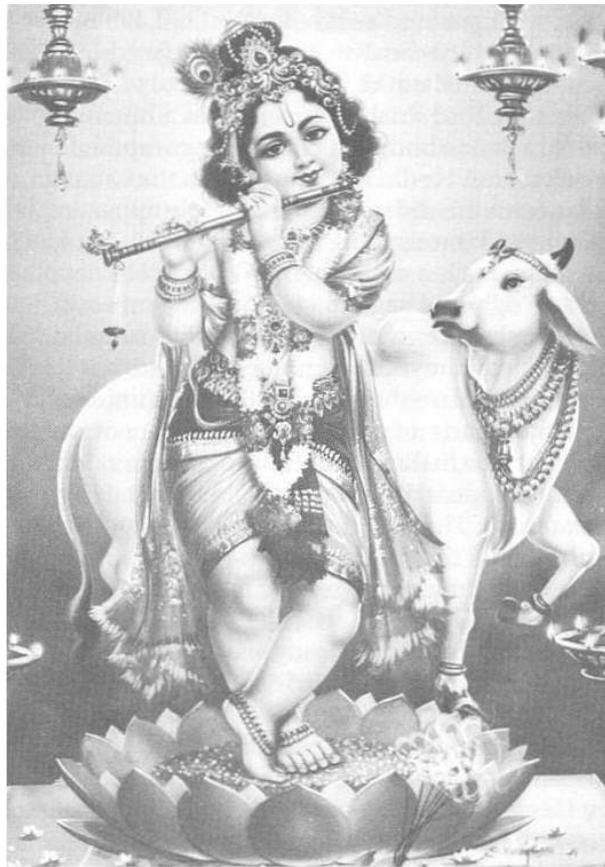


BHAGAVAD GITA

(The Divine Song)

Translated by Swami Tapasyananda¹



Introduction

This pocket edition of the Bhagavad Gita is specially meant for those who do not know the Devanagari script and would like to have the Text in Roman script with a plain English translation. It will be useful also for those who want to carry a great scripture even to their work spot in order to seek holy company in the midst of work. Though put in the context of a battle scene, the object of the Gita is

¹ Swami Tapasyananda (1904-1991) was a vice-president of the Ramakrishna Order

not war - mongering but exhorting man to do his duty, whatever it be, in a spirit of detachment and dedication. Such an attitude can be sustained only if a man has unreserved faith in God and in His supremacy over the destiny of man individually and of the cosmos as a whole. So beginning with an exhortation to action, the Gita gives in substantiation of that teaching a universal theology without any sectarian or dogmatic stance, which would be found congenial by all who are not in the grip of those narrow loyalties. For this reason we have designated it as the scripture of mankind.

Speaking about the universality and profundity of the teachings of the Gita, Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India (1773-1784), in his Introduction to the first-ever English translation of the Text by Charles Wilkins (1784) declares that 'Works as the Gita could live long after the British domination in India has ceased to exist' and that it contains passages 'elevated to a track of sublimity into which our habits of judgement will find it difficult to penetrate'.

A study of this small Text of seven hundred verses will convince any one that such an encomium of the wisdom contained in it is not a misplaced over-estimate.

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Chapter I Arjuna's Conversion

Dhritarashtra said:

1. O Sanjaya! What indeed did my people and the followers of the Pandavas do after having assembled in the holy land of Kurukshetra, eager to join battle?

Sanjaya said:

2. Then seeing the army of the Pandavas arrayed in battle order. King Duryodhana for his part approached the teacher Drona and spoke to him the following words:

3. O Teacher! Behold this great army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed in battle order by your talented disciple, the son of Drupada.

4. Here (in that army) are many brave bow-men of note who are equal to Bhima and Arjuna in battle - great car-warriors like Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada;

5. Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana and the brave king of Kashi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Shaibya the best of men;

6. The powerful Yudhamanyu, the brave Uttamauja, the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi - all these are indeed noted car-warriors.

7. O best of Brahmanas, I shall mention for your information the names of the distinguished leaders of our army.

8. Yourself, Bhishma and Karna, the victorious Kripa, Ashwatthama, Vikarna and Jayadratha the son of Somadatta.

9. These and many more brave men, who are ready to lay down their lives for my sake and who fight with various types of weapons, are present here. All of them are seasoned warriors.

10. Though numerically superior, inadequate is the army of ours defended by Bhishma, while theirs guarded by Bhima is adequate.

11. Therefore do ye all protect Bhishma remaining in appropriate positions in your respective divisions.

12. Cheering him up, the valiant grandfather Bhishma, the oldest of the Kurus, sounded a lion-roar loudly and blew his conch-shell horn.

13. Thereupon, conchs, kettle-drums, tabors, trumpets, and cowhorns all blared out suddenly causing a tremendous sound.

14. Then Shri Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a great chariot with white horses yoked to it, blew their celestial conch-shell horns.

15. Shri Krishna blew his conch Panchajanya, Arjuna blew Devadatta, and Bhima of terrible deeds sounded his great conch Paundra.

16. Raja Yudhisthira, the son of Kunti, blew his conch Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva, Sughosha and Manipushpaka respectively.

17. The great archer, king of Kashi, the mighty car-warrior Shikhandi and Dhrishtadyumna and invincible Satyaki;

18. The King of Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, the mighty armed son of Subhadra - all these, O king, sounded their conchshell horns again and again everywhere.

19. That tumultuous uproar, resounding in the sky and over the land, pierced the hearts of the followers of Dhritarashtra.

20-21. O King! Arjuna, the Pandava-leader with the banner crest of a Hanuman, on seeing the followers of Dhritarashtra arrayed for battle and the clash of weapons about to start, held up his bow and said the following words to Shri Krishna:

Arjuna said:

21-22. O Achyuta! Please station my chariot between the two armies so that I may have a view, on the eve of this battle, of all those standing ready to fight, and learn who all are the persons with whom I have to contend.

23. Let me see all those who have arrived to favour the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra in war and are standing ready to join battle.

Sanjaya said:

24-25. O King Dhritarashtra! Shri Krishna, to whom Arjuna addressed these words, stationed that most splendid of chariots at a place between the two armies, confronting Bhishma, Drona and all those chiefs, and said: "O Arjuna! See these men of the Kuru horde

assembled for battle."

26-27. There he saw standing in both the armies - fathers, grand-fathers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, comrades, fathers-in-law and bosom friends. Seeing all these kinsmen arrayed, Arjuna was overcome with great pity, and said sorrowing:

Arjuna said:

28-29. Seeing these relatives standing eager to join battle, my limbs are giving way, my mouth is parching. I get trembling of the body and horripilations.

30. My bow Gandiva is slipping from my hand. My skin too is burning. I find it impossible to stand firm, and my mind is, as it were, reeling.

31. O Kesava! I see adverse omens. I do not feel that any good will come by killing all one's kinsmen in battle.

32. O Krishna! I do not long for victory, or kingdom, or enjoyments. O Govinda! Of what use is kingdom, enjoyments or even life itself?

33-34. Those for whose sake kingdoms, enjoyments, and pleasures are desired - those very teachers, fathers and sons, as also grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law and other relatives are here stationed in battle ready to give up their lives and possessions.

35. Even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, I do not desire to kill them, though myself killed - how much less then for this earthly kingdom!

36. What joy can there be for us by killing these sons of Dhritarashtra? Though they are murderous villains, only sin will accrue to us by killing them.

37. Therefore, O Madhava! it is not befitting that we kill our relations, the sons of Dhritarashtra. How could one be happy by the slaughter of one's own kinsmen?

38-39. O Janardana! Even if these people, with their intelligence overpowered by greed, do not see any evil in the decay of families and any sin in the persecution of friends, why should not we, who are aware of the evil of such decay of families, learn to desist from that sin?

40. When a clan becomes decadent, its ancient traditions (laws) perish.

When traditions perish, the entire clan is indeed overcome by lawlessness.

41. O Krishna! When lawlessness prevails, the women of the clans become corrupt. O scion of the Vrishnis! When women are corrupted, mixture of classes (promiscuity) prevails.

42. Promiscuity results only in hell to those destroyers of the clans, as also to the members of the clan. For (being without legitimate progeny to perform obsequies), the spirits of their ancestors fall, deprived of the offerings of rice ball and water.

43. By the misdeeds of these ruiners of clans and promoters of promiscuity, the immemorial traditions of the communities and clans are uprooted.

44. O Janardana! We have heard that residence in hell awaits men, the religious traditions of whose clans have been destroyed.

45. Alas! What great sin have we resolved to commit when we prepared ourselves to destroy our kinsmen out of greed for the pleasures of a kingdom!

46. Far better would it be for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapons in hand, kill me in battle, unarmed and unresisting!

Sanjaya said:

47. So saying, Arjuna, with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow, abandoned his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot seat.

Chapter II Yoga of Knowledge

Sanjaya said:

1. To him who was thus overcome with pity and whose eyes were full of tears and bore a bewildered look, Shri Krishna spoke as follows:

The Blessed Lord said:

2. O Arjuna! Whence has this loathsome stupidity come upon you in this crisis? It (this attitude) is unworthy of a noble personage; it is a bar to heaven and a cause of much disrepute.

3. O Partha! Yield not to unmanliness! It befits thee not. Abandoning this base faint-heartedness, rise up, O dreaded hero!

Arjuna said:

4. O Krishna! How can I attack Bhishma and Drona in battle with my arrows? They are, indeed worthy of worship, O destroyer of foes!

5. It is indeed better to live here in this world on a beggar's fare than to prosper by killing these venerable teachers. The enjoyment of pleasure and power obtained through the slaughter of these teachers and elders will surely be bloodstained.

6. We do not know which of the two (alternatives) will be the better - the one that we should conquer them or the other that they should conquer us. The men on the side of Dhritrashtra, standing arrayed against us, are the very people after killing whom we should not care to live.

7. My natural disposition is vitiated by a sense of pity, and my mind is in utter confusion regarding my duty. Lord, I beg Thee: tell me with certainty what will lead to my good. I am Thy disciple. Instruct me, who have taken refuge in Thee.

8. I do not find anything that can assuage this grief which numbs my senses. Neither the unchallenged lordship over a prosperous kingdom, nor even the overlordship of all the Devas can do so.

Sanjaya said:

9. Addressing Shri Krishna, the master of the senses, Arjuna, though valorous and vigilant, said, 'I will not fight' and sat silent.

10. O King! To him who was thus sitting grief-stricken between the two armies (instead of fighting), Shri Krishna said as if by way of ridicule.

The Blessed Lord said:

11. You are moaning for those who should not be moaned for. Yet you speak like a wise man. The truly wise never weep either for the dead or for the living.

12. Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these rulers of men. Nor shall all of us cease to be hereafter.

13. Even as the attainment of childhood, youth and old age is to one in this physical life, so is the change to another body (at death) for the embodied soul. Wise men are not deluded by this.

14. Contact of the senses with their objects generates cold and heat,

pleasure and pain. They come and go, being impermanent. Bear with them patiently, O scion of the Bharata race!

15. O leader of men! That enlightened one who is unperturbed alike in pleasure and pain, whom these do not distress - he indeed is worthy of immortality.

16. The unreal can never come into existence, and the real can never cease to be. The wise philosophers have known the truth about these categories (of the real and the unreal).

17. Know that Reality, by which everything is pervaded, to be indestructible. No one can cause the destruction of this immutable Being.

18. What is said to perish are these bodies, in which the imperishable and unlimited Spirit is embodied. Therefore fight, O scion of the Bharata race!

19. He who thinks him (the Self) to be the killer, and who experiences him (the Self) as the killed - both of them know not. He (the Self) neither kills nor is killed.

20. He (this Self) has neither birth nor death. Nor does he cease to be, having been in existence before; unborn, eternal permanent and primeval, he is never killed when the body is killed.

21. O Arjuna! Know this self to be eternal, undecaying, birthless and indestructible. A person who knows him to be so - whom can he slay or cause another to slay.

22. Just as a man gives up old garments and puts on new ones, so the embodied self abandons decrepit bodies and assumes new ones.

23. Him the weapons cleave not; Him the fire burns not; Him the waters wet not; Him the wind dries not.

24. He cannot be cut or burnt. He can neither be wetted nor dried. Eternal, all-pervading, immovable and motionless. He is the same for ever.

25. Knowing Him (the Self) to be unmanifest, inconceivable, and unmodifiable, it is improper to mourn for Him.

26. In the alternative, even if you hold him (the Self) to be subject to

constant births and deaths, there is no justification, O mighty armed, for your mourning for him.

27. For the born, death is unavoidable; and for the dead, birth is sure to take place. Therefore in a situation that is inevitable, there is no justification for you to grieve.

28. Mystery surrounds the origin of beings. Mysterious too is their end. Only in the interim, between birth and death, are they manifested clearly. Such being the case, what is there to grieve about?

29. Some have a glimpse of Him as a marvel, some speak of Him as a marvel, and yet others hear of Him as a marvel. Yet none understands Him in truth, in spite of (seeing, speaking and) hearing about Him.

30. At no time can the Spirit embodied in all beings be slain. Therefore there is no reason for you to grieve for any one.

31. Further, even from the point of view of one's own duty, you ought not to falter. There is no greater good for a Kshatriya than what a righteous war offers.

32. O Arjuna! That Kshatriya must indeed be a happy man to whom comes unsought a war like this, which is an open gate to heaven.

33. If you do not take part in this righteous war, you will incur sin, besides failing in your duty and forfeiting your reputation.

34. Besides, every one will speak ill of you for all time. More poignant than death is disrepute to a man accustomed to be honoured by all.

35. The great car-warriors will consider you as having fled from battle out of fear, and you who have been the object of their respect, will be despised by them hereafter.

36. Your enemies will indulge in derogatory speeches against you, belittling your prowess. What is more painful than that?

37. O son of Kunti! If killed in battle you will attain heaven; if victorious you will enjoy the kingdom. Therefore arise, resolved to fight.

38. Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, be ready for battle. Thus you will not incur any sin.

39. O Arjuna! What has been declared to you is the Truth according to

the Samkhya (the path of knowledge). Listen now to the teaching of Yoga (the path of selfless action combined with devotion) by practising which the bondage of Karma is overcome.

40. In this path of Yoga - the path of selfless action combined with devotion - no effort is lost due to incompleteness and no contrary effect of an adverse nature is produced due to failures. Even a little observance of this discipline saves one from great fear.

41. O Arjuna! In those following this path, the Buddhi (the understanding) that has the nature of producing conviction, is directed towards a single objective. In those without any spiritual conviction, the understanding gets scattered and pursues countless ends.

42-44. O Arjuna! There are people who delight in the eulogistic statements of the Vedas and argue that the purport of the Vedas consists in these and nothing else. They are full of worldly desires; paradise is their highest goal; and they are totally blind in a spiritual sense. They expatiate upon those florid Vedic texts which describe the means for the attainment of pleasure and power, which provide attractive embodiments as the fruits of actions and which are full of descriptions of rites and rituals (through which these fulfillments are obtained). In the minds of these votaries of pleasure and power, addicted to enjoyments of the above description, steadfast wisdom (capable of revealing the Truth) is never generated.

45. O Arjuna! The Vedas deal with material ends. But you be established in the Spirit, in the immutable purity of it, having abandoned all material values, attachment to possessions, and concern with the contraries of life like pleasure and pain, heat and cold.

46. What use a pond has got when a whole country is flooded, that much of use only the Veda has got to a Brahmana who is full of wisdom.

47. To work alone you have competence, and not to claim their fruits. Let not the longing for fruits be the motive force of your action. At the same time let not this attitude confirm you in indolent inaction.

48. Engage yourself in action with the mind steadfast in Yoga. Abandon attachments, O Arjuna, and be unperturbed in success and failure. This unperturbed sameness in all conditions is Yoga.

49. O Arjuna, mere action (with attachment) is far inferior to action done with the mind poised in evenness. Seek shelter in this state of

unperturbed evenness (which can arise only in a desireless mind in communion with the Divine). Those who work for selfish gains are indeed pitiable.

50. One endowed with this unperturbed evenness of mind abandons the effects of both good and bad actions even here itself. Therefore strive for this state of Yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

51. Wise men, established thus in the unperturbed evenness of mind, abandon the fruits of action, free themselves from entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths, and attain to the state of freedom from all sorrow (liberation).

52. When you have overcome the delusions of your understanding sprung from self-centred attachment, then you attain to a state of indifference towards all the past experiences and the others yet to be had.

53. When your intellect, fed up with the bewildering scriptural doctrines and their interpretations, settles (finally) in steady and unwavering introspection, then you will attain to real Yoga.

Arjuna said:

54. O Kesava! What are the signs of a person who has attained to steady wisdom and deep introspection? How does he speak? How does he sit? How does he walk? (How does he behave in life generally?)

The Blessed Lord said:

55. O Son of Pritha! When all the desires of the heart have been abandoned, and the Spirit finds joyous satisfaction in Itself (without dependence on any external factor) - then is one spoken of as a person of steady wisdom.

56. Whose mind is not agitated in adversity, who is free from desire, and who is devoid of attachments, fear and anger - such a person is called a sage of steady wisdom.

57. Whoever is without self-centred affection for anything, who rejoices not in favourable situations and hates not in unfavourable ones - such a person's wisdom is firmly set.

58. When a person can withdraw his senses from their objects just like the tortoise its limbs on all sides, his wisdom is firmly set.

59. From the abstinent soul sense objects fall away, but not the taste

for them. When the Supreme Truth is realised, even the taste departs.

60. O son of Kunti! The turbulent senses do violently draw away the mind of even a discerning person who is earnestly striving on the spiritual path.

61. Having controlled them all, one should become entirely devoted to Me. He whose senses are under control, his wisdom is firmly set.

62. In one who dwells longingly on sense objects, an inclination towards them is generated. This inclination develops into desire, and desire begets anger.

63. Anger generates delusion, and delusion results in loss of memory. Loss of memory brings about the destruction of discriminative intelligence, and loss of discriminative intelligence spells ruin to a man.

64. A man of disciplined mind, who has his senses under control and who has neither attraction nor aversion for sense objects, attains tranquillity, though he may be moving amidst objects of the senses.

65. On attaining tranquillity all one's sorrows come to an end. For soon does the intellect of a tranquil person become steady.

66. A man of uncontrolled senses has no spiritual comprehension. He has no capacity for meditation either. For the unmeditative there is no peace. And where is happiness for one without peace of mind?

67. The senses are naturally disposed to move towards their objects. Whichever of these senses the mind pursues, that sense carries away that mind as a gale does a ship on the high seas.

68. Therefore, O mighty Arjuna, he who can completely restrain his senses from pursuing their objects, has his wisdom firmly set.

69. What is like night to all ignorant beings, to that Atman consciousness the self-controlled sage is awake; and the sensate life to which all ignorant beings are awake, that is like night to this illumined sage.

70. He into whom objects of desire enter (unsought and causing no perturbation), even like the ocean that is ever being filled by the rivers but still remains steady within its bounds - such a person attains to peace, not he who runs madly after objects of desire.

71. Whoever has abandoned desires, and moves about without attachments and the sense of 'I' and 'mine' - he attains to peace.

72. This, O son of Pritha, is the state of dwelling in Brahman. Having attained it, one is no more deluded. By abiding in that state even by the time of death, one is united with Brahman.

Chapter III Yoga of Action

Arjuna said:

1. O Janardana, if, according to Thee, discriminative insight is superior to action, why dost Thou enjoin on me this terrible action (of engagement in war)?

2. By seemingly conflicting words, Thou art confusing my understanding. Speak to me only about that which will definitely lead to my highest good.

The Blessed Lord said:

3. In times of yore a twofold spiritual path was taught by me, O sinless one - that of knowledge for Samkhyas (who are pure contemplatives), and that of action for Yogis (who combine detached work with devotion).

4. By non-performance of action a man does not gain the state of spiritual passivity (or the state of egoless actionlessness called Naishkarmya). By mere external abandonment (Samnyasa), he does not attain to perfection.

5. No man can ever remain even for a moment without performing any action. The impulses of nature deprive him of freedom in this respect and compel him to act.

6. He who restrains the organs of action but continues to brood in his mind over the objects of sensual desire (enjoyed through them) - such a deluded person is called a hypocrite.

7. But he who, controlling all sense organs (by the power of his will) and becoming non-attached, lives a life of communion through dedicated action such a person excels.

8. Perform your prescribed duties. For, action is superior to inaction. If you are totally inactive, even the survival of the body would become

impossible.

9. O son of Kunti! In this world all actions, unless they are done as an offering to God (or as Yajna), become causes of bondage. Therefore, work for the sake of God without personal attachments.

10. In the beginning Prajapati, having created men together with Yajna (selfless work dedicated to God or Vedic sacrifice) as their duty, declared: "By this shall you multiply. May this be to you the Cow of Plenty yielding all your wants!"

11. "You cherish the Devas with Yajna, and may the Devas in turn bless you (with rain and other desired gifts)! Thus, mutually cherishing, you shall attain the highest good.

12. Worshipped by sacrifices, the Devas will give you the desired objects of enjoyment. They are verily thieves who enjoy their gifts without giving their share in return.

13. Those persons who eat what is left after sacrifice, are released from all sin. But those who cook food for the self alone (without sharing it with others), such degraded men eat sin.

14. From food (i.e., from reproductive power sustained by food) creatures are born. Food is produced by rain. Rain is born of sacrifice, and sacrifice originates from action.

15. Works of sacrifice have their authority in the Veda. Veda has been revealed by the Supreme Being. Therefore the all-comprehending Veda is established in sacrifice (that is, has performance of sacrifice as its fundamental teaching).

16. Vain is the life" of that sinful and sense-indulgent person who fails to fulfil his obligations in this cycle of mutual inter-dependence and service (which the law of sacrifice implies).

17. But whoever delights in the Self (Spirit) alone, and is content and satisfied in the Self, for such a person there is no obligatory duty to discharge.

18. He has no object to gain here in this world by action. Nor does he lose anything by abstaining from action. For him, there is no dependence on any created being for any object of his.

19. Therefore perform action always without attachment. For, by

working without attachment a man attains the Supreme.

20. Men like Janaka verily attained to perfection by work alone. You ought to work for the good of the world (having their example in view).

21. Whatever the noblest persons do, the ordinary man imitates. The standard they set, the ordinary men follow.

22. In all the three worlds there is nothing, O son of Pritha, that is binding on Me as duty. Neither is there anything that I have to gain, nor anything that I cannot gain. Still I am always engaged in work.

23. O son of Pritha! If I did not ever continue in action unwearied, men all around would have followed My way.

24. If I were not to work, all these worlds would have perished. I would have been the cause of confusion among men and of their ultimate destruction.

25. O scion of the Bharata race! Just as ignorant men do action out of attachment, so let enlightened ones perform the same unattached, with the good of the world in view.

26. An enlightened man should not cause confusion in the minds of ignorant people (by his conduct), Himself working with equanimity, he should make them interested in all activities.

27. Everywhere the dispositions (powers) of Nature perform all works. But deluded by egoism, man thinks, 'I am the doer.'

28. But those who know the truth that the dispositions of Nature and the actions which spring from them are distinct from the Self, do not get attached, understanding that it is not the Self, but the dispositions of Nature as organs that settle on the respective objects which too are products of the same dispositions.

29. Men, deluded by the dispositions of Nature, get attached to work prompted by these dispositions. Those who know the whole Truth should not unsettle these dull-witted men of imperfect understanding.

30. Offering all your actions to Me, your mind in unison with the spirit and free from desires and egotism, you fight without the slightest touch of hatred or excitement.

31. Whoever follow this teaching of mine, with their minds full of faith

and free from disparagement, they also are released from the bondage of Karma.

32. But those who disparage this doctrine of Mine and discard it, know such senseless men, blind to all wisdom, as lost.

33. Even a wise man acts in accordance with his nature. All beings follow their nature. What can repression do?

34. It is natural for each organ to feel attraction or aversion in respect of objects pertaining to each sense. Do not come under their sway, for they are enemies (of all spiritual aspirants).

35. One's own Dharma (duty), even though not glamorous, is better than duty alien to one's growth (Paradharmah), however well performed. For even death in doing one's duty leads to one's good, while a duty alien to one's growth is burdened with the fear of downfall.

Arjuna said:

36. What is that, O scion of the Vrishni race, prompted by which a man is forced, as it were, to live a sinful life even against his will?

The Blessed Lord said:

37. It is lust, it is anger, born of Rajoguna, insatiable and prompting man to great sin. Know this to be the enemy (in man's spiritual life).

38. As fire is enveloped by smoke, mirror by dust and the embryo by the placenta, so is knowledge overcast by lust.

39. Knowledge, O Son of Kunti, is covered up by this eternal foe of the aspirant after knowledge - the insatiable fire of lust.

40. The senses, the mind and the Buddhi are said to be its seat. With these it veils knowledge and deludes the embodied spirit.

41. Therefore, O scion of the Bharata race, controlling the senses at the beginning itself, slay this foul enemy, the destroyer of all knowledge and realisation.

42. The senses are great, they say. Superior to the senses is the mind, and superior even to the mind is the intellect. What is superior even to the intellect is He, the Atman.

43. Thus knowing Him who is superior even to the Buddhi, and

controlling the lower self with the higher, kill that tough enemy in the form of lust, O mighty-armed Arjuna!

Chapter IV Renunciation of Action in Knowledge

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I imparted this immortal Yoga to Vivasvan, Vivasvan to Manu, and Manu to Ikshvaku.

2. O scorcher of foes! This Yoga handed down from teacher to disciple in succession, was known to the Rajarishis (royal sages). But owing to long lapse of time, it was lost to the world.

3. You are My devotee and friend - thinking thus, I have today declared to you even that ancient Yoga. For, it is a noble secret (imparted by a teacher only to a worthy disciple).

Arjuna said:

4. Thy life-time is later, that of Vivasvan was much earlier. How then am I to understand that Thou didst impart this doctrine to him?

The Blessed Lord said:

5. O Arjuna! You and I have passed through many births; I remember them all, but you do not, O scorcher of foes!

6. Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings as well, yet I (the Eternal Being) take birth by My inherent mysterious Power (Atma-mayaya), employing the pure or Sattva aspect of My material Nature (Prakriti).

7. Whenever there is decline of Dharma and ascendance of Adharma, then, O scion of the Bharata race! I manifest (incarnate) Myself in a body.

8. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I am born from age to age.

9. O Arjuna! He who thus understands the truth about My embodiment and My deeds - he, on abandoning his present body, is not reborn; he attains to Me.

10. Freed from passion, fear and anger, ever absorbed in My thought, and ever dependent on Me - many have attained to My state, being

purified by the fire of knowledge and austerity.

11. O Partha! Whosoever worship Me through whatsoever path, I verily accept and bless them in that way. Men everywhere follow My path.

12. In this world those who entertain desire for the fruits of pious works, worship the deities. For, in this world of men such actions bear fruit quickly.

13. According to the aptitudes resulting from the dispositions of Nature (Gunas) and from works, the social order of fourfold division has been created by Me. Though I am their originator, know Me to be not an agent but the Spirit unchanging.

14. Actions do not affect Me. Nor have I any desire for the fruits of action. Whoever knows Me to be so, is not bound by Karma.

15. Knowing thus, the ancient aspirants after liberation performed works. Therefore you too do work as these ancients did from time immemorial.

16. What is work and what is 'non-work', is a subject regarding which even the wise are perplexed. I shall therefore speak to you about work, by knowing which one is liberated from evil (or the life of bondage in Samsara).

17. The truth about the nature of 'beneficial work' has to be understood, as also of 'baneful work' and of 'non-work'. The way of work is difficult indeed to understand.

18. He who sees work in 'no work' and 'no work' in work, he is wise among men. Even while doing all work, he remains established in Yoga.

19. Whose undertakings are devoid of self-centred objectives, whose works have been burnt up by the fire of knowledge - him the wise call a sage.

20. Without attachment to the fruits of action, ever-satisfied and free from calculations, he is verily doing nothing, even though engaged in actions.

21. One who is free from desires, whose mind is well-controlled, and who is without any sense of ownership, incurs no sin from works, as his actions are merely physical.

22. Satisfied with whatever comes without calculations, rising above the contrasting conditions of life, without any competitive spirit, and alike in success and in failure, a man, though working, incurs no sin.

23. In the case of one who is without attachments and the sense of agency, and whose mind is fully established in the knowledge of God, - his actions, being done in dedication to the Lord, melt away with their very tendencies.

24. To one of the above description, the ladle with which the offering is made and the oblations are Brahman; and the sacrificial rite (which is Brahman) is performed by the sacrificer who is Brahman, in the fire which too is Brahman. He who is thus absorbed in work as Brahman, attains to Brahman alone.

25. Some Yogis perform sacrifices especially wanting to propitiate deities. Still others offer sacrifice (the Atman) itself as oblation (Yajna) in the fire of Brahman.

26. Some offer their organs of knowledge like hearing as sacrifice in the fire of restraint, while others take in all their sense perceptions as oblations made in the fire of their respective senses.

27. Others offer all the functions of their senses and vital energy as sacrificial offerings in the fire of self- restraint kindled by knowledge.

28. Likewise others, being of rigid vows and hard practice, offer their wealth, their austerities, their Yogic practices, and their daily study of the Vedas as sacrifice.

29. Others devoted to the practice of Pranayama, regulate the movement of Prana and Apana, and offer as oblation Prana in Apana, and likewise Apana in Prana.

30. Some others, who observe regulation of food, make a sacrificial offering of the Prana as the vital energy present in food stuffs, into the prana as the vital energy enlivening the body. All these know the true nature of sacrifice and have all evil in them washed away by Yajna (sacrifice).

31. Those who partake of nectar, the sacramental remnants of sacrifice, attain to the eternal Brahman. O Thou the best of the Kurus! For one who sacrifices not, this world is lost, not to speak then of the hereafter.

32. Thus many forms of sacrifice are set forth prominently in the Vedas (as paths to Brahman). All of them spring from work done by body, mind, and speech. Knowing this, you will attain liberation.

33. O scorcher of enemies! Sacrifice involving knowledge is superior to sacrifice with material objects; for, O son of Pritha, all works without exception culminate in knowledge.

34. With reverential salutations do you approach them - the wise men who have known the Truth. Serve them, and question them repeatedly (with due respect, until your doubts are clarified). These wise men will impart the knowledge of this divine Truth to you.

35. They will impart to you that divine knowledge by knowing which you will not again fall into such delusion; for you will then see all beings in their entirety in the Self and also in Me.

36. Even if you happen to be the worst of sinners, you will surely go across all sin by the raft of divine knowledge.

37. Just as a well-kindled fire reduces a heap of fire-wood to ashes, so does the fire of divine knowledge reduce all sins to ashes.

38. Verily there is nothing so purifying as knowledge in this world. One who is perfect in Yoga discovers it in oneself in course of time.

39. A man of deep Faith (Shraddha) obtains this divine knowledge, being full of zeal and devotion for it and endowed with mastery of the senses. Having obtained that knowledge, he is established in supreme peace very soon.

40. An ignorant man without any positive faith, who knows only to doubt, goes to ruin. To such a doubting soul there is neither this world nor the world beyond. There is no happiness for him.

41. O Arjuna! Works do not bind one who has abandoned them through Yoga consisting in dedication and detachment, whose doubts have been dispelled by divine knowledge, and who is poised in the Self.

42. Therefore, cutting asunder the sceptical tendency of the heart by the sword of divine knowledge, betake yourself to Yoga (communion through sacrificial action) and arise, O scion of the Bharata race!

Chapter V Yoga of Renunciation

Arjuna said:

1. O Krishna! Thou praisest in one breath both abandonment of works and communion through their performance. Now tell me with certainty which of them leads to one's good.

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Both abandonment of works and communion through works lead to liberation. But of them, communion through work excels abandonment of work.

3. O mighty-armed one! Whoever hates not, nor desires, should be known as one established in renunciation. Indeed, one who is above such contraries is easily liberated from bondage.

4. It is only the childish and not the wise that speak of Samkhya (or Knowledge accompanied by abandonment of work) and Yoga (or communion through detached and dedicated work) as different. A person well-established in even one of these, attains the end that is the common goal of both. (That is, in the means they employ, they look different, but their end or ultimate purpose is identical.)

5. The state which one attains by Samkhya, that same state is attained by Yoga too. He who sees both Samkhya and Yoga as one, sees indeed.

6. O mighty-armed Arjuna! True abandonment of work (which the discipline of Samkhya implies) is difficult to practise for one who is not accomplished in the Yoga discipline of detached work. But the sage accomplished in Yoga attains to Brahman in no long time.

7. One who is established in selfless and detached action, who is pure, whose mind and senses are under control, and whose self is identified with the self of all - he is never bound, though he be engaged in work.

8-9. I (the Self) do naught; only the senses are occupied with their objects - this should be the conviction of one who is detached in action and established in the truth (that he is the Atman), even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, conversing, evacuating, holding, and opening and closing the eyes.

10. One who resigns all his actions to Brahma and works without any personal attachments, is not soiled by sin, as a lotus leaf is not wetted

by water.

11. For the attainment of mental purity, spiritual aspirants (Yogins) perform action devoid of attachment, with their body, mind, intellect or even merely with the senses.

12. By abandoning the fruits of action a man of restrained mind attains to abiding peace. But the one with unrestrained mind, being prompted by desire for the fruits of action, gets bound.

13. A self-controlled soul, having abandoned all work mentally (in the way described above), resides at ease (as a witness) in this corporeal mansion with nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done.

14. In regard to all beings in this world, the sovereign soul is not the cause of the sense of agency, nor of actions, nor of the fruition of actions. It is Nature that does all this.

15. The all-pervading Being does not accept the sins or merits of any one. Knowledge of the Divine Spirit is veiled by ignorance, and therefore beings are deluded.

16. But in the case of those whose ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of the Atman, to them that knowledge reveals the supreme Truth, as the sun does the objects of the world.

17. Those who think of That always, who are ever at one with That, who are deeply devoted to That, and who look upon That as their goal, get purified of their sins by divine knowledge and go to the state from which there is no return to worldly life.

18. Enlightened men are those who see the same (i.e. the Atman) in a Brahmana with learning and humility, in a cow, in an elephant, and even in a dog or in an eater of dog-meat (outcaste).

19. Even here in this embodied state, the cycle of births and deaths has been overcome by those who have this vision of sameness in all. Verily, Brahman is the Unsullied and the Pure. Therefore are those seers of sameness said to be established in Brahman.

20. Unperturbed and undeluded, a knower of Brahman, who is established in Him, neither rejoices at pleasant experiences nor gets agitated at unpleasant ones.

21. An aspirant who is unattached to the contactual experiences of the

external world, gains the joy that is in the Self within. He enjoys unending bliss with his mind absorbed in communion with Brahman.

22. Whatever enjoyments are there born of sense contact, they are sources of suffering only. For, they are with a beginning and an end. A wise man finds no delight in them.

23. Here, even while in the body, whoever is able to withstand the agitation caused by lust and anger, he is the self-controlled one, he is the happy man.

24. The Yogin whose happiness is within, whose resting place is within, who likewise experiences' the light within - he realises himself to be the Spirit and attains to beatitude in Brahman.

25. Verily, they attain to beatitude in Brahman who are sinless, whose doubts have been destroyed, whose self is under their control and who rejoice in the good of all.

26. To those self-controlled ones (ascetics) who are free from lust and anger, who have controlled their minds and who have known their real nature as the spirit - the attainment of beatitude in Brahman is near at hand.

27-28. Excluding all sense perceptions; fixing the look between the eye brows; steadying the flow of Prana (out-going breath) and Apana (incoming breath) through the nostrils; controlling the senses, mind and intellect; devoid of desires, fear and anger; and aspiring for liberation alone - a meditative sage is liberated for ever.

29. Knowing Me, the recipient of all worship and austere practices, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, and the friend of all beings, man attains to eternal peace.

Chapter VI Communion Through Meditation

The Blessed Lord said:

1. It is the man who performs his duties without dependence on the fruits that deserves to be called a Sannyasin (renouncer) and a Yogin, not the one who keeps no fire or avoids works.

2. O son of Pandu! What is called Sannyasa or renunciation know that to be identical with Yoga or disciplines of selfless action. For, whoever

has not abandoned subtle hankerings and self-centred objectives, can never become a Yogi, or a practitioner of spiritual communion through works.

3. For one who desires to ascend the path leading to the heights of spiritual communion (Yoga), detached work is the means. For one who has ascended it, quiescence is verily the means.

4. When one ceases to be attached to sense objects and to one's actions, then that one, who has thus abandoned all subtle hankerings and self-centred objectives, is said to have ascended the heights of spiritual communion (Yoga).

5. One should uplift one's lower self by the higher self. One should not depress or downgrade one's self. For the self verily is both the friend and the foe of the self.

6. To him who has subdued the lower self by the higher self, the self acts like a friend. But to him who has lost his higher self by the dominance of the lower one. the self functions as the enemy, always hostile to him.

7. In one who has conquered his mind, the Self remains steady and unperturbed in the experience of the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour.

8. A Yogin whose spirit has attained contentment through knowledge and experience, who is unperturbed, who has subdued his senses, to whom a lump of earth and a bar of gold are alike - such a Yogi is said to have attained steadfastness in spiritual communion.

9. Specially noteworthy in excellence is he who is even-minded in his outlook on friend and foe, on comrade and stranger, on the neutral, on the ally, on the good, and even on the evil ones.

10. Let a Yogin constantly practise spiritual communion, residing alone in a solitary spot, desireless, possessionless, and disciplined in body and mind.

11-12. At a clean spot, which is neither too high nor too low, a seat should be made with Kusha grass, spread over with a skin and a cloth. Firmly seated on it, the Yogi should practise spiritual communion, with mind concentrated and with the working of the imaginative faculty and the senses under control, for self-purification.

13-14. Holding the body, head and neck erect, motionless and firm, gazing at the tip of the nose and not round about, fearless, serene, restrained in mind, and established in the vow of continence, he should sit in spiritual communion with Me, looking upon Me as his highest and most precious end.

15. With the mind restrained from going outward to objects and always uniting with the Supreme in spiritual communion, the Yogi attains to Peace, which is the summit of bliss and enduring establishment in My state.

16. O Arjuna! Success in Yoga is not for those who eat too much, nor for those who eat too little. It is not also for those given to too much sleeping, nor to those who keep vigil too long.

17. For one who is temperate in food and recreation, who is detached and self-restrained in work, who is regulated in sleep and in vigil - Yoga brings about the cessation of the travail of Samsara.

18. When the disciplined mind is able to remain established in the Atman alone, when it is free from longing for all objects of desire - then is it spoken of as having attained to spiritual communion.

19. The flame of a lamp sheltered from wind does not flicker. This is the comparison used to describe a Yogi's mind that is well under control and united with the Atman.

20. That state in which the Chitta (mind stuff), with its movements restrained by the practice of Yoga, finds rest; in which is experienced the joy of the Spirit born of the higher mind intuiting the Spirit.

21. In which he (the Yogin) experiences that endless bliss which is beyond the ken of the senses but is intuited by the purified intellect; wherein established, one does not waver from the Truth.

22. Having obtained which no other gain is considered as greater; remaining in which one is not shaken even by the heaviest of afflictions.

23. Know that severance of connection with pain as what is designated as Yoga. It has to be practised tirelessly with determination.

24-25. Abandoning imagination - born longings in their entirety, restraining all the senses with the mind on every side, and setting that mind firmly on the Self under the direction of a steadfast intellect, one

should practise tranquillity little by little, and abstain from every kind of thought.

26. From whatsoever reason this wavering and fickle mind wanders away, it should be curbed and brought to abide in the Self alone.

27. Supreme Bliss wells up in a Yogi, who is tranquil in mind, whose passions are subdued, who is free from impurities and who is in the Brahmic state.

28. Thus, ever engaged in making the mind steadfast in spiritual communion and having all the impurities of the mind effaced thereby, the Yogin easily experiences the infinite Bliss of contact with Brahman.

29. The man of spiritual insight, established in same-sightedness, sees the Self as residing in all beings and all beings as resting in the Self.

30. He who sees Me in all beings, and all beings in Me - to him I am never lost, nor he to Me.

31. Established in the unity of all existence, a Yogin who serves Me present in all beings, verily abides in Me, whatever be his mode of life.

32. O Arjuna! In My view that Yogi is the best who, out of a sense of identity with others on account of the perception of the same Atman in all, feels their joy and suffering as his own.

Arjuna said:

33. O Slayer of Madhu! Owing to the fickleness of the mind, I find no way of firm establishment in spiritual communion through equanimity as instructed by you.

34. O Krishna! Verily, the mind is fickle, turbulent, powerful and unyielding. To control it, I think, is as difficult as controlling the wind itself.

The Blessed Lord said:

35. O mighty armed one! Undoubtedly the mind is fickle and difficult to be checked. Yet, O son of Kunti, it can be brought under control by dispassion and spiritual practice.

36. My view is that Yoga is difficult of attainment by men of uncontrolled mind. But for those who have their minds under control, it is possible to attain, if they strive with the proper means.

Arjuna said:

37. What, O Krishna, is the fate of a man who, though endowed with a firm faith, is not steadfast in his practices owing to distractions, and therefore fails to reach spiritual perfection?

38. O mighty-armed Lord! Bewildered in the path of Brahman, supportless, does he not lose both this world and the next? Does he not perish like a rain-cloud rent asunder?

39. O Krishna! My doubt in this respect has yet to be cleared completely. Indeed! I find none better than Thee to be that doubt dispeller.

The Blessed Lord said:

40. O son of Pritha! He does not meet with downfall either here in this world or in the hereafter. Know for certain, O dear one, that one who treads the path of virtue never goes the way of evil ones.

41. The fallen Yogi goes (after death) to the spheres of the righteous, and after having lived there for unnumbered years, is reborn in this world in a pure and prosperous family.

42. Or he is re-born in a family of men full of wisdom and spirituality. Re-birth under such conditions is passing hard to get in this world.

43. There, O scion of the clan of Kurus! he will regain the spiritual discernment of his previous birth, and then he will strive harder than ever for perfection.

44. Even if helpless, he will be driven towards the path of Yoga by the force of his previous striving. For even a beginner in the path of Yoga goes above the stage requiring the aid of Vedic ritualism (not to speak then of one who has made some progress in Yoga).

45. As for the Yogi striving diligently, he is cleansed of all his sins and gains spiritual perfection after passing through several embodiments. Finally he reaches the highest state (which consists in release from the bondage of the body).

46. A Yogi (one practising meditation) is superior to a man of austerity; he is superior to a scholar; he is superior to a ritualist too. Therefore, O Arjuna, be you a Yogi.

47. Of all the Yogins, he is the most attuned in spiritual communion, who worships Me with abiding faith, and with his innermost self fused

with Me.

Chapter VII

Communion Through Knowledge

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Hear now, O son of Pritha, how one resigned to Me and absorbed in love of Me, attains to full knowledge of Me through the practice of spiritual communion.

2. I shall now declare to you in fullness that Knowledge along with Special Knowledge, (its higher development), by means of which there will remain nothing more for you to understand.

3. Among thousands of men, there will just be one here or there striving for spiritual perfection. From among the aspirants so striving, one perchance knows Me in truth.

4. My Nature is divided into eight categories - earth, water, fire, air, sky (ether), mind (manas), understanding (buddhi), and I-sense (ahamkara).

5. This, O mighty armed, is My lower Nature. Know that, as different from it, is My higher Nature forming the source of all Jivas and the support of the whole universe.

6. Know that all beings have these two Natures of Mine as their source. I am the origin and the dissolution of this entire universe.

7. O Arjuna! There is no being higher than Me. As a row of pearls threaded on a string, all the worlds are held on Me.

8. O son of Kunti! In water I am taste; in sun and moon, their brilliance; in all the Vedas, the sound symbol Om; in the sky-element, sound; and in men, their manliness.

9. In the earth element I am sweet fragrance; in fire I am brilliance; in living beings I am the life-principle; and in austere men, I am austerity.

10. Know me, O Partha! to be the eternal seed of all beings. In the wise I am their wisdom and in puissant men, their prowess.

11. In the strong I am strength uncorrupted by desire and attachment,

and in living beings I am desire not contrary to virtue.

12. Whatever manifestations there are of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, they have all come from Me. They are in Me, not I in them.

13. Deluded by the mental states accruing from the three Gunas of Prakriti, this world knows not Me, the Imperishable, transcending these Gunas.

14. My divine Maya (power) constituted of the three Gunas is difficult to overcome. Whoever takes refuge in Me alone, in utter devotion, overcomes it.

15. The lowest type of men, evil, foolish and demoniac in nature, being deprived of right understanding by Maya, never take refuge in Me with devotion.

16. O Arjuna, the greatest of the Bharata race! Four kinds of pious men adore Me. They are the distressed one, the knowledge-seeker, the wealth-seeker, and the knower.

17. Among them, the knower (or the man of wisdom), ever communing and single-minded in devotion, is the best. I am indeed supremely dear to such a knower, and he in turn is dear to Me.

18. While all of them are certainly noble, the knower I cherish as My very self - such is My view. For, ever in union with Me, he is established in the conviction that I am his highest goal.

19. At the end of many births (of striving), the knowing one makes Me his refuge, realising that Vasudeva is All. A great soul of that type is rare to find.

20. Influenced by their inherent nature and deprived of correct judgement by numerous desires, people adore other deities with various forms of worship pertaining to them.

21. Whichever devotee desires to adore whatever such Deity with faith, in all such votaries I make that particular faith unshakable.

22. Endowed with that faith, a votary performs the worship of that particular deity and obtains the fruits thereof, these being granted by Me alone.

23. The results accruing to such small-minded people are finite only.

Those who worship the Devas go to the Devas, but My devotees attain to Me.

24. Without any insight into My transcendental nature, unique and immutable, men of little understanding look upon Me as a mere human individual, having come into manifestation from an unmanifested state.

25. Veiled as I am in My Yoga-maya (Divine Power), I am not revealed to all. This deluded world does not know Me, the unoriginated and the indestructible.

26. O Arjuna! I know all beings - past, present and future. But none knows me.

27. O scion of Bharata's house! From their very birth all beings are deluded by the bewitchment of the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, springing from the instinctive feelings of attraction and aversion for them.

28. But those men of virtuous deeds, in whom sinfulness has been effaced - they, freed from the bewilderment of sense life, worship Me with great steadfastness in their vows.

29. Those that strive for liberation from the travails of old age and death in complete trust and dependence on Me, shall know all about the Absolute, His spiritual manifestation and His works of spiritual import.

30. Those who have grasped that I am the spiritual power that sustains all material manifestations, all divine expressions and all spiritual endeavours - they continue to know Me as such even at the time of death, their mind being ever absorbed in Me.

Chapter VIII Way to Brahman

Arjuna said:

1. O Supreme Lord! What is Brahman (the Absolute)? What is the Spirit (the Adhyatma)? What is work (Karma)? And what is that which underlies the material manifestations (Adhibhuta), and what, the divinities (Adhidaiva)?

2. O Slayer of Madhu! Who is the Adhiyajna (the spirit underlying sacrifices) that resides in this body, and how does he do so? How

should a man of a self-restraint meditate on the Supreme Being at the time of death?

The Blessed Lord said:

3. Brahman is Akshara, the Immutable Being than whom there is none higher. Brahman's power manifested in every body as the transmigrating self (the Jiva), is the Adhyatma. The creative act (identified with sacrificial offering), which brings all beings into existence, is Karma (work).

4. O noble one! The perishable Nature is the material aspect (Adhibhuta). The cosmic soul is the basis of all divine manifestations (Adhidaivata); and I verily form the Adhiyajna, the one object of all worship which men perform with their body and mind.

5. Whoever thinks of Me alone even at the time of death, attains to My state on abandoning the body. There is no doubt about this.

6. O son of Kunti! Whatever object a person thinks of at the time of death, having been absorbed in its thought all through, - he attains to that object alone.

7. Therefore fight, remembering Me always. One who has dedicated his mind and understanding to Me, shall come to Me alone, undoubtedly.

8. Thinking of Me continuously, with a mind trained in the practice of spiritual communion and freed from the tendency to stray away to other objects, one attains to the Divine Spirit Supreme.

9-10. He who, with a mind steady and endued with devotion and strength born of spiritual practice, fixes his entire life-force between the eye-brows at the time of death, and contemplates on Him who is all-knowing, primeval, subtler than even an atom, sustainer and director of all, glorious like the sun, and beyond all darkness of inertia and ignorance - he verily attains to that Supreme Being.

11. That which Vedic scholars call the Imperishable (Akshara), which Sannyasins devoid of worldly attachments enter, desiring which men follow the life of continence and asceticism, - that state I shall declare to you in brief.

12-13. Established in spiritual communion by inhibiting all sensations, concentrating on the heart centre, and drawing up the vital energies to the head, one should meditate on Me along with the utterance of the singlessyllabled mantra Om denoting Brahman. Departing from the body

in this state, one attains liberation.

14. He who, with a mind undistracted by other things, thinks of Me constantly every day - to the Yogi thus ever-attuned, I am easy of attainment, O son of Pritha!

15. No more is re-birth, no more this home of transience and misery, for those great-souled ones who have attained to supreme perfection by realising Me.

16. All the worlds from the realm of Brahma down to the earth, are subject to re-birth. But, O Arjuna, one who has attained to Me is never reborn.

17. Those who have an understanding of Brahma's day time, which lasts for a thousand ages, and of his night time, which too is of equal length, - they indeed understand what a day is and what a night.

18. At the dawn of the day of Brahma this whole universe comes into manifestation from the Unmanifest (Prakriti). When the night begins, it dissolves in that Unmanifest itself.

19. O son of Pritha! This vast collectivity of beings comes inexorably into manifestation again and again, dissolving at the commencement of night, and again coming forth at the dawn of day.

20. Different from this unmanifested state is the supreme and eternal - Unmanifested whose being remains unaffected even when everything is destroyed.

21. Know that state, which is called the Unmanifested and the Imperishable, to be the ultimate goal of all. That is My supreme abode. Attaining to that, man is not reborn.

22. That Supreme Purusha, the abode of all beings and the indweller of them all, can be attained by unswerving and exclusive devotion to Him.

23. I shall now tell you, O noblest of Bharatas, of the circumstances, dying under which a Yogi never returns to this world and also of the time, dying when he is sure to return.

24. Fire, light, day-time, bright fortnight, six months of the northern course of the sun - the knowers of Brahman who depart along this path, attain to Brahman.

25. Smoke, night and likewise the black fortnight and the six months of the southern course of the sun - the Yogi departing by this path attains to the lunar sphere and thence returns.

26. Verily, these two paths - the bright and the dark - are accepted as everlasting verities. By the one, the aspirant gains Moksha, the state of non-return, while the other leads him to rebirth.

27. O son of Pritha! Whoever among Yogis know these two paths, they are never deluded. Therefore, O Arjuna, be steadfast in Yoga at all times.

28. Knowing this, a Yogi transcends all the meritorious rewards that are prescribed for the study of the Vedas, for the performance of austerities, and for charities too, and attains to that primeval state, which is the Supreme Being.

Chapter IX Sovereign Secret

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I shall now declare to you, who are endowed with reverence, that profoundest of all mystic doctrines and the way to its experience, by which you will be free from the baneful life of Samsara.

2. It is a sovereign science, and a profound mystery. Supremely sanctifying, demonstrable by experience, and yielding imperishable results, it is also easy to perform and is in agreement with the moral law.

3. Men without faith in this sacred doctrine (who continue to look upon the body as the self) fail to attain Me. They remain caught up in Samsara, the eternally recurring cycle of births and deaths.

4. All this world is pervaded by Me, the Unmanifested Being. All objects subsist in Me, but not I in them.

5. And yet objects do not abide in Me! Behold My mysterious Divine Power! Source and support of all objects, and yet not abiding in (i.e. not limited by) them!

6. Know that, as the mighty atmosphere ever abides in space, so do all objects abide in Me (without restricting or limiting Me in the least).

7. At the end of a cosmic cycle, O son of Kunti! all beings resolve into Nature (Prakriti), which is My own, and at the beginning of a new one (after the period of dissolution or Pralaya is over), I bring them out again.

8. Resorting to Prakriti (Nature) which is My own Power, I send forth again and again this multitude of beings that are without any freedom, owing to Nature's sway over them.

9. These activities do not in any way bind me, because I remain detached like one unconcerned in their midst.

10. Under My direction and control, Nature brings out this mighty universe of living and non-living beings. Thus does the wheel of this world revolve.

11. Foolish men, without an understanding of My higher nature as the Supreme Lord of all that exists, disregard Me manifested in the human body.

12. Futile are the hopes, futile the works, and futile the knowledge of these men of perverted understanding who are deluded by their cruel, proud and passionate nature, characteristic of Rakshasas and Asuras.

13. But the high-souled ones, endowed with virtues characteristic of Devas, understand Me to be the Immutable and the source of all beings, and adore Me with a mind undistracted by anything else.

14. Strenuous and steadfast in their vows, these ever-integrated devotees worship Me with devotion, always singing My glories and prostrating before Me.

15. Others, again, who offer wisdom sacrifice to Me, worship Me the All-inclusive Whole (All-formed)- as the One, as the Distinct, and as the Immanent in all.

16. I am the sacrifice (kratu), I am the worship (yajna), I am the ancestral offering (svadha), I am the medicinal herb. Again I am the Vedic hymn, I am the sacrificial ingredients. I am the sacrificial fire, and I am the sacrificial oblation too.

17. To this world I am the father, the mother, the grandsire and the sustainer. I am the Holy One to be known, as also the syllable Om, the Rig, Sama and Yajus.

18. The goal, the support, the Lord, and the consciousness witnessing - all this I am. I am again the abode, the refuge, and the friend of all, as also their origin, their dissolution, their ground, their treasure-house and their seed imperishable.

19. I give heat, and I send forth as well as withhold rain. I am, O Arjuna! both immortality and death, both being and non-being.

20. Men versed in the Vedas, cleansed of their sins by the performance of sacrifices attended with the drinking of consecrated Soma juice, pray for heavenly regions (as the reward for adoring Me with those rites). They go to the heaven of Indra, attainable by meritorious deeds, and enjoy heavenly felicities there.

21. Having enjoyed the varied felicities of heaven for long, they come back to the world of human beings when their asset of meritorious deeds is exhausted. Thus, being desire-ridden, the followers of the Vedic sacrificial rites stagnate in Samsara, the repetitive state of going and returning.

22. Whoever, being devoted to me solely, engage themselves always in contemplation and worship of Me - to such ever-steadfast devotees I ensure the procurement of all their wants (salvation) and the preservation of their assets (worldly interests).

23. O son of Kunti! Those devotees who worship even other deities with deep faith, they also are worshipping Me alone, though contrary to injunctions.

24. I am indeed the only enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices. But they (the worshippers of other deities) do not understand Me in My true nature (as the object of all worship). So they fall.

25. The votaries of the deities go to the deities; of the manes, to the manes; and of the spirits, to the spirits, while My worshippers come to Me.

26. Whoever makes an offering to Me with devotion, be it of leaf, flower, fruit or water - that devout offering by a pure-hearted man, I accept with joy.

27. O son of Kunti! Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give as charity, whatever austerity you perform - do that as offering unto Me.

28. Thus shall you be freed from the bonds of Karma bearing good and evil fruits. With the heart firmly set on renunciation, you will attain liberation and thereby come to Me.

29. I am the same towards all beings. None is hateful, and none dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion dwell in Me, and I too dwell in them.

30. Even a confirmed sinner, if he worships Me with unwavering faith and devotion, must verily be considered as righteous; for he has indeed taken the right resolve.

31. Soon will he become righteous and attain to lasting peace. No devotee of Mine will ever perish; you may swear to this effect, O Arjuna!

32. O son of Pritha! Taking refuge in Me, women, Vaishyas, Shudras, and likewise even men of inferior birth, attain to the highest spiritual goal.

33. Then how much more so in the case of holy Brahmanas and also of devoted royal sages! Having come into this impermanent and unhappy world, engage yourself in My worship.

34. Let your mind be absorbed in Me. Be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, and bow down to Me. Thus, having Me as your highest goal, and united with Me in mind, you shall come to Me alone.

Chapter X Divine Glories

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Hear again, O mighty armed one, My words on the Supreme Truth. Desirous of your good, I want to declare it to you, who are so beloved of Me.

2. Neither the hosts of gods nor Maharishis (great sages) know my origin, for I am Myself the origin of all those gods and great sages.

3. He who knows Me as the beginningless, the unborn and the Master of the worlds - he among mortals becomes undeluded, and he is freed from all sins.

4-5. Intelligence, knowledge, sanity, patience, truth, sense-control,

mind-control, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear and also fearlessness; non-injury, same-sightedness, contentment, austerity, benevolence, fame and obloquy - all these diverse modes of the mind seen in all beings proceed from Me alone, their ultimate sanctioner.

6. The seven great sages (beginning with Marichi) as also the four earlier ones like Sanaka and the rest and the Manus likewise are My emanations, being projections of my thought. All this race of men is their progeny.

7. He who knows the truth about this manifestation of My Divine majesties and about My power, gets united with Me in steady and unfaltering communion. There is no doubt about this.

8. I am the source of all things, from Me all these go forth - knowing thus the wise ones worship Me, being filled with ecstatic devotional fervour.

9. With their minds engrossed and their vital energies deeply involved in Me, they are ever contented and delighted by mutually conversing about Me and enlightening each other thereby.

10. To those who serve Me with delight and are ever steadfast in spiritual communion, I bestow intuitive understanding by means of which they come to Me.

11. Out of sheer compassion for them, residing within as their innermost self, I destroy the darkness born of ignorance in them by the brilliant lamp of wisdom.

Arjuna said:

12-13. Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode, the Utterly Holy. Thou art the eternal divine Person - the birthless and all-pervading Divinity supreme. All the Rishis proclaim this - the divine sage Narada as also Asita, Devala and Vyasa; Thou Thyself too dost tell Me the same.

14. O Kesava! Whatever Thou hast told me, I deem as true. Verily, O Lord, neither the Devas nor the Danavas know what Thy manifestations are.

15. O Thou the highest of all beings! O Creator of all! O Lord of all! O God of gods! O Ruler of the world! Thou art known only to Thyself through self-intuition.

16. Deign to speak to me in entirety of those divine manifestations of Thy glory, whereby, pervading all these worlds. Thou abidest in them and beyond.

17. How am I to know Thee, O Yogin, through constant meditation? In what all aspects shouldst Thou be contemplated upon by me, O Lord?

18. O Janardana! Tell me again and again of Thy divine powers and majesties; for I am ever eager to hear more and more of Thy nectarine words.

The Blessed Lord said:

19. Behold, O best of the Kurus! I shall declare unto you what My divine self-manifestations are; but I shall mention only the chief of them. For, there is no end to their details.

20. O Arjuna! I am the Self residing in the heart of every being. I am their beginning, their life-span, and their end.

21. Of the twelve Adityas (suns), I am Vishnu; among the luminaries I am the radiant sun; among the seven Maruts (winds) I am Marichi; and of the Nakshatras (asterisms), I am the moon.

22. Of the Vedas, I am the Sama Veda; among the Devas, I am Indra; of the senses, I am the mind; and in living beings, I am intelligence.

23. Of the eleven Rudras, I am Shankara; among the Demigods and Titans, I am Kubera; of the eight Vasus, I am Agni; among mountains, I am the Meru.

24. Among the priests, know me to be the chief of them - Brihaspati, the priest of the Devas, O Arjuna. Among the war-lords I am Skanda; among the water reservoirs, I am the ocean.

25. Among the great sages, I am Bhrigu; among utterances I am the mono-syllabled 'Om'; among holy offerings, I am the offering of Japa (silent repetition of Divine Names); among immovable objects, I am the mount Himalaya.

26. Among all trees, I am the holy fig-tree; among the divine sages, I am Narada; among celestial artistes, I am Chitraratha; among perfected souls, I am Kapila the sage.

27. Among horses know Me to be the nectar-born Uchchaishravas, among the lordly elephants, the white celestial elephant Airavata; and

among men, persons endowed with leadership.

28. Among weapons I am the thunderbolt; among cows, Kamadhenu the celestial cow of plenty; among progenitors, Kama the god of love; and among snakes, Vasuki.

29. Among serpents I am Ananta; among water-dwellers I am Varuna; among the manes I am Aryama; and among the enforcers of law I am Yama.

30. Among Daityas I am Prahlada; among calculators I am time; among animals I am the lion; and among birds I am Garuda.

31. Among purifying agents I am the wind; among warriors I am Rama; among the fish I am the shark; and among rivers I am the Ganga.

32. O Arjuna! Of the created objects I am the beginning, middle and end; among the sciences, I am the science of the spirit; and in debaters I am the power of correct reasoning.

33. Among letters I am the letter 'A', among compound word formations I am the copulative (dvandva). I am also the never-ending Time and the all-seeing Brahma (the dispenser of the Karmas of all beings).

34. I am the all-destroying Death, and I am the origin of all that are to come too. Among virtues considered as female I am fame, fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, constancy and patience.

35. Among the Sama hymns I am the Brihatsaman (the Great Chant); among the Vedic metres, I am the Gayatri; among months, I am Margashirsha (Nov-Dec.) and among seasons, I am the flower-bearing spring.

36. I am the dicing of the deceitful, the power of the powerful and the goodness of the good. I am victory, determination and constancy too.

37. I am Vasudeva among the Vrishnis and Arjuna among the Pandavas. I am Vyasa among sages, and Ushana among the far-sighted.

38. I am the rod of chastisement in the disciplinarians; I am the wise policy in those seeking success; I am silence in the arts of secrecy; and I am wisdom in the wise.

39. Of all beings I am the seed, O Arjuna. Whatever exists in this world, living or non-living, none of them can be, if I were not.

40. O great warrior! There is no end to my divine manifestations. What I have expounded forms only a few of them by way of examples.

41. Whatever there is endowed with extraordinary glory, attractiveness and vigour, know all that to be born of a fragment of My power.

42. But then, of what avail is this detailed understanding of my manifestations to you, O Arjuna! Supporting this mighty universe with but one single fragment of My self, I remain unchanged and transcendent.

Chapter XI The Cosmic Form

Arjuna said:

1. Thy instructions on the grand Mystery, the highest spiritual Truth, imparted to me out of Thy abounding grace, have dispelled my delusion.

2. O lotus-eyed One! From Thee I have heard at length about the origin and dissolution of creatures as also about Thy greatness that knows no decay.

3. Thou art, O Lord Supreme, even as what Thou hast declared Thyself to be. (I understand and accept it.) Yet I now desire to see that form of Thine as the Lord of all.

4. If, O Lord, Thou thinkest me worthy of experiencing that immutable form of Thine, then deign to reveal the same to me, O Thou Master of all Yoga!

The Blessed Lord said:

5. Behold, O Partha, My manifold forms in their hundreds and thousands - all divine and all of varied hues and shapes.

6. Behold the Adityas and the Vasus, the Rudras and the Ashvins, and the Maruts likewise - behold these marvels unseen by any before, O scion of Bharata's clan!

7. O conqueror of sleep! Behold here and now the whole of this

universe of conscious and unconscious entities as also anything else you desire to experience - all abiding as a unity in My body.

8. You cannot have an experience of Me merely with your physical eye. I therefore give you the power of divine vision. Behold with that My power as the Lord of all.

Sanjaya said:

9. So saying, Hari, the Master of all spiritual powers, now revealed to Arjuna His transcendent form as the Lord of the universe.

10. Having countless faces and eyes; exhibiting countless features; provoking wonder; bedecked with countless celestial ornaments equipped with countless divine weapons held aloft;

11. Wearing heavenly garlands and vestments; anointed with celestial unguents and perfumes; replete with incredible, marvellous features - a divinity boundless and all-seeing.

12. What brilliance there would have been if a thousand suns were to blaze forth all of a sudden in the sky - to that was comparable the splendour of that great Being.

13. There in the body of that God of all divinities, the son of Pandu then saw the whole universe - a multiplicity abiding unified in His being.

14. Thereupon Arjuna, struck with amazement and his hairs standing on end, bowed down before the Lord and said with hands folded in salutation.

Arjuna said:

15. In Thy form I see, O Lord, all the Devas and all the varied hosts of other beings - the divine Rishis, the celestial serpents and likewise Brahma the Lord of creation, seated on his lotus throne.

16. I see Thee in Thy all encompassing form everywhere - with myriad arms, myriad trunks, myriad mouths, myriad eyes. O Lord of all! O the All-formed! I see not Thy beginning, Thy middle, or Thy end.

17. I see Thee, boundless Being, diademed and armed with mace and discus, shining everywhere as a mass of light, and difficult to look at, like the blazing fire or the incandescent sun.

18. In my view Thou art the Supreme Imperishable Being to be

realised - the world's ultimate refuge and the guardian of eternal law, most ancient and perennial.

19. I see Thee - beginningless, middleless and endless; infinite in puissance; of boundless energy active everywhere; having the sun and the moon for eyes; with a face luminous like a flaming fire; and with spiritual radiance energising everything.

20. O High-souled One! All the three worlds tremble with fear at the sight of this wondrous, awe-inspiring form of Thine - the one existence that fills all space betwixt heaven and earth and all the quarters as well.

21. Verily, these bands of Devas enter into Thee, while others, awe-struck, stand with hands joined in salutation. Hosts of sages and celestial singers cry 'Hail' unto Thee, and extol Thee with hymns of abounding praise.

22. And the Rudras, Adityas, Vasus and Sadhyas; Vishvas, Ashvins, Maruts and Manes; and the hosts of Gandharvas, Yaksas, Asuras and Siddhas - all view Thee in utter amazement.

23. At the sight of Thy stupendous form, with faces, eyes, arms, trunks, thighs and legs in myriads, and Thy numerous fangs of forbidding appearance - the whole world, O mighty one, is trembling in awe, even as I.

24. When I see Thy form reaching up to the skies and shining in varied hues, when I see Thy face with mouth wide open and eyes large and glowing bright, I feel shaken to the core of my being with awe. O All-pervading One! My strength is exhausted and my mind is without peace.

25. Even by beholding Thy faces, resembling the fire of cosmic destruction and striking terror with their fangs, I lose all sense of direction as also my presence of mind. O Thou the Lord of all and the home of the worlds! Be propitious unto me!

26-27. All these hosts of kings, along with the sons of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona and yonder Kama, as also the principal warriors on our side - all are rushing headlong into Thy fearful mouth set with terrible fangs. Some are seen with their heads crushed and caught in the gaps of Thy teeth.

28. As the swift-flowing waters of numerous rivers rush verily towards

the sea, so these heroes among men are rushing into Thy flaming mouth.

29. As moths swarm swiftly into a flaming fire and perish, so do these men rush headlong into Thy mouth to meet with sure destruction.

30. Thou lappest up all these worlds around, devouring them with Thy flaming mouth. Thy lustre, striking awe into the minds of all, fills this entire universe with its radiance and scorches it, O Vishnu!

31. Deign to tell me who Thou art with this awe-inspiring form. To Thee, O Supreme Lord, my salutation, and also my prayers for Thy grace. I wish to know more about Thee, the Primal Being, as also of Thy purpose here, of which I am in ignorance.

The Blessed Lord said:

32. I am the mighty world destroying Time, engaged here in annihilating all beings. Even without you. not one of all the warriors arrayed in these rival armies shall survive.

33. Therefore arise! Win renown! And destroying your enemies, enjoy the prosperous kingdom. For, these warriors have already been slain by Me. Be you but an instrument thereof, O thou master-bowman, Arjuna.

34. Kill Drona and Bhishma, Jayadratha and Karna, as also these other heroic warriors, who are already doomed by Me. Fight on, and you shall conquer the enemies in battle.

Sanjaya said:

35. Hearing this declaration of Krishna, Arjuna, with his frame trembling, saluted Him again and again with joined palms. Prostrating himself before Him in utter awe, Arjuna addressed Him in faltering voice.

Arjuna said:

36. Rightly do the worlds rejoice and delight in glorifying Thee. In Thy presence the Rakshasas melt away in fear in all directions, while the hosts of Siddhas bow in adoration.

37. O High-souled one! Why should they not bow down to Thee who art the highest of all beings and the primal cause of even Brahma the creator! O Infinite One! O Lord of all Gods and the Abode of all the worlds! Thou art that Imperishable Being who is both existence (effect condition) and non-existence (causal state) as also that which is

beyond them both.

38. Thou art the first of all divinities and the most ancient of all beings. Thou art the ultimate haven of rest and safety for the worlds. Thou art both the knower and the known as also the supreme Abode. O Thou of countless forms! By Thee the whole universe is pervaded.

39. Manifested as Vayu the god of winds, as Yama the god of death, as Varuna the god of the seas, and as the moon with the hare-mark on the face - Thou art the Progenitor of all and the source of him as well. Hail, hail unto Thee a thousand times! Hail, and hail again and yet again.

40. Salutations unto Thee, the All-formed, from before, from behind and from all directions! Infinite in puissance and limitless in might, Thou pervadest everything and Thou art verily the All.

41-42. O undecaying One! If, without knowing Thy greatness and taking Thee only to be a friend, I have, out of ignorance or love, alone or even in company, addressed Thee discourteously in fun, while playing relaxing, sitting or feasting, with words such as, "O Krishna! O Yadava!" - I beseech Thee, O Boundless One, do pardon me for the same!

43. Thou art the father of the world - of all that is moving and unmoving. Thou art the object of its worship, the most venerable of its Teachers. In all the worlds there is not another equal to Thee. much less one greater, O Thou of incomparable puissance!

44. Therefore greeting Thee with my body stretched in prostration, I beseech Thee, O worshipful Lord, to be gracious unto me. Bear with me as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend, and as a lover with his beloved.

45. Seeing this form unseen before, I am overjoyed but my mind is also perturbed with fear. Reveal to me that other familiar form of Thine and be gracious unto me, O Thou God of all gods, and Indwelling Spirit of the worlds.

46. I desire to see Thee as before crowned with a diadem, and holding a mace and discus in hand. Deign to assume that four-armed shape, O Thou of a thousand arms and of universal form!

The Blessed Lord said:

47. Out of My grace, I have, by My divine power, revealed to you this

transcendent form of Mine - infinite, primeval, radiant and all-inclusive. Never has it been seen by any one before except by you.

48. Except by you (on whom My grace has been bestowed), none in this world of men could see Me in this Cosmic Form - be it by Vedic study, by sacrifice, by good works, by rituals, or by severe austerities.

49. Fear not; nor be bewildered at seeing this awe-inspiring form of Mine. With fear assuaged and a heart full of joy, behold now this. My familiar form, again!

Sanjaya said:

50. Saying thus to Arjuna, Krishna revealed again his own familiar form. Having thus assumed that gentle form, the Exalted One comforted the awe-struck Arjuna over again.

Arjuna said:

51. Seeing this gentle human form of Thine, O Janardana, I am now composed and restored to my natural slate of mind.

The Blessed Lord said:

52. This form of Mine which you have seen is extremely difficult to behold. Even Devas themselves are ever eager to see it.

53. Neither by Vedic study, nor by austerities, nor by charities, nor by sacrifices could one behold Me in the way you have done.

54. But, O Arjuna, thou great warrior! Through unswerving devotion this form of Mine may be known in truth and in reality, may be experienced and entered into.

55. Whoever works for Me, looking upon Me as the goal; whoever is My devotee, free from attachments and from antagonism to any being - such a man, O son of Pandu, shall enter into Me.

Chapter XII **Loving Devotion**

Arjuna said:

1. There are Thy ever-steadfast devotees who love and worship Thee in the above way (as the Divine Person); there are again others who contemplate on Thee as the Imperishable Unmanifest (Impersonal Absolute) - which of these has a greater understanding of Yoga.

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Those I consider as the most perfect in Yoga, who, with their minds fixed intently on Me in steadfast love, worship Me with absolute faith.

3-4. Those who are devoted to the Imperishable (the Impersonal Absolute) - who is the firm support of the world and is also undefinable, unmanifested, transcendent, motionless, eternal and all-pervading, - even they reach Me alone, striving with their senses controlled, and with mind tranquillised and set on the welfare of all.

5. The obstacles facing those devoted to the Impersonal Absolute are far greater; for the way of any unclear ideal is difficult for an embodied being (the body-centred man) to understand or follow.

6-7. But, O son of Pritha, soon will I lift from this ocean of death-bound worldly existence, those whose minds are ever set on Me - those who abandon to Me the fruits of all their actions together with the sense of agency thereof, and who worship Me, meditating on Me as their sole refuge and their only love.

8. Fix your mind on Me alone; let your reason penetrate into Me; without doubt you will then abide in Me alone for ever more.

9. If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on Me (even at the start), then try to reach Me through the systematic practice of concentration.

10. If you are not capable of practising systematic concentration, then devote yourself whole heartedly to works of service to Me (consisting in external worship and discharge of duties for My sake). Thus working for Me, man can attain to perfection.

11. If even this is too difficult for you to perform, then taking refuge in Me, and thus controlling the mind, give up the fruits of all your actions (recognising Me as their agent and enjoyer).

12. Than (a mere formal) practice of disciplines, a clear intellectual understanding (of the doctrine) is better. Than such understanding, meditation is better. Even better than meditation is the abandonment of the fruits of action. For, such abandonment (of the fruits of works and sense of their agency) is immediately followed by peace.

13-14. Friendly and compassionate to all and without any touch of hatred; devoid of possessiveness and arrogance; ever content and contemplative; alike in happiness and misery; self-controlled and firm in conviction; dedicated to Me with all his heart and all his soul - dear

to Me is a man who is thus devoted.

15. Who causes fear to none and whom none can frighten, who is thus free from the agitation of the moods caused by euphoria, anger, and excitement - such a person too is dear to Me.

16. Desireless, pure, resourceful, unattached, unworried and without any sense of self-centred agency - a devotee thus endowed is dear to Me.

17. He who is free from elation, anger, sorrow, and craving, who neither seeks the pleasant nor shuns the unpleasant - dear to Me is the man who is thus devoted.

18-19. Alike to friend and foe, alike in honour and insult, alike in heat and cold, alike in praise and blame - unattached, contented, homeless, and steady in mind - dear to Me is a man who is thus devoted.

20. Whosoever even seeks to follow the virtuous path to Immortality thus set forth, with a mind full of faith and acceptance of Me as their supreme goal - exceedingly dear to Me are men who are thus devoted.

Chapter XIII **The Knower and The Known**

The Blessed Lord said:

1. This body, O son of Kunti, is called the Ksetra, the field (because the fruits of action are reaped in it). He who knows it (as his property) is the Ksetrajna or the Spirit who knows the field. So say those versed in this subject.

2. Know Me, O scion of the Bharata race, to be the Ksetrajna (the Spirit) in all Kshetras (bodies). The knowledge of the distinction between Ksetra and Ksetrajna alone is real knowledge according to Me.

3. Hear from Me in brief what the Kshetra is, of what nature it is, what its modifications are, and from what causes what effects have sprung. Also know who the Ksetrajna is and what his powers are.

4. In many and different ways have the Rishis sung about this subject in metres of varying description. The well-reasoned and definitive aphorisms of the Brahma-sutras too have discussed it.

5-6. The five great elements, the I-sense, the intellect, and the

Unmanifested (Root Matter); the ten organs along with the mind as the eleventh, and the five objects of the senses; desire, hatred, pleasure and pain; the body, consciousness, and will - such is a brief description of the Kshetra with all its modifications.

7. Freedom from self-importance, unpretentiousness, non-violence, patience, straight-forwardness, service of the teacher, cleanliness, stead-fastness, and self-control;

8. Abhorrence of sensuality, self-effacement and perception of evil and misery in birth, death, old age and sickness;

9. Detachment from property and family members, non-identification with them and their fortunes, and constant evenness of mind in favourable and unfavourable situations;

10. Practice of unswerving devotion through contemplation on Me as one's 'own' (or on Me in non-separation), resort to solitude and abhorrence of vulgar company;

11. Constant application to the study of spiritual texts and practice of spiritual disciplines, and a clear comprehension of the goal of spiritual enlightenment and the destiny of man - all these described before constitute knowledge; what all is opposed to it is ignorance.

12. I shall now declare the Object which ought to be known, by knowing which one attains to immortality. It is the Supreme Brahman, the eternal Being who cannot be described either as existent or non-existent (in the way sense-bound material objects are described).

13. His hands and feet are everywhere. His eyes, ears and mouth grasp everything. His face is in all directions. He is the transcendent Spirit, enveloping all that exists.

14. By His power the faculties of the senses function, but sense organs He has none. He is the support of all things, but they do not affect Him. He transcends Nature and its functions, but these constitute the objects for His enjoyment.

15. He is within and without all beings. Though unmoving. He looks like one moving (because He is everywhere). He is both far and near - far to the ignorant, and near to the knowing ones. Owing to subtlety. He cannot be known like gross objects.

16. He, (the Brahman) whom aspirants seek to know, is the impartible

Whole, yet does He seem to dwell in all beings as if divided into many. He is the generator and supporter of all beings, and their devourer too.

17. The self-luminous light of consciousness revealing even all that is luminous. He is beyond obscuration by the darkness of ignorance. He, the light of knowledge. He, the quest of knowledge. He, the way to whom is knowledge - in the innermost recess of all beings is He established.

18. Thus has been briefly expounded what the Kshetra (material Nature) is, as also what constitutes knowledge and the object of knowledge. My devotee who understands these verities becomes worthy of My state.

19. Know both Prakriti (Nature) and Purusha (Spirit) to be beginningless, eternal verities. Know also that all changeful objects and attributes (that constitute the world of daily experience) are sprung from Prakriti.

20. Prakriti is the cause of the formation and functioning of the body and the senses, while it is the Purusha that experiences pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow.

21. Seated in bodies, which are the products of Prakriti, the Purusha enjoys the objects and qualities born of Prakriti. Attachment to these objects is the cause of the Spirit getting embodiments in evil or exalted wombs.

22. In this body there is also the Transcendent and the Supreme Spirit, who is described as the Supreme Self and Sovereign Lord, the unconcerned Witness, the Sanctioner, the Supporter and the Enjoyer.

23. Whoever thus knows the Purusha (Spirit) and Prakriti (Nature) along with its effects, will never be born again, whatever be his mode of living.

24. There are some who perceive the Atman within themselves by the practice of meditation with a purified mind. There are also others who approach Him through the discipline of knowledge or of work.

25. There are still others, who, being unfit to follow the disciplines described before - for they lack the knowledge of the Yoga Shastra and the Vedas -, adopt forms of worship (devotional disciplines) under instruction from teachers or elders. Full of faith in these instructions heard, and following them sincerely as their only refuge, they too

certainly overcome the cycle of births and deaths.

26. O thou the best of the Bharata clan! Whatever there is born - whether moving or unmoving - it has come into being due to the union of Kshetra (body) and Kshetrajna (Spirit).

27. He really sees who perceives the Supreme Lord alike in everything - as the Imperishable Substance abiding amidst perishing phenomena.

28. For, he who perceives the Lord's presence alike everywhere no longer works against his own spiritual wellbeing (by mistaking the ego for the true spiritual Self as men in ignorance do). He therefore attains to the Supreme Goal.

29. He is the real seer who perceives that Prakriti (i.e.. one's body-mind born of Prakriti) alone is doing all works and that the Atman, the true spiritual self, is the actionless witness.

30. When one perceives the manifold objects as centred in the One and as evolved from It as well - then he attains Brahman.

31. That highest Self, being the immutable and unoriginated Spirit beyond Nature, is free from all action and stain, though dwelling in the body.

32. Just as the all-pervading Akasha, because of its subtlety, is not stained by anything, so this Atman, though abiding in all bodies, is never affected by any impurity.

33. Just as the single sun illumines the whole universe, so the (one) Indwelling Spirit enlivens all bodies (with self-consciousness).

34. Whoever perceives by spiritual insight the distinction between Kshetra (Nature) and Kshetrajna (Spirit) as also the freedom of the Spirit from the hold of Nature, they reach the Supreme.

Chapter XIV **The Three Gunas**

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I shall now expound to you again that knowledge relating to the Supreme Being, the most exalted of all forms of knowledge, by gaining which all sages passed from this state of bondage into the highest perfection.

2. Those who have attained unity with My nature through this knowledge are not born again even at the beginning of a new creative cycle, nor are they subjected to the distress of dissolution.
3. The Great Nature Prakriti is like a womb to Me. I deposit therein the germ of creation, the creative impulse, out of which everything comes into being.
4. O son of Kunti! All creatures, whatever might be the womb from which they are born, have really the Great Nature as the womb - the source of their origin. And I am their father, the bestower of the seed.
5. The three Gunas as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas born of Prakriti, bind down the immortal soul to the body in its embodied state.
6. Among these, Sattva is luminous and harmonious due to its essential purity. It binds the soul, O sinless one, with the feeling 'I am happy, I am full of knowledge.'
7. Know Rajas to be passion-based, and productive of longings for unattained objects and attachment for those in one's possession. It binds the (actionless) soul, O son of Kunti, by entangling it in action through the feeling 'I am the doer.'
8. As for the Guna known as Tamas, it is ignorance-born and is productive of delusion in all beings. It binds the soul, O scion of the Bharata clan! with the obsession of a disposition characterised by negligence, indolence and sleepiness.
9. Sattva enslaves one to a mood of joy and happiness, and Rajas to one of activity, while Tamas, which veils up knowledge, fills one with negligence and laziness.
10. Overpowering Rajas and Tamas, Sattva prevails (sometimes); suppressing Sattva and Tamas, Rajas becomes dominant; and likewise dominating over Sattva and Rajas, Tamas holds the field.
11. When through all the senses, which are the portals of the body, knowledge, happiness and similar characteristics manifest, then indeed it should be understood that Sattva is dominant.
12. Avarice, extroversion, ceaseless planning and execution of works, restlessness, desire for enjoyments - these arise when Rajas prevails.

13. When Tamas dominates, there is lack of intelligence, lack of effort, negligence and delusion.

14. If one dies when Sattva is prevailing dominant, then one attains to the pure regions of the knowers of the Highest.

15. Those who die when Rajas dominates are born among those attached to action (men); and likewise those dying in Tamas are born in the wombs of creatures without reason (animals).

16. Virtuous actions promote spirituality and purity (Sattva), while the Rajas-dominated ones result in pain, and the Tamas dominated ones in ignorance.

17. From Sattva arises knowledge and from Rajas, avarice. Negligence, delusion and also ignorance are the products of Tamas.

18. Those established in Sattva evolve to higher goals, while those abiding in Rajas remain in the mid-course. Steeped in evil tendencies, the Tamas-dominated ones degenerate.

19. When the subject (Jiva) recognises the Gunas alone as the agent in all actions, and himself as transcending the Gunas - then he attains to My state.

20. The embodied spirit (Jiva), having transcended the Gunas from which the body has sprung, gains deliverance from the miseries of birth, death and old age, and attains to Immortality.

Arjuna said:

21. Lord! What are the marks of one who has transcended these three Gunas? How does he behave? And how does he rise above them?

The Blessed Lord said:

22. O son of Pandu! He who shows no aversion to knowledge, activity, or delusion when any of them is dominant, nor longs for them when absent;

23. Who remains like an unconcerned witness and is unperturbed by the Guna-born sense objects; who knows that it is only the Guna-born senses and mind that act and enjoy (and not his real self); who remains unwavering in all situations;

24. Who is self-poised alike in pleasure and in pain; who makes no difference between stone, iron, and gold; who is the same towards the

loving and the hating; who is unmoved by praise and blame alike;

25. Who is alike in honour and in humiliation; who views a friend and a foe alike; who has abandoned all sense of agency - such a person is said to have transcended the Gunas.

26. He who serves Me through the communion of unswerving and exclusive devotion, transcends the Gunas and attains fitness to become Brahman.

27. Indeed, I (Krishna, the God of love and grace, or the Pratyagatman the true Inner Self), am the basic support of Brahman - of the incorruptible state of Moksha, of the Eternal Law and of unending Bliss.

Chapter XV

All-Pervading Divine Person

The Blessed Lord said:

1. The scriptures speak of the eternal Ashvattha, the World Tree, whose roots are in the Most High, branches in the lower regions, and leaves in Vedic hymns. He who knows it, understands the Veda really.

2. Nourished by the Gunas and covered with the budding foliage of sense objects, its branches spread into regions high and low. Stretching forth on the ground below in the world of men, are its secondary roots, entangling man in the bondage of action.

3-4. For one involved in worldly life, the form of the World-Tree is not visible, nor its origin, nor its end, nor its foundation. Cutting asunder the firmly rooted Ashvattha (World-Tree) with the powerful axe of non-attachment, and saying, "I seek refuge in that Primeval Person from whom this eternal cosmic activity has streamed forth", man should seek that Status, attaining to which there is no more return to this life of Samsara.

5. They who are free from pride and delusion, who have no attachments, who are ever absorbed in spiritual pursuits, who are free from all worldly desires, who are unaffected by the varying situations of pleasurable and painful nature - such persons, freed from ignorance, attain to the Eternal State.

6. That the sun does not illumine, nor the moon, nor the fire; (for it is the Light of Pure Consciousness). Having attained It, the Spirit does not return again to the life of Samsara. Such is My Supreme Abode.

7. A fragment of Myself, immortal in nature, having become the embodied spirit in the world of the living, attracts to Himself the mind and the five senses born of Prakriti.

8. When he gets a new body or abandons an old one, the Jiva, the lord of the body, moves, carrying them (the mind and the senses) with him, as the wind carries smells from their seats (in flowers and the like).

9. In identification with the senses like hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, this Jiva experiences their respective objects.

10. The deluded do not recognise the Spirit (Jiva) when, in identification with the Gunas, he takes or leaves a body, or when he experiences objects through it; but those endowed with the eye of wisdom do.

11. The striving contemplatives perceive the Atman within themselves, but not the impure and the unregenerate, though they be striving.

12. That light of the sun which illumines the whole universe, which is present in the moon and in fire likewise - know that splendour to be Mine.

13. Entering the earth by My spiritual energy, I sustain all beings residing in it. As the watery moon, I nourish all herbs.

14. Based in the body of living beings, I manifest as the digestive Fire, Vaishvanara, and in combination with the vital energies known as Prana and Apana, digest the four kinds of food taken by them.

15. I abide in the hearts of all. By My' will both the dawn and effacement of memory (of past births) and of supersensuous knowledge take place. The original teacher of the Vedanta I am, as also the knower of all Vedas.

16. It is well known that there are two types of Purushas (spirits or categories) - the Kshara or the Perishable and Akshara, the Imperishable. The Kshara consists of all the Jivas in embodiment who are subject to change, while the Akshara consists of the collectivity of liberated Jivas who remain aloof from changeful matter and are unaffected by it; (or in the alternative, the Creative Power Maya-shakti, which is the source of all falsity and the cause of endless Samsara).

17. But there is yet another Purusha, known as the Supreme Being or

the Purushottama, who is the highest of spirits, and who pervades all the three worlds and sustains them.

18. As I transcend the Perishable and am also superior to the Imperishable, I am well-known as the Purusottama (the Supreme Being) in both the Vedic and secular literature.

19. He who knows Me in this way as the Purushottama, he understands the true nature of this Totality, and he loves and adores Me with his whole being.

20. O sinless one! This spiritual doctrine, the most profound of all in the sacred lore, has now been revealed by Me. A true understanding of it makes a man really wise and established in a sense of total fulfilment.

Chapter XVI

Divine and Demoniatic Types

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and devotion, benevolence, control of the senses, worship, study of scriptures, austerity, uprightness;

2. Non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to slander, compassion to living beings, freedom from sensuality, gentleness, modesty, steadfastness;

3. Vigour, patience, fortitude, harmlessness, freedom from vanity - all these, O scion of the Bharatas, are present in those born to a divine heritage.

4. O son of Pritha! Pretentiousness, arrogance, overweening pride, wrath, rudeness, as also insensitiveness to spiritual values - all these are found in those born to a demoniac heritage.

5. It is deemed that the divine heritage leads to liberation and the demoniac to bondage. Grieve not, O son of Pandu! You are born to a divine heritage.

6. In this world there are two types of creation, the divine and the demoniac. The divine heritage has already been described. Now hear from Me what constitutes the demoniac heritage, O son of Pritha.

7. Men of demoniac nature know not what should be done and what should be avoided. Neither purity, nor good conduct, nor truthfulness is found in them.

8. According to them nothing is ultimately real in this world. It is Godless and without any moral basis. Being born of sexual union, what else but lust can be said to be its cause?

9. Holding such views, these lost souls - these men of little understanding- given, as they are, to cruel deeds opposed to general well-being, appear as agents for the destruction of the world.

10. Steeped in insatiable lust, motivated by hypocrisy, vanity, arrogance and avarice, given to corrupt and impure ways of life, they work in pursuit of false values entertained through delusion.

11. Obsessed with numerous cares all through life, looking on sex indulgence as the highest aim, convinced that there is no higher purpose in life than this;

12. Bound with a hundred cords of hopes and expectations, and enslaved by lust and anger, they strive to accumulate wealth in improper ways for the fulfilment of their sensuous desires.

13. "Today I have gained this object, tomorrow I shall gain that object of desire too; I have this much wealth now, much more will be mine hereafter;

14. "This enemy has been slain, the others too I will soon destroy; I am the master; everything is for my enjoyment; I am the successful man, the powerful man, the happy man;

15. "I am wealthy and high-born; who is there like unto me? I will perform sacrifices, I will make charity, and I will rejoice" - deluded thus by ignorance;

16. Gripped by numerous bewildering thoughts, entangled in the meshes of delusion, and ever given to sex indulgences, they are degraded into states that are loathsome and full of suffering.

17. Vain-glorious, stubborn and intoxicated with the pride of wealth, they perform for mere show Yajnas that are so in name only, being done without the observance of the commandments of the scriptures.

18. Dominated by self-conceit, prone to the use of force, arrogant,

lustful and choleric, these traducers of virtue violate Me, dwelling in them and also in others.

19. These vicious men, oppressive cruel and sinful as they are, - are always hurled down by Me into demoniac wombs in life after life in the transmigratory cycle.

20. O son of Kunti! Falling into demoniac wombs, in life after life, they go to still lower states of degradation, without attaining Me.

21. Lust, anger and greed - this triad leads to the destruction of man's spiritual nature. They form the gateway to hell; they should be abandoned.

22. If a man is free from these three, the gateways to hell, he can work out his own good and reach the highest goal.

23. He who abandons the commandments of the scriptures and lives as his desires prompt him, he attains neither spiritual perfection, nor worldly happiness nor liberation.

24. Therefore let the scriptures be your norm in determining what should be done and what not. Understand the injunction of the scriptures first and then set yourself to work.

Chapter XVII **Three Aspects of Faith**

Arjuna said:

1. There are persons who offer worship full of Faith, but without observing scriptural injunctions while doing so - of what nature is their Faith? Is it born of Sattva, Rajas or Tamas?

The Blessed Lord said:

2. The Faith of embodied beings, which is rooted in their natural disposition (derived from the impressions of past births), is of three kinds - those of the nature of Sattva, of Rajas and of Tamas.

3. O scion of the Bharata race! The Faith of everyone is according to his natural disposition (derived from past impressions). Man is constituted of his Faith. What his Faith is. that verily he is.

4. Those endowed with the quality of Sattva worship the Devas; those with Rajas, the Yakshas and the Rakshasas; and those with Tamas, the

spirits of dead ancestors and the elementals.

5-6. Vain, conceited and moved by powerful passions and attachments. they perform various terrible mortifications contrary to scriptural injunctions. Thus do these senseless men torture their own bodies and Me dwelling in them. Know such persons to be of demoniac resolve.

7. Even the food dear to these three types is of three different kinds. The same is the case with worship, austerity and charity. Hear from Me about this distinction regarding them.

8. Persons who are Sattvika by nature like foods that promote longevity, vitality, energy, health, happiness and cheerfulness, as also those that are juicy, soft, nourishing and agreeable.

9. Persons who are Rajasa by nature like foods that are bitter, sour, salty, excessively heating, pungent, burning and thirst-producing as also what bring on uneasiness, depression and disease.

10. Persons who are Tamasa by nature like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, decayed and unclean, and constitute the leavings of others.

11. That worship is of the nature of Sattva which is in accordance with scriptural injunctions, and which is performed by one not with an eye for its fruits but merely out of the feeling that it is one's duty to perform it.

12. O scion of the Bharata race! Know that worship to be of the nature of Rajas, which is performed with its fruits in mind and for vain display.

13. That worship is of the nature of Tamas which is not sanctioned by scriptures, which is without gift of food, without the chanting of holy Mantras, without sacramental presents and without sincere faith.

14. Service of the Devas, holy men, teachers, parents and wise persons, as also observance of cleanliness, uprightness, continence and non-injury - these constitute austerities pertaining to the body.

15. Speaking only words that are inoffensive, true, pleasant and beneficial, as also regular recitation of scriptures, constitute austerity pertaining to speech.

16. Serenity of mind, gentleness, moderation in speech, self-control, and purity of heart - these are called austerity of the mind.

17. This threefold austerity, performed with the highest faith, by men who are not motivated by expectations of reward and who are established in mental equipoise, is declared to be of the nature of Sattva.

18. The austerity that is performed with much show and ostentation, and having in view recognition, praise and adoration as a pious man by others, is said to be of the nature of Rajas. It is unstable and leads to no permanent good.

19. The austerity performed through the practice of self-torture under the influence of perverse theories or done for the destruction of another, is spoken of as Tamasa by nature.

20. That gift which is made out of a sheer sense of duty, without expectation of any kind of return, at the proper time and place, to a fit recipient, is said to be of the nature of Sattva.

21. The gift which is given in consideration of some gift in return, or with some fruit to be reaped in future, or in a grudging mood - that is considered to be of the nature of Rajas.

22. The gift that is made at an improper time and place, to an unworthy recipient, unceremoniously and in a slighting manner - that is said to be of the nature of Tamas.

23. Om Tat Sat - these are the three symbolic designations of Brahman. By these were ordained the Brahmanas, the Vedas and the Yajnas in ancient times.

24. Therefore the followers of the Vedas always start their ordained works like sacrifice, gift, and austerities with the utterance of Om.

25. Various forms of sacrifices, austerities and charities are performed without any desire for the fruits by seekers after liberation, along with the utterance of the syllable Tat (That).

26. O son of Pritha! The syllable Sat is used in the sense of reality and goodness. It is also used to indicate an auspicious rite or act.

27. Steadfastness in sacrifice (or worship), in austerity and in charity is called Sat (good). Any action connected with these is also called Sat.

28. O son of Pritha! Whatever is performed as a sacrifice, charity, or

austerity without Faith - in fact anything done without Faith - is declared to be Asat (not good). It is of no significance here or in the hereafter.

Chapter XVIII Liberation Through Renunciation

Arjuna said:

1. O mighty-armed One, famed as the destroyer of Keshin and the conqueror of the senses! I desire to know the true nature of Samnyasa, and as distinguished from it, of Tyaga too.

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Abandonment of all desire-prompted actions is Samnyasa (renunciation) according to the wise. Men of discernment speak of the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as Tyaga (relinquishment).

3. Some wise men say that all action is to be abandoned as evil. Others maintain that good works like worship, charity and practice of austerity are not to be abandoned.

4. O the best of the Bharata race! Hear my conclusive view on this subject of Tyaga (relinquishment). It is said that there are three types of Tyaga.

5. Works like sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be abandoned. They should be performed; for sacrifice, charity and austerity are indeed purifying for the wise.

6. O Son of Pritha! Even these works are to be performed without attachment and desire for their fruits. This is My settled and decisive view.

7. It is not at all proper to renounce works that ought to be done as duty. Their abandonment out of delusion is considered to be of the nature of Tamas.

8. Those who give up work out of a dread of physical suffering, out of a feeling that it is painful, they, performing relinquishment of a Rajasa nature, do not obtain the results of true relinquishment.

9. But, O Arjuna! That relinquishment is considered as Sattvika which consists in giving up attachment and thoughts of returns in respect of works, and which is done with the feeling that it is an obligatory duty

that must necessarily be performed.

10. The relinquisher (Tyagi), if he is endowed with the qualities of Sattva, wisdom and conviction in regard to the spiritual ideal, never avoids duties merely because they are unpleasant, nor does he get attached to works that seem pleasant to him.

11. It is not indeed possible for any embodied being (i.e., one with body-consciousness) to abandon works in entirety. So all that one can do is to abandon the fruits of action. One doing so is called a Tyagi (a relinquisher).

12. Regarding those who have not relinquished their desires (atyaginam), they reap after death the fruits of their actions performed with desire. They are of three sorts - 'unpleasant' like degradation into animal life or stay in purgatory for the very wicked; 'pleasant' like attainment of heavenly felicities for the virtuous; and mixed' as in human birth, for those who have Karmas of both these types to their credit. But Samnyasins (true renouncers) will have none of these.

13. Learn from me, O mighty armed! about the five causal factors required for all actions as described in the Samkhya, the philosophy of spiritual illumination, which is the ultimate purpose of all actions.

14. One's body which is the seat of action, the ego claiming to be the actor, the several instruments of actions (like the senses, the mind etc.), the varied and the distinct types of movements involved, and finally the unknown factor (or the deities presiding over the senses) as the fifth - these are the five causal factors.

15. These are the five causal factors involved in all actions, good as also bad, which men undertake with this body, speech and mind.

16. That being so, he whose imperfect understanding makes him think that the self alone (or the unlimited and unrelated Atman) is the agent involved in work - he verily sees not, being perverted in outlook.

17. He who is ever established in the feeling 'I am not the agent' and whose mind is consequently unsullied by attachments - he kills not really, nor is he bound, even though he annihilates all these beings.

18. Knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower - these constitute the threefold incitement to action. And the three constituents of action are the instruments of action, the purpose of action, and the agent.

19. In the philosophy dealing with the Gunas and their evolutes, knowledge, action and agent are each divided into three according to the preponderance of each Guna in them. Hear of them also as they are.

20. That knowledge by which one is able to see a unitary unmodifiable Essence, undivided among the divided, - know that knowledge to be of the nature of Sattva.

21. That knowledge which apprehends all beings as a multiplicity with mutual distinction and in their separateness only, without any apprehension of an underlying unity - know that knowledge to be born of Rajas.

22. That by which one dogmatically holds on to a part as if it were the whole (or looks on the body, an effect, as the whole man) - a view which is irrational, untrue and silly - that knowledge is said to be born of Tamas.

23. Work of the nature of duty done by one without hankering for fruits, and without attachment, or passion or hate - such work is spoken of as born of Sattva.

24. But work that is done by a person merely for the gratification of his desire, and with great strain and a feeling of self-importance is said to be born of Rajas.

25. And that work which is performed under delusion, without any regard to consequences, loss, injury to others, and to one's own capacity - is said to be born of Tamas.

26. A 'doer' (an agent of an action) who is without any attachment and sense of pride and self-importance, who is endowed with steadiness and zeal, and who is unruffled in success and failure - such a doer is said to be of the nature of Sattva.

27. A 'doer' who is swayed by passion, who is keen on the fruits of his actions, who is covetous, cruel and impure at heart, and who is subject to elation and depression in success and failure - such a doer is said to be of the nature of Rajas.

28. And a 'doer' who is unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, malicious, indolent, despondent, and procrastinating - such a doer is said to be of the nature of Tamas.

29. Hear now, O Arjuna, of the threefold division of the intellect and of the power of determination on the basis of their constituent Gunas - hear of them severally and in their totality.

30. O son of Pritha! That intellect is said to be of the nature of Sattva which grasps the distinction between worldliness and renunciation, between the moral and the immoral, between what should be feared and what should not be, and between knowledge and freedom.

31. O son of Pritha! That intellect is said to be of the nature of Rajas, which takes a distorted and confused view of the moral and the immoral, of what should be done and what should not be.

32. O son of Pritha! That intellect is of the nature of Tamas, which, covered by the darkness of ignorance, understands the immoral as the moral and thus reverses all values.

33. O Son of Pritha! That power of determination is of the nature of Sattva, by which the mind, the vital energy and the senses are held in control through unswerving concentration.

34. That power of determination is of the nature of Rajas, by which one holds on to duty, pleasure and wealth with passionate attachment, motivated by the desire for their fruits.

35. That power of determination is of the nature of Tamas, due to which one of perverted intelligence does not give up sloth, fear, grief, despondency and frenzy of sense indulgences.

36-37. Hear from Me now about the three kinds of pleasures, O the greatest of the Bharata clan! That pleasure is said to be of the nature of Sattva which is gained by long practice of disciplines, which puts an end to all sorrows that man is heir to, which is like poison in the beginning but nectar-like at the end, and which springs from the serenity arising from the consciousness of the Atman.

38. That pleasure is declared to be of the nature of Rajas, which is born of the union of the senses with their objects, which seems nectar-like in the beginning but turns to be poison in the end.

39. That pleasure is of the nature of Tamas, which springs from sleepiness, sloth and heedlessness, and which is delusive in its effect on the spirit from beginning to end.

40. Nowhere, be it in this world or in the heavenly regions of the

Devas, is there any being who is free from these three Gunas of Nature (Prakriti).

41. O great hero! The duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and also of Shudras have been divided according to the qualities born of their own nature.

42. Serenity, control of the senses, austerity, purity, straightforwardness, knowledge, insight, and faith in the Supreme Being - these are a Brahmana's duties born of his own nature.

43. Prowess, splendour of personality, unflinching courage, resourcefulness, dauntlessness in battle, generosity, leadership - these are a Kshatriya's duties born of his own nature.

44. Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade form the duty of the Vaishya springing from his own nature, while the natural duty of a Shudra consists in subordinate service under others.

45. By being devoted to one's own natural duty, man attains to spiritual competency. Now hear how devotion to one's own natural duty generates spiritual competency.

46. From whom all beings have emanated and by whom all this universe is pervaded - by worshipping Him through the dedicated performance of one's duty, man attains to spiritual competency (Siddhi).

47. One's own duty, even if without excellence (i.e. inferior) in the scale of worldly values, is more meritorious spiritually than the apparently well-performed duty of another. For, no sin is incurred by one doing works ordained according to one's nature (that is, in consonance with one's own natural evolution).

48. O son of Kunti! Do not abandon the duty that is natural to you, even if some imperfections are incidental to it. For there is no undertaking without some imperfections, even as there is no fire without a covering of smoke.

49. Completely non-attached, self-subdued, and desireless, an aspirant attains the supreme perfection of transcendence of work through renunciation.

50. Now hear from Me in brief how one, who is established in the perfection of transcendence of work, attains to Brahman, the highest

consummation of knowledge.

51-53. Endowed with a purified intellect, established in self-control, abandoning the life of the senses as also attachments and antagonisms; frequenting solitary places, reducing food to the minimum; having speech, body and mind under control; ever meditative; endued with dispassion; abandoning conceit, violence, lust, anger and possessiveness; selfless and tranquil, he becomes fit for beatification in Brahman-consciousness (Atman-consciousness).

54. Brahma-become (established in Atman-Consciousness), tranquil in spirit, free from grief and passions, and regarding all beings alike, he gains supreme devotion to Me.

55. By devotion does he come to know Me - both my extent and My essence. Knowing Me thus in truth and in reality, he enters into Me at once.

56. Though performing every kind of work always, he who has taken refuge in Me shall, by My grace, attain to the eternal and indestructible state of Moksha (spiritual liberation).

57. Mentally resigning all actions to Me (in respect of their fruits and agency), devoting yourself intensely to Me, and ever practising the communion of intellectual love, be you ever established in the thought of Me.

58. If you are thus ever in communion with Me in mind, you will overcome every obstacle. But if, out of self-conceit, you do not listen to Me, destruction will be your fate.

59. Vain is your resolve not to fight, born as it is of self-conceit. Nature will compel you.

60. O son of Kunti! Duties which your natural tendencies have imposed upon you, but which out of delusion you refuse to do, even that you will have to perform by the compulsion of Nature.

61. O Arjuna! The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings revolving them all by His mysterious Power Maya, as if they were objects mounted on a machine.

62. O scion of Bharata's clan! Seek refuge in Him, making a total surrender of your being - body, mind and soul. By His grace you shall attain to supreme peace and the everlasting abode.

63. Thus have I imparted to you wisdom which is more secret (profound) than all that is secret (profound). Reflecting over this whole teaching, do as you think fit.

64. Listen again to My supreme word, the profoundest of all spiritual teachings. You are well beloved of Me; and so I shall tell you what is beneficial to you;

65. Let your mind be engrossed in Me. Offer worship to Me. Be resigned to Me. Beloved as you are of me, I pledge in truth you shall come to Me alone.

66. Abandoning (after sincere trial) dependence on all Dharmas (or human efforts at moral and spiritual upliftment), come to Me as the only Refuge. Grieve not; I will deliver you from all sins.

67. This should on no account be imparted to those who do not practise austere living, who have no devotion to Me, who cavil at Me, and are devoid of the discipline of service.

68. He who teaches this supremely profound doctrine among men devoted to Me, having thereby offered to Me the highest form of loving service, shall undoubtedly come to Me alone.

69. No man can do anything more pleasing to Me than he, and nor shall any one on earth be dearer to Me than he.

70. It is My view that he who studies this conversation between us should be regarded as adoring Me with a sacrifice of knowledge.

71. Even a man who listens to this holy conversation between us with deep faith and receptivity shall attain to liberation and the happy regions open to righteous men.

72. Has this teaching been heard by you, O Arjuna, with a concentrated mind? Has all delusion born of ignorance been dispelled from you, O Dhananjaya?

Arjuna said:

73. My delusion has been dispelled and my memory restored by Thy grace, O Undecaying Lord! I now stand firm, with all my doubts cleared, ready to execute Thy command.

Sanjaya said:

74. Thus have I heard, with my hair standing on end, this wonderful conversation between Krishna and the high-souled son of Pritha.

75. Thus did I, by Vyasa's grace, directly hear Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, Himself teaching this Yoga, profound and supreme.

76. Again and again, O king, does the memory of that sacred and astounding dialogue between Keshava and Arjuna come to my mind, causing no end of joy.

77. Again and again does that most wondrous form of Hari arise in my mind, generating great astonishment and endless thrills of joy.

78. Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, accompanied by Arjuna wielding the bow - there reign good fortune, victory, prosperity and sound policy. Such is my conviction.

Shri Krishnaarpanam astu