Devotion to God, (3) Perfor-

ming sacrifice unto God (4) Humble prostration to God. Such discipline leads to the highest realisation, namely, union with God.

Therefore those who seek knowledge should reject all the temptations of the flesh. They should fix their mind on God and love God with the same zeal and attraction as they feel for the objects of the senses. They should bow to God in utter humility. They should meditate on God with a full heart. The ignorant unfortunately run after sensual pleasures and distract their minds with a hundred petty desires and longings. They miss the way and are lost in darkness. They have strayed away from the path of true happiness. They cannot realise the bliss of union with God.

Satyam te pratijane : The Lord clears the last trace of doubt from the mind of Arjuna by saying—“This is the truth; I pledge my word.” Rarely do we come across such open declarations from the Lord in the course of his teaching. One’s faith in the Lord’s teaching is doubled and redoubled, and he accepts the final words of the Lord with deep and unswerving faith, and attain liberation.

Manmanah bhava : All the four paths of spiritual progress are included in this verse (1) Action (*Karma*), (2) Devotion (*Bhakti*), (3) Meditation (*Dhyana*) (4) Knowledge (*Jnana*).

Question : *What are the means of liberation ?*

- Answer :** 1) Fixing the mind on God,
 2) Devotion to God,
 3) Performing sacrifices unto God,
 4) Humble prostration before God.

Question : *On whom does the Lord bestow his grace ?*

- Answer :** On those who win his love by following the spiritual discipline with truth and sincerity.

Question : *What is the result of such devotion to God ?*

- Answer :** They attain Liberation. This is the pledge of the Lord.

The Lord declares finally the very essence of the Gita message.

66. सर्वधर्मान्यरित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६

*Sarvadharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja ।
aham tva sarvapapebhyo mokshayisyami ma suchah ॥ 66*

Meaning : सर्वधर्मान् Sarvadharman: all duties, परित्यज्य parityajya : having abandoned, माम् mam : to me, एकं ekam : alone, शरणं व्रज saranam vraja : refuge take, अहम् aham : I, त्वा tva : you, सर्वपापेभ्यः sarvapapebhayah : from all sins, मोक्षयिष्यामि mokshayishyami : will liberate, मा शुचः ma suchah : do not grieve.

Substance : Having abandoned all duties (*Dharmas*) take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve.

Commentary : This is the last verse of the Gita-message. The first part represents 'kilakam' in the *Mantra Sastra*. The essence of the Gita-message is summed up in this verse. The *Vaishnavas* repeat it as a *Mantra*.

Sarvadharman Parityajva : (having abandoned all duties). Surrender to the Lord is the direct path for attaining ultimate liberation. Performing the duties prescribed by the *Sastras* is no doubt good as it produces 'Punya' which takes man to higher worlds. But surrender to the Lord confers *Moksha*-Liberation. The fruit of all duties and religious observances is implied in surrender. Therefore the Lord advises his disciple to abandon all other duties and attain the highest goal by complete Self-surrender.

Mam Ekam : (Me alone). The fruit of all duties form a part of the infinite bliss of Liberation, as ten forms a part of a hundred. When the stem is watered, all the branches upto the last twig receive nourishment. So the Lord here enjoins complete Self-surrender as the simplest and also the highest

method for final Liberation. God is the highest good. By knowing Him (*Atma*) all else is known, and by attaining Him all the rewards of spiritual life are attained. The fruit of God-realisation is infinite. All finite works and actions are implied in it.

Mokshayishyami : (I will liberate you from all sins). What is the effect of Self-surrender ? The *Dharma Sastras* prescribe certain types of penance for the purification of some forms of sin, committed by man in the course of his life. Self-surrender liberates man completely from all sins, innumerable though they may be. In fact the common man is not aware how many kinds of sins he is committing every day without his knowledge. So he is bound by his own sins, and wanders through the various worlds, in restless agitation. Such is the fate of the '*Jiva*' who clings to worldly life and yet hopes for peace which eludes him throughout his life. This restlessness troubles him continuously till he discovers the only way of liberation from all sins and from all forms of bondage. The Lord here reveals the highest secret. "Surrender to Me; I will liberate you from all sins", declares the Lord.

Self-surrender should not be a partial affair. It must be complete, without any pre-condition or the least reservation. The river when it joins the ocean does not keep back any part of its separate identity. The union is complete. Thus Self-surrender leads to complete union with the Lord or *Atma*. The *Jivatma* becomes *Paramatma*, and that is the culmination of all spiritual knowledge.

What is the nature of this Self-surrender ? It is to withdraw oneself from every kind of worldly attachment. It is to give up all temptation to enjoy the pleasures of this world or the next. It is to abandon all desires. It is to crush the last trace of the ego as a separate entity. Such is the nature of Self-surrender. This cannot be done in a single day. The principle should be properly understood, and continuously practised in every day life.

It is the divine law that by doing good, man attains joy, and by doing evil he suffers sorrow. Good and evil are mixed up in various proportions in the life of each individual. So joys and sorrows overtake men like the waves of the ocean. This is what we call *Samsara*. The man who clings to the senses must experience pleasure and pain alternately. Pleasure and pain are inextricably mixed up as the two vital ingredients of human life. So the wise man after experiencing the mixed fruits of his actions through many many births, finally gives up the futile and foolish game and turns his mind to God. There he finds the peace which surpasses understanding. This is Liberation.

The devotee, the *Bhakta*, surrenders to the Lord, and the *Jnani*, the man who follows the path of discrimination, surrenders to *Atma*. It may appear as though there is a subtle distinction between the two, the *Bhakta* and the *Jnani*, the path of devotion and the path of knowledge through discrimination. The *Gita* has already made it clear that the distinction is only a verbal difference, and in essence there is no distinction at all. All paths, *Jnana*, *Bhakti*, and *Karma*, lead to the same goal—Liberation. The basic truth implied in all these paths is renunciation, *Tyaga*, of the little limited personal ego. The *Sastras* declare that by *Tyaga* alone man attains immortality.

The reader has to understand the statement ‘*Sarva Dharmān parityajya*’ very carefully. It does not mean that he can remain idle without doing anything at all. If that is so, every idler can claim to be a *Brahmajnani*, a liberated soul. That is not the meaning. The statement means that the individual should surrender the fruits of his *Karma* and *Dharma* in the Lord, and by such surrender, he attains *Moksha*. The lesser duties have to be abandoned by taking to the higher and the highest duty—namely self-surrender.

Ma suchah: (Do not grieve): This is the Lord's pledge to all his faithful disciples. The *Gita* actually starts with the words of the Lord ‘*aschyan arvaschistvan*’ and ends here with the glorious promise ‘*ma suchah*’. Therefore it is perfectly

clear that the purpose of the entire Gita message is to liberate man from the deadly grip of sorrow. Life is a kind of pilgrimage, not from one joy to another, but from one sorrow to another. The wise man knows it, and so he seeks for a joy that does not come to an end, a joy unmixed with sorrow, a joy that is permanent, a joy that fills full the yearning heart, and this he finds in Self-realisation. The ignorant man suffers and continues to suffer through several births, and at last he too comes to the conclusion that there must be a way out of this vicious circle. Then he hears the mighty call of the Gita—"Do not grieve, my friend, surrender to Me and I will liberate you from all sin and sorrow."

The Lord here prescribes the simplest form of discipline to the world as the highest means of ultimate Liberation. So the common man need not worry that he has not read this *Sastra* or that, that he has not followed this *Dharma* or that, that he has not performed this sacrifice or that, and so on. In whatever manner he lives, let him surrender to the Lord with truth and sincerity. He shall attain peace and he shall experience the bliss of Liberation.

Question : *How can man free himself from sin and bondage?*

Answer : By complete surrender to the Lord.

Question : *What is the way to the highest Peace?*

Answer : Surrender.

The Lord says that the Gita-Sastra should not be taught to those who are devoid of devotion.

67. इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥

६७

Idam te na'tapaskaya na'bhaktaya kadachana!

na cha'susrushavē vachyam na cha mam yo'bhyasuyati" 67

Meaning : ते ie : by you, इदं idam : this, कदाचन kadachana : ever, अतपस्काय atapaskaya : to one who is devoided of austerity;

न वाच्यं *na vachyam* : not to be spoken, अभक्ताय *abhaktaya* : to one who is devoid of devotion, न *na* : not, अशुश्रूषवे च *asushrushave cha* : and to one who does render no service or who does not deserve to listen, न *na* : not, यः *yah* : who, माम् *mam* : me, अभ्यसूयति *abhyasuyati* : cavils at, च *cha* : and, न *na* : not.

Substance : This is never to be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerity, nor to one who is not devoted, nor to one who does not do service, nor to one who speaks ill of me.

Commentary : The Lord teaches his disciple that this great science of Liberation should not be revealed to those who are devoid of austerity and devotion.

This warning is necessary and no true seeker is excluded from the benefit of receiving the light of knowledge. It means that the seeker for Liberation should make himself fit to receive this knowledge by austerity, service and devotion.

It should not be taught to people who have neither self-control nor devotion to God. Such men are likely to disparage this great and secret knowledge and give false interpretation to the laws enunciated in the Gita. In practical life one comes across many flippant shallow people, engrossed in worldliness, who decry all spiritual knowledge as a foolish exercise in futility. Such men do great harm to society. They destroy faith and create doubts about the truth of this great science. Such men are not only unhelpful, but positively harmful to society.

The idea is stated negatively, but its positive meaning is clear. The receiver of this knowledge should possess certain qualities of character. He must have acquired self-discipline by following an austere way of life. He must possess devotion. He must have served elders and teachers, and he should never scorn the wise masters who deliver this wonderful message.

Above all, the disciple should be most eager to free himself from the ills of the flesh. This eagerness, this yearning to know the truth, to live by it, and experience the bliss of Liberation in his own life, is the first qualification for receiving the message of the Gita.

Question : *To whom should the Gita-Sastra be not taught ?*

Answer : To those who are devoid of austerity and devotion.

Question : *What does this prohibition imply ?*

Answer : It implies that those who have practised austerity and who have devotion to God are most qualified to receive the Gita message.

In this and the following verse, the Lord says that those who propagate the Gita-message are most dear to Him and they shall attain Him.

68. य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥

६८

*Ya idam paramam guhyam madbhakteshvabhidhasyati!
bhaktim mayi param kritva mam evai shyaty asamsayah • 68*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, परमं गुह्यं *paramam guhyam* : Supreme secret, इदं *idam* : this, मद्भक्तेषु *madbhakteshu* : to my devotees, अभिधास्यति *abhidhasyati* : shall declare, मयि *mayi* : in me, परां *param* : Supreme, भक्तिं *bhaktim* : devotion, कृत्वा *kritva* : having done, असंशयः *asamsayah* : doubtless, माम् एव *mam eva* : to me alone, एष्यति *eshyati* : shall come.

Substance : He who with supreme devotion in me will teach this profound philosophy to my devotees, shall doubtless come to me alone.

Commentary : The Lord here declares that those who teach the Gita to his devotees would reach Him, attain *Moksha*. From this we understand the high value of true service to humanity.

Of course, there are many forms of service, but the highest service a wise man can do is to transmit his knowledge to others. Such a man attains the highest fruit of service, namely Liberation. The knowledge imbedded in the Gita contains the most profound secret of life. It provides the key to Liberation. It is no doubt a great thing to attain knowledge and liberate oneself, but it is an infinitely greater thing to offer the light of knowledge to others, who are in need, and thus help them to reach the highest goal of life.

Question : What is the importance of the Gita ?

Answer : It contains the most profound secret of Liberation.

Question : To whom should it be taught ?

Answer : To the devotees of the Lord.

Question : What reward does he get ?

Answer : He attains liberation (*Moksha*).

69. न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृतमः ।

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥

६९

*Na cha tasman manushyeshu kaschin me priya krittamah :
bhavita na cha me tasmat anyah priyatara bhuvi ॥ 69*

Meaning : मनुष्येषु *manushyeshu* : among men, तस्मात् *tasmat* : than he, मे *me* : of me, प्रियकृतमः *priyakrittamah* : one who does dearer service, कश्चित् *kaschit* : any, न च *na cha* : not and, तस्मात् *tasmat* : than he, मे *me* : of me, प्रियतरः *priyataraḥ* : dearer, अन्यः *anyah* : another, भुवि *bhuvi* : in the world, भविता न च *bhavita na cha* : shall be not and.

Substance: Nor is there any among men who renders dearer service to Me than he; nor shall there be another dearer to Me than he in the world.

Commentary : Those who teach the Gita are the most dear to the Lord. So the best way of obtaining the Grace of the Lord is to propagate his teaching. It is the best form of

service to the Lord. Out of love and compassion for humanity, the Lord is eager to convey His message to the largest number of sincere seekers. He wants all his disciples not only to study the Gita, but communicate its message to others. People are all eager to obtain the grace of the Lord by doing various devotional deeds. Here the Lord says that he who propagates His teaching is the dearest of his devotees. The common man may not be able to do great deeds for the service of mankind. But it is within his power to study the Gita and communicate its precious message to others in every possible way. It is good to gather devotees of the Gita in towns and villages and do constructive spiritual work in the manner prescribed by the Lord.

Question : *Who is the man most dear to the Lord and who does the most dear service to Him ?*

Answer : The man who propagates the teaching of the Gita is most dear to the Lord, and it is he who does the most dear service to Him.

The study of the Gita is the sacrifice of Knowledge-Jnana Yagna.

70. अध्येष्यते च य इं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्वामिति मे मतिः ॥

७०

*Adhyesyate cha ya imam dharmyam samvadam avayoh
jnayanayajnena tena'ham ishtah syam iti me matih । 7.*

Meaning : यः च *yah cha* : and who, धर्म्यं *dharma* : sacred, आवयोः *avayoh* : of ours, इमं संवादम् *imam samvadam* : this dialogue, अध्येष्यते *adhyesyate* : shall study, तेन *tena* : by him, ज्ञानयज्ञेन *jnanayajnena* : by the sacrifice of knowledge, अहम् *aham* : I, इष्टस्याम् *ishtasyam* : shall have been worshipped, इति मे *iti me* : thus my, मतिः *matih* : conviction.

Substance : And he who shall study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall have been worshipped by *Jnana yagna*; this is my conviction,

Commentary : *Dharmyam* : The Gita is sacred because it does not swerve from *Dharma*. It is the very embodiment of *Dharma*. The opening words of the Gita—“*Dharmakshetre*”—are to be remembered here.

Jnanayajnena : The study of the Gita is a form of sacrifice—it is the Sacrifice of knowledge. So it is clear that the Gita teaches knowledge (*jnana*) as its main aim. The other paths of *Bhakti* and *Karma* are accessory aids which ultimately culminate in supreme knowledge. Worship of the Lord with flowers and fruits is no doubt good in its own way. But the devotee acquires greater merit by the study of the Gita and by understanding the wisdom enshrined in it. This is itself a holy sacrifice.

Me matih : (This is My conviction)—The Lord proclaims that the Gita is the message of the highest knowledge by which man attains Liberation.

Question : What is the merit of the Gita ?

Answer : It is Jnana-yagna.

One who hears the Gita also acquires great spiritual merit.

71. अद्वावाननसूयव शृगुपादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँछोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मगम् ॥ ७१

*Sradhāvayan anasuyas cha sruinuyad api yo narah ।
so'pi muktah subhan lokan prapnuyat punya karmanam ॥ 71*

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, नरः *narah* : man, अद्वावान् *sradhāvayan* : full of faith, अनसूयः च *anasuyah cha* : free from malice and, शृगुपादपि *sruinuyadapi* : also may hear, सः *sah api* : he even, मुक्तः *muktah* : liberated, पुण्यकर्मणां *punya-karmanam* : of those righteous deeds, शुभान् लोकान् *subhan lokan* : happy worlds, प्राप्नुयात् *prapnuyat* : shall attain.

Substance : And the man who hears this, full of faith and free from malice, even he shall attain the happy worlds of the righteous, freed from all evil.

Commentary : On many occasions, the Lord has warned the devotee against the evils of malice and hatred, and once again he emphasises the idea at the end of his teaching. Besides being free from these twin evils, one should possess single-minded devotion and faith (Sraddha). Without faith (Sraddha) no one can achieve anything great in any sphere of life. And particularly in the spiritual realm, no man can achieve any merit if his heart is impure. Malice is like a canker. It eats away the vital forces of man and renders him weak and disabled for any great pursuit.

There may be many illiterate persons who are eager to learn and know the *Sastras*, and who feel disappointed by their inability to read the sacred books. The Lord here declares that they need not at all be disappointed. They may hear the Gita-Sastra and acquire spiritual merit which offers them the reward of attaining the happy worlds of the righteous. Only the condition is that their hearts should be pure, free from malice and hatred. The centre of spiritual knowledge is the heart and not the brain. It is the illumination of the heart that liberates man. The Lord abides in the lotus of the heart.

One comes across learned scholars who have thoroughly read the *Sastras*, but who still remain ignorant of the highest wisdom. This goes to show that their hearts are still dim and obscure inspite of their vast learning. People honour them for their learning, but the light of true knowledge they cannot give, because their hearts are troubled by the tempest of *Samsara*.

On the other hand, there are illiterate people whose hearts are pure and untainted. They are fit to be initiated into the secrets of true knowledge. The Lord advises such pure souls to hear the Gita, and thus acquire spiritual merit.

Question : *What is the way of Liberation for the illiterate ?*

Answer : For the illiterate, the way of Liberation is to hear the Gita.

At the end of the Gita, the Lord questioned Arjuna—"Is your delusion removed and ignorance destroyed by the message of the Gita ?"

72. कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥

७२

*Kacchid etacchrutam partha tvayai'kagrena chetas ।
kacchid ajnana-sam-mohah pranashtas te dhanamjaya ॥ 72*

Meaning : पार्थ Partha : O Arjuna, एतत् etat : this, त्वया tvaya : by you, एकाग्रेण चेतसा ekagrena chetasa : with one-pointed mind, श्रृतं कच्चित् sritam kacchit : whether heard, धनञ्जय dhanamjaya : O Arjuna, ते te : your, अज्ञान समोहः ajnana-sam-mohah : the delusion of ignorance, प्रनष्टः कच्चित् pranashtah kacchit : whether destroyed.

Substance : Has this been heard by you O Partha, with a concentrated mind? Has the delusion of your ignorance been destroyed O Arjuna?

Commentary : As a physician who at the end of his treatment asks the sick man if his illness is cured, so also the Lord questions Arjuna whether His teaching has removed the delusion of ignorance. Ignorance of one's own real nature is the disease from which all mankind suffer. Ignorance creates delusion, and man forgets his real nature. The wise man who knows his real nature, who feels that he is not the body, but the glorious *Atma*, frees himself from all suffering and sorrow.

***Ekagrena chetasa* :** (One-pointed mind)-Concentration is essential in every type of work. A divided and distracted mind cannot achieve anything good and useful. The mind acquires power by concentration. If the waters of a lake are disturbed, there cannot be a clear reflection of the surrounding trees. A mirror cannot reflect a moving face correctly and clearly. So also, if the mind is unsteady and disturbed, there cannot be a clear reflection of the Reality (*Atma*). Therefore the Lord questions Arjuna whether he has heard the Gita-teaching with a concentrated mind. One should study the Gita with a concentrated mind. Only then can he understand its meaning clearly. This is no doubt an elementary principle in the study and under-

standing of any subject. More so, in the study of the Gita which contains the highest spiritual truth. The student has to be extremely alert and concentrated in mind.

Ajnana samnah : (The delusion of ignorance)-Delusion is the effect of ignorance. A man sees a rope and mistakes it for a snake. This is delusion. Here delusion clouded Arjuna's mind as he saw his relations and friends who stood opposed to him on the battle field. The Lord's teaching cleared the delusion.

Pranashtah : A potent medicine destroys the illness completely, leaving no trace of it in the body. So also knowledge destroys ignorance completely. The spiritual teacher takes great care of his disciple, and will not be easily satisfied till he has grasped his teaching. He will not be contented till his disciple is completely freed from the last trace of ignorance and bondage. Such is the compassion that great masters have for suffering humanity.

Dhananjaya : Formerly Arjuna has acquired wealth and fame by his heroism and victory over innumerable external enemies. Now the time has come for him to vanquish the inner enemies of delusion and ignorance. This indeed is a far more difficult task. But Arjuna has all the necessary equipment, and the guidance of Sri Krishna Himself on the way to spiritual illumination.

Question *How should Gita be studied ?*

Answer : It should be heard or studied with one-pointed mind.

Arjuna answers the Lord's questions.

अर्जुन उवाच

73. नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसम्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तथ ॥

73

Arjuna uvacha

*Nashto mohah smritir labdha tvatprasadan maya'chyuta'
sthito'smi gatasamdehah karishye vachanam tava" 37*

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjun uvacha* : Arjuna Said.

Meaning : अच्युत *actyuta* : O Krishna, त्वं प्रसादात् *tvat-prasadat* : by your grace, मोहः *mohah* : delusion, नष्टः *nashtah* : is destroyed, मया *maya* : by me, स्मृतिः *smritih* : memory, लब्धा *labdha* : is gained, गतसमदेहः *gatasamdehah* : free from doubt, स्थितः अस्मि *sthitah asmi* : firm I am, तव *tava* : your, वचनम् *vachanam* : word, करिष्ये *karishye* : I will do.

Substance : Arjuna said : My delusion is destroyed I have regained my memory through your grace, 'O Krishna! I stand firm, free from doubt; I will act according to your word.

Commentary : With heart swelling with joy and happiness, Arjuna says that his delusion is destroyed by the teaching of the Lord. When Arjuna arrived on the battle-field, his mind was distracted by a hundred doubts. He could not decide what to do and how to act. He was perplexed and confused. Delusion dimmed his intellect. After hearing the Lord's message, his delusion was destroyed. The Lord's medicine cured Arjuna's disease instantaneously. The Lord Himself is the Master and a devotee like Arjuna is the disciple. No wonder that Arjuna directly perceived the Truth, and his heart was illumined with knowledge.

Spiritual knowledge is to be tested by personal experience. It is not mere talk. Arjuna felt the force and power of the Lord's teaching. He felt a glow of the heart arising from true knowledge. Arjuna stands as a representative of common humanity. The Gita message which destroyed Arjuna's ignorance and delusion is an unfailing cure for destroying the ignorance of every individual and helping him to realise the highest spiritual truth.

Smritirlabdha : After hearing the Lord's teaching, Arjuna regained the memory of his true Self which he had forgotten under the shadow of temporary delusion. The delusion being removed, he remembered his real nature. He

realised in a flash that he was neither the body nor the mind, but the ever pure and ever perfect *Atma*. *Atma* is the ever present Reality in every being. The man who is conscious of this truth is a *Jnani*, and the man who forgets it is an *Ajnani*. That is all the difference. But one's being conscious or not conscious of the Reality does not make any difference at all for the ever present *Atma*. It is there all the time, during all the states and conditions which overshadow man's life from time to time. If a man who wears a chain round his neck forgets it and goes about searching for it everywhere, and at last discovers that it is all along with him, he is not said to have gained anything at all. His memory is revived, and he finds the chain where it was throughout his external search for it. So also, having forgotten the truth that he is *Atma*, man goes through all the troubles and sorrows of life, and at last he comes to know that what he thought to have lost was always there with him, and he is That (*Atma*). Such is the experience of Arjuna in the present situation. Sankara says :—

*Atmatu satatam propto
hyapraptavad avidyaya
tannase praptavad bhati
svakanthabharanam yatha (Atmabodha)*

The meaning of this verse is explained earlier in this paragraph.

Tyat prasadat (by your grace)—God and Guru are essential factors in Self-realisation. It is by the grace of God and Guru that the seeker realises the truth. Without such grace, no amount of individual effort can remove the darkness of ignorance and delusion. The Hindu religion has therefore prescribed regular worship of God in various ways and also the service of the Guru in every possible way. By the grace of God and Guru, the bonds of *Maya* are broken and the seeker attains freedom. Arjuna here declares this ancient truth. By the grace of the Lord, Arjuna threw off the shackles of delusion and realised his original nature.

Achyuta : The word means one who does not fall from his original state. This address of the Lord is very appropriate in this context. The Lord remains ever pure and ever perfect, and so He alone can lift man from the dark pit of *Samsara*.

Gatasandehah : (Free from doubt)—In the state of ignorance, man is beset with innumerable doubts. When Self is realised all doubts and delusions are finally removed. They do not appear again in any form whatsoever.

Karishye vachanam tava : (I will act according to your word)—Thus says Arjuna after hearing the message of the Lord. His doubts are removed. He realises that he is no other than the ever-pure and ever-perfect *Atma*. The wrong notion that he is the body is removed by true knowledge. So he says that he would act according to the will of the Lord, free from all doubt and the bondage of ignorance.

The seeker should always remember that the Master's word is final in all matters. He must have such faith in the Master even after Self-realisation. The conduct of Arjuna throughout is a perfect example of the disciple's attitude towards his Master.

Question : How did the Gita message benefit Arjuna ?

Answer : His delusion was destroyed. He recovered memory of his original state as *Atma*.

Question: How can man overcome the delusion caused by ignorance ?

Answer : By worshipping God and serving wise Masters, man can overcome all difficulties on the spiritual path.

In the five following verses, *Sinjaya* describes his joy when he heard the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

संजय उवाच

74 इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च पश्चात्ममः ।
संवादनिषमत्रोपमद्गृहं रामहृषण् ॥

Sanjaya uvacha

*Ity aham vasudevasya parthasya cha mahatmanah !
samvadam imam ashrausham adbhitam romaharshanam 74*

सञ्जयउवाच *Sanjaya Uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : इति *iti* : thus, अहम् *aham* : I, वासुदेवस्य *Vasudevasya* : of Krishna, महात्मनः *mahatmanah* : high-souled, पार्थस्य च *Parthasya cha* : and of Arjuna, इम् *imam* : this, अद्भुतम् *adbhitam* : wonderful, रोमर्हणम् *romaharshanam* : that makes the hair stand on end, संवादम् *samvadam* : dialogue, अश्रौषं *ashrausham* : (I) have heard.

Substance : Sanjaya said :- Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Lord Krishna and high-souled Arjuna, causing my hair to stand on end.

Commentary : By the grace of Veda Vyasya, Sanjaya was able to hear the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. He now expresses his unbounded joy to Dhritarashtra.

Parthasyacha mahatmanah : Arjuna was in a state of ignorance like any other mortal. He now becomes a Mahatma after gaining *Atma-Jnana* by the message of the Gita. Everybody can become a Mahatma by sincere effort. The aim of the Gita is to raise the degraded mortal to the status of a Mahatma. The ignorant man becomes wise, the man of fear becomes a hero, and the doubter gains firm conviction, by the teaching of the Gita.

Adbhitam romaharshnam : Sanjaya was filled with a feeling of wonder and his hair stood on end when he heard the divine dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Just as the nectar confers longevity on mortal man, just as baser metals are transformed into gold by the touch of Sparsavedi, so also the message of the Gita frees the bound soul from delusion and ignorance, and man attains *Atma-Jnana*. Sanjaya is in a state of ecstasy. It shows that everybody when he hears the Gita will be filled with great joy like Sanjaya.

Question : How does Sanjaya describe the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna ?

Answer : It is wonderful and creates ecstasy in the heart of the devotee.

75. व्याप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतदगुह्यतमं परम् ।

योगं योगेश्वरत्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥

७५

Vyasaprasadacchrutavan etad guhyatamam param !

yogam yogesvarat krishnat sakshat kathayatah svayam ॥ 75

Meaning : व्याप्रसादात् *Vyasaprasadat* : by the grace of Vyasa, अहम् *aham* : I, गुह्यं *guhyatamam* : great secret, परं *param* : supreme, एतत् *yogam* *etat yogam* : this Yoga, स्वयम् *svayam* : Himself, कथयतः *kathayatah* : declaring, योगेश्वरत् *yogesvarat* : from the Lord of Yoga, कृष्णात् *Krishnat* : from Krishna, साक्षात् *sakshat* : directly, श्रुतवान् *sritavan* : I have heard.

Substance : Through the grace of Vyasa have I heard this supreme and most secret *Yoga* direct from Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*, Himself declaring it.

Commentary : The *Gita-Sastra* is *Yoga*. *Yoga* means that which unites. The *Jivatman* merges into *Paramatman* by *Yoga*. So the Gita is said to be *Yoga-sastra*. It contains the supreme and most profound secret. Therefore for the seekers of truth, it is the most valuable course of study.

***Yogesvara* :** Krishna is the Lord of *Yoga*. One can understand with what deep faith and devotion, he should hear the message of the Gita.

***Sakshat* :** How was Sanjaya sitting in the royal palace able to hear the dialogue taking place on the battle field of Kurukshetra ? Vyasa conferred on Sanjaya the miraculous power of seeing and hearing what was happening at a distance. It is not second-hand information reported to Sanjaya by some one

else. He heard it directly. He is communicating it as he heard it for the benefit of humanity.

Question: *What is the greatness of the Gita ?*

Answer : It contains the most profound spiritual secret. It is directly declared by the Lord Himself.

Sanjaya says that his heart is over-flowing with joy as he thinks of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna again and again.

76. राजन्समृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमित्यमद् ।

केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

७६

*Rajan samsmritya-samsmritya
samvadam imam abhutam
kesavarjunayoh punyam
hrisyami cha muhur-muhuh ॥*

76

Meaning : राजन् *rajan* : O king, अद्भुतम् *adbhutam* : wonderful, पुण्यं *punyam* : holy, केशवार्जुनयोः *Kesavarjunayoh* : between Krishna and Arjuna, इमां संवादम् *iman samvadam* : this dialogue, संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य *samsmritya samsmritya* : having remembered, having remembered, मुहुर्मुहुः च *muhurmuhuh cha* : and again and again, हृष्यामि *hrisyami* : I rejoice.

Substance : O king ! as I recall again and again this wonderful and holy dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

Commentary : Sanjaya says that he recalled to mind the Gita-message again and again. It means that the devotee should not be satisfied with a mere reading of the text, but must think of it again and again many times in order to understand its true meaning and significance. This is called “*Manana*” in the *Sastras*. Hearing is the first stage. Thinking of what is heard repeatedly is the second stage. And the third stage is being

established in the idea firmly. It is only then that the seeker gets the full reward of his study. The reward is true joy-(*ananda*), which every man is seeking here and there in the objects of the world, but which he can attain only by true knowledge and devotion to God.

Punyam : The Gita is a holy scripture. It destroys all evil which envelops the human mind.

Muhurmuhuh : Sanjaya rejoices again and again. At the moment of Self-realisation or at the moment of union with the Supreme, man experiences a state of ecstasy. Arjuna started at first as a frail mortal with his mind clouded by sorrow. At the end, the same Arjuna becomes a very different man. He attains Self-knowledge, and plunges into righteous action without fear and sorrow. So also Sanjaya thinks of the Gita-message again and again with indescribable joy.

The *Gita-Sastra* is the cure, the only cure, which destroys all ignorance inherent in man, and sorrow resulting from ignorance.

Question : *How is the Gita described here ?*

Answer : It is holy and wonderful.

Question : *What should the seeker do after hearing it ?*

Answer : He should think of it again and again and establish himself in the knowledge revealed.

Question : *What is the fruit of such meditation on the Gita ?*

Answer : The devotee is filled with joy and experiences the bliss of Atma Jnana.

Sanjaya again says that he is overpowered with wonder as he thinks of the Universal Form of the Lord.

77. तत्र संस्कृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्पद्धुर्ह हरे ।

विस्मयो मे वक्षन्नाजन्मृष्यानि च पुनः पुनः ॥

*Taccha samsmritya-samsmritya
rupam atyadbhutam hareh!
vismayo me mahan rajan
hrisyami cha punah-punah "*

77

Meaning : राजन् *rajan* : O King, हरेः *hareh* : of Hari, अत्यद्भुतं *atyadbhutam* : most wonderful, तत् च रूपं *tat cha rupam* : and that form, संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य *samsmritya samsmritya* : having remembered (again) having remembered, मे *me* : my, महान् *mahan* : great, विस्मयः *vismayah* : wonder, पुनः पुनः च *punah punah cha* : and again and again, हृष्यामि *hrishyami* : I rejoice.

Substance : O King ! As often as I recall that most wonderful form of the Lord, great is my astonishment, and I rejoice again and again.

Commentary : In the previous verse, Sanjaya described the joy of hearing the Lord's message. Here he expresses his astonishment when he saw the wondrous form of Krishna. "I rejoice again and again" says Sanjaya. Great is his astonishment when he remembers the Universal form of the Lord. The little small world in which man lives is forgotten for the time being, and the devotee actually sees the mighty infinite Virat form of God. When this vision appears, the devotees are filled with overflowing joy that is above all other joys which he finds in the ordinary objects of the world. In that state of ecstasy, some sing, some dance, and some are plunged in deep silence.

Question : *How is the Universal form of the Lord ?*

Answer : It is most wonderful.

Question : *How did Sanjaya feel when he saw it ?*

Answer : He was filled with astonishment

Sanjaya declares that victory and prosperity are there where Krishna and Arjuna are present.

78. यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीविजयो भूति ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

७८

*Yatra yogesvarah krishno yatra partho dhanurdharah !
tatra srir vijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama ॥ 78*

Meaning : यत्र *yatra* : wherever, योगेश्वरः *yogeswarah* : The Lord of Yoga, कृष्णः *krishnah* : Krishna, यत्र *yatra* : wherever, धनुर्धरः *dhanurdharah* : the wielder of the bow, पार्थः *parthah* : Arjuna, तत्र *tatra* : there, श्रीः *srih* : prosperity, विजयः *vijayah* : victory, भूति^१ *bhutih* : happiness, ध्रुवा *dhruva* : firm, नीतिः *nitiḥ* : policy, मम *mama* : my, मतिः *matih* : conviction.

Substance : Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*, wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow, there are prosperity, victory, happiness expansion and sound policy; such is my conviction.

Commentary : This is the last verse of the Gita. All the most precious rewards of life, victory, peace and prosperity, come to the man who feels in his heart the presence of Krishna and Arjuna.

Krishna is the Lord of *Yoga*. Arjuna is the wielder of the bow, *Gandiva*. He is not only a hero on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, but he is also a devotee who conquered the inner enemies of delusion and ignorance. The knowledge of the Gita is like *Gandiva* in the hands of Arjuna. Knowledge, devotion and action are the mighty weapons in his battle with ignorance. Victory is thus assured for the true devotee.

Dhanurdharah : (the wielder of the bow) :- The word indicates the *Yoga* of action (*Karma-Yoga*). In fact Arjuna understood the secret of *Karma-yoga* by the teaching of the Gita. He plunged into action and obtained victory.

Yogeswarah : (*The Lord of Yoga*) Krishna is the embodiment of all the paths of *Yoga*- *Bhakti*, *Jnana*, *Karma* and *Dhyana*.

There is a common notion that wisdom and action are contradictory terms. They are not. There is no conflict between

wisdom and action. A man can live in the world surrounded by the numerous duties and obligations of life, and yet enjoy the bliss of supreme peace within himself. He is the perfect man who combines wisdom and action in his life. The Lord has already said that no man could live without action even for a moment. One sees it directly in his life. Men are acting continuously. How to achieve peace in this world of action ? That is the most important question. The Gita gives a convincing answer to that question. This last verse which brings Krishna and Arjuna together into one focal point is a visible representation of *Jnana* and *Karma*, the actionless Brahman represented by Krishna, and action represented by Arjuna.

Every one wants victory, peace, and prosperity. How can he achieve them ? The answer is by worshipping Krishna as the Lord of *Yoga*, and Arjuna as the wielder of the bow, that is, by knowledge and action combined in the every day conduct of life.

Sanjaya makes it clear to Dhritarashtra that victory is on the side of the Pandavas as they are following the righteous path.

The company of holy men is also most beneficial in the spiritual progress of man. May the devotees of the Gita remember this verse at all times, and thereby enjoy the highest rewards of life.

इति श्रीमन्महाभारते शतसाहस्रिकायां संहितायां वैयासिक्यां श्रीमद् भीष्मपर्वणि
श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासुपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णाज्ञेनसंवादे मोक्षसन्न्यासयोगो नाम
अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Iti Sriman mahabharate satasahasrikayam samhitayam
vaiyasikyam Srimad Bhishma parvani Srimad
Bhagavadgita supanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade
moksha sannyasa yogo nama
astadaso'dhyayah ॥*

Thus in Sri Mahabharata consisting of a lakh stanzas composed by Veda Vyasa, in the section called Bhishma Parva in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the Scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Eighteenth chapter entitled—Moksha Sannyasa yoga
(The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation.)

Om tat sat

Sri Krishnarpanamastu

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

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कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते	2	47	क्रोधाऽद्वति संमोहः	2	63

क्लैशोऽधिकतरः	12	5	ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च	18	19
क्लैव्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ	2	3	ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानम्	7	2
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा	9	31	ज्ञानं शेयम् परिज्ञाता	18	18
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवम्	13	34	ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी	5	3
क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि	13	2	ज्ञेयं यत्तत्रवक्ष्यामि	13	12
			ज्ञायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते	3	1
			ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिः	13	17
ग					
गतसङ्गेत्य मुक्तस्य	4	23			
गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी	9	18	ततः पदं तत्परिमा	15	4
गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्	1	30	तच्च संस्मृत्य	18	77
गामाविश्य च भूतानि	15	13	ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च	1	13
गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्	14	20	ततः इवेतैवैयैर्युक्ते	1	14
गुरुनहत्वा हि महानु	2	5	ततः स विस्मयाविश्वे	11	14
			तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो	3	28
			तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगम्	6	43
च					
चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण	6	34	तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्	14	6
चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मास्	7	16	तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः	1	26
चातुर्वर्ण्य मया सृष्टम्	4	13	तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नम्	11	13
चिन्ताभपरिमेया च	16	11	तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा	6	12
चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि	18	57	तत्रैवं सति कर्तारम्	18	16
			तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यावृक् च	13	3
			तदित्यनभिसंधाय	17	25
ज					
जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यम्	4	9	तद्बुद्ध्यस्तदात्मानः	5	17
जरामरणमोक्षाय	7	29	तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन	4	34
जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः	2	27	तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी	6	46
जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य	6	7	तपाम्यहमेव वर्षम्	9	19
ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये	9	15	तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि	14	8
ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा	6	8	तमुवाच हृषीकेशः	2	10
ज्ञानेन तु तद्ज्ञानम्	5	16	तमेव शरणं गच्छ	18	62

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रभाणं ते	16	24	त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः	11	38
तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय	11	44			
तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ	3	41	द		
तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ	11	33	दण्डो दमयतामस्मि	10	38
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु	8	7	दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च	16	4
तस्मादसक्तः सततम्	3	19	दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते	11	25
तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतम्	4	42	दातव्यमिति यदानम्	17	20
तस्मादोगित्युदाहृत्य	17	24	दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य	11	12
तस्माद्यस्य महाधाहो	2	68	दिव्यमालयाम्बधस्म्	11	11
तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हनुम्	1	37	दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म	18	8
तस्य संजनयन्तर्षम्	1	12	दुःखेष्वनुद्विशमनाः	2	56
तं विद्याहुः खसंयोग	6	23	दूरैण द्विवरं कर्म	2	49
तं तथा कृपयाविष्टम्	2	1	दृष्टा तु पाण्डवा	1	2
तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्	16	19	दृष्ट्वैदं मानुषं रूपम्	11	51
तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य	2	61	देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञ	17	14
तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी	12	19	देवान्मावयतानेन	- 3	11
तेजः क्षमा धृतिः	16	3	देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे	12	13
ते तं शुक्त्वा खर्गलोकम्	9	21	देही नित्यमवध्योऽयम्	2	30
तेषामहं समुद्रतां	12	7	दैवमेवापरे यज्ञम्	4	25
तेषामेवानुकंपार्थम्	10	11	दैवी व्येषा गुणमयो	7	14
तेषां सततयुक्तानाम्	10	10	दैवी संभद्रिमोक्षाय	16	5
तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त	7	17	दोषैरेतैः कुलज्ञानाम्	1	43
त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गम्	4	20	द्यागापृथिव्योरिद्	11	20
त्याज्य दोषवदित्येके	18	3	द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि	10	36
त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैः	7	13	द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञाः	4	28
त्रिविधा भवति अद्वा	17	2	द्वुपदौ द्रौपदेयाश्च	1	18
त्रिविधं नरकस्येदम्	16	21	द्रोणं च भीष्मं च	11	34
त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदाः	2	45	द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके	15	16
त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः	9	20	द्वौ भूतसर्गो लोके	16	6
त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यम्	11	18			

ध			न मे पार्थीस्ति कर्तव्यम्	3	22
धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे	1	1	न मे विदुः सुरगणाः	10	2
धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निः	3	38	न रूपमस्येह तथो	15	3
धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः	8	25	न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैः	11	48
धृत्या यया धारयते	18	33	नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा	18	73
धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः	1	5	न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि	3	5
ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति	13	24	न हि देहभूता शक्यम्	18	11
ध्यायतो विषय न्पुंसः	2	62	न हि प्रपश्यामि	2	8
न			न हि ज्ञानेन सद्वशम्	4	38
			नात्यश्वतस्तु योगोऽस्ति	6	16
न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि	5	14	नादते कस्यचित् पापम्	5	15
न कर्मणामनारम्भात्	3	4	नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्या	10	40
न काङ्गे विजयं कृष्णं	1	32	नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारम्	14	19
न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु	18	69	नासतो विद्यने भावः	2	16
न च मत्स्थानि	9	5	नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य	2	66
न च मां तानि कर्माणि	9	9	नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य	7	25
न चैतद्विज्ञः करतरम्भो	2	6	नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा	11	53
न जायते म्रियते वा	2	20	निभित्तानि च पश्यामि	1	31
न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा	18	40	नियतस्य तु संन्यासः	13	7
न तद्वाप्यते सूर्यो	15	6	नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वम्	3	8
न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुम्	11	8	नियतं सङ्गशहितम्	18	23
न त्वेषाहं जातु नासम्	2	12	निराशीर्यत्वित्तात्मा	4	21
न द्वेष्यतुश्लं कर्म	18	10	निर्मनिमोहा जितसङ्गं	15	5
न प्रहृष्यत्प्रियं प्राप्य	5	20	निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र	18	4
न बुद्धिभैर्दें जनयैत्	3	26	निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः	1	36
नभः सृष्टं दीप्तमनेक	11	24	नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति	2	40
नमः पुरुषादथ पृष्ठ	11	40	नैते सृती पाथ जानन्	8	27
न मा कर्माणि लिङ्गन्ति	4	14	नैन छिन्दन्ति शक्षाणि	2	23
न मा दुष्कृतिन्मे भूढाः	7	15	नैव किञ्चित् करोनीति	5	8

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो	3	18	प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि	13	29
			प्रजहाति यदा कामान्	2	55
प			प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु	6	45
पञ्चैतानि महाब्राह्मो	18	13	प्रयाणकाले मनसा	8	10
पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयम्	9	26	प्रलयन्विशुजन्गृह्णन्	5	9
परस्तस्मान्तु भावो अन्यो	8	20	प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च	18	30
परं ब्रह्म परं धाम	10	12	प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च	16	7
परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि	14	1	प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनम्	6	27
परित्राणाय साधूनाम्	4	8	प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीः	6	14
पवनः पवतामस्मि	10	31	प्रसादे सर्वदुखानाम्	2	65
पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि	11	5	प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां	10	30
पश्यादित्यान्वसूल्	11	6	प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकान्	6	41
पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव	11	15			
पश्येतां पाण्डुपुत्राणाम्	1	3	ब		
पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो	1	15	बन्धुरात्मनस्तस्य	6	6
पार्थं नैवेह नामुत्र	6	40	बलं बलवतामस्मि	7	11
पिताऽसि लोकस्य चरा	11	43	बहिरन्तश्च भूतानाम्	13	15
पिताहमस्य जगतो	9	17	बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते	7	19
पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च	7	9	बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि	4	5
पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि	13	21	बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा	5	21
पुरुषः स परः पार्थं	8	22	बीजं मां सर्वभूतानाम्	7	10
पुरोधसां च मुख्यं माम्	10	24	बुद्धिशुक्तो जहातीह	2	50
पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव	6	44	बुद्धिज्ञानमसंसोहः	10	4
पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ञानम्	18	21	बुद्धेभद्रं धृतेश्वैव	18	29
प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च	14	22	बुद्ध्या विशुद्ध्या युक्तो	18	51
प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव	13	19	शूहस्याम तथा समान्नाम्	10	35
प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव	13	0	ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाम्	14	27
प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टम्य	9	8	ब्रह्मप्याश्राय कर्माणि	5	10
प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि	3	27	ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा	18	54
प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः	3	29	ब्रह्मार्थं ब्रज इषि	4	24

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशाम्	18	41	मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुन	11	47
भ			मयि चानन्ययोगेन	13	10
भक्तया त्वनन्यया शक्य	11	54	मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि	3	30
भक्तया मामभिजानाति	18	55	मध्याबेश्य मनो ये माम्	12	2
भयाद्रणादुपरतम्	2	35	मध्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ	7	1
भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च	1	8	मध्येव मन आधत्स्व	12	8
भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम्	11	2	महर्षेयः सप्त पूर्वे	10	6
भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः	1	25	महर्षीणां भृगुरहम्	10	25
भूतग्रामः स एवायम्	8	19	महाभूतान्यहंकारो	13	5
भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः	7	4	मा ते व्यथा मा च	11	49
भूय एव महावाहो	10	1	मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय	2	14
भीक्तारं यज्ञतपसाम्	5	29	मानापमानयोस्तुल्यः	14	25
भीगैश्वर्यं प्रसक्तानाम्	2	44	मामृपेण्य पुनर्जन्म	8	15
म			मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण	14	26
मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि	18	58	मां हि पार्थं व्यपाश्रित्य	9	32
मच्चित्ता मद्रत प्राणाः	10	9	मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी	18	26
मत्कर्मकृन्मन्त्परमो	11	55	मूढ्याहेणात्मनो यत्	17	19
मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्	7	7	मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहम्	10	34
मदनुग्रहाय परमम्	11	1	मोघाशा मोघकर्मणो	9	12
मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वम्	17	16	य		
मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु	7	3	य इदं परमं गृह्णम्	18	68
मनमना भव मद्भक्तो	9	34	य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारम्	2	19
मनमना भव मद्भक्तो	18	65	य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषम्	13	23
मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यम्	11	4	यच्चापि सर्वभूतानाम्	10	39
मम योनिमेहद्वाद	14	3	यज्ञावहासार्थमस	11	42
ममैवांशो जीवलोके	15	7	यज्ञन्ते सात्त्विका देवा	17	4
मया तत्मिदं सर्वम्	9	4	यज्ञावहासार्थमस	4	35
मयाऽध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः	9	10	यज्ञ दाम लपः कर्म	18	5

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो	4	31	यदा भूतपृथग्भावम्	13	30
यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो	3	13	यदा यदा हि धमस्य	4	7
यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र	3	9	यदा विनियतं चित्तम्	6	18
यज्ञे तपसि दाने च	17	27	यदा सच्चे प्रवृद्धे तु	14	14
यततोऽपि कौन्तेय	2	60	यदा संहरते चायम्	2	58
यन्तो योगिनश्शैनम्	15	11	यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु	6	4
यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानाम्	13	45	यदिमामप्रतीकारम्	1	46
यतोन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिः	5	28	यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं	3	23
यतो यतो निश्चरनि	6	26	यद्यच्छया चोषपन्नम्	2	32
यत्करोपि यदश्चासि	9	27	यद्यच्छयाला भसंतुष्टो	4	22
यत्तद्ग्रे विप्रमिव	18	37	यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः	3	21
यत्तुकामेष्युना कर्म	18	24	यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वम्	10	41
यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्	18	22	यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति	1	38
यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थम्	17	21	यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्	18	34
यत्रकाले त्वनावृत्तिः	3	23	यया धर्मधर्मं च	18	31
यत्र योगीश्वरः कृत्यो	13	73	यया स्वप्नम् भयं शोकम्	18	35
यत्रोपरमने चित्तम्	6	20	यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव	3	17
यत्तत्त्वर्थ्यः प्राप्यो	5	5	यस्त्वन्दियाणि मनसा	3	7
यथाकागस्तियो नित्यम्	9	6	यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहम्	15	18
यथा दीपां निवास्यो	6	19	यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको	12	15
यथा नदीनां बहवां	11	28	यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो	18	17
यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः	13	33	यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः	4	19
यथा प्रदीप अवलोक	11	29	यं यं त्रायिषि स्मरत्मावम्	8	6
यथा मर्यागतं योऽन्यान्	13	32	यं लब्ध्य चापरं लाभम्	6	22
यथैवांगि भानिद्रोऽपि	4	37	यं पंच्य त्रिनिः प्राप्तुः	6	2
यद्यग्नचानुयन्ते च	13	39	यं हि न क्यथयन्त्येते	2	15
यद्यहंकारमात्रिन्य	13	59	यः शास्त्रियिषुत्सुन्य	16	23
यद्यक्षरं वेदविदौ	8	11	यः सर्वत्रामभिस्नेहः	2	57
यदा ने योहकलिङ्गम्	2	52	यायाः गतस्तु	17	10
यदादिस्यगतं तेजो	15	12	या निष्ठा सबभूतानाम्	2	69

यान्ति देवता देवान्	9	25	यो उन्तः सुखोऽन्तरारामः	5	24
यामिमा पुष्पितां भाचम्	2	42	यो मामजमनादिं च	10	3
यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्	13	26	यो मामेवमसंभूदो	15	19
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहम्	1	22	यो मां पश्यति सवत्र	6	30
यावानर्थं उदपाने	2	46	यो यो यां यां ततुं भक्तः	7	21
युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा	5	12	योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः	6	33
युक्ताहारविहारस्य	6	17			
युज्जन्मेवं सदात्मानम्	6	15			
युज्जन्मेवं सदात्मानम्	6	28	रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय	14	10
युधामन्युश्चविक्रान्तः	1	6	रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा	14	15
ये चैव साच्चिका भावः	7	12	रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि	14	7
ये तु धर्म्याभूतमिदम्	12	20	रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय	7	8
ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि	12	6	रागद्वेषवियुक्तेस्तु	2	64
ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यम्	12	3	रागी कर्मफलप्रेषुः	18	27
ये त्वेतदभ्यस्त्वयन्तो	3	32	राजन् संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य	18	76
ये उप्यन्यदेवताभक्ताः	9	23	राजविद्या राजगुणम्	9	2
ये मे मतमिदं निल्यम्	3	31	रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि	10	23
ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते	4	11	रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च	11	22
ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सुज्य	17	1	रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्र	11	23
येषामर्थं काङ्क्षितं नो	1	33			
येषां त्वन्तरगतं पापम्	7	28			
ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगाः	5	22	लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम्	5	25
योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा	5	7	लेलित्यसे ग्रसमानः	11	30
योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणम्	4	41	लोकेऽस्मिन्निविधा	3	3
योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि	2	48	लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः	14	12
योगिनामपि सर्वेषाम्	6	47			
योगी युज्जीत सततम्	6	10			
योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहम्	1	23	वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण	10	16
यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि	12	17	वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा	11	27

वायुर्मोऽपि वरुणः	11	39	श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च	18	71
वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा	2	22	श्रद्धावांछते ज्ञानम्	4	39
विद्याविनयसंपन्ने	5	18	श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते	2	53
विधिहीनमसृष्टान्म्	17	13	श्रेयान्द्रव्यजयाद्यज्ञात्	4	33
विविक्तसेवी लघाशी	18	52	श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः	3	35
विषया विनिवर्तन्ते	2	59	श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः	18	47
विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगात्	18	38	श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्या	12	12
विस्तरेणात्मनो योगम्	10	18	श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये	4	26
विहाय कामान्यः	2	71	श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च	15	9
वीतरागभयक्रोधाः	4	10	श्वशुरान्सुहृदृचैव	1	27
बृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि	10	37			
वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि	10	22	स		
वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यम्	2	21	स एवायं मया तेऽद्य	4	3
वेदाहं समरीक्तानि	7	26	सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसः	3	25
वेदेषु यद्वेषु तपःसु	8	28	सखेति मत्वा प्रसभम्	11	41
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः	2	41	स वोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणाम्	1	19
व्याप्तिश्रेष्ठेन वाक्येन	3	2	सततं कीर्तयन्ते माभ्	9	14
व्याप्तप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवान्	18	75	स तया श्रद्धया सुक्तः	7	22
			सत्कारमानपूजार्थम्	17	18
श			सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति	14	5
शक्रोतीहैव यः सोदुम्	5	23	सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति	14	9
शनैः शनैरुपरमेत्	6	25	सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानम्	14	17
शमो दमस्तपः शौचम्	18	42	सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य	17	3
शुशीरं यद्वाप्नोति	15	8	सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः	3	33
शरीराङ्गमनोभियत्	18	15	सद्ग्रावे साधुभावे च	17	26
शुक्लकृष्णो गती ह्यने	8	26	समदुखसुखः स्वस्थः	14	24
शुचौ देशे प्रतिप्राप्य	6	11	समं कायशिरोग्रीवम्	6	13
शुभाशुभफलैरेवम्	9	28	समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र	13	28
शौर्यं रेजो धृतिराक्षयम्	18	43	समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु	13	27
श्रद्धया परया तस्म्	17	17	समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च	12	18

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु	9	29	सन्न्यासस्तु महाबाहो	5	6
सगाणामादिरन्तश्च	10	32	सन्न्यासस्य महाबाहो	18	1
सर्वकर्माणि मनसा	5	13	सन्न्यासं कर्माणाम्	5	1
सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा	18	56	सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगञ्च	5	2
सर्वगुद्यतमं भूयः	18	64	साधिभूताधिदैवं माम्	7	30
सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्	13	13	सांख्ययोगै पृथग्भालाः	5	4
सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य	8	12	सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा	18	50
सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्	14	11	सीदन्ति भम गात्राणि	1	29
सर्वधमान्परित्यज्य	18	66	सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा	2	38
सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानम्	6	29	सुखमात्मनिकं यत्तत्	6	21
सर्वभूतस्थितं यो माम्	6	31	सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधम्	18	36
सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय	9	7	सुददेशमिदं रूपम्	11	52
सर्वभूतेषु येनैकम्	18	20	सुहन्मित्रार्युदासीन	6	9
सर्वमेतद्वतं मन्ये	10	14	स्थाने हृषीकेश तव	11	36
सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय	14	4	स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा	2	54
सर्वेस्य चाहं हृदि	15	15	स्पशांकुत्वा वहिर्बाहान्	5	27
सर्वानीन्द्रियकर्माणि	4	27	स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य	2	31
सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासम्	13	14	स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय	18	60
सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय	18	48	स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानम्	10	15
सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्टा	3	10	स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः	18	45
नहस्तयुगपर्यन्तम्	8	17			
संकरो नरकायैव	1	42	ह		
संकल्पप्रभवान्कामान्	6	24	हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि	2	37
संतुष्टः सततं योगी	12	14	हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि	10	19
संनियस्येन्द्रियग्रामम्	12	4	हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यम्	1	21

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