

**BISWADHARMA SAMANWAYA
GITA HRUDAYAM**

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- Karma Tattva
- Bhakti Tattva
- Jnana-Vijnana Tattva

Sudarsan Mishra



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Swami Sivananda **Swami Chidananda** **Late Narayan Mishra & Pankaja Devi**
 (1887-1963) (1916- 2008) (1912-2004) (1935-2021)

Om Sri Jagannathaya Namah! Om Sri Gurudevaya Namah!

DEDICATION

With the blessings of the late, ever-revered father Narayan Mishra and the loving blessings of my mother Shrimati Pankaj Devi, I offer this book as a gift of Lord Krishna's divine knowledge for the welfare of the world. Inspired by the teachings of the revered Guru Swami Sivananda Maharaj, Swami Chidananda Maharaj and Swami Sivachidananda Maharaj, through the application of the nectar-like words of the Gita over thirty years of life, I have tried to understand and present this experience with my limited knowledge, along with the profound interpretations of various Gita commentators. An effort has been made to simplify how an action-oriented life can lead to the liberation of the soul and instead of causing bondage, can free one from the sorrows and pains of the world, making the words spoken by the Lord Krishna to Arjuna easily understandable. My humble prayer as an insignificant servant at the feet of the Lord is that this book, offered as a sacrifice of knowledge, may serve the welfare of the world. Just as all rivers finally merge into the sea, all selfless actions ultimately lead to self-realization. Nothing is certain in the passage of time. This book, titled "Biswadharma Samanwaya Gita Hrudayam" Volume I (Karma Tattva), Volume II (Bhakti Tattva) and Volume III (Jnana-Vijnana Tattva) originally published in Odia

language has been translated into English for wider circulation. The contribution and support of my life partner - Arundhati is not limited to put in words. Support from family members treat as the extended blessing of the god for this noble deed. May all beings in the world be blessed with and may the will of the almighty be fulfilled.

|| Om Tat Sat ||

Sudarsan Mishra

Bengaluru

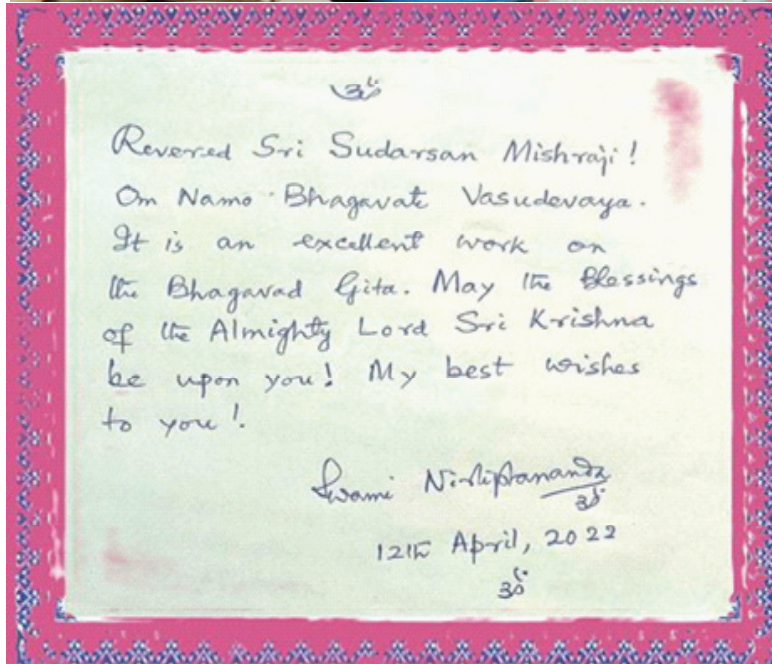
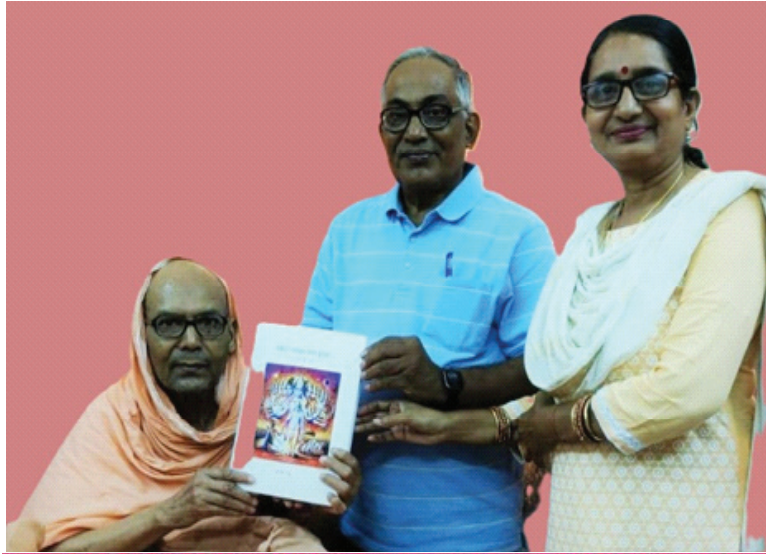
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(Devasnana Purnima)



Sudarsan Mishra & Arundhati Mishra

BLESSINGS



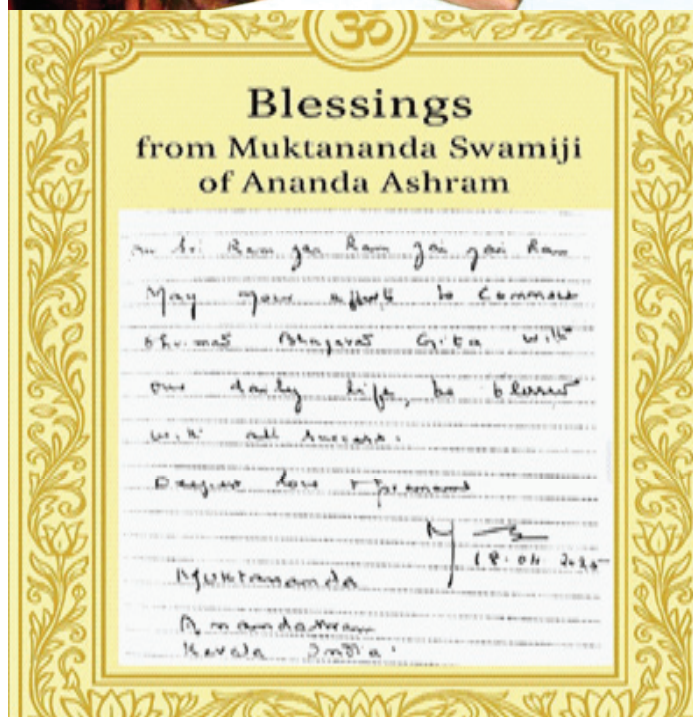
ॐ
Revered Sri Sudarsan Mishraji!
Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.
It is an excellent work on
the Bhagavad Gita. May the blessings
of the Almighty Lord Sri Krishna
be upon you! My best wishes
to you!

Swami Nityananda
ॐ

12th April, 2022

ॐ





THE BELOVED'S RESOLVE FULFILLED



Swami Sivachidananda Saraswati

ya idaṁ paramaṁ guhyaṁ mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati
bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām evaiṣyaty asaṁśayaḥ
na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyaḥ priyataro bhuvi

The man who, with supreme love for Me, recites this supreme secret-filled Gita scripture before my devotees, will surely attain me; there is no doubt about it. Among human beings, there is no one dearer to Me than him who performs this most beloved act of Mine, nor will there ever be anyone dearer than him on the entire earth in the future either.

The Supreme Soul who controls all living beings has inspired our beloved and worshipful Sri Sudarsan Mishra to steadfastly follow the Guru's teachings in the truest sense, revealing the glory of unwavering spiritual practice, taking the essence of thirty Gita commentaries as provisions, and completing the commentary on the supreme scripture Srimad Bhagavad Gita consisting of seven hundred verses on the auspicious day of Sri Adi Shankaracharya's Jayanti, dated 02-05-2025.

The spiritual practice of this beloved author is exemplary and worthy of contemplation. Fulfilling the great resolve of life comes first, and everything else follows afterward. He made all preparations to reach the goal, and the goal was achieved. The divine bliss he experienced afterward is being realized only by that devotee author.

May Mother Gita and Lord Yogeshwara Sri Krishna grant this unparalleled devotee author all attainments along with this divine accomplishment.

Jay Gita Mata !

Sivananda Ashram, Vrindavan

PREFACE

This world appears true to ignorant people, but to the wise it is false. Therefore, only the pure consciousness exists everywhere. This is the precious advice given by Sage Vashishtha to Lord Rama (in Yoga Vashishtha Ramayana). In Indian culture, this truth has been discussed, examined, and analyzed in many sacred texts such as the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Gita, and Ramayana. In the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, which came directly from the divine mouth of Lord Krishna, this truth has been declared many times, in various ways and in many places — as in the verse: “Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ” (Gita 7.19). The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is such a spiritual scripture that is very simple, beautiful, scientific, and practical.

It gives easy and clear solutions to many complex problems faced in daily life. It is eternal and highly useful even in the modern age. It is a short scripture filled with very deep and mysterious spiritual truths. It has only eighteen chapters and seven hundred and one verses. Hundreds of commentaries and explanations have been written on this great scripture by many saints, sages, scholars, and learned people. But can anyone other than Lord Krishna Himself truly explain His own teachings in their real sense? The book “Biswadharma Samanwaya Gita Hrudayam”, compiled by Sri Sudarsan Mishra — a devoted follower of Swami Sivananda Maharaj (the founder of the Divine Life Society) and initiated by his great disciple Swami Chidananda Saraswati — presents the essence of many important commentaries in a simple, graceful, lively, and logical manner. Now the whole treatise of Srimad Bhagavad Gita has been completed, which is a matter of great joy. My close friend, Sri Mishra, started the compilation of this book in 2013. Since that day, both of us have been experiencing unique joy through daily evening discussions over the

phone — reflecting, churning, and drawing conclusions from the Gita verses. Those rare, blissful moments of forgetting this sorrowful worldly life and feeling oneness with Lord Krishna can only be understood by one who has personally experienced them.

While living in the household life (Grihastha Ashrama), the help and sacrifice of his wife Arundhati are a major part of his practice of Karma Yoga as taught by Lord Krishna. In today's busy life, people who constantly work day and night for their own and their family's sustenance rarely have the time, interest, or faith to relish such a wonderful scripture. In such circumstances, reading and discussing even one major commentary is possible only for a few fortunate devotees. It is said that if a person, with love, devotion, and faith, reads even one verse of the Gita daily, his life becomes fulfilled. For all — the busy common people, the seekers, the accomplished, and the inquisitive — this compiled book “Biswadharmā Samanwaya Gita Hrudayam” is a priceless gift. Just as a honeybee collects nectar from many flowers and stores it for everyone's benefit, Sri Mishra has studied, discussed, reflected upon, and churned many important commentaries of the Gita, and from each he has extracted the essence — offering to all a unique nectar of Gita wisdom, full of spiritual knowledge, presented in a simple, beautiful, lively, and logical manner. O wise readers! Come, let us drink this nectar and make our human life meaningful. Let us surrender ourselves to Lord Krishna, perform our prescribed duties for the welfare of all, and spend our days joyfully.

May this spiritual journey continue without break and may the noble wish for the welfare of all come true — this is my humble prayer at the feet of the Supreme Lord. Charaiveti, Charaiveti — “Keep going, keep going.”

Jaya Jagannatha! Jaya Jagannatha!

Dt. 04-05-2025

Jyotirmaya Padhi
Retired Odisha Finance Service Officer
Swarnamayee Nagar-Berhampur

BACKGROUND

*Purnamadaha Purnamidam Purnnat Purnna Mudachyate
Purnnasya purnnamadaya purnnameba bashishyate.*

This individual soul, which is the inherent nature or limited form of a being, is itself complete. Because the soul's existence is formless and imperishable, it is neither a transformation nor a part. Even while remaining in this limited form, the realization or experience of the Infinite is called spirituality. And this spirituality too is complete. This nature or spirituality, through direct experience, becomes the illumination of the Supreme Soul. In other words, this (soul) is complete, that (Supreme) is complete, and from completeness arises completeness. From completeness proceeds completeness, yet completeness still remains. This is the Vedic concept of the established Brahman and the Self. It is the essence of the Gita. The union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul and the attainment of liberation from rebirth is the soul's highest goal. The embodied soul is not meant to abandon actions born of nature's impulse. Nor is one to give up meditation on the Supreme Soul, who is established in the body as the indwelling sacrificer. If one maintains harmony between meditation on the Lord and the actions arising from nature, then knowledge is born. That self-knowledge assists in the union of the soul with the Supreme. Therefore, spiritual realization requires the combined discipline of meditation and action (Karma Yoga). Maya (illusion) leads to the loss of true knowledge. As a result, harmony between action and meditation is lost, which pushes the soul into ignorance. It was from this confusion and sorrow that Arjuna's delusion arose. Even though Duryodhana also experienced grief, because he was averse to the Lord, that sorrow could not become

a means of union (Yoga). Only Arjuna's sorrow, due to being in the presence of the Lord, became Yoga — it enabled him to experience his eternal relationship with God. This understanding of the self and the experience arising under the impulse of nature is the practice of a disciplined seeker (yukta purusha). Hence, the practice of any disciplined seeker is not to be neglected. Therefore, as per the teaching of the Gita by the Lord, the Nirvana of the Buddhists, the Sankhya practice of Kapila, and the Vedic ritual practices — all are helpful and not different in essence. Their right understanding and application are inherently woven into the daily lifestyle of Vedic culture. Thus, Lord Krishna has used the word “Nirvana” clearly to mean “liberation” when He said: “One attains the supreme peace of Nirvana, which is established in Me.” (Gita 6.15) Gita is thus a grand scripture of both philosophy and practice. Each chapter of the Gita has been taken as a path of yogic discipline. Dharma (righteousness) and Shastra (scripture) are complementary. Without scripture, Dharma disappears. Faith that guides Dharma must be based on scripture, or else it will perish over time. Over time, scriptures may be lost. Christianity has the Bible, Islam has the Quran, Buddhism as the Dhammapada. Hinduism does not have a single, exclusive religious book. In Hinduism, we worship the divine in various forms — like Bhagavan, Rama, Krishna, Jagannath, Narayana. Similarly, gods and goddesses like Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu, Hanuman, Ganesha, Parvati, Durga are worshipped in idol forms. Also, many religious scriptures are found in Hinduism — such as the Vedas, Puranas, Gita, Shruti, and Upanishads. A Hindu may wonder: whom should I accept as God, and which scripture should I follow to attain Him? The Vedas are not easily available or understandable to common people. The Upanishads summarize the Vedas and present spiritual philosophy through various approaches. Brahma Sutras and Vedanta are derived from the Upanishads, but are limited to the level of sages and are not easily simplified. They are too complex to be practically adopted in daily life by common people. To make it accessible, the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, and Bhagavad Gita together are called “Prasthanatraya” — the three foundations of Hindu spiritual philosophy. The Gita appears in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata and consists of 700 verses across 18 chapters. Composed by Bhagavan Vyasa, the Mahabharata is considered the fifth Veda and a universal blessing. The Gita is not based on any single doctrine. Regardless of one's sect, belief, or school of thought, the Gita ensures everyone's spiritual welfare and access to God. This is the Gita's primary purpose. human birth is meant for the welfare of the world. The speaker of the Gita, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, was not a renunciate. Nor was Arjuna, the listener, a monk. Therefore, the Bhagavad Gita is intended for all castes and all ordinary people. The Mahavakya “Tat Twam Asi” means “That Thou Art” — i.e., you are That. It points to the relationship between the individual soul and the Supreme. But questions arise: Who is “That”? Who is “Thou”? What does “Art” mean? Various interpretations exist. They are classified into three schools of philosophy: Dvaita (dualism) by Madhava, Vishishta Dvaita (qualified non-dualism) by Ramanuja, Advaita (non-dualism), uniquely founded by Bhagavan Shankaracharya. Though divided into these three streams, within

each are many sub-schools. Each acharya interpreted from their perspective but accepted the Gita as the fundamental truth. To elaborate on this Mahavakya, the Gita has been structured into three divisions: The first six chapters explain “Twam” — the individual soul. Chapters 7 to 12 describe “Tat” — the Supreme Soul. Chapters 13 to 18 clarify “Asi” — the relationship and unity between the two. Every science has its twin aspects i.e theory and practice. Intellectual grasp of a subject is theory. Its application is practice. Many a student of Vedanta or any other system of philosophy runs the risk of being entangled in mere theorizing. He may draw some intellectual pleasure in such wrangles. But life remains untouched. On the other hand, Brahma Vidya is what teaches and transforms life. It is intensively practical when applied to life. It is called Yoga Sastra. This is one of the applications by which the Bhagavad Gita is known. Let us illustrate the matter by examples. If a wage-earner applies the practical aspect or rather the principles of the Bhagavat Gita to his life, he will be a better wage earner. A farmer will equip himself better, if only he harvests the Gita principles into action. A merchant is bound to thrive better in his business by putting these tenets into practice. An officer will execute his duty more efficiently when he makes an effort to practice the Gita advices while discharging his duty. A teacher will throw bright light on his student by putting into practice of Yoga. To sum up, men become well equipped for life by practicing yoga. An efficient man is otherwise called a Yogi “jogah karmasu kausalm”. Besides this, Yoga Sastra’s feature what Lord Shri Krishna has assured that from practicable point of view, it is top secret and king of all Vaidya’s. It is directly result oriented, doable, i.e. very easy to practice, supreme purifier, pleasurable, highest benevolent and imperishable. As this yoga sastra is common to all religions so it is told of “Raja Yoga”. The contents of this Yoga Sastra is the Brahma-Jnana that so it called “Raja Vidya” (Gita Ch.IX Verse.2: “rajavidya rajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam - pratyaksha vagamma dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam ”) A little attempt to practice this yoga in the daily way of life keeps far away from the great fear of even death. The fear of death is the greatest of all. As atman is being understood through this Yoga Sastra, this fear ceases. there is no bit of adverse effect on the attitude or nature of human quality who attempts to practice this Yoga Shastra in his daily life. The partial practice of yoga does not suffer from any disadvantages and not fraught with any danger. (Gita- Ch.II- Verse 40- ne ha bhikramanaso sti pratyavayah na vidyate – swalpam apy asya dharmasya trayate mahoto bhayat”) Thy all the eighteen chapters in the Gita are designated, each as a type of yoga . The function of the yoga is to train the body and mind. Patanjali, the father of the school of thinking and Yoga Shastra makes it plain that yoga is not for him who is given to dejection or worry. Poise and blissful attitude are indispensable for the practice of yoga. But these – poise & blissful attitude – were not found in Arjuna on the eve of the war. A sense of frustration had overtaken him. In the place of an indomitable caliber of mind, dejection and despondency had marked him for their own. This is just the opposite of the mental make-up required of a man of yoga. Still the first chapter in the Gita is designated as a system of Yoga. It is called Arjuna’s Vishada Yoga.

This is no more apt than calling darkness-light. Why then this chapter recognized as a system of Yoga? To answer this, this may be reason that, Arjuna was not able to see what exactly was his duty- to wage the war or to go into the wilderness. It is the conflict that perturbed him. Life becomes an unbearable burden. A sort of spiritual anguish had overtaken him. The messengers of light advocate that kind of duty is a prelude to spiritual enlightenment. Here it prepares Arjuna for Yoga. They who are distressed at heart shall be comparted in enlightenment. This is the law of life. Hence this distress of Arjuna is also called a system of yoga. All the eighteen yogas contained in the eighteen chapters may be reduced to four – the Karma Yoga, the Raja Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga and the Jnana Yoga. Tradition holds that spiritual life begins with karma yoga and goes on evolving into other three respectively. All through the discourses, the Lord equates Karma with Gnana. Elsewhere Raja Yoga gets a footing parallel to Bhakti. While playing the part of the charioteer, Lord Sri Krishna reigned four white horses yoked to the chariot. They symbolize the four yogas yoked to the human carrier. These snow-white steeds suggest purity as the basis of yoga. Their combined effort is necessary to draw the chariot forward. All the four yoga's together stimulate life with spirituality. Since Shri Krishna handles all the four yoga's with equal importance, he is called Yogeshwar. The Gita being a practical yoga, what should an individual do when life is beset with crises. His duty is to surrender himself to Him whose function is creation, preservation and destruction – surrender in all entirely as indicated. “Gita Ch.18-Verse 66 –“sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja - ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucah”. The Gita is a perfect guide to those who aspire to build a perfect personality. Every student of the Gita is a potential Arjuna. May he receive light in his own way from the scriptural universal. Those who work without any consciousness of their lower ego are not affected with evil, for they work for the good of the world. To work without motive, to work unattached, brings the highest bliss and freedom. This secret of karma yoga taught by the Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita and that analyzed by Swami Vivekananda in one verse of the Gita (“Cha.II-Verse 3- Kṛābyam ma sma gamah paārtha’ naitat twayyu upapadyate - Kṣudram hrudaya daurbalyam tyaktva tistha paramtapa.’”) The man who fails to face a crisis, speaking and acting irrelevantly, is denounce as a dolt. He who is soft and weak minded is good for nothing. He cannot achieve anything great in life. “Yield not to unmanliness, O’ son of Prutha! It is the death that leads the least. Off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O’ Scorcher of these enemies!”. One gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita as this one sloka is embedded the whole Message of the Gita. Hence the Gita is known as the Scripture Universal.

Pujya Swami Sivananda Moharaj has written : (Taken from D.L.1945 -The Divine Life Dec./2016): It is on this day more than six thousand years ago that Lord Krishna gave Arjuna the sublime lesson of wisdom and philosophy on the battlefield of Kurukshetra Gita is the voice of God. It is the song of an ancient wisdom. It is a great textbook of

spiritual culture. Gita's message is the message of action, love, service and sacrifice. It contains the essence of Hinduism. Gita is a synthesis of religion and ethics. Gita is a synthesis of all Yogas. Gita is an Upanishad, a Brahma Vidya, a Yoga Shashtra, a Samvada, the science of Self. It is the crest jewel of Mahabharata. Gita is the best balm to heal the wounds of the world. Gita is a universal gospel, which appeals to all, irrespective of age, race or religion. It has a universality which embraces every aspect of human action, which suits and elevates every stage of human development. That is the reason why tributes to the Gita have been paid by eminent scholars of Asia, Europe, and America. Emerson, the great sage of America, had a copy of Gita always on his table. Gita does not want you to flee from worldly career to the solitude of forests. It does not bid you hide in a cave of the Himalayas for attaining the Supreme Peace of the Eternal. Gita tells you to resist Adharma, to develop the divine virtues, which will help you to attain Self-realization in and through the world. Gita gives you practical lessons to regulate your daily life and conduct. Duty for duty's sake, action without attachment and expectation of fruits, a life of discipline, regular meditation, self-surrender and sacrifice, practice of non-injury, truthfulness and purity, cultivation of Daivi-Sampath and universal love, enquiry into the nature of the Supreme Self, the Reality behind these names and forms and constant endeavor to identify yourself with the all- pervading Consciousness or the Immortal Soul - these are the lessons of the Gita for individuals and the nations alike . O Man! You have been spoiled by wrong education! God can neither be examined in a glass retort in the laboratory of a scientist nor cut open by the surgeon's knife. No one can prove God by logic. You cannot meet God without Bhakti. You take pride through your boasted intellect that you have proved that God does not exist. You take pride that you are Godless. What a vain Godless man you are! You have lived in vain; you have wasted your life. Open your eyes! Wake up from your long slumber of ignorance now. Take refuge in Gita and Gita's Lord Sri Krishna. Still there is hope for you. He is all- merciful. He will bless you. Study Gita daily and live in the spirit of Gita. You will soon attain eternal bliss and immortality. May Lord Krishna, the Joy of Devaki, the flute bearer of Vrindavan, the Supreme Guru of the world, bless you all.

|| Om Tat Sat ||

GITA DHYANA

(Meditation Verses on the Bhagavad Gita)

These are the traditional 9 verses recited as an invocation before studying the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

**Om pārthāya pratibodhitām bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayaṁ
vyāsenā grathitām purāṇamuninā madhye mahābhārata |
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm bhagavatīmaṣṭādaśādhyāyinīm
amba tvāmanusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīm ||**

Gist: O Bhagavad Gita, taught by Lord Narayana Himself to Arjuna, composed by sage Vyasa within the Mahabharata, divine Mother showering the nectar of Advaita (non-duality) in 18 chapters — I meditate on you, destroyer of samsara (cycle of rebirth).

**namo'stu te vyāsa viśālabuddhe phullāravindāyatapatranetra |
yena tvayā bhāratatailapūrṇaḥ prajvālito jñānamayaḥ pradīpaḥ ||**

Gist: Salutations to Vyasa, of vast intellect and lotus-petal-like eyes, who lit the lamp of knowledge filled with the oil of the Mahabharata.

**prapannapārijātāya totravetraikapāṇaye |
jñānamudrāya kṛṣṇāya gītāmṛtaduhe namaḥ ||**

Gist: Salutations to Krishna, the wish-fulfilling tree for devotees, holder of the whip (for cows) in one hand, showing the gesture of knowledge, and milker of the Gita's nectar.

**sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopālanandanah |
pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīrbhoktā dugdham gītāmṛtaṁ mahat ||**

Gist: All Upanishads are cows, Krishna (son of Gopala) is the milker, Arjuna the calf, wise devotees the drinkers, and the great nectar of the Gita is the milk.

**vasudevasutaṁ devaṁ kaṁsacāṇūramardanam |
devakīparamānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vande jagadgurum ||**

Gist: I salute Krishna, son of Vasudeva, slayer of Kamsa and Chanura, supreme bliss of Devaki, the world-teacher.

**bhīṣmadroṇataṭā jayadrathajalā gāndhāranīlotpalā |
śalyagrāhavaṭī kṛpeṇa vaṭinī karṇena velākulā |
aśvatthāmaṁvikarna-ghora-makarā duryodhanāvartinī
sottīrṇā khalu pāṇḍavai raṇanadī kaivartakaḥ keśavaḥ ||**

Gist: The battle-river with Bhishma and Drona as banks, Jayadratha as water, Gandhara's king as blue lotus, Shalya as shark, Kripa as current, Karna as waves, Ashwatthama and Vikarna as fierce crocodiles, Duryodhana as whirlpool — was crossed by the Pandavas with Kesava (Krishna) as helmsman.

**pārāśaryavacaḥ sarojamamalaṁ gītāthagandhotkaṭaṁ
nānākhyanakakesaraṁ harikathāsaṁbodhanābhyodhitam |
loke sajjanaṣaṭpadairaharahaḥ pepīyamānaṁ mudā
bhūyādbhāratapaṅkajaṁ kalimalapradhvaṁsinaḥ śreyase ||**

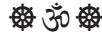
Gist: May the spotless lotus of the Mahabharata, born from Vyasa's words, fragrant with the Gita's meaning, with stories as petals, awakened by Hari's tales, drunk joyfully daily by saintly bees in the world — dispel Kali's sins and bring supreme good.

**mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim |
yatkrpā tamahaṁ vande paramānandamādhavam ||**

Gist: I salute that Madhava of supreme bliss, whose grace makes the dumb eloquent and the lame climb mountains.

**yaṁ brahmā varuṇendrarudramarutaḥ stuvanti divyaiḥ stavaiḥ
vedaiḥ sāṅgapadakramopaniṣadairgāyanti yaṁ sāmāgāḥ |
dhyānāvasthitatadgateṇa manasā paśyanti yaṁ yoginaḥ
yasyāntaṁ na viduḥ surāsuragaṇā devāya tasmai namaḥ ||**

Gist: Salutations to that God whom Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra, and Maruts praise with divine hymns; whom Sama singers chant through Vedas, Angas, Pada, and Krama with Upanishads; whom yogis see in deep meditation with absorbed mind; whose limits even gods and demons do not know.



KARMA TATTVA



ॐ
SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter-1 (Vishada Yoga)

Dhṛitarāṣṭra Uvācha

**dharma-kṣhetre kuru-kṣhetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāśh chaiva kim akurvata sañjaya (1-1)**

Comm. Dhritarashtra asked – “O Sanjaya! What did my sons and the sons of Pandu do after assembling with the desire to fight at Kurukshetra, the holy field of righteousness where the gods themselves once performed sacrifices?” Dhritarashtra was the then king of Hastinapura, the elder brother of Pandu, and blind from birth. Sanjaya was born to Gavgana, and he served as a minister to King Dhritarashtra. In our Vedic Sanatan culture, any action undertaken is preceded by the invocation of Dharma. The first letter of the Gita is “dha” (from “Dhritarashtra”) and the last letter is “m” (from “Dharmam”). Thus, the entire Gita is encompassed within Dharma. That is, by faithfully performing one’s Dharma, all principles of the Gita are automatically followed. The Pandavas always gave importance to Dharma. On the other hand, Duryodhana’s only ambition was to gain the kingdom. Although both the Pandavas and Kauravas were of the Kuru dynasty, in Dhritarashtra’s mind, there was a dual attitude – he considered only the Kauravas as his sons and not the Pandavas. He did not have equal feelings for both; rather, he showed partiality and deep attachment toward his own sons. Because of this duality, love and affection between the two sides did not develop; instead, enmity arose. Even though the war was decided, Dhritarashtra still had inner conflict. Since the war was to be held at Kurukshetra, a field of

Dharma, and his sons were engaged in Adharma, Dhritarashtra feared the outcome might favor Dharma. Kurukshetra was the land where the King Kuru performed penance. The gods once performed Yajna (sacrifices) there, hence it became known as Dharmakshetra – the field of righteousness. At the beginning of the Mahabharata war, Bhagavan Vyasa offered Dhritarashtra divine sight so he could witness the war from Hastinapura itself. But since Dhritarashtra was blind by birth and feared seeing the death of his sons—especially Duryodhana—he declined Vyasa’s offer. This rejection was due to his emotional attachment and ignorance. Then Bhagavan Vyasa granted divine vision to Sanjaya so he could narrate the war’s visuals, words, thoughts, and all events from Kurukshetra to Dhritarashtra. On the first day of war, Sanjaya was ready in Hastinapura to report all the happenings of the battlefield, though Dhritarashtra was initially not eager to hear it. Rather, he had said – “O Sanjaya! As long as grandsire Bhishma, Guru Dronacharya, and other mighty warriors are present, the Kaurava side is secure.” The appointment of Bhishma as commander-in-chief on the first day further strengthened Dhritarashtra’s confidence. The central aim of the Mahabharata war was the destruction of Adharma and the establishment of Dharma. With this objective, on the tenth day of war, the mighty and invincible Bhishma was struck down. Bhishma fell on a bed of arrows, pierced by Arjuna’s weapons. After this, an atmosphere of fear and despair spread in the Kaurava camp. Sanjaya returned from Kurukshetra to Hastinapura and narrated the incident of Bhishma’s fall to King Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra was shocked on hearing this. He wished to know from Sanjaya by whose weapon, by what power, and how Bhishma was defeated. He also wanted to know whether the Pandavas and Kauravas intended to continue the war or now consider peace as an option after Bhishma’s fall. The thought arose in his mind that Bhishma’s fall was a great loss to both sides and especially unbearable to the Pandavas. Therefore, he believed that the Pandavas—who stood for Dharma and justice—might not want to fight any further. He wanted to know what thoughts the warriors, righteous charioteers, learned counselors, and above all Shri Krishna, were having regarding the next course of the war. At this juncture, wise Sanjaya decided to narrate the past ten days of war in detail and also the moment when Arjuna, overcome by weakness, was enlightened by Shri Krishna’s teachings on the Self and Supreme, dispelling his doubts and showing the path to certain victory. Thus, the Bhagavad Gita is the divine dialogue that occurred between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield, presented to Dhritarashtra by Sanjaya. Arjuna choosing Krishna as the charioteer was itself a destined event. Before this, Krishna had taken birth in prison, was brought to Gokula by Vasudeva, was raised by Mother Yashoda, and performed many divine acts like slaying Putana, Chanura, and Kamsa. Arjuna had heard about these miraculous feats, especially Krishna lifting Govardhana Hill on his finger to protect the villagers from Indra’s wrath. Hence, Arjuna believed Krishna had the power to make the impossible possible. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna had gone to Krishna for help in war. Krishna offered them a choice – one could have His entire Narayani army,

the other could have Him alone, unarmed. Arjuna chose unarmed Krishna on his side, content with His guidance. Duryodhana, happy to receive the powerful army, did not believe in Krishna's divinity. After Duryodhana left, Krishna asked Arjuna why he chose Him. Arjuna replied, "O friend! I believe that you alone can handle any situation wisely. The army is just a tool, but You can guide me with wisdom and steer me through crisis." He also added that it had long been his desire to have Krishna as his charioteer in war, and now it would be fulfilled. Krishna saw in Arjuna the deep inquisitiveness and reverence. Arjuna not only believed in Krishna's divinity from what he had heard but also wanted to witness it firsthand. Thus, Krishna did not just become Arjuna's physical charioteer, but also the inner charioteer of his life, removing his ignorance and delusion through divine wisdom. That immortal divine teaching became the Bhagavad Gita, a guiding light for all humanity. King Duryodhana, upon seeing the army of the Pandavas arranged in formation, spoke to Dronacharya: From a spiritual point of view, the meaning of the verse where Dhritarashtra asks a question can be understood as follows.

The human body is itself the field of Dharma (righteousness) and also the battlefield of Kurukshetra. This body is formed through the combination of the soul, which is a part of the Supreme, and nature endowed with the three gunas (qualities). Hence, the body is the meeting place of the symbol of Dharma—the soul—and the symbol of inferior power—Prakriti (Nature). Prakriti is ever-active, so this too is Kurukshetra, the field of action. In this body, which is both Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra, the Pandavas, endowed with divine qualities, and the Kauravas, endowed with demoniac qualities, are constantly at war within their own domains. Dhritarashtra represents one who holds the "nation" (symbolically, the body). The intellect that has grasped the body is likened to Dhritarashtra. When the intellect is overpowered by delusion, its inherent knowledge gets covered and it assumes the form of ignorance. This ignorant state of the intellect is like the blind Dhritarashtra. The mind of the body is Gandhari, who, despite having the power of vision, voluntarily blindfolded herself and embraced blindness. Though the mind is pure by nature, when it comes in contact with the deluded intellect, it too becomes blind. That means the mind has two forms: in its pure form, it aids divine qualities; and in its blind state, it supports demoniac traits. From the union of ignorance (Dhritarashtra) and temporarily blind mind (Gandhari), an egoistic son like Duryodhana is born. The other demoniac qualities are like the brothers of Duryodhana. In the entire Gita, only this one verse is spoken by Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya. The constant battle between the divine qualities symbolized by the Pandavas and the demoniac traits symbolized by the Kauravas takes place in the battlefield of the body, known as Kurukshetra. The ultimate question is: under the influence of this battle, what is the state and final outcome for the human being? The answer to this question is the entire Bhagavad Gita, which was spoken by Shri Krishna to Arjuna and narrated by Sanjaya to the ignorant Dhritarashtra.

Saṅjaya Uvācha

**dṛiṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā
āchāryam upasaṅgamy rājā vachanam abravīt (1-2)**

Comm. King Duryodhana, seeing the Pandava army arranged for battle, spoke to his teacher Dronacharya: O respected teacher! Look at how your intelligent student, Dhṛiṣṭadyumna, has organized the Pandava army. Among them are great warriors like Satyaki, Virata, Drupada, Dhṛiṣṭaketu, Chekitana, Kashiraja, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Shaibya, Yudhamanyu, Uttamauja, Abhimanyu, and Draupadi's five husbands. All of them are mighty heroes skilled in warfare. In our army, we have you, Bhishma, Karna, Kripacharya, Ashwatthama, my brother Vikarna, Bhurishrava, and Jayadratha. Many great warriors are ready to fight and give their lives for me. Even though Bhishma is our commander, it feels like we are not equal to the Pandavas. The army protected by Bhima seems stronger than ours. Therefore, all of you should lead your troops and protect Bhishma. Hearing Duryodhana's words, Bhishma became very happy. He blew his conch shell with a lion-like roar. Hearing that sound, others also blew their conch shells. The sounds of conch shells, drums, bugles, and horns filled the battlefield, making it tremble. Among the Kaurava army, Arjuna saw his teachers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, friends, and relatives. Seeing them, Arjuna's body began to tremble. His hair stood on end. His bow, Gandiva, slipped from his hand. He said, "O Krishna! I don't want victory, kingdom, or happiness by killing them. If they die, whom will I enjoy the kingdom's pleasures with? I would rather die than kill my relatives and commit such a sin. If our clan and family are destroyed, our traditions will vanish. If our traditions are lost, we will face ruin. If women become widows, it will lead to the mixing of castes. Overcome with sorrow, Arjuna threw down his bow and refused to fight. He sat down in grief, overwhelmed by despair.

Arjuna Uvācha

**na cha śhaknomy avasthātum bhramatīva cha me manaḥ
nimittāni cha paśhyāmi viparītāni keśava (1-31)**

**na cha śhreyo 'nupaśhyāmi hatvā sva-janam āhave
na kāṅkṣhe vijayaṁ kṛiṣṇa na cha rājyaṁ sukhāni cha (1-32)**

Comm. Arjuna said: O Krishna! I see no good in killing my own people in this war. I don't desire victory. I don't want a kingdom. I don't need such happiness. O Govinda! What use is a kingdom to us? What is the point of such pleasures and luxuries? What is the benefit of living like this? Arjuna understands that to win this war, he must commit sinful acts like killing his teachers, friends, elders, and relatives. He is not ready to do such

things. In our daily lives, we often face similar situations. When the results of our actions seem harmful or unbearable, and the rewards seem insignificant, we lose the desire to act. At such times, our sense of duty becomes unclear. These reactions are common for an ordinary person. However, a wise person considers whether an action is a duty or not. They think about whether the action serves their true purpose, benefits the world, or is meant for selfish gains. They check if the action aligns with spiritual principles. When these factors are considered, the focus shifts away from the results of the action. Fear of the outcome doesn't stop a wise person from acting or make them abandon their duty. Actions driven by the desire for enjoyment are never performed with true dedication. This is because the focus remains on the outcome, not the action itself. If the outcome is favorable, it leads to pride and ego. If the outcome is unfavorable, it causes pain and suffering. When a person thinks, "I am doing this," it creates feelings of pride, arrogance, and ego in their mind. Attachment to the results of actions can lead to giving up on the task altogether. This kind of reaction is called despair. In Arjuna's mind, the thought of killing his family and friends in the war felt like a grave sin and caused him pain. Compared to that, the kingdom, wealth, fame, and victory seemed meaningless to him. At that moment, the feeling of "I must fight this war" turned into despair in Arjuna's mind.

Arjuna Uvācha

**yadi mām apratīkāram aśhastraṁ śhastra-pāṇayah
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyuṣ tan me kṣhemataraṁ bhavet (1-46)**

Comm. Arjuna, overcome with despair, became mentally weak. In the end, he was consumed by grief. He even thought it would be better to die without resisting the enemy. Arjuna, who had bravely asked Lord Krishna to place his chariot between the two armies to see the Kauravas, how did he become so mentally weak? How could he think it's better to die unarmed at the hands of the enemy? Arjuna had strayed from his path. He was in the battlefield as a warrior, ready to fight. He was supposed to see the gathered warriors as enemies, but instead, he saw them as his grandfather, teachers, brothers, and relatives. Seeing Bhishma, Drona, Kripacharya, and his own family in the enemy ranks, Arjuna developed an attachment to their lives. At the same time, he began to doubt his victory in the war. The Pandavas was fighting to reclaim their rightful kingdom, or they would have to accept Duryodhana's terms and go into exile for another twelve years. This moment of decision came all at once for Arjuna. Didn't he consider earlier that he would have to fight great warriors like Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, and that it might lead to the death of his loved ones? He had already made the decision to fight, crossing that stage of thinking. But when the moment came to raise his weapons and attack the enemy, he asked Lord Krishna to place the chariot between the two armies to see the enemy warriors. This was the moment when Arjuna deviated from his duty. At this time, his weakness in the form

of attachment caused his willpower to collapse. Signs of fear and cowardice appeared in Arjuna. Overcome with grief, he abandoned his bow and arrows and sat down in the middle of the chariot on the battlefield.

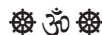
Saṅjaya Uvācha

**evam uktvārjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
visrijya sa-śharaṁ chāpaṁ śhoka-saṁvigna-mānasaḥ (1-47)**

Comm. Arjuna said, “I am not ready to fight the enemy under any circumstances.” Saying this, he dropped his Gandiva bow and weapons, sat on the chariot, and was filled with grief. In our ordinary lives, such situations arise. Whether it’s a busy personal or family life, we must first make a decision about whether to act or not after considering all aspects of a matter. Once a decision is made to act, but when the time comes to carry it out, if uncertainty about the outcome causes distress, it means some mental weakness is affecting us. Once a decision is made with firm resolve, the action must be carried out. Actions done for the sake of fulfilling one’s duty, without attachment to the results, are like a sacred offering. Such actions are part of spiritual practice. For Arjuna, this war was like a sacred offering. To perform such an action, a calm mind and focused attention are essential. Before the war, Arjuna’s mind and heart were clouded by fear of the war’s terrible consequences. Fleeing from the battlefield went against the warrior’s code of conduct, and this was seen in Arjuna’s behavior. A spiritual practitioner who remains detached from the results of their actions stays mentally strong while performing their duties. In worldly life, when things or people we value are lost during times of enjoyment, it causes pain and suffering in the mind. At such times, a sense of detachment from the world arises strongly. If, at that moment, one meets a wise, enlightened person and gains knowledge, it sparks a quest for eternal happiness and divine bliss in the mind, heart, and intellect. Therefore, like Arjuna, every person needs such moments of despair in their life to turn toward their true self. When one becomes indifferent to worldly pleasures and seeks the cause of life’s dualities—like permanent and temporary, joy and sorrow, birth and death, pain and happiness—it leads them toward God in some lifetime.

**“Om Tat Sat : Iti Srimad Bhagavad Geetaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam
Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishnaarjuna Samvaade Arjuna Vishada Naama
Prathamodhyaayah.”**

“Om Tat Sat: Thus ends the first chapter, called Arjuna Vishada Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, forming a part of the Upanishads of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Brahma-knowledge and the Yoga Shastra.”



ॐ
SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter-2 (Sankhya Yoga)

Sañjaya Uvācha

taṁ tathā kṛipayāviṣṭam aśru-pūrṇākulekṣaṇam
viṣīdantam idaṁ vākyaṁ uvāca madhusūdanaḥ (2-1)

Comm. When the heart trembled at the sound of war conches, Arjuna ordered Sri Krishna to place the chariot in the middle of the two armies so that he could see the battle-eager warriors on the enemy side. From that very moment, a feeling of cowardice overwhelmed Arjuna. Due to extreme cowardice, ignorance, and a pitiful mental state, Arjuna's eyes filled with tears, and all his senses became stunned. No scene from around him appeared clear to his eyes. Seeing this condition of Arjuna, Lord Sri Krishna opened His mouth for the first time and began to speak words that were not ordinary. Those words were the sacred garland of mantras known as the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. In the Vishada Yoga (Chapter of Despondency), it is shown that Arjuna told Sri Krishna about the consequences of his relatives dying in the war. He said that killing family members, Guru Dronacharya, Grandfather Bhishma, and others in battle would bring great sin, and he would have to go to hell because of it. Arjuna explained all this from beginning to end. Lord Sri Krishna listened to everything in complete silence without giving any reply. He had also obeyed Arjuna's command by driving the chariot and placing it in the center of the battlefield, thus fulfilling the duty of a charioteer. Perhaps the moment that Lord Sri Krishna was

waiting for—to give His response—had not yet become visible in Arjuna at that time. Because of the crisis of dharma, Arjuna had reached the peak of weakness. The Lord was waiting for the moment when Arjuna himself would search for a way out of that situation and surrender to Him. From the beginning, Arjuna had this faith in Lord Sri Krishna that in times of crisis, He alone would guide him with wisdom. But as long as Arjuna saw Sri Krishna only as a charioteer and did not see Him as a Guru or a crisis-removing advisor and did not earnestly request guidance, the Lord did not utter even a single word of advice to him. From this, we learn the following lesson: Only after one eagerly surrenders oneself at the feet of a knower of Truth (tattvadarshi) and expresses the longing to find one's own path can true knowledge be received from such a realized soul. To receive the teaching of wisdom, one must take the first step oneself.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**kutaḥ tvā kaśmalam idaṁ viṣame samupasthitam
anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam akīrti-karam arjuna (2-2)**

**klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayy upapadyate
kṣudraṁ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa (2-3)**

Comm.: O Arjuna! After the enemy side had blown their conches and given the signal to start the war, instead of raising your weapons to attack the enemies, How can you say that it is better if they kill you and you will not lift your weapons? In this moment of crisis, where has this misfortune come to you from? If you think that by not fighting back, you will avoid the sin caused by violence and attain heaven, or by avoiding the killing of your relatives and kin, you will become worthy of praise among people and your reputation will increase, Then all these are your mistaken ideas. People will call you impotent and point fingers at you. The glory of your heroism, which exists as a father-to-son tradition, will get stained. This is a sign of extreme cowardice. Such weakness of heart is the behavior of lowly people. O Arjuna! Before this, you had earned fame by destroying enemies. On hearing your name, enemies used to tremble in fear of death. Due to engagement in action, three types of thoughts are seen in humans. The first is to wisely seek one's own welfare. The second is to perform good deeds as a virtuous soul, earn dharma, and attain heaven. The third is to establish one's own fame and reputation in the world while accepting the world. Arjuna's decision not to fight was outside these three types of thoughts. Therefore, the Lord has called it a sign of cowardice and rebuked Arjuna. Noble or superior persons always keep their own welfare in view and never withdraw from their duty. Saying this, Lord Sri Krishna encouraged Arjuna to give up cowardice, raise his weapons, and fight.

**katham bhīṣmam ahaṁ sāṅkhye droṇaṁ ca madhusūdana
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārhāv ari-sūdana (2-4)**

Comm: Arjuna said – I am not afraid, but O Madhusudana! How can I shoot arrows in battle at my grandfather Bhishma and my teacher Drona and kill these honored ones? O Arisudana! From the perspective of relationship, both of them are highly venerable and respectable to me. It is not due to cowardice that I am reluctant to fight, rather, I have decided not to fight so that I can protect dharma. My decision not to attack Bhishma and Drona with weapons is not a sign of cowardice. Because I am not afraid of dying, but I am afraid of killing. Arjuna is not yet mentally ready to admit his weakness. Rather, he is putting forth arguments before Lord Krishna, that those who are like father and teacher, it would be irreligious and sinful to strike them with weapons and take their lives. In Arjuna's heart, seeing such great venerable teachers like Bhishma and Drona, attachment had arisen, and he was caught in delusion. Doubt had arisen in his mind regarding what is duty and what is not. Attachment to the perishable body and material objects is the behavior of a non-self-realized person. This is ignorance. Letting go of the reins of the horse one is riding, and in fear of losing the bag full of gold coins on one's head, trying to grab it with one's hands— what can this be except ignorance? Having descended into the battlefield, seeing the enemy warriors as dear ones and respected teachers, and instead of attacking with weapons, worrying about saving their lives—this is not compassion from a grieving heart. It is Arjuna's deluded intellect or ignorance.

**gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān-
śreyo bhoktuṁ bhaikṣyam apīha loke
hatvārtha-kāmāns tu gurūn ihaiva-
bhuñjīya bhogān rudhira-pradigdhan (2-5)**

Comm. It is far better to live by begging without killing these great venerable teachers. These great gurus are full of yoga, knowledge, righteousness, discernment, and renunciation. O Govinda! What will I gain by killing them? Even if I gain kingdom, wealth, and pleasures soaked in their blood, I will gain neither heaven, nor peace, nor liberation. It is worth considering here that even though Bhishma and Drona were righteous, because they were nurtured with Duryodhana's food, they were compelled to fight on the side of unrighteousness by Duryodhana's command. By eating self-earned righteous food and living a life accordingly, one attains inner peace. Arjuna's argument is that to kill one's own teachers is unrighteous, and to gain kingdom and wealth by killing them in war and then enjoy them is like living on alms. Even that would not be beneficial for him. In today's society we can see that to earn money, people resort to lies, deceit, bribery, cheating,

betrayal, etc., but such means are not considered sins or crimes. However, earning money through such means and living off it is even more despicable than living on alms.

**na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo -
yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas -
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ (2-6)**

Comm. Arjuna says: Even if I decide to fight as part of my Kshatriya duty, I still do not know whether it will bring welfare to us or not. It is uncertain whether the Kauravas will win over us in battle or we shall be victorious. The ones we must kill are those whose death would make the rest of our life undesirable. It is those very loved ones who now stand before us ready for war. Arjuna finds himself in a dilemma—on one hand, he is ashamed of showing cowardice by refusing to fight; On the other hand, his heart is troubled because he considers killing his own kin as sinful and finds no peace within. His mental disturbance is not caused by uncertainty over victory or defeat in the war. Rather, it is his attachment to the lives of his relatives and teachers who stand before him that causes his grief and distress. In daily worldly life, when we recognize our mistakes, it is easier to correct them. However, when one is attached to enjoyment or clouded by delusion, wrong judgment appears right and it becomes difficult to correct. Because a mind absorbed in objects and clouded by delusion can never judge correctly. A mind enveloped in darkness cannot awaken true discrimination. Thus, Arjuna's decision not to fight, though it may appear justified by reason, is actually a result of false judgment. To justify this mistaken decision as right, he presents many arguments before Lord Krishna.

**kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ
pr̥cchāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me
śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvāṁ prapannam (2-7)
na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād
yac chokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām
avāpya bhūmāv asapatnam ṛddhaṁ
rājyaṁ surāṇām api cādhipatyam (2-8)**

Comm. Arjuna says: Due to the weakness of compassion, my nature has deviated, and I am unable to decide my duty clearly. I am confused and unable to determine whether fighting this war or abstaining from it is the better path for me. Whether we will win or the Kauravas will defeat us is also uncertain. But one thing is sure—this upcoming war will result in massive destruction of life. Even if we do win, will that victory give me peace? I am unable to decide what should be done or what should be avoided, or what course of action will be in accordance with dharma. Therefore, Arjuna, acknowledging the futility of his so-called knowledge, surrenders at the feet of Lord Krishna. He says:

O Govinda! I now take refuge in You as Your disciple. Kindly instruct me on what is truly beneficial for me. At this stage, Arjuna is no longer concerned about the result of the war. Instead, he is focused on resolving the moral crisis he faces—what action will be righteous and bring him inner peace. He seeks the path to peace and well-being. He surrenders to Lord Krishna as a guide and seeks divine wisdom. Then Arjuna continues: Even if I were to gain a prosperous and peaceful kingdom on earth or the highest position in heaven along with it, Still, I cannot see how it would relieve the burning grief that dries up my senses. Now, Arjuna sets aside desires for kingdom, wealth, or glory, and searches instead for a way to escape the torment caused by his mental imbalance. His sorrow has now transformed into a deep yearning for peace. He has become a true seeker, filled with dispassion and longing for knowledge. Usually, in worldly turmoil, people approach self-declared gurus or spiritual figures out of a desire for material gain. But to become a true disciple like Arjuna, one must develop dispassion toward sense pleasures, Have a sincere longing for self-upliftment, and place complete faith in the knower of truth. Surrendering to such a teacher is the noble tradition of Sanatana Dharma. Only after experiencing the intensity of inner suffering does, one truly approaches a genuine teacher. Mere imitation or emotional impulse leading to temporary dispassion and taking initiation does not aid in achieving supreme peace. Until one truly experiences a deep yearning for inner welfare and the fire of spiritual inquiry arises, one is not qualified to receive instruction from a true Guru. When one is dissatisfied with outer conditions, a desire for self-realization awakens. Restlessness during action brings fear and anxiety due to uncertainty of results. Anxiousness, born from unfulfilled desires, causes mental instability. These two—restlessness and anxiety—cause inner pain and cloud the mind’s ability to think clearly. To escape such confusion, one must develop a burning desire to gain wisdom from a realized teacher. Arjuna was deeply disturbed both by the thought of killing loved ones and the fear of committing sin through war. Thus, caught in a dharmic crisis, he surrenders to Lord Krishna and seeks guidance. Until now, Arjuna saw Krishna as a friend. Now, he accepts Him as a Guru. Thus, Bhagavan Krishna is ready to accept any relationship from the seeker who surrenders with sincere longing.

Saṅjaya Uvācha

**evam uktvā hr̥ṣīkeśam guḍākeśaḥ parantapaḥ
na yotsya iti govindam uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha (2-9)**

**tam uvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ prahasann iva bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye viśīdantam idaṁ vacaḥ (2-10)**

Comm. Sanjaya said, “O Dhritarashtra, destroyer of enemies! Arjuna, who had conquered sleep, humbly prayed to Lord Krishna to instruct him, surrendering himself

as a disciple. “Then, he explicitly said, “I will not fight,” and fell silent. In the holy land of Kurukshetra, the Kaurava army stood on one side and the Pandava army on the other, both eager for battle. Lord Krishna had ascended Arjuna’s chariot as his charioteer, and the former friendly relationship had now transformed into one of guru and disciple. At this moment, Arjuna had surrendered himself as a disciple, and the bond between charioteer and warrior had taken the form of a teacher-disciple relationship. To remove Arjuna’s current mental weakness, the consolation of a friend or well-wisher would not suffice. What Arjuna required was strong discipline, one that would guide his intellect on the righteous path, liberate him from the agony of grief and delusion, and lead him toward spiritual welfare. In Arjuna’s view, who could be a better teacher than Lord Krishna himself? Even after surrendering as a disciple, Arjuna had not yet admitted that his decision not to fight was a mistake. Rather, he desired to receive knowledge from Lord Krishna, his Guru, to understand why his decision not to fight was not acceptable. Arjuna ultimately received the entire Gita discourse and the vision of the Universal Form from Lord Krishna. Finally, he declared, “Sthitosmi gata sandehah karishye vachanam tava” — “O Achyuta! My delusion and doubts about duty have been destroyed. I will now act according to your instructions.” That is, Arjuna was freed from the suffering caused by his conflict of duty. Thus, Lord Krishna chose Arjuna as a disciple only as an instrument and, for the welfare of the entire human society, joyfully began delivering the divine message of the Bhagavad Gita in the following way. This is the peak of the Bhagavad Gita’s message.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ (2-11)**

Comm.: This verse is the seed-mantra of the entire Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. The philosophical vision of the Gita begins with this verse. It is the first verse commented upon in Shankaracharya’s Gita Bhashya. Lord Krishna begins his instruction by presenting the topic of life and death. In another sense, it is the mystery of birth and death. The body dies, but the indwelling soul — the cause of the body — does not die. Highlighting this, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, “O Arjuna! You are grieving for those who are not worthy of grief.” “You speak wise words like a scholar, but a true scholar never grieves over life or death.” A true scholar is one who has attained spiritual knowledge of the perishable world, the individual soul, and the Supreme Lord who governs both. The soul is a part of the Supreme Soul. Though the soul residing in the body made of five elements is eternal and pure, due to ignorance, it remains associated with identification with the body. This identification with the body — this ego or ‘I’-ness — is what is known as the individual soul (jivatma). Like all other material elements, the body undergoes creation, sustenance, growth, decay, and destruction. However, the soul remains unchanged and constant. In

Chapter One, from verses 35 to 44, Arjuna says: “Even if I gain dominion over all three worlds, I do not wish to kill my kinsmen. What joy would come from killing them? It would only result in sin. Shouldn’t we reflect on avoiding the sin born of destroying our family and betraying our friends? The sin born from the destruction of family lineage and social order is great.” From all this, it appears that Arjuna presents arguments before Lord Krishna as if he were a man of knowledge. On the other hand, he also expresses grief, fearing the loss of life of his dear relatives in battle. A truly knowledgeable person does not grieve either for the dead or for the living, fearing their death. Because a wise one knows that death simply means the soul leaving one body and assuming another, which is an eternal process. Death is nothing more than a change of body. In this world, death is not a sorrowful event. Rather, it is a great blessing from God in the process of creation and order. To merge with the Supreme Soul, the soul must journey a long spiritual path, which involves changing the body. The body serves two purposes: One, to undergo the fruits of past actions (prarabdha karma); The other, to perform noble actions through self-effort (purushartha) and connect the soul with the Supreme through spiritual practice. From either perspective, the end of the body is never a cause for grief. Due to the soul’s identification with the body, the individual feels, “This body is me,” and falsely believes that the body is eternal. This illusion creates desires for worldly pleasures. When the intellect becomes deluded by attachment to such pleasures and desires, one experiences sorrow and suffering in adverse situations.

**na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayam ataḥ param (2-12)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna establishes the impermanence of the body and the eternity of the soul. After the destruction of the human body, the soul adopts a subtle form, taking on the cause-body (Bhoot Karan Sharira). The soul exists in all three periods of time — past, present, and future. Clan, lineage, name, form, and life stage — all these are related to the body. The soul is beyond all these. After countless births and the destruction of many bodies, when the sense of individuality departs from the soul, then only the eternal, unchanging soul remains. When that pure consciousness — the eternal soul — merges with the Supreme Soul (Paramatma), it is called the liberation of the soul (Mukti). Every soul must, according to its past karmas (Prarabdha), take on new bodies until it attains liberation. Even after the destruction of one body, until it takes birth again, the soul remains in an unmanifest form. Therefore, O Arjuna! There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist, and there will never be a time in the future when we will cease to exist. The soul has always existed, exists now, and will continue to exist. It is only the body that changes.

**dehino ’smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati (2-13)**

Comm. During the lifetime of the body, the stages of childhood, youth, and old age come one after another. Each stage brings its own characteristics to the body. For example, in childhood, the mind is tender and the intellect begins to develop. In youth, strength is infused in the body, aiding the pursuit of the householder's life. Similarly, in old age, maturity in thought and discrimination develops, which encourages one toward a life of renunciation (Sannyasa Ashram). In the same sequence, after old age, the embodied soul (Jivatma) leaves one body and attains another. This change is similar to the change of stages. The body obtained now had existed previously in another name and form. After the destruction of the previous body, a new body is obtained, and its journey begins again from infancy. Until the soul merges with the Supreme Soul, this process of changing bodies continues inevitably. A wise person considers this a natural phenomenon and is not deluded or sorrowful. Only the ignorant, due to their attachment to the perishable body, express grief.

**mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāms titikṣasva bhārata (2-14)**

Comm. It is natural for people to feel sorrow. All visible things, people, and situations in the world become connected to the body's senses due to the influence of the three qualities — Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. The body's senses and the worldly objects interact through their respective qualities. From this connection, the mind experiences either pleasure or pain. When things align with one's desires, there is a feeling of pleasure. If the outcome is contrary to desire, the mind feels pain. But neither the pleasure nor the pain lasts forever. Because both the body and the external world are constantly changing. Therefore, the experiences arising from their relationship are also impermanent. They come and go — nothing stays permanently. O Arjuna! Consider them as temporary, and renounce the fleeting pleasure and pain — rather, tolerate them. Trying to hold on to them is futile. There is no other way but to endure. As long as one holds a body in the world, this will surely happen. As person devoted to duty accepts all circumstances calmly while carrying out their responsibilities. Neither pleasure nor pain is permanent. The disappearance of unpleasant conditions also never happens fully. This is the law of nature. It is the divine design of the Lord for the welfare of the world.

**yaṁ hi na vyathayanty ete puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha
sama-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate (2-15)**

Comm. Whatever be the present situation, a wise and discerning person is not disturbed by it. They do not deviate from their dedication to duty. Whatever goal one pursues in life, favorable and unfavorable circumstances will inevitably come. These must be considered momentary and endured. The final goal of human life is attaining immortality. Only upon liberation from the cycle of birth and death does one stop taking bodies in this impermanent, sorrowful world. The pleasures experienced through the mind and senses in the material

world are merely the temporary absence of desires when a desire gets fulfilled. But as soon as another desire arises, the previously obtained pleasure fades away. Similarly, when the mind is denied what it desires, or faces adverse conditions, it experiences mental weakness — which we call sorrow. This pleasure and pain are merely imaginary states of mind. They have no real substance. A wise person, by giving up identification with the body, and firmly establishing the mind in the soul, neither feels pleasure nor pain. For a person identified with the body, death is the most fearful and sorrowful event. But the body is meant for attaining God. Until that goal is fulfilled, the body is only a temporary residence for the soul to carry out its spiritual practices. A discerning person does not view the body's destruction as death —rather, they receive it as a blessing from God. Through such a mindset, by attaining self-knowledge, a human being becomes free from the cycle of birth and death, and becomes eligible for immortality.

**nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayaor api dr̥ṣṭo 'ntas tv anayos tattva-darśibhiḥ (2-16)**

Comm. A person whose wisdom is awakened knows the difference between what is real (sat) and what is unreal (asat). They understand, based on the authority of the scriptures, that only real things are worth accepting. It is best to reject unreal things. Such a person has realized the truth of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) and desires liberation. For them, the absence of reality is never felt, nor do they perceive the existence of the unreal as real. Even though they possess all this scriptural knowledge, if someone considers perishable (unreal) things as the cause of happiness and depends on them, they are truly ignorant. Such a person, who is called a wise man, quickly falls. The meaning of real (sat) and unreal (asat) should be understood as eternal and temporary. What is unreal has no existence in the past, present, or future. Those who see the truth of the soul conclude that what is visible is perishable. It did not exist before, nor will it exist in the future. Even though it seems to exist now, it is decaying every moment and moving toward destruction. The body, the world, and the visible universe are unreal (asat). Unreal things cannot manifest on their own. It is only through the reflection of the soul's consciousness that the intellect can understand the state of the body. Only the truth of the Supreme Soul is real (sat). The highest form of the Supreme Soul is the individual soul (jivatma) or Brahman, which exists in all three times (past, present, future). The Supreme Soul is real, while the material nature (prakriti) is unreal. This is the higher (para) and lower (apara) power of God. The lower power is material nature, and the conscious soul is the higher power. The entire world is created through the combination of these higher and lower powers. According to Advaita (non-dual) philosophy, "There is only one Brahman, no second exists. Everything is Brahman; all is filled with Brahman." The Supreme Brahman is beyond both real and unreal. The Supreme Brahman is all-pervading. Its existence is present everywhere. What is all-pervading is always complete. Whether it is a living being or an inanimate object, that existence is present in everything. Things that undergo

transformation or change arise from the lower power. Consciousness is the higher power, and through it, unreal things are manifested. Based on the Supreme Brahman, the entire universe is a combination of real and unreal, higher and lower powers. In this world, mixed with truth and illusion, the wise person who rejects the unreal and accepts the real is truly discerning. A person whose wisdom is awakened and who understands the non-difference between the soul and the Supreme Soul is truly wise. They can perfectly understand the real and unreal nature of God's form, both with attributes (Saguna) and without attributes (Nirguna).

**avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
vināśam avyayasyāśya na kaścit kartum arhati (2-17)**

Comm. The meaning of this verse can be considered in terms of the body and the world. From the perspective of the body, the soul pervades the entire body. Due to its influence, the energy of consciousness is felt throughout the body. The presence of the soul in the body is the life force of the body. Because the soul is extremely subtle, it cannot be seen within the body. Even today, physical medical science has not been able to identify the soul within the body. However, the soul's presence, its influence, and its departure from the body at death are experienced. The soul remains bound within the five sheaths (koshas) in the body. These are the food sheath (annamaya), life-force sheath (pranamaya), mind sheath (manomaya), knowledge sheath (vijñanamaya), and bliss sheath (anandamaya). These five sheaths, created in the body, become active under the soul's influence, giving rise to the mind, intellect, and memory. Through the connection of the soul's conscious energy with the intellect, the body's actions create a distinct sense of identity. This is called ego (ahankara). Ego is the sense of "I" that arises from the soul's identification with the body. When the soul's pure consciousness is influenced by the three qualities (gunas) of material nature in the body, it takes the form of the individual soul (jivatma). As the individual soul, it becomes the experiencer of happiness, sorrow, cold, heat, and so on. The soul and the individual soul are essentially the same. The sense of being a doer or experiencer, caused by identification with the body, is ego. Thus, the soul, remaining unaffected, spreads throughout the body and enables its activities. No one can ever destroy the soul within the body. This is because the soul is a source of divine energy that neither has a beginning nor an end. From the perspective of the world, the entire universe is pervaded by the Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is complete and indivisible. In both the manifest and unmanifest, the existence of the Supreme Soul is always present. This is the view of Advaita philosophy. What is visible does not truly perish; it only undergoes transformation. The soul, Brahman, and material nature all originate from the Supreme Soul. There is no existence apart from the Supreme Soul. Even God cannot create a state devoid of Brahman. This is because God's nature is the complete Brahman.

**antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīraṇaḥ
anāśino 'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva bhārata (2-18)**

Comm.Until the individual soul merges with the Supreme Soul, it must take on many bodies. All the bodies that the individual soul receives are perishable. No matter how much effort is made, nobody can be saved from destruction or the grasp of time until liberation is attained. However, the individual soul is indestructible. Time cannot touch it, let alone destroy it. The soul is eternal because its nature never changes. It is always complete and indivisible. The soul is also immeasurable, meaning its existence cannot be known through the body's senses, mind, or intellect. Whatever is born is certain to perish. The end of the body can happen at any time; there is no certainty about it. The individual soul receives a body to experience the results of past actions (karma). Based on this destined karma, the soul's connection with a body is determined by time. If, in a particular body, through effort and by transcending the three qualities, the soul realizes its pure consciousness, it no longer takes another body. This is the liberation of the individual soul. On the other hand, during the experience of destined karma, ignorance causes the intellect to become attached to the material world. The desire to enjoy the material world leads to the individual soul taking another body after the current one ends. Breaking the connection with the body and attaining the state of pure consciousness is the soul's true nature. This true nature of the soul is not different from the Supreme Soul. Therefore, it is eternal and indestructible. The senses in the body, through sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, cannot cause any change in the soul's true nature. Thus, the soul is unchanging. Being extremely subtle, the soul is also formless. What is unchanging and formless cannot be subject to proof. Even the statements of the Vedas cannot directly describe the soul. The Vedas only attempt to describe the soul by saying, "Not this, not this" (neti neti). In this way, the soul is eternal, everlasting, indestructible, and immeasurable. Saying this, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: O Arjuna! If the fear of the imminent death of relatives and teachers in battle is the cause of your sorrow, understand the truth of the soul and the body, and give up sorrow. Follow your duty and fight. Indirectly, Lord Krishna instructs all humanity that performing one's duty in the world with sincerity is like fighting a battle. When performing this duty firmly, one may face dilemmas like the loss of life, whether one's own or others. By remembering the perishable nature of the body and the imperishable nature of the soul, one must overcome the fear of death and perform one's duty.

**ya enaṁ vetti hantāraṁ yaś cainaṁ manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate (2-19)**

Comm.Firstly, death is the destruction of the soul. Secondly, killing someone means one soul is the destroyer of another soul. A person who holds these two beliefs is ignorant. This is because the soul neither dies nor can it kill another. In this verse, Lord Krishna recites two Vedic mantras to Arjuna. In creation, a living being is a manifestation of the

soul's true nature. The soul of a living being can never die on its own. Nor can it cause the death of another or be a killer. For one who believes in this principle, how much peace they will find. Death is the greatest fear that disturbs sleep. To the physical eyes, the body is seen first as a living entity. Then comes the realization of the soul. First, the form is seen, and then the intellect perceives the essence. A spiritual seeker should reflect: Does the soul come first or the body? Through reflection, the conclusion will be that the soul comes first, and the body follows. In other words, the essence comes first, and the form follows. Thus, dying or killing never refers to the destruction of the soul or the soul being a killer. Dying results in the absence of the body. Killing causes the cessation of the body's functioning. In both these events, all actions are limited to the body alone. All actions in the body arise from the qualities of material nature. Dying and killing have no connection with the soul's true nature. The soul is neither the doer nor the action in any activity. However, by identifying with the body, the soul considers itself the doer of actions happening in the body. It also considers itself the experience of the resulting changes. This sense of being a doer or experiencer arises in the intellect due to the soul's connection with the body. If the soul were not identified with the body, the sense of dying or killing would not arise in the intellect. After understanding this truth, the body is seen merely as a covering for the soul. The destruction of this covering does not cause the absence of the soul. Ultimately, dying or killing is never a cause for sorrow.

**na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre (2-20)**

Comm. The embodied soul (dehi) is never born nor does it die. The soul is unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient, and even when the body is destroyed, it is not destroyed. The nature of the soul and the body is completely different. The soul is not attached to the body, nor is the body attached to the soul. The soul, as a source of energy, only manifests the body. It causes all the senses to function through their qualities. The senses become active only through the soul's energy. This is experienced at the level of the intellect. Through the soul's reflection of consciousness, all sensory experiences are reflected as knowledge in the intellect. The wise person considers these reflected experiences as temporary and illusory and rejects them. The ignorant person considers them real and experiences happiness, sorrow, cold, heat, pleasure, and pain. This ignorant intellect is a reflection of the individual soul, which is ego. If this body ceases to exist, we will not suffer any loss. Until now, we have left behind many bodies. Those bodies do not remain as parts of the soul. This is because the body is transient and changeable, with both a beginning and an end. The influence of those bodies does not affect the soul. The soul has remained unchanged in all bodies as a part of the Supreme Soul's energy. No difference ever arises in the soul's true nature. Being eternal and unmanifest, nothing can remain attached to

the soul. The soul is not created and then ceases to exist; it is not like that. The soul has always existed. The soul's nature is not to be born and then cease to exist. Every visible object is born, exists in a form, grows, undergoes change, decays, and finally perishes. Since the soul has neither birth nor destruction, the other four changes (existence, growth, change, decay) are also not observed in it. The term “everlasting” indicates that the soul is free from decay and destruction. In the body, death occurs due to the separation of the life force. Since the soul is all-pervading, no connection or separation can occur in it. Thus, the soul never dies.

**vedāvināśinaṁ nityaṁ ya enam ajam avyayam
kathaṁ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam (2-21)**

Comm. O Arjuna, a wise person who has gained self-knowledge does not see living beings in terms of their form, changes, or usefulness. He sees all living beings, from the smallest blade of grass to Brahma, as having the same soul. A wise person considers the death of a living being as merely the end of its physical body. Only an ignorant person wants to analyze how or why someone died or who caused the death. This kind of thinking is part of material knowledge. In material knowledge, killing is seen as violence, and scriptures forbid it. A self-realized person understands that death is just the destruction of the physical body, which is certain to happen. The soul never dies. The soul is indestructible, eternal, and without birth. Something that has no beginning also has no end. Since the soul cannot be destroyed, it is free from decay or change. Due to past actions, the soul takes a body to experience the results of those actions. The body also serves as a means for the soul to achieve liberation through good deeds. Arjuna was sad about death for two reasons. First, he had to kill respected elders like Bhishma and Drona. Second, as a leader in the war, he would cause many deaths and earn sin. Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna that once you understand the soul and the body, actions like dying, killing, or causing death do not create sorrow for a dutiful person. A wise person does not stray from the path of duty.

**vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni grhṇāti naro 'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny
anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī 2-22**

Comm. There is no reason to grieve over the destruction of the body. Just as a person discards old clothes and wears new ones, the soul leaves an old body and takes a new one. A human needs food and clothes to sustain the body. When clothes become old, they are no longer useful to cover the body. They need to be replaced. Similarly, the soul resides in the body. The body is like a covering for the soul. When the body becomes worn out or useless, the soul leaves it. Until the soul is liberated from the cycle of birth and death, it must keep changing bodies. The current body is received based on past actions and has a fixed lifespan. This lifespan can end at any time. When the results of past actions

are exhausted, the body becomes worn out, and its time ends. The soul must leave the current body. Just as clothes enhance the body and protect it from cold or heat, the body serves as a tool for the soul to perform actions. Just as a person chooses new clothes based on preference, the soul takes a new body at the end of life, carrying forward its subtle impressions. Changing clothes does not change the body's nature. Similarly, changing bodies does not change the soul's nature. Changing clothes is a normal part of daily life. Likewise, leaving one body for another is a step in the soul's journey toward liberation. A self-realized person uses the body to attain liberation. After achieving this ultimate goal, the body is no longer needed. When attachment to the body ends, only the pure soul remains. In this state, the soul merges with the Supreme Soul because the body is destroyed.

**nainam chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na cainam kledayanty āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ (2-23)**

**acchedyo 'yam adāhyo 'yam akledyo 'śoṣya eva ca
nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur acalo 'yam sanātanaḥ (2-24)**

**avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate
tasmād evam viditvainaṁ nānuśocitum arhasi (2-25)**

Comme. Lord Krishna repeats the principles of Sankhya Yoga in these verses. He describes the eternal nature and unique qualities of the soul. The five elements—space, air, fire, water, and earth—cannot destroy the soul. The soul is beyond these five elements. The soul comes from the supreme power of the Supreme Soul. Through the soul's consciousness, the material nature created by a lower power is manifested. Therefore, the manifested material cannot destroy the source of manifestation. Dividing the body means cutting it. Even if a weapon, made of the earth element, cuts the body, the soul cannot be cut. The soul has no form. Something without parts cannot be affected by cutting. A substance becomes wet only when water molecules enter it. But the soul is complete and perfect. So, water cannot make the soul wet. Similarly, air cannot dry the soul, and fire cannot burn it. The soul is all-pervading, so air cannot carry or absorb it. The soul is steady and stable, so fire's burning cannot destroy it. Space is not a destroyer of the soul either. Space is the primary element from which the other four elements—air, water, fire, and earth—are created. Although space is all-pervading and detached, it lacks the soul's conscious nature. Space is neither all-attaining nor eternal. Therefore, space cannot affect the soul. The soul exists as part of the Supreme Soul before creation. Thus, the soul is eternal. The soul does not travel between this world and the next. After the physical body is destroyed, the subtle body remains and takes rebirth. Therefore, the soul is steady and immovable. The soul is also unmanifested and unthinkable. It cannot be perceived by the senses. The mind cannot grasp the soul either. The human mind is influenced by material qualities. Something bounds by qualities cannot reach the transcendental soul. The soul

is self-luminous and always free from change. Thus, the soul is eternal, all-pervading, steady, immovable, unmanifested, unthinkable, and unchanging. Understanding the soul's nature, one should not grieve over the body's death. The purpose of explaining the soul's qualities is to show that, even if one identifies with the body and world, or fails to realize the soul and body are distinct, the soul remains eternal, constant, and uniform. In reality, the soul does not need the body's limitations. The soul is not bound to stay within the body. The soul can exist freely, beyond material qualities, in an unmanifested form. There is no difference between the souls of different beings. Ego creates the illusion of separate souls in each being. Ego is ignorance. When ego is removed, the same soul is realized everywhere. From Brahma to a blade of grass, everything is of the same divine essence. Differences arise only due to form, change, and utility. In essence, the divine essence exists everywhere. Just as no part of the body is separate from the body, no object or being in creation is separate from the divine essence. A question arises: Why does Lord Krishna repeatedly explain the soul's nature to Arjuna? The answer is that the soul is extremely subtle and exists within the body as consciousness. This consciousness, influenced by body-identification, creates ego and material thinking. This ego makes one feel the reality of the body and world. At an ordinary level of understanding, the soul's presence in the body is not realized. The purpose of repeatedly explaining the soul's nature is to first accept that the soul is distinct from the body. This truth must be firmly established in the mind. This understanding should not be forgotten even for a moment. When this idea becomes a constant practice in the body, mind, and heart, the intellect begins to explore the soul's qualities. In this state, the seeker becomes curious. The mind and heart turn away from material things and focus on the soul. Once the soul's nature is realized with a clear intellect, it becomes self-knowledge.

**atha cainam nitya-jātam nityam vā manyase mṛtam
tathāpi tvaṁ mahā-bāho naivaṁ śocitum arhasi (2-26)**

**jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi (2-27)**

Comm. Arjuna was grieving and facing a moral dilemma because of the deaths of relatives in the war. He decided not to fight due to this sorrow. Lord Krishna explains the nature of the soul and body to Arjuna. He tries to make Arjuna understand that the soul does not die when the body is destroyed. The soul is unborn, indestructible, eternal, and everlasting. After understanding the soul's nature, a wise person does not grieve over the destruction of their own body or others' bodies. But this self-knowledge is a very advanced concept for humans. At an ordinary level of understanding, people believe that when the body dies, consciousness also disappears, and the soul dies too. Just as a seed sprouts and grows into a tree, the union of spirit and nature creates a conscious body. This means the soul is born along with the body. So, Lord Krishna now explains to Arjuna at an

ordinary level of understanding to remove his grief over death. Even if we assume the soul is born with the body and dies with the body's destruction, grieving is still inappropriate. Because anything that did not exist before and comes into being will surely be destroyed. What comes into being will return to its non-existent state. From that non-existent state, it will again come into being. In the world, just as the bright fortnight follows the dark fortnight, or day follows night, these are eternal truths. Similarly, death follows birth, and birth follows death; this is also an eternal truth. No one can change this cycle. Every person knows that they are alive now but moving toward death every moment. Death is inevitable in the future. When a relative dies, it causes pain in the mind. The reason is the attachment to that person's body. When we accept the truth of death and realize that the dead person cannot return in the same body or maintain the same relationship, our attachment fades. All worries and grief come to an end. From another perspective, death frees an old, worn-out, incapable body. It allows the soul to gain a new, beautiful, delicate, and capable body with pure consciousness. What greater blessing can there be in this world? While relatives grieve over a body's death in one place, elsewhere, relatives joyfully await the birth of a new body. This contradiction is the nature of the world. Even if one does not understand the true nature of the soul, accepting that death is certain after birth means grieving is unnecessary.

**avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata
avyakta-nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā (2-28)**

Comm. Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna the process of the body's cycle: it arises from the invisible, exists, faces death, and becomes invisible again. This principle of the unmanifested becoming manifested is something ordinary people can understand from their own life experiences. Before birth, no one knows where or in what state the body was. Only during the middle period, from birth to death, is the body visible. After death, no one knows what happens to the body. Based on the words of sages and scriptures, if we accept the concept of past lives, it is true that a body from a previous life dies and becomes unmanifested before a new body is born. The current body has no similarity in form, qualities, or changes with the body of a past life. Just as a giant tree exists unmanifested in a seed, after the physical body of a past life is destroyed, its subtle impressions remain unmanifested. Just as a seed is destroyed after sprouting and a new tree's leaves become visible, after a being's death, the subtle impressions give birth to a new body. Though the body seems stable, it is moving toward destruction every moment. Without consciousness, everything visible in the world is subject to six changes: birth, existence, growth, transformation, decay, and destruction. A body that has no independent existence and is not stable, moving toward destruction every moment, is only imaginarily connected to consciousness. After the body ends, all imagined relationships also end. Over many lifetimes, a soul has left behind countless bodies and relationships. The relationship of a soul, especially a human, with the world is like travelers meeting on a journey. Travelers

may rest together under a tree or spend a night at a rest house. After the night, they part ways and head to their own destinations. The soul's relationship with the world is like a traveler's brief connection for one night. Feeling joy or sorrow over momentary relationships based on the mind's imagination is not a sign of wisdom. O Arjuna, the relatives you see now—some existed before you were born, but you did not. After your birth, you became related to others. It is true that these relatives will exist after you are gone, or some will die while you are still alive. Thus, all current relationships are false. It is not appropriate for you to feel joy or sorrow over the cycle of these false relationships, where bodies go from unmanifested to manifested and back to unmanifested. Even considering the world's overall existence, according to Vedic principles, all creation—living and non-living—merges unmanifested with nature during cosmic dissolution. During creation, it becomes manifested from the unmanifested. Lord Krishna explains this principle to Arjuna in the eighth chapter. This cycle of becoming manifested from unmanifested and returning to unmanifested is part of the law of creation and dissolution. The Supreme Soul, who exists at the start of creation, during dissolution, and is the root cause and source of consciousness, is present throughout creation and dissolution. What did not exist before creation and will not exist after dissolution, even if it appears to exist in between, is not real. Like a mirage in the desert, it is only an illusion. It should be understood as a stream of water created by illusion (Maya).

**āścarya-vat paśyati kaścīd enam
āścarya-vad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ
āścarya-vac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpy enam veda na caiva kaścit (2-29)**

Comm. Some people see the soul with wonder. Others describe it with wonder. Some hear about it with wonder. Even after hearing, no one can fully understand it. The soul's nature is extraordinary. It has no similarity with any manifested or unmanifested thing in the world. It cannot be known through senses like form, taste, touch, sound, or smell. Seeing the soul means gaining knowledge of its nature. Studying scriptures does not lead to self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is gained only through direct realization of the soul. By completely removing the world's distractions and emptying the mind and heart, the soul's conscious nature reflects in the intellect as pure consciousness. Realizing the soul's existence by pure consciousness, in the absence of the illusory world, is self-realization. The understanding of the soul's nature after this is far different from worldly knowledge. The soul's existence is confirmed by itself. Just as "I exist" is felt naturally. Knowing one's own nature does not require any external light or revelation. The soul is self-luminous. Self-knowledge is neither difficult nor rare. Few people seek self-knowledge. Only someone who has attained self-knowledge can convey this truth to others. The soul's nature cannot be described through words. Wise seers indicate it with words like eternal, everlasting, ancient, all-pervading, immovable, steady, and eternal. Thus, describing it

feels wondrous. Teachings from saints or scriptures, based on worldly knowledge, are easily understood by the intellect. But the principle of self-knowledge cannot be grasped by a mind attached to the body. Since the soul is beyond the scope of mind and intellect, hearing about it feels wondrous. Even after hearing about the soul from wise seers, no one can fully understand its truth. This does not mean self-knowledge is impossible or incomprehensible. Attaining self-knowledge requires continuous practice. Accepting firmly that “I am not the perishable body, I am the soul” and constantly shedding body-identification to remain in the soul’s nature leads to its realization.

**dehī nityam avadhyo ’yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi (2-30)**

Comm. From the tiniest insect to Brahma, the soul resides in every body. This soul is eternal and cannot be killed. Therefore, O Arjuna, you should not grieve for Bhishma, Drona, or any creature’s death in the world. In this verse, Lord Krishna explains the principle of Sankhya practice and concludes the description of Sankhya Yoga. Lord Krishna repeatedly tells the grieving Arjuna that the best way to overcome sorrow is self-knowledge or self-realization. The practice to attain this self-knowledge is called Sankhya practice. From verse 11 to verse 30 of the second chapter, the principles of Sankhya practice are described. The practice indicated by numerical analysis is called Sankhya practice or Sankhya Yoga in the scriptures. The core principle of this practice is one: the Supreme Soul, who is existence, consciousness, and bliss. Apart from the Supreme Soul, no substance has independent existence. Existence belongs only to the foundational soul. When the mind vibrates in imagination, the world appears. Like a dream in sleep, this apparent world is based only on imagination. Thus, it is a matter of the non-self. By stopping the mind’s vibrations, the apparent world ceases. In Sankhya philosophy, the distinction between the soul and non-self is primary. From the smallest insect to the largest creature and the most intelligent human, the same divine essence exists in all bodies. The body’s nature is perishable, decaying every moment. The soul is indestructible and cannot be destroyed by anyone at any time. A person who deeply reflects on the nature of the soul and body and strives to realize their difference is a seeker, worthy of self-knowledge. The body is given only as a field for practice. Actions performed in the body are meant for the world. The soul has no connection with the body or its actions. Assuming a connection between the soul and body is the cause of bondage and the root flaw. By intellectually rejecting the connection between the soul, body, and actions, the mind is purified, and the intellect becomes free from distortion. When the intellect is free from distortion, pure consciousness arises. Then, the soul’s existence is realized. Once this existence is realized, the seeker becomes detached from the body and actions. This ensures no forbidden actions occur, and there is no attachment to the results of good actions. This is the subject and outcome of Sankhya Yoga practice.

**sva-dharmaṁ api cāvekṣya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat kṣatriyasya na vidyate (2-31)**

Comm. After explaining the nature of the soul to remove Arjuna's sorrow, Lord Krishna now encourages him to fight by focusing on the duties related to the body. From the perspective of varnashrama (social order), fighting is the prescribed duty of a Kshatriya (warrior). Arjuna had previously argued that killing his relatives would lead to the destruction of the family and cause intermixing of castes, which would bring sin upon him. Now, Lord Krishna refutes this argument about family traditions. He says, "O Arjuna, if you do not fight to protect your Kshatriya family traditions, you will still incur sin." This is because abandoning the righteous war and taking up any other work is not the path to well-being for a Kshatriya. Resisting enemies to protect the nation's boundaries, the lives and property of its people, and their religion is considered a righteous war. A war fought to establish pride, arrogance, or to plunder others' wealth is an unrighteous war. The upcoming war was a righteous war for the Pandavas. After twelve years of exile, Duryodhana refused to give the Pandavas even a small piece of land without a fight and challenged them to war. Therefore, fighting to establish his rightful claim is a matter of upholding Arjuna's Kshatriya family duty. Avoiding the war out of fear of sin will not be beneficial for Arjuna in any way. Killing enemies in a righteous war is not considered an act of violence. This is because such a war is meant to establish righteousness and promote the welfare of society. In a righteous war, a Kshatriya considers his death as attaining a heroic end. A soldier who sacrifices his life to protect the nation is honored as an immortal martyr by the nation. There is no greater path to well-being for a Kshatriya than fighting in a war to destroy unrighteousness and establish righteousness.

**yadṛcchayā copapannaṁ svarga-dvāram apāvṛtam
sukhīṇaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddham īdrīśam (2-32)**

Comm. Resisting a war declared by the enemy out of pride and arrogance is a duty that comes naturally to a Kshatriya. Fighting to protect the people, resist the oppression of the weak by the strong, and establish justice and righteousness is a matter of great honor. Facing such a war is like an open door to heavenly bliss for a Kshatriya. Heavenly bliss is attained both in this world and the next. In this world, it means enjoying material pleasures and possessing all wealth. After death, it means being reborn in a higher state or dwelling with divine beings in the afterlife, which is also heavenly bliss. Fighting in this war was unavoidable for Arjuna. This is because all efforts by the Pandavas to avoid war failed due to Duryodhana's war-mongering arrogance. Even Lord Krishna's mediation, offering just five villages to the Pandavas instead of the kingdom, was rejected by Duryodhana. Lord Krishna says, "O son of Pritha, since you did not want this war and it has come to you against your will, accept it as an open door to heavenly bliss and fight." This will be the path to your well-being.

**atha cet tvam imaṁ dharmyaṁ saṅgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi
tataḥ sva-dharmaṁ kīrtiṁ ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi (2-33)**

Comm. The righteous war that has come before Arjuna must be accepted as a duty. This is the only way to uphold his Kshatriya duty and maintain his reputation as a brave warrior. If he avoids this war for any reason, he will disrespect his family traditions. Along with that, he will lose the fame he has earned as a warrior and incur sin. Lord Krishna says, “O Arjuna, if you remain firm in your decision not to fight this righteous war, you will lose your natural ability to fight.” This means you will lose your Kshatriya nature.

**akīrtiṁ cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te ’vyayām
saṁbhāvitasya cākīrtir maraṇād atiricyate (2-34)**

Comm. Lord Krishna warns Arjuna about the consequences of not fighting and encourages him to engage in battle. First, by abandoning his family duty, he will incur sin. Second, if he does not fight, the disgrace he will face will be remembered by people forever. People will cite his example to point out a Kshatriya who fled from battle. Just as great souls like Vishwamitra, Parashara, Nimi, and Shrungi are remembered in the scriptures for their downfall, Arjuna’s name will be used similarly. Arjuna has earned fame as the greatest archer in the world by defeating many demons, gandharvas, and gods in battle. Fleeing from this righteous war will taint that glory, and his disgrace will be recorded in history forever. For an honorable person, fame brings pride and respect. In the same way, disgrace is more painful than death. Comparing disgrace to death means that for an honorable person, it is better to die than to earn infamy through their actions. The point is that the disgrace Arjuna will earn by not fighting as a Kshatriya will be worse than dying in battle.

**bhayād raṇād uparataṁ maṁsyante tvāṁ mahā-rathāḥ
yeṣāṁ ca tvaṁ bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam(2-35)**

Comm. Arjuna decided not to fight, believing that raising weapons against revered elders or killing relatives for the sake of a kingdom would be a great sin. He even said he would not resist the enemy’s attacks. The great warriors on both sides will not easily accept Arjuna’s mindset. Instead, they will think that Arjuna fled from battle out of fear of great warriors like Bhishma, Drona, Jayadratha, Karna, and Kripacharya. No matter what reasons Arjuna gives for avoiding his duty, society will not accept them as valid. People will point out his weakness. This is like a common problem seen in today’s society. For example, today’s youth give various reasons to avoid serving their elderly parents. They don’t even want to visit their parents who are suffering from illness or pain, waiting for death. Even if someone gains advanced knowledge, lives abroad, earns titles, accumulates wealth, or claims to serve society or the nation, they cannot earn true respect if they neglect their duty to care for their elderly parents. People will ignore all their fame and honor and criticize them for failing to perform their duty. Therefore, no one can achieve

good results by neglecting their duty. Even if someone gains respect for other reasons, it will be overshadowed by the criticism for neglecting their duty.

**avācya-vādānś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ
nindantas tava sāmārthyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim (2-36)**

Comm. Arjuna, your enemies will say many unkind things about you. They will speak harsh words and mock your abilities. What could be more painful than this? The enemy warriors will also say that Arjuna hid as Brihannala during his exile. They will claim this shows signs of cowardice in you. They will say that because of this, you fled the battlefield in fear of death. They will insult you with words you cannot even imagine. The sound of your Gandiva bow makes the three worlds tremble. Warriors in front of you freeze in fear. Enemies run away from the battlefield, crying out in terror, fearing for their lives. But those who mock you will make fun of all your strengths. They will not praise you for avoiding war out of fear of sinning by killing relatives and elders. Instead, they will call you a coward. Such harsh criticism of your abilities will be unbearable for you. Here, Lord Krishna urges Arjuna to fight to maintain his honor. He says there is no other way to uphold your duty except by fighting.

**hato vā prāpsyasi svargam jītvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ (2-37)**

Comm. So far, Lord Krishna has been explaining spiritual and worldly perspectives to Arjuna. He says that from the perspective of the soul, family traditions, duty, or preserving your honor, fighting in the war is not a sin. In this verse, Lord Krishna gives advice from a different angle. That angle is Karma Yoga (the path of selfless action). For Arjuna, winning or losing the war was not the concern. Instead, the fear of killing his relatives in the war was the cause of his sorrow. It is uncertain who will win or lose in a war. But Arjuna has decided to avoid fighting because he fears the outcome. The main principle of Karma Yoga is to focus on performing your duty without worrying about the results. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, “O son of Kunti, stand up and resolve to fight.” He says that both winning and losing in the war are equal for you. If you die in battle, you will go to heaven and attain divine status. Kings perform special sacrifices during their lifetime to attain heavenly pleasures. But by dying bravely in battle, you will achieve this automatically. If you win the war, you will gain great glory and enjoy a kingdom without obstacles. Therefore, any outcome of this righteous war is favorable for you. With this in mind, resolve firmly and rise to fight immediately.

**sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi(2-38)**

Comm. In a war, if one side wins, the other side loses. The winning side gains wealth and honor. The losing side loses wealth, honor, and often many valuable lives. While one

side celebrates victory with joy, the other side is broken by sorrow. In a war, one of the two outcomes—victory or defeat—will surely happen to both sides. Even though war involves violence, it is not a sinful act. However, the intention behind the war determines whether it is righteous or unrighteous. A war fought to establish justice, protect the nation, or uphold righteousness is a righteous war. A war fought out of pride, arrogance, greed, or to oppress the weak is an unrighteous war. Fighting a righteous war is the duty of a Kshatriya (warrior). Therefore, a Kshatriya should never decide to fight or avoid fighting based on the outcome of victory or defeat. The violence in a righteous war does not lead to sin. In this verse, Lord Krishna begins teaching Arjuna the principles of Karma Yoga. An action itself is never sinful, but desire and attachment to the results of the action cause sin. Running away from your duty out of fear of the outcome is not only unrighteous but also a great sin.

**eṣā te 'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tv imām śṛṇu
buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karma-bandhaṁ prahāsyasi(2-39)**

Comm. From verses 11 to 30 of this chapter, Lord Krishna explained the practice of Sankhya (spiritual knowledge). Now, he begins teaching Arjuna about Buddhi Yoga or Karma Yoga (the yoga of disciplined action). The Supreme Soul is present everywhere. The ultimate truth indicated by the number “one” is the essence of Sankhya philosophy. Realizing this truth is the practice of Sankhya. Understanding the difference between the soul and the non-soul is Sankhya wisdom. Knowing the relationship between the body and the soul and detaching from the body at the level of intellect is Sankhya Yoga. When one truly understands the connection between the soul and the body, a state of equanimity naturally arises in the mind. When the intellect becomes attached to the body instead of the soul, it leads to imbalance. Sankhya Yoga describes this state of balanced intellect. Arjuna is caught in the dilemma of sin and virtue, duty and non-duty. Due to attachment to his brothers, friends, and relatives, he is overcome with delusion. Because of this, he has decided not to fight. He believes that killing respected elders like Bhishma and Drona and his relatives to enjoy a kingdom is not only painful but also a great sin. Through Sankhya wisdom, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that the souls of the relatives you grieve for cannot die. The soul is eternal, everlasting, and indestructible. The body is never permanent and will surely perish. So, what is there to grieve about? Yoga wisdom refers to maintaining equanimity in all situations. A person who practices this Buddhi Yoga is freed from the bondage of actions. Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to listen to how this equanimity is achieved through Karma Yoga, its nature, and its practice. From verses 31 to 38, before explaining Karma Yoga with equanimity, Lord Krishna clarified what prescribed duties are, what righteous actions are, and whether fighting or not fighting is the right duty. The human body is given to experience the results of past actions and to strive for liberation through effort. Unlike humans, the bodies of all other beings are meant only to experience the results of their fate. Therefore, only the human body has the capacity for action. In this

capacity for action, one must know the difference between duty and forbidden actions. By abandoning forbidden actions and sincerely performing duties without expecting results, one remains balanced in all situations—this is Karma Yoga. Avoiding duties is also considered a forbidden action. Attachment to actions and their results prevents equanimity. Performing duties with selflessness for the welfare of others and the nation is true righteous work. By performing duties, one naturally attains the state of yoga.

**nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt(2-40)**

Comm. The core principle of Karma Yoga is maintaining equanimity or a balanced mind. This equanimity is of two types: inner balance and external harmony. Inner balance means the mind remains steady whether an action succeeds or fails. It also means not being affected by attachment or aversion due to the outcome of actions. External harmony is the realization that everything is filled with the Supreme. Attaining external harmony is the highest state of equanimity. One who is established in this state of divine equanimity becomes liberated while living. This state is achieved only after attaining inner balance. Once the desire for equanimity awakens in a person, it never fades. Even if this practice remains incomplete in one lifetime, it does not lead to negative results. Instead, it creates favorable conditions in the next life to continue the practice. By striving to practice this equanimity, even a little inner balance can temporarily free one from the fear of birth and death. When inner balance is achieved, the connection with the three qualities of nature (sattva, rajas, tamas) ends. As a result, actions no longer bind the person. Performing rituals like sacrifices, charity, or penance with the desire for results leads to temporary outcomes that eventually fade. But even a small amount of inner equanimity or detachment gained through practice remains forever across lifetimes. Efforts toward achieving equanimity are never wasted. Actions performed with desire for results do not lead to equanimity. As long as there is desire for results, equanimity cannot be achieved. When equanimity is attained, the desire for results disappears. By sincerely performing duties according to one's role and for the welfare of all beings without expecting results, equanimity is naturally attained. This is because equanimity is the true nature of the soul.

**vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyīnām (2-41)**

Comm. In the path of yoga, there is a need for a resolute, single-pointed intellect. There is no need for a scattered or divided intellect. A unified intellect is the best and is essential for practicing karma yoga (selfless action) . A scattered intellect creates doubts. Performing selfless duty with dedication leads to attaining equanimity. Firmly establishing this principle at the level of intellect is called resolute intellect. When such a resolute intellect is present with single-pointed focus, the intellect does not waver. The sole aim of this resolute intellect is to attain equanimity. This intellect is not swayed

by the mind but remains independently oriented toward the soul. A resolute intellect can reflect any form of the soul. Engaging in desire-driven actions and following a mind filled with desires and attachments is an irresolute intellect. Those whose hearts are filled with desires and who are attached to sensory pleasures and accumulation are irresolute. In trying to fulfill many desires, the intellect of such people becomes endless. And that intellect also branches out infinitely. For example, first comes the desire for sensory pleasure, from sensory pleasure comes the desire for wealth, from wealth comes indulgence in sensory enjoyment, then the desire for fame, prestige, and power—thus, the intellect becomes scattered with many branches.

**yām imām puṣpitaṁ vācaṁ pravadyantya avipaścitāḥ
veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādinaḥ (2-42)**

**kāma-ātmānaḥ svarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām
kriyā-viśeṣa-bahulām bhogaiśvarya-gatiṁ prati (2-43)**

**bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate (2-44)**

Comm. In the previous three verses, Lord Krishna explains how the performance of desire-driven rituals described in the Vedas creates attachment in the hearts of ignorant people. And how this becomes an obstacle to attaining resolute intellect. The Vedas have two sections: the knowledge section (Jnana Kanda) and the ritual section (Karma Kanda). The knowledge section consists of two parts: Aranyaka and Upanishads. Similarly, the ritual section consists of two parts: Samhita and Brahmana. The ritual section describes various rituals, sacrifices, and their results. In the six philosophical systems (Shad Darshana), the Mimamsa philosophy is divided into two parts: Purva Mimamsa, which focuses on rituals, and Uttara Mimamsa, which focuses on knowledge. According to Purva Mimamsa, performing sacrifices is the only religion, and attaining heaven is the only goal of human life. Ordinary people understand religion as performing sacrifices, charity, penance, vows, and fasting to achieve desired results. The Lord says that performing these desire-driven actions does not remove attachment to sensory pleasures but increases it. The mind of someone whose heart is immersed in desires remains constantly restless. Such a restless intellect can never be single-pointedly focused on the Supreme Truth (God). Only by performing selfless duties with dedication does the intellect become oriented toward God. Lord Krishna says, “O Arjuna! Some desire-driven people consider sensory pleasure to be the goal of life.” They remain immersed in desires and take pleasure in performing desire-driven actions, citing Vedic statements as proof. Their intellect considers heavenly enjoyment to be the ultimate goal, believing, “There is nothing greater to attain than heaven.” They firmly hold onto these beliefs. These ignorant and unwise people praise the flowery words of the Vedas, which are pleasing to hear but lead to harm. Ignorant people value taking repeated births and obtaining material enjoyments as the result of their actions.

The intellect of such unwise people becomes divided into endless branches. Thus, for the sake of enjoyment and wealth, their actions multiply endlessly. Their intellect remains restless due to the pursuit of fulfilling desires and attachments. Those whose intellect is influenced by the words of such ignorant people also become swayed by desires and attachments. They develop a strong attachment to enjoyment and wealth. When the mind is corrupted by the desire for sensory pleasures, it loses its focus. As long as one has an interest in enjoyment, accumulation, pride, and ego, they cannot focus their intellect on the Supreme Soul with resolute determination. This is because such desire-driven people lack a resolute intellect. They can never attain equanimity or reach a state of meditative absorption (samadhi).

**traiguṇya-viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavāṛjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho niryoga-kṣema ātmavān(2-45)**

Comm. The Vedas describe all forms of enjoyment and the paths to attain them, which are influenced by the three gunas (qualities of nature: sattva, rajas, tamas). The Vedic scriptures are meant for those under the influence of the three gunas. The purpose of the ritual section of the Vedas is to guide people from tamas (ignorance) to rajas (passion) and from rajas to sattva (goodness). O Arjuna! To attain eternal happiness and liberation from the bondage of actions, rise above the influence of the three gunas. When desire-driven actions are removed from your heart, your mind will become pure. And you will become capable of practicing selfless karma yoga. When your heart is free from desires and attachments, you will become free from dualities. By rising above the control of nature, your heart will be free from the opposing disturbances of the world, such as happiness and sorrow, heat and cold, love and hate, honor and dishonor. All these dualities arise from the three gunas of nature. The state of being beyond the gunas is called the eternal state of sattva (nitya sattva). Instead of remaining in temporary sattva, remain established in eternal sattva. This means that your heart, in a state of pure and elevated sattva, becomes devoted to the soul and is not influenced by the actions of sattva, rajas, or tamas. Although it is not possible to be completely free from the gunas while maintaining the body, the Lord's instruction to become free from the gunas, dualities, and established in eternal sattva means that a spiritual seeker must turn their heart away from worldly affairs and toward the soul, practicing selfless karma yoga. The Lord further says, "O Arjuna! Be free from the concerns of yoga and kshema, and be self-realized." Desiring to attain what is not yet obtained is called yoga, and protecting what has been obtained is called kshema. The Lord Himself takes responsibility for the yoga and kshema of a person who performs their duties with dedication. At the time of creation, all necessary material things, starting from food, have been arranged by nature for the sustenance of all beings. Just as arrangements for a child's sustenance are made in the mother's body before its birth, this is God's gift for all beings. By abandoning the desire for material happiness and engaging in the practice of self-realization for

eternal happiness, one becomes self-realized. After self-realization, the Supreme Truth is naturally understood.

**yāvān artha uda-pāne sarvataḥ samplutodake
āvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ (2-46)**

Comm. When a vast reservoir of pure, sweet water is available in all directions, there is no longer any need to use small water sources like wells, ponds, or ditches. Similarly, for a wise person who has realized the truth of the soul, there is no further need to study the Vedas. The point is that such a person rises above the three qualities (gunas) described in the Vedas, becomes free from duality, established in eternal truth, and realizes the nature of Brahman (the Supreme Reality). Such a person is truly a Brahmin or a knower of Brahman. For such a knower of Brahman, the rituals and other scriptures in the Vedas are no longer particularly useful. A person who has attained knowledge of Brahman is established in the Supreme Reality and reaches the highest state. Just as someone who has access to the cool, pure water of the Ganges would not drink from a ditch, why would a great soul who has realized Brahman need to study the Vedas? By performing rituals as prescribed in the Vedas, one may attain a specific realm (loka) as the result of those rituals. To attain different realms, different rituals must be performed. This is like using small water sources. A selfless Karma Yogi (one who performs actions without attachment), established in eternal truth through selfless duty, gains access to realms starting from the solar sphere, including the realms of ancestors, gods, gandharvas, and Indra, all at once. They gain the ability to roam and enjoy happiness in all these realms. At the time of cosmic dissolution (pralaya), they merge into the Supreme Reality along with Brahma. This is called gradual liberation (krama mukti) in the Upanishads. This attainment of a selfless Karma Yogi is like a vast reservoir. The joy derived from the pleasures of heaven and other realms described in the Vedas is not denied to a selfless Karma Yogi. Instead, they become entitled to boundless, infinite joy. The supreme peace and joy obtained by performing duty without desiring results make all small and large pleasures seem insignificant in comparison.

**karmaṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi(2-47)**

Comm. Lord Krishna says: You must renounce the fruits of your actions, but not the actions themselves. You have control only over performing actions, but you have no control over the results of those actions. If you don't expect results from your actions, you might wonder, "What's the point of doing anything?" But don't let this thought make you idle or cause you to abandon your duties. This verse is the main principle of Karma Yoga, in which Lord Krishna explains four key practices of Karma Yoga. (1) Only in human life do you have the right to perform new duties. (2) Humans have no control over the results of their actions; these are dependent on other factors. (3) A person is

not the cause of the results of their actions, meaning attachment to results should not be the reason for performing actions. (4) You should also not be attached to inaction, meaning attachment to results should not cause you to stop working. Performing new duties is a human effort and is under your control. But the results of actions depend on the consequences of past lives (prarabdha). In non-human forms of life, the body is designed only to experience predetermined results, and there is no ability to perform new actions. Such beings are driven by nature and only experience results. In human life, you have the ability to make efforts, through which you can liberate your soul. Humans have the freedom to perform new actions. Whether the outcome of an action is favorable or unfavorable, humans have no power to change it. So why worry about something God has not given you control over? You must leave the results of actions to God. By making good use of the situations that arise from performing actions, and using them as a means to liberate the soul, your mind becomes purified. Therefore, for humans, experiencing the results of past actions (prarabdha) and performing new duties are both means to liberate the soul. In performing duties without desiring results, humans are completely free. If a desire arises in the mind, and you act to fulfill that desire, it becomes a desire-driven action (sakama karma). Selfless duty (nishkama karma) arises naturally. By performing prescribed actions without attachment, there is no sense of being the enjoyer, and therefore no sense of being the doer. When there is no sense of being the doer, a person is not bound by actions, even while performing them. From another perspective, no single person's actions are completed solely by their own effort. Every action is accomplished through a combination of materials, the collective efforts of multiple people, and the influence of destiny. Therefore, it is dishonest to claim the results of actions as your own doing. The way to make actions selfless (naishkarmya) is: (1) Firmly believe that desires are endless. When one desire is fulfilled, another takes its place. Acting with attachment to results leads only to suffering. Understanding this, perform actions selflessly for the welfare of the world, with a service-oriented mindset; this becomes selfless action. (2) Neither actions nor their results are permanent. Actions have a beginning and an end, and the results of actions come and go. But the soul is eternal and everlasting. Therefore, the soul has no connection with actions or their results. Once this is understood, the mind does not become attached to expecting results. The connection between the mind and worldly pleasures is broken. You are not the cause of the results of actions, meaning attachment to results is not the reason for performing actions. Thinking, "I am doing this action to achieve a specific result," is a wrong approach. Similarly, thinking, "I won't succeed, so I won't act," and stopping action is also a wrong approach. In other words, attachment to results should not cause you to abandon action. If you act with attachment to the body, senses, mind, or intellect, you become the cause of the action. Thinking, "My action made someone happy," or "I helped them," creates a sense of being the doer in the mind. If you don't consider yourself the cause or reason for an action, you won't be the cause of its results either. Believing that abandoning action will lead to worldly or spiritual progress is

also an attachment to inaction. For example, thinking, “My elderly father is sick and won’t recover, so why bother showing him to a doctor?” is an example of abandoning duty due to attachment to results. Therefore, perform your duties to benefit the world and renounce any claim over the results of your actions. This is the core principle of Karma Yoga.

**yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate (2-48)**

Comm. O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), perform your duties while established in Yoga. Renounce attachment to actions and their results. Whether an action is successful or remains incomplete and unsuccessful, keep your mind balanced in both situations. Don’t feel elated by success, nor let failure bring sorrow to your mind. Maintaining a balanced mind in success and failure is called Yoga. Some commentators explain “established in Yoga” as being connected to the Supreme Reality. By performing actions as worship of God, attachment to actions naturally disappears. If you believe that everything you do is for the pleasure of God, both the action and its results are offered to God. The results of actions do not bind you. Such devotion-filled actions, performed with knowledge, are also part of Karma Yoga. Performing actions while established in Yoga means acting with a focused mind, detached from the materials of action, and fully absorbed in the task. By continuously performing all actions while established in Yoga, a flow of selfless action is created, in which attachment and aversion naturally disappear from the mind. This brings immense peace to the mind, which is far greater than the joy of achieving results. By disconnecting the mind from identification with the body, the natural state of balance in the mind is called Yoga. Once established in this Yoga, or state of balance, you never fall away from it.

**duṛena hy avaram kama buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ (2-49)**

Comm. O Dhananjaya, desire-driven actions (Sakama karma) are far inferior to selfless actions (Nishkamakarma). Desire-driven actions create imbalance in the mind, leading to ego and attachment in the body. Selfless actions bring balance to the mind. Therefore, take refuge in Karma Yoga to attain balance. A person who acts with attachment to results, seeking to fulfill desires, is truly pitiable. They remain immersed in actions driven by sense pleasures and ego, life after life. Comparing desire-driven and selfless actions is like comparing a speck of dust to a mountain. Selfless Karma Yoga leads to realizing the Supreme Reality, while desire-driven actions lead to the cycle of birth and death. By performing duties with a balanced intellect (buddhi yoga), a seeker does not feel they are receiving the results of actions. This is because, while performing actions, they experience peace and joy. Since selfless action is based on service and renunciation, Karma Yoga is a practice rooted in discrimination (viveka). Just as a miser lives in a wretched state day and night to accumulate wealth, a desire-driven person, like a poor beggar, constantly waits for the results of their actions. Karma Yoga is also called Buddhi Yoga (Yoga of Intellect). Since

it is guided by resolute intellect, it is rooted in intellect and discrimination, and emphasizes renunciation. Therefore, renouncing attachment to results with resolute intellect is Buddhi Yoga. Remaining always established in balance is taking refuge in the intellect.

**buddhiyukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛta-duṣkṛte
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam (2-50)**

Comm . A wise person whose intellect is established in Yoga, meaning whose mind is fully balanced, renounces both sinful and virtuous actions and their resulting consequences (sin and merit) while still alive. Therefore, O Arjuna, strive to attain this Buddhi Yoga (Yoga of Intellect). Performing actions with resolute intellect, focused on duty, is the perfection or skill of action. Actions are not inherently sinful or virtuous. The connection of the doer with the action, the intention behind the action, the method of performing it, and attachment to its results determine whether an action is virtuous or sinful. For ordinary people, performing rituals like yajnas is considered virtuous. Actions like stealing others' wealth, causing harm, or acting with jealousy to harm others are considered sinful. Generally, desire-driven people avoid prohibited actions but perform prescribed actions to fulfill their desires, driven by a mindset of enjoyment. Due to attachment to results, the intellect of desire-driven people is not steady, nor do they remain balanced in the face of outcomes. But a person with balanced intellect does not act to attain heaven or other desires, nor do they abandon prescribed actions out of fear of negative consequences like hell. A Karma Yogi does not view actions as virtuous or sinful, remains free from dualities like sin and merit, happiness and sorrow, and performs duties with resolute intellect. In this verse, Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the art of performing actions. If you think fighting in this war and killing respected elders and relatives is sinful, abandon that thought. Similarly, if you think avoiding the war and not killing your kin will earn you merit, abandon that thought as well. View this righteous war from the perspective of Yoga. Be a warrior fighting with zeal in the war, but do not be the cause of its outcome. Establishing dharma (righteousness) and justice on earth is the duty of a Kshatriya (warrior). Therefore, face the current situation by taking refuge in Karma Yoga. If you accept this war as a selfless duty, it becomes Karma Yoga for you. Based on service and renunciation, without any connection to personal gain or results, performing actions is Karma Yoga. The skill of Yoga in action is adopting the technique of balanced intellect, so that actions performed through Karma Yoga do not bind you.

**karma-jaṁ buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ
janma-bandha-vinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchanty anāmayaṁ(2-51)**

Comm . A person whose intellect has attained Yoga (discipline) gives up attachment to the fruits of action. Such a wise person becomes free from the bondage of birth and death, and attains the supreme, changeless state. All creation in this world arises from the will of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, every perishable object in the world originates from

the results of actions. When one gives up attachment to the fruits of their own actions, the mind no longer remains bound. Whether an action is selfish or selfless, its result is bound to follow. Then, how can one renounce the results of action? The solution lies in two methods of renouncing the fruit of action. First is to act out of a sense of duty, without being driven by desire or attachment to the outcome. The second is to accept the outcome — whether favorable or unfavorable — as part of spiritual practice and remain mentally balanced. By practicing work in this spirit of renunciation, the deep connection between the mind and the transient world slowly weakens. This state of balance is the true nature of the soul. By remaining unattached to worldly matters and acting selflessly, the intellect realizes the soul's nature of equanimity. This state of intellect is what leads one to the Supreme State of stillness and detachment. When the mental activity becomes free from agitation and remains fixed in the soul's nature, the truth of the Supreme Self is naturally realized. When this truth is experienced through pure intellect, it is called liberation or freedom in life (Jeevanmukti). The one who experiences this knowledge becomes free from the bondage of birth and death. Such full stability of intellect is the attainment of the highest, disease-free state — the culmination of Karma Yoga.

**yadā te moha-kalilaṁ buddhir vyatitariṣyati
tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca (2-52)**

Comm. When your balanced intellect completely overcomes the attachment to temporary material objects that satisfy the senses and the ego-driven pleasures of worldly relationships, it rises above the mud of delusion. At that time, your heart will develop detachment towards the pleasures and luxuries of this world that you have heard about, as well as the heavenly joys of the afterlife that you have yet to know. Though you are an eternal conscious being, you mistakenly identify yourself with the perishable physical body and material things, creating a sense of attachment and possession. Feeling happiness from temporary things and relationships, like children, spouse, wealth, or status, is like being stuck in the mud of delusion. With a balanced intellect, you consider these temporary relationships insignificant and let go of them, which is the rising of your intellect from the mud of delusion. A wise person with a balanced intellect uses material possessions to bring happiness to others, thereby attaining peace and joy. When the desire to bring happiness to others awakens, you gain the strength to sacrifice your own pleasures. Through discernment and reflection, the desire for worldly pleasures is destroyed in your heart. When your intellect overcomes the delusion-like mud, you develop detachment towards the luxuries of both this world and the heavenly realms.

**śruti-vipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā
samādhāv acalā buddhis tadā yogam avāpsyasi(2-53)**

Comm. Listening to the Vedas' descriptions of desire-driven actions and their rewards, like heaven, causes the mind to become scattered. When your intellect stops

wandering in different directions due to a restless mind and becomes steady, focusing on the Supreme Soul, it reaches a state of unwavering stillness. In this state, O Arjuna, you will attain the yoga of equanimity, meaning you will be established in self-knowledge. Arjuna's intellect is troubled by conflicting scriptural views, such as the sin of killing respected elders and kin versus the sin of not fighting as a warrior's duty. To save his kin, Arjuna must avoid war, but avoiding war means failing to protect them, creating a state of mental conflict. A spiritual seeker faces similar conflicts in daily life, such as choosing between worldly duties and spiritual practices aimed at attaining the Supreme Soul. The solution is to prioritize worldly duties, but perform them with the understanding that you seek nothing from the world, focusing on sacrifice and service. Worldly duties should be done for the service of others, with a spirit of sacrifice, which naturally leads to realizing the essence of the Supreme Soul. Thus, the path of Karma Yoga (selfless action) is an excellent way to attain the Supreme Soul. Through Karma Yoga, your intellect gains three realizations: (1) "I am a soul," (2) "I must detach from the world," and (3) "I must attain the essence of the Supreme Soul." When a Karma Yogi firmly accepts these three goals, cuts off all worldly attachments by considering them temporary, suppresses passion and ignorance, and prioritizes purity, the intellect becomes steady. In this steady state, the intellect is free from the restlessness of worldly and religious conflicts. The heart becomes free from dualities like attachment and aversion, and the mind remains steady, like the flame of a lamp, which is the state of an unwavering intellect. With a steady intellect and focused mind, merging with the essence of the Supreme Soul leads to an unshakeable state, where the intellect attains deep meditation. In this state, the intellect turns away from the world and towards the soul, achieving the yoga of equanimity. According to Shankaracharya, attaining this equanimous intellect through Karma Yoga leads to the state of liberation in this life.

Arjuna Uvācha

**sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhi-sthasya keśava
sthita-dhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim (2-54)**

Comm. In the practice of Karma Yoga, a person whose intellect or wisdom remains steady in equanimity is called a "Sthitaprajna" (one with stable wisdom). Their mental tendencies are always calm and peaceful. Such a person is known as Sthitaprajna. When the mental tendencies of a spiritually disciplined person are awakened in the knowledge of the all-pervading Brahman (Supreme Consciousness), they remain constantly absorbed in the Supreme Soul. This state is called Samadhi (deep meditative absorption). After hearing about the nature of the soul in Sankhya Yoga and the equanimity of mental tendencies in Buddhi Yoga from Lord Krishna, Arjuna develops a curiosity. He wants to know how a person with stable wisdom and one who has attained the truth of the Supreme Soul is

perceived by ordinary people. Arjuna has now shifted his focus from the dilemma of whether to fight in the war or not. He is eager to learn in detail about the practice of equanimity in Buddhi Yoga and its ultimate goal to attain liberation from worldly suffering. This eagerness is evident from the questions Arjuna asks Lord Krishna. He wants to know what unique characteristics are seen in the speech, behavior, sitting, standing, walking, and other physical actions of a perfected person in Buddhi Yoga. He also wants to know how the mental tendencies, renunciation of actions, and behavior of a person absorbed in the truth of the Supreme Soul create a specific impression among ordinary people. Overall, Arjuna wants to understand what signs indicate that someone is a “Tattvavit” (knower of truth). These signs can be followed by a spiritual aspirant to progress on the path of spiritual practice. The mind of a worldly person, engrossed in material pleasures, becomes restless and unsteady due to attachment to sensory enjoyment. Due to the imbalance of attachment and aversion in mental tendencies, the intellect remains unstable. This unstable intellect leads to a lack of coordination in actions, causing one to lose sight of their goal. On the other hand, a Sthitaprajna person remains detached from worldly matters and is constantly absorbed in the Supreme Soul. A person who has attained knowledge of the Supreme Soul transcends the qualities of Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance). For them, these qualities are merely names and have no real effect. The mind of such a person, free from the dualities of attachment and aversion, is liberated. Like an innocent child, the speech of a Sthitaprajna person is very simple and clear. For a great soul who has realized the truth of the Supreme Soul, the ego has completely dissolved in their inner being. Their mind, intellect, and consciousness take the form of pure awareness and remain constantly connected with the Supreme Soul. All physical and mental actions of such a spiritually connected person are related to the Supreme Lord, who transcends the three qualities (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas). This is the realization of Brahman (Supreme Consciousness). For such a person, the entire universe is filled with Brahman, and Brahman alone is the truth and the Supreme Lord. In this way, a Sthitaprajna and Samadhistha (one in meditative absorption) person remains established in eternal goodness and moves through the world with detachment. In this chapter, from verses 55 to 72, Lord Krishna answers all of Arjuna’s questions. He explains the method of practicing Buddhi Yoga and its utility in human life in a very clear manner.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tadocyate (2-55)**

Comm. Lord Krishna says: O Partha (Arjuna), when a person with disciplined intellect renounces all desires that arise in the mind, they become satisfied and content within their

own soul. At that time, they are called a Sthitaprajna. Their mind and intellect remain steady and calm at all times. You should understand this. Desires arise in the mind due to ignorance, seeking sensory pleasures in this world or the next, heavenly enjoyments, or ego-driven ambitions. Desires are distinct from the objects of the world and are not the mind itself. Various enjoyable objects in the world are perceived through the senses, creating a subtle desire in the mind for their attainment and enjoyment. This is called mental desire. Desire does not originate from the mind. The mind is merely an instrument. Desires arise in the mind and can also depart from it. Not acknowledging the independent existence of desire in the mind is the renunciation of desire. The word “Kama” means desire. “Sarvan Kaman” means all types of desires. These desires reside in the mind, meaning the nature of the mind is to desire. Enjoyable objects exist in the external world. However, the craving or desire to enjoy those objects resides in the mind. This desire exists in various forms or states. Vasana (latent desire) is the undeveloped form of desire. Some unfulfilled desires from past lives remain as impressions in this body and exist subtly as Vasana in the inner being, causing the experience of destined events (Prarabdha). As the body matures, these Vasanas develop and take the form of desires in the mind for enjoyment. When the absence of an enjoyable object is felt, and its necessity is realized in the inner being, it is called Spruha (aspiration). Spruha is the semi-developed form of desire. In the state of Spruha, desire influences both the mind and the intellect. When Spruha leads to effort or endeavor to attain the enjoyable object, it becomes the fully developed form of desire, called Kamana. Kamana fully dominates the mind, intellect, consciousness, and ego. The distorted form of desire is called Trishna (craving). Just as fire burns more intensely with fuel like ghee or oil, desire grows stronger with the indulgence in enjoyment, becoming Trishna. Even infinite material enjoyments cannot satisfy Trishna. In the words of Goswami Tulsidas, indulging in objects increases desire day by day, and it is never satisfied. The way to calm desire is not through sensory indulgence. By controlling the senses, the agitation of desire can be temporarily subdued, but this is not the complete renunciation of desire. No one can attain true satisfaction while keeping desire alive. The best way to completely renounce desire is through “realization of truth followed by surrender to God.” Without complete surrender to God, the cessation of desire is impossible. The Supreme Soul is the embodiment of infinite bliss. By directly experiencing the true nature of the eternal, pure, and conscious Supreme Soul, a state of eternal satisfaction arises in the inner being. This is the state of being satisfied within the soul by the soul itself. A Karma Yogi engaged in spiritual practice, while remaining absorbed in the truth of the Supreme Soul, also experiences supreme bliss through selfless service in the world. In this state, the craving for enjoyment naturally ceases. Satisfaction or contentment is the eliminator of desire. In this state of bliss, desire no longer finds a place in the inner being. As long as the mind and intellect are not free from desire, the inner being cannot turn toward the soul. The equanimity of mental tendencies is the state of eternal happiness and contentment. When a spiritual aspirant becomes completely free from desire and remains established in their

soul's true nature, attaining supreme bliss, they are called a Sthitaprajna. The eternal bliss attained by a desireless Karma Yogi surpasses even the heavenly pleasures imagined in realms like Indraloka, Devaloka, or Brahmaloaka. This bliss, arising from an eternal cause, never ends. Just as heat is inherent in the radiance of fire, bliss is inherent in the true nature of the soul. Seeking bliss in the external material world by diverting the mind and intellect from the soul is ignorance. When direct knowledge arises in the mind and intellect, the darkness of desires and Vasanas dissolves.

**duḥkheṣv anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣu vigata-spr̥haḥ
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate (2-56)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna explains how the characteristics of a Sthitaprajna person are outwardly expressed, answering Arjuna's question. A person whose mind is not disturbed by physical, material, or divine suffering is a Sthitaprajna. They have no craving for happiness. Their inner being is free from attachment, fear, and anger. Such a sage, who has reached the pinnacle of contemplation, is called a Sthitaprajna. They remain undisturbed in adverse circumstances caused by destiny, obstacles in performing duties, unfavorable outcomes, or criticism and insults. They consider suffering as the result of past sins and accept it calmly as God's grace for the purification of sins. A steady-minded sage always remains absorbed in the Supreme Soul. Their mental tendencies transcend all forms of mental imaginations and desires. A steady-minded contemplative person has no craving for any kind of happiness. This means they do not desire that sensory enjoyments, favorable outcomes, praise, or honor should always be present. They are not affected even slightly by the temporary happiness or suffering related to bodily identification. The way to alleviate the mental pain caused by worldly suffering is: (1) To firmly believe that as long as one lives in a body in this world, unfavorable situations—whether physical, material, destined, or caused by fate—are inevitable. When suffering arises, one should accept it with patience and steady intellect, taking appropriate steps as needed. (2) One should not seek the material cause of suffering. (3) One should not blame others for their situation. (4) One should firmly believe that this situation is temporary and will pass. Both happiness and suffering will surely come to an end. During times of mental distress, one should engage in self-reflection or service to others, as this practice quickly alleviates mental suffering. Attachment, fear, and anger are the three afflictions (Tapas). Attachment is the attraction in the mind toward objects that bring pleasure. This attraction is called Anuraga (affection) in the mind. If affection toward the world persists, it turns into craving, which disturbs mental tendencies. The fear of losing perishable enjoyable objects is called fear. Fear arises from mental imaginations caused by ignorance of reality. When one gains knowledge of the eternal and temporary, fear automatically disappears. The agitation or excitement in mental tendencies caused by the possibility of adversity is called anger. Anger is particularly related to ego. The thought that "everything should happen as I desire" is also a form of desire. This thought subtly resides in the ego. When actions

deviate from expectations or are obstructed by someone, anger arises. Anger disrupts mental tendencies and renders the intellect ineffective. Happiness, suffering, attachment, fear, and anger are specific tendencies of the mind. The presence or absence of these tendencies in a person is expressed through their speech, interactions with others, and behavior. A Sthitaprajna person, free from all these tendencies, remains absorbed in the truth of the Supreme Soul and moves through the world with detachment.

**yaḥ sarvatra 'nabhisnehas tat tat prāpya śubhāśubham
nābhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā (2-57)**

Comm. A Karma Yogi, even while being connected with all beings and objects in the world, remains free from affection. This means they do not form attachments or become attracted to living beings or material objects. Just as a swan swim in water but the water does not cling to its body, a Karma Yogi, despite being outwardly connected with people and objects, remains completely detached inwardly. A person with steady intellect does not have any affection for any object, person, or even their own body, children, or family. If attachment exists toward objects or people, the dualities of good and bad, virtue and vice arise in mental tendencies due to the results of actions. Attachment is the root cause of affection, desire, anger, fear, and all dualities. A worldly person becomes elated and speaks proudly when they achieve favorable results, boasting about their accomplishments. Alternatively, when results are unfavorable, they become sorrowful, despise the outcome, blame others, and disrespect or dishonor their actions. Due to the absence of attachment and aversion in the mental tendencies of a Karma Yogi, their intellect remains firmly established. A person whose mind is free from attachment and possessiveness has mental tendencies free from distortions, and their intellect is decisively established. Due to detachment from actions, resources, and outcomes, they do not perceive actions as good or bad, favorable or unfavorable. They find joy solely in performing their duties. Just as from the peak of a mountain, the grass, trees, valleys, and hills below do not appear distinctly separate, a Sthitaprajna person does not perceive worldly events as good or bad, virtuous or non-virtuous. The rarest and most unattainable state of supreme peace and bliss is not sought by a Yogi through connection with worldly objects. Therefore, they neither rejoice in favorable events nor grieve over unfavorable ones, considering judgments of good, bad, virtuous, or non-virtuous as God's work. A Karma Yogi believes in dedicating all actions to God. In response to Arjuna's question about how a Sthitaprajna speaks, Lord Krishna addresses this context. In the next verse, He explains how a Sthitaprajna sits, meaning their state of being.

**yadā samharate cāyaṁ kūrmō 'ngānīva sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā(2-58)**

Comm. When a tortoise senses danger from afar, it retracts its head, tail, hands, and feet inward, remaining still and lifeless. It protects itself from external enemies

with its strong shell. Similarly, a person who can withdraw their senses from the desires arising from form, taste, smell, sound, and touch, and keep their mind restrained within their heart, has a steady intellect. The foundation of spiritual practice is sense control. Regardless of the path—Jnana (knowledge), Karma (action), or Bhakti (devotion)—a spiritual aspirant begins their practice with sense control. Keeping the senses away from external enjoyable objects is not true restraint. Controlling the senses through the mind and intellect, directing their activities with willpower, is true self-restraint. The senses naturally engage in enjoyment without restriction if not controlled. The moment they are restrained from enjoyment, the mind becomes restless, and the intellect becomes unstable due to their influence. Until a spiritual aspirant detaches themselves from sensory pleasures, their intellect cannot remain steady in the truth of the Supreme Soul. Restraining the senses and keeping the mind controlled within the heart is the highest level of spiritual practice. In Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga, this is described as "Pratyahara," a key practice. With strong willpower, withdrawing the mind and senses from enjoyable objects is Pratyahara. To reach the stages of meditation (Dhyana) and absorption (Samadhi), detachment from the material world is essential. Swami Sivananda, in his commentary on the Gita, says: "One who has mastered Pratyahara is dead to the material world." No temporary object can influence a restrained person. A Yogi can use their senses for their well-being at any time and place.

**viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate(2-59)**

Comm. By restricting the senses from enjoying objects, one only externally detaches from those objects. However, the inner attachment to those objects does not cease. But for a Sthitaprajna person, both the attachment to the material world and the desire for sensory pleasures cease in their mind. Keeping the senses "fasting" means restraining them from the pleasures derived from form, taste, sound, smell, and touch. Even if the senses are externally restrained from enjoyment, the subtle attachment to enjoyment remains in the inner being. The craving for objects does not cease in the mind. Due to illness, a sorrowful environment, extreme fear, false prestige, or physical disability, the senses may temporarily refrain from enjoyment. Such disconnection from objects is due to forced circumstances or for show. For example, someone observing the Ekadashi fast may remain silent but express their thoughts through gestures or writing, preparing a list of foods for the Dwadashi feast from the day of Ekadashi. Many hypocritical babas and dishonest yoga gurus in today's society fall into this category. As long as the inner attachment to enjoyment persists, it is not true restraint. The attraction or craving for sensory enjoyment is called "Rasa" (taste). When a greedy person receives money or a lustful person meets a woman, the excitement in their mind is called "Vishaya Rasa" (taste of objects). By removing enjoyable objects from the senses, the objects themselves are eliminated, but the taste for them remains in the inner being. As long as the taste for enjoyment persists in the mind and intellect, one

cannot remain absorbed in the truth of the Supreme Soul or experience the divine taste of supreme bliss. Through the taste of service in Karma Yoga, the realization of truth in Jnana Yoga, and the taste of divine love in Bhakti Yoga, a spiritual aspirant becomes free from the taste of objects and cravings. The happiness derived from perishable objects is temporary and leads to deficiencies, fear, sorrow, and anxiety after attainment. When absorbed in the truth of the Supreme Soul, the intellect remains distinct from the world and aligned with the soul. When the mind is calm and the intellect is steady, one attains an eternal state of goodness. A wondrous, divine stream of bliss flows in the inner being, leading to absorption, enchantment, and immersion in mental tendencies. Upon attaining this bliss, the spiritual aspirant naturally refrains from sensory pleasures. This supreme bliss is beyond the senses, meaning the senses are incapable of experiencing such bliss. It is reflected only in pure consciousness. The self-satisfaction that arises in the inner being is direct realization. When complete, undivided, eternal bliss is attained, the senses refrain from temporary cravings. When all imbalances, desires, and Vasanas are eradicated from the inner being, the intellect remains steady in divine consciousness.

**ya tato hy api kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabham manah(2-60)**

Comm. The renunciation of desires and cravings for enjoyment begins with the practice of sense control. Without sense control, the stability of the intellect is impossible. Detaching the senses from the material world and making them free from attachment is not possible solely through intellectual reasoning. Even a vigilant person who discerns between truth and falsehood can have their mind drawn toward sensory enjoyment by the senses at any time. The only way to be free from the influence of the senses is through complete surrender to God. As long as there is identification with the body, a sense of doership, and the role of the enjoyer, even a wise and discerning person's senses are not fully controlled. Due to the sense of being an enjoyer, the attachment of the senses to enjoyable objects does not cease. To the question "Who is the enemy?" Lord Shankaracharya's answer is, "Your senses." To the question "Who is the friend?" the answer is, "The senses remain a friend as long as they are controlled." As long as attachment to objects persists, the restless senses continuously tempt and agitate the mind of even a wise person toward enjoyment. Just as a galloping horse is controlled by reins to reach its destination, if the reins slip, one suffers from the horse's kick. Similarly, if the senses slip from control, they make the aspirant lustful and drag them to a lower state. Controlling the senses is like declaring a disciplined war against them for a spiritual aspirant. The aspirant may face defeat many times in this battle but must learn from it and continue the effort. A spiritual aspirant should never believe, "I have fully controlled my senses." Until complete knowledge of the Supreme Soul is attained, the aspirant must remain vigilant like a guard toward the activities of the senses. The state of equanimity in the inner being is evident through sense control. Attachment

to objects is like the sharp weapon of the three qualities (Gunas) of Maya. Due to the activity of the Gunas, the senses are attracted to desires for enjoyment. When the mind is calm, the Rajas Guna is subdued, the Sattva Guna becomes active, and the mind turns toward the soul. When the intellect is established, the senses are fully controlled.

**tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta mat-parah
vaśe hi yasya indriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā (2-61)**

Comm. Becoming self-realized and remaining an exclusive devotee of God is called Matpara or Matparayana. When one completely surrenders to God, control over the senses happens automatically. This cannot be achieved through chanting, penance, worship, vows, charity, or pilgrimage. To restrain the senses from the pleasures of form, taste, touch, sound, and smell, one must constantly immerse oneself in the essence of the Supreme Self (Paramatma Tattva). Through the practice of constant absorption in the Supreme Self, desires, attachments, and other mental impurities gradually weaken. The mind's tendencies gradually become purified. The inner mind becomes free from attachment and aversion. Dualities like honor-dishonor, pleasant-unpleasant, pleasure-pain, and criticism-praise do not disturb the intellect. Pure consciousness awakens in the intellect. All actions performed by the mind and senses are perceived as being dedicated to God. When the intellect is absorbed in the Supreme Self, attaining supreme bliss, all senses turn away from worldly pleasures. Only through meditation on the Supreme Self (Matpara) can the senses be fully controlled. Controlling the senses through personal effort alone is extremely difficult. When the senses are fully controlled, the intellect attains stability. The ultimate goal of a Karma Yogi is to become Matparayana, devoted to the Supreme Being, and attain liberation in this life (Jivanmukti). In Shankaracharya's commentary, Matparayana means: "The inner Self of all beings is the Supreme Self, which is Vasudeva, and one's inner Self is non-different from Vasudeva." When the intellect is focused on this truth, all senses remain fully controlled. If the senses are not controlled and the intellect is not steady and absorbed in the Supreme Self, stopping thoughts of sensory objects is impossible. The human senses, mind, and intellect are designed to be constantly attracted toward the three modes of material nature (Prakriti). The senses cannot be controlled merely through restraint or prohibition. Through the practice of surrender and contemplation of the divine, the mind must be turned away from sensory thoughts and directed toward the Self. Controlling the senses becomes relatively easy through contemplation of the Self. Because in Self-contemplation, the egoistic identification with the body ("I") first dies. When the "I" dies, the sense of being the doer and enjoyer ceases to exist. When attachment to sensory enjoyment ends, the senses become devoid of desire for sensory pleasures. Equanimity arises in the mind's tendencies. After this, one desire does not give rise to another. The senses remain under the practitioner's control. One whose senses are under control is called Jitendriya (master of the senses). One who is Jitendriya is also Sthitaprajna (established in wisdom).

**dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate (2-62)**

**krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ
smṛti-bhramaśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇāśyati (2-63)**

Comm. In these two verses, Lord Krishna explains how worldly people, engrossed in sensory thoughts, ultimately lose their discriminative power and, as a final consequence, lose their human virtues and are born in lower species. Thinking about sensory objects causes mental impurities in the inner mind. The knowledge provided by Lord Krishna in these two verses acts like a preventive antidote, helping practitioners free themselves from mental afflictions and remain established in the Self. When an ordinary person contemplates pleasurable or attractive objects, attachment to those objects arises in the mind. From attachment, the desire to obtain that object is born. While trying to fulfill that primary desire, one must satisfy many related desires. This involves facing numerous obstacles. When these desires are thwarted, anger arises in the inner mind due to the intellect's aversion. Due to bodily identification, desires for status, power, and respect arise, and obstacles to these desires also lead to anger. In a state of anger and agitation, the inner mind severely lacks discriminative power, and all mental processes become disrupted. This delusion arising from anger is extremely foolish. Desire, anger, greed, and attachment—these four mental processes give rise to delusion. Delusion caused by desire clouds discriminative power. Delusion caused by greed destroys the ability to discern between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. Delusion caused by attachment destroys equanimity, leading to bias. When the inner mind is deluded due to anger, memory is lost, and knowledge of time, place, and context disappears. Loss of memory causes the intellect to lose its discriminative power. The intellect becomes confused about what should or should not be done. When the intellect loses its discriminative power, a person becomes devoid of understanding what is beneficial or harmful. The person descends to an animalistic level. The destruction of human virtues is the true downfall for a human being. The inner mind that contemplates sensory objects becomes a field for sensory indulgence. Attachment to sensory objects is the seed of the tree of sensory enjoyment. When this seed is planted in the sensory-attached inner mind, it grows into a tree of sensory indulgence. As the branches of this tree of sensory indulgence spread, storms of desire, anger, and delusion surround it from all sides. When the tree of sensory indulgence is damaged, tremors arise in the inner mind. As a result, the intellect and discernment are destroyed, and knowledge of what is beneficial or harmful is lost. The mind and intellect become restless. The destruction of the intellect is the fall of a human from their human qualities. When the intellect is destroyed, a person abandons their duties and engages in forbidden actions. This leads to harshness, violence, vengeance, and cowardice in their behavior. After death, they are born in lower species from their current state. Therefore, instead of sensory

contemplation, the inner mind should be made a foundation for Self-contemplation, planting the seed of attaining supreme bliss. When the tree of attaining supreme bliss grows in the inner mind, a person becomes free from the bondage of birth and death.

**rāga-dveṣa-vimuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran
ātma-vaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati (2-64)**

**prasāde sarva-duḥkhānām hānir asyopajāyate
prasanna-cetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate(2-65)**

Comm. A Karma Yogi whose inner mind is controlled, senses are under their command, and free from attachment and aversion, maintains a pure inner mind even while performing duties and engaging with sensory objects. The purity of the inner mind keeps the heart serene. When the heart is serene, all worldly afflictions and pains are destroyed. Such a pure heart quickly becomes steady in the Supreme Self. In the previous verses, Lord Krishna explained how sensory indulgence with attachment leads to the downfall of worldly people. In these two verses, he describes how, without attachment or aversion, engaging with sensory objects through controlled senses leads to attaining serenity. The term “senses” (Indriya) means created by Indra, given by Indra, and dedicated to Indra, where Indra is the deity of action. Senses are created by Indra, given by Indra, and meant for Indra’s purpose. Just as enjoyment is obtained according to karma, the body and senses are obtained to perform actions according to one’s disposition. Humans receive hands, animals receive four legs, and birds receive wings to fly, based on their karma. Attachment to sensory enjoyment and the resulting thoughts in the mind and intellect are the cause of a person’s downfall. This attachment transforms into intense desire. Desire and anger, as well as attachment and aversion, are essentially the same. When desire becomes fixed, it turns into attachment (Raga), and when anger becomes fixed, it turns into aversion (Dvesha). Due to the distinction between the stable and unstable states of the mind and intellect, desire and anger are called tendencies of the mind. Attachment and aversion are the tamasic (ignorant) forms of the intellect. Attachment and aversion bind a person. By abandoning them, actions do not lead to bondage. Actions performed by the senses under the guidance of an intellect free from attachment and aversion do not bind. The senses naturally engage only with their respective objects. For example, the knowledge senses (eyes, ears, etc.) perceive sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, while the action senses (hands, feet, etc.) perform tasks like speaking, walking, or sitting. When the mind and intellect, which drive the senses, are free from attachment and aversion, the senses remain under the control of the Self. The practitioner can engage or withdraw the senses at will. The question arises: if the mind and intellect are free from attachment and aversion, why would they prompt the senses to engage with objects? For a Karma Yogi, the answer is that even without attachment or aversion, the senses engage in actions for the welfare of the world or the benefit of others. This means that even if the senses engage in sensory objects, the absence of attachment and aversion

ensures that actions do not bind. As discussed in the previous verse regarding “Matparah,” if sensory engagement is done for the pleasure of God, it does not lead to bondage. Actions performed with this attitude result in attaining Prasada (divine contentment). Prasada is a state of the inner mind where no agitation exists. Sensory indulgence driven by attachment and aversion provides momentary pleasure, called Samriddhyānanda (prosperity-based joy). This pleasure diminishes over time and eventually disappears completely. When the senses engage in selfless actions without attachment or aversion, the resulting joy is Shāntyananda (peaceful bliss), which is the nature of the Self. This bliss is not experienced through the senses but is realized by the Self in its true nature. In Vedānta philosophy, the Self is described as blissful (Anandamaya) because of this. Mental agitation or distress is the destroyer of this bliss. Even the slightest wave of agitation in the mind hides this bliss. This bliss is experienced by the Self only when the mind and intellect are free from distress. For example, a weary traveler, exhausted by the scorching sun, removes their burden and sits under a tree’s shade, momentarily freeing the inner mind from agitation. At that moment, a glimpse of Shāntyananda is experienced. Whenever the inner mind is free from desires, attachments, agitation, attachment, and aversion, Shāntyananda is experienced. This Shāntyananda is referred to as Prasada. “Prasadaṣṭu Prasannata”: The eternal serenity of the Self is the form of Prasada, attained by a practitioner who engages in selfless actions through senses free from attachment and aversion. Those striving on the path of yoga, not yet fully realized but making efforts to control the Self, are called Vidheyatma (self-disciplined). Attaining Prasada destroys all sorrows. Sorrow is the inability to experience the Self’s serene nature due to mental agitation. By removing this agitation, how can sorrow remain? Just as darkness disappears in the presence of light, sorrow is destroyed in the Self’s blissful nature. The intellect of a person with a serene heart quickly becomes steady. The heart (Chitta) is the fourth component of the inner mind, after mind, intellect, and ego. It is situated above the mind, intellect, and ego. Scriptures describe the heart as Chitta, the closest to the Self’s nature of knowledge. When the heart is free from agitation, it takes the form of pure consciousness and becomes capable of experiencing the Self’s blissful nature.

**nāsti buddhir ayuktasya na cāyuktasya bhāvanā
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham (2-66)**

Comm. A person who does not practice yoga cannot control their senses and is attached to material pleasures, so their mind lacks firm wisdom. Due to various desires and attachment to enjoyment, such a person’s mind becomes restless. Because of the urge for desires and expectations of results, their intellect does not remain stable. Due to an unstable intellect, they cannot focus on selfless actions or feel a sense of duty, and instead, they are driven by a desire for pleasure. Being immersed in the material world makes them turn away from attaining divine truth and living a liberated life. Their inner self does not develop a sense of balance. Their mind and intellect, instead of being rooted in the soul, wander in material pleasures. Due to lust, anger, attachment, hatred, greed,

and jealousy, their inner self remains constantly disturbed. Without spiritual practice and self-knowledge, such a person cannot find peace or joy. Their mind does not experience clarity, nor do they attain eternal divine bliss. How can such an uncontrolled person find true happiness? By staying engrossed in material pleasures, they remain trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, attaining divine truth is the ultimate goal of human life. By prioritizing firm wisdom and practicing spiritual discipline, one can attain peace and joy. True happiness is achieved only when desires and cravings are overcome. When a spiritual seeker can keep their mind and intellect steady in divine truth, they attain eternal joy, which is everlasting happiness.

**indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām yaṃ mano 'nuvidhīyate
tad asya harati prajñāṃ vāyur nāvam ivāmbhasi(2-67)**

Comm. The senses are naturally drawn to their respective objects and wander in the material world. When even one sense becomes strongly attached to its object, it pulls the mind toward indulgence in pleasure. In other words, the mind gets absorbed in enjoying that object. As soon as the senses pull the mind, the spiritual seeker loses focus on duty and becomes driven by a desire for pleasure. When the desire for pleasure arises, firm wisdom is destroyed. The senses, with the mind's help, seek out material pleasures. When the mind is dragged by the senses, it becomes restless with cravings for enjoyment. If the mind does not align with the senses, the senses cannot even perceive the objects of pleasure. So how can such a sense overpower the intellect? Just as a boat on water loses direction when strong winds push it off course if the sailor loses control, similarly, uncontrolled senses of an undisciplined person steal their intellect and destroy their reasoning. However, a skilled sailor can use the wind to guide the boat to its destination. Similarly, when a yogi's senses are controlled, they help stabilize the mind and intellect, aiding in attaining spiritual realization. The five sense objects—form, taste, touch, sound, and smell—are linked to the senses of sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell, respectively. Each of these sense objects can attract a being and lead to their downfall. For example, a moth is drawn to a flame's light, a bee to a flower's scent, an elephant to the touch of a female elephant, a deer to the sound of a flute, and a fish to taste, all leading to their death. Similarly, if the mind gets attached to any external sensory object, the person's wisdom and discernment are lost. For someone whose five senses constantly chase material objects, their mind and intellect remain in chaos, which is easy to imagine. Just as a rudderless ship caught in a storm fails to reach its destination and sinks, uncontrolled senses drown an undisciplined person in material pleasures, destroying their intellect and leading to their downfall. Sensory indulgence is like scratching an itch—it feels good momentarily but worsens the condition and harms the body. The loss of intellect due to sensory indulgence happens often to spiritual seekers. However, a yogi practicing selfless action learns from each mistake, avoids repeating it, and remains focused on attaining divine truth, returning to their spiritual path .

**tasmād yasya mahā-bāho nigrhītāni sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā(2-68)**

Comm. The Lord says: O mighty-armed one! A disciplined person who keeps their mind and all senses restrained from their objects at all times has a stable intellect. The senses naturally tend to engage in their respective objects without restraint. This is because, since time immemorial, living beings have been indulging in sensory pleasures through these senses. Controlling this natural tendency of the senses and removing attachment to material objects is what it means to keep the senses restrained. Additionally, every sense object evokes attraction or aversion in the senses. A yogi practicing selfless action does not fall under the influence of attraction or aversion and uses sensory objects only for necessary, practical purposes for their well-being. In such actions, there is no trace of desire for pleasure. The term “restrained” means the senses are fully controlled, and the seeker has no attachment or attraction to material objects. By letting go of identification with the body, the sense of “I” or ego dies. When the ego is absent, the desire for pleasure does not arise. In the absence of the desire for pleasure, the senses automatically come under control without needing to be forcibly restrained. For someone whose mind and senses are controlled, their intellect remains firmly stable, and they are known as one with steady wisdom. A life of self-control is worth living, with the sole aim of attaining divine truth

**yā niśā sarva-bhūtānāṁ tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneh (2-69)**

Comm. Here, Lord Krishna explains how a disciplined, self-realized person and a materialistic person perceive the world differently while living in it. A disciplined yogi, focused on attaining spiritual wisdom and liberation from the cycle of birth and death, strives for self-realization in the world. In contrast, a materialistic person, attached to sensual pleasures, believes the human body is meant only for fulfilling desires and indulgences. Such a person is constantly engaged in accumulating material things. For a materialistic person, spiritual knowledge and the vision of God are like darkness, similar to night. A materialistic person is completely ignorant about spiritual truths. Spiritual knowledge is like clear daylight, while material pleasures are like the darkness of night. Ordinary people, due to their nature, do not enter the path of spirituality, so they remain unaware of spiritual truths. A yogi, connected to spiritual wisdom, remains constantly awake in the realization of divine truth. What is darkness (ignorance) for a materialistic person is clear daylight (spiritual clarity) for a yogi. A worldly person is always active in pursuing sensual pleasures, chasing after wealth, family, and status. For a yogi, these material pleasures are like complete darkness. What a materialist considers real, a spiritually realized person sees as illusion (maya). A yogi is not attracted to material pleasures, nor does a materialistic person strive for spiritual realization. The state of self-realization is

like night for an ordinary person, but a disciplined yogi is always aware and awake in this state. Conversely, the material pleasures that excite an ordinary person are like night (irrelevant) for a self-realized sage. The word “night” also means “peace.” A disciplined person, even when engaged in worldly duties, remains unattached and free from desire or aversion, attaining peace and joy. A worldly person, immersed in sensual pleasures, considers material accumulation as everything and does not think about spiritual truths. A karma yogi understands both spiritual truths and the nature of the world. A worldly person sees only the “night” (material world), while a yogi sees both the “day” (spiritual truth) and the “night” (material world). A greedy person only knows how to accumulate wealth, but a person who renounces wealth experiences both accumulation and renunciation. To truly understand the world, one must detach from it, as the world is not the true self. Similarly, to know God, one must become one with Him, as the true self is not separate from God. In practical life, the metaphor of day and night can be realized. In ordinary life, people often face situations where their efforts seem surrounded by despair. An ordinary person may feel discouraged in such situations. However, a self-realized person faces these situations differently. By surrendering to God and dedicating actions to Him, a self-realized person remains engaged in duties, and this state is like daylight for them.

**āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭhām
samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntim āpnoti na kāma-kāmī (2-70)**

Comm. Just as thousands of rivers flow into the ocean without causing it to overflow, the ocean remains steady and unaffected. The ocean’s size or state does not change significantly due to the water entering from rivers or evaporating due to the sun. The ocean has two states: calm and turbulent. Despite being complete, the ocean’s form and state remain unchanged by the water entering or leaving it. Similarly, no matter how many material or spiritual experiences a self-realized person encounters, their inner state remains undisturbed. The mind of a self-realized person is filled with infinite joy and remains steady. Such a person, immersed in divine bliss, remains calm, stable, peaceful, and joyful in all situations. Just as the ocean does not need water from others to maintain its existence, a self-realized person does not need worldly pleasures. Like the ocean that does not cross its boundaries, a self-realized person remains unaffected while engaging with worldly objects according to their situation. The entire creation is full of joy. When viewed materially, mountains, rivers, and skies appear as mere rocks, soil, or celestial bodies. But when seen with spiritual insight as God’s creation, they bring joy. Viewing God’s creation with spiritual vision unites external and internal joy. The soul’s true nature is like a vast ocean of joy. When worldly objects are seen with divine vision rather than material desire, they merge into the ocean of divine bliss within a self-realized person’s heart. The mind of a self-realized person remains steady and complete, like an ocean of

divine joy. Their inner balance is never disturbed by worldly thoughts. Established in spiritual truth, they attain eternal peace and divine joy. A materialistic person, driven by desires, becomes excited by acquiring worldly things. Such a person repeatedly indulges in sensual pleasures. A person consumed by desires can never attain true peace. Their mind remains restless, filled with thoughts of material objects, agitation, and sorrow. They can never achieve lasting peace.

**viḥāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṁś carati niḥspṛhaḥ
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati (2-71)**

Comm. A great person who gives up all desires for sensual pleasures achieves ultimate bliss and eternal peace. They abandon attachment to both obtained and unobtained things. They live in the world free from possessiveness and ego. After attaining this state, nothing remains unachieved. In this verse, Lord Krishna explains the path of renunciation for those practicing Karma Yoga. The ultimate goal of a Karma Yogi is to attain supreme peace and joy. To reach this goal, a Yogi must let go of desires caused by the senses. They must become free from possessiveness and ego. The desire to obtain something not yet acquired is called “craving.” Being unattached to sensory pleasures is called “detachment.” Feeling a strong need or lack for something is called “longing.” Longing is a subtle form of craving. A Karma Yogi starts by trying to control their senses and giving up cravings and desires. In the final stage of practice, they become indifferent to even the necessities of life. Whether the body survives or not, or whether they get essentials, becomes unimportant. This is because they are close to attaining ultimate bliss. Being free from possessiveness means not feeling attachment to worldly things. Thinking “my wife, my son, my house, my wealth, my status” creates possessiveness. When the mind connects with the body and feels ownership, it creates a sense of a separate self. This separate self is the ego, the sense of “I.” For example, thinking “I am a scholar, I am wealthy, I am intelligent” is ego. The ego creates a sense of “I” as the doer and connects to things as “mine.” Both “I” and “mine” are imaginary and not real. Worldly things exist outside, and without the soul, there is no “I.” Seeing the world while identifying with the body distorts perception and creates ego. Ego is the sense of “I,” and attachment to things is the sense of “mine.” “I” and “mine” are interconnected. The sense of “I” and “mine” binds a person to actions and their consequences. Among longing, possessiveness, and ego, ego is the root cause. If the sense of “I” is removed, the sense of “mine” cannot exist. Without “I,” who will have desires? Attachment arises for things already obtained. Desire arises for things not yet obtained. Giving up attachment leads to a state of desirelessness. Giving up desire builds the ability to be detached. The body’s needs make a person dependent. Thinking the body is “I” creates needs. Realizing “I am the soul, the observer” removes attachment to worldly things. The body and the world are just things to be observed. The observer is always separate from what is observed. This realization makes a person free

from ego and steady in wisdom. The body is made of the world, so its actions should benefit the world. Thinking the body belongs to the world removes the need for personal gain. This mindset frees a Karma Yogi from possessiveness. When desires, longing, possessiveness, and ego are completely removed, inner peace is naturally experienced.

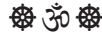
**eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha naināṁ prāpya vimuhyati
sthitvāsyām anta-kāle 'pi brahma-nirvāṇam ṛcchati(2-72)**

Comm. To remove Arjuna's confusion, Lord Krishna teaches Karma Yoga. This verse explains the ultimate goal of human life and how to achieve it. A Karma Yogi gives up sensory desires and possessiveness, becoming ego-free. This leads to the state of Brahman, the highest state of unity with the infinite. In this state, the world feels like a dream. A great person who attains Brahman never falls back into delusion. Delusion is thinking the soul is one with the body. Not knowing the true self, reality, or duties is delusion. In the state of Brahman, identification with the body ends. The senses, mind, and intellect merge into the soul. Delusion is completely destroyed and does not return. Brahman is the seer, the seen, and the act of seeing. The doer, the means, and the action become one. This is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi in the scriptures. In Samadhi, the soul directly experiences Brahman. Realizing the soul's unity with Brahman is called Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman). A steady-minded person in this state no longer lives for worldly things. All ties with temporary things are cut, ending individual existence. No one remains to call the body "I" or "mine." The false sense of self disappears. When the ego dies, Brahman Nirvana (liberation) is attained. This ends material life and cuts ties with the physical world. Knowing the soul as one with Brahman, a person overcomes death and gains immortality. Achieving this state during life makes a Karma Yogi liberated while living. They do not return to identifying with the body. Within 21 days, they may leave the body and merge with Brahman. After many lifetimes of practice, Yogis, sages, and saints attain this state. Even at the moment of death, if this state is reached, the Yogi attains the divine abode. At death, when the soul leaves, the mind and intellect disconnect from the body. If, due to past practice, good impressions, or divine grace, the mind focuses on truth, Brahman is experienced. This is called Brahma Nirvana, a direct realization. A great person who attains this while alive is liberated. Leaving the body in this state, a Karma Yogi is free from material life. The soul returns to its original state, the ultimate home of all beings. In this chapter, Lord Krishna teaches Sankhya Yoga and Karma Yoga. He shows the practical path of Karma Yoga. A dedicated practitioner surely attains ultimate bliss. A person must start with firm resolve and disciplined practice. They must give up a materialistic life and begin a disciplined one. This is achievable, and practice leads to perfection. Following the Yoga path brings a unique sense of calm to the mind. This calmness is true peace and joy. Once experienced, this peace remains unforgettable until death. Understanding the Karma Yoga of the Gita inspires one to practice it. Lord Krishna's words have the power

to transform a materialistic mind into a spiritual one. People chase worldly things for a bit of joy. If God promises the greatest joy, why ignore it? Why hesitate to follow the path to one's own welfare? Anyone who gets a chance to read the Gita gains everything. May everyone soon understand the Gita's teachings by God's grace.

**“Om Tat Sat : Iti Srimad Bhagavad Geetaasu Upanishatsu Brahma
Vidyaayaam Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishnaarjuna Samvaade Sankhya Yoga Naama
Dviteeyo'dhyaayah.”**

Thus, chanting “Om Tat Sat,” the second chapter of the Gita, called Sankhya Yoga, concludes. This chapter is part of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in the Gita, a scripture of Brahma Vidya and Yoga Shastra.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter-3 (Karma Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir janārdana
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi keśava (3-1)

vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tad ekaṁ vada niścitya yena śreya ‘ham āpnuyām (3-2)

Comm. After receiving teachings from Lord Krishna on Sankhya Yoga and Karma Yoga to dispel his confusion, Arjuna’s mind is conflicted about the importance of action versus knowledge. Arjuna asks Lord Krishna to resolve his confusion and tell him the path that will lead to his well-being . Arjuna says: O Janardana, destroyer of ignorance! If knowing the Supreme Truth is better than engaging in action, and this is your opinion, why do you repeatedly urge me to engage in the violent and terrifying act of war? Your mixed and confusing words have left my mind doubtful and even more deluded. O Keshava! You are the creator, sustainer, and destroyer. You are my dearest friend and wish for my welfare. Due to my ignorance, I cannot understand the essence of your words. Please be gracious and clearly tell me one definite path that will lead to my well-being. To answer Arjuna’s question and resolve his many doubts, Lord Krishna’s detailed teachings and the vision of His universal form are presented in

the subsequent chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. In response to Arjuna's question, Lord Krishna explains what prescribed duties are, the consequences of not performing them, which actions cause bondage, and which actions lead to liberation, elaborating on these in this chapter. Because of these teachings, this chapter is named Karma Yoga. Once, a disciple approached a guru in an ashram to seek spiritual practice. On the first day, the guru gave instructions on ashram rules and spiritual practices.

One instruction was: "Eat food for the body, but you should not eat as the self." The disciple, unable to understand the guru's ambiguous instruction, asked: O Guru! I don't understand whether I should eat or not eat in the ashram. The guru replied: My instruction is clear and purposeful. The solution is: You must provide food daily to sustain the body, but if you eat with the mindset of "I am eating food," it awakens attachment to taste. Instead, if you eat with the mindset of offering food to the inner divine, the act becomes one of devotion. Offering food to the body in this way carries a sense of surrender. Eating food is an action, and the mindset or attitude behind this action is knowledge. When action and knowledge are harmonized, the action becomes selfless and carries a sense of surrender. When Lord Krishna explained Sankhya Yoga, He said: "You are not the body yourself – your true self, the Atma, is different from the body. Many bodies have been connected with the Atma and have been destroyed. Attaining knowledge of the Atma is the ultimate goal of human birth. The body is perishable. The destruction of the body does not destroy the Atma. The Atma is indestructible. Therefore, one should not grieve or feel sorrow over the destruction of the body." In this way, the Lord taught the truth about the Atma. When He explained Karma Yoga, He said: "Take refuge in Buddhi Yoga (yoga of intelligence/wisdom). A person endowed with buddhi renounces both good deeds and bad deeds. When buddhi crosses over the delusion (moha), one attains the fearless supreme state. Desire-motivated action is far inferior to Buddhi Yoga." According to Arjuna's understanding, the word "buddhi" means "jnana" (knowledge). Therefore, Arjuna felt that in Karma Yoga, the Lord was giving greater importance to the glory of knowledge and placing action (karma) in a lower position. At the same time, from statements like: "You have the right only to action" ("karmaṇyevādhikāras te"), "Perform action" ("kuru karmaṇi"), "Therefore, fight" ("tato yuddhāya yujyasva"), Arjuna also understood that action should not be abandoned. But everything the Lord said about body, soul, equanimity, buddhi, knowledge, and action appeared mixed-up and confusing to Arjuna. In all this, he could not find a clear solution to his main problem – whether he should fight the war or not – and his moral dilemma remained unresolved. The pain and suffering in his heart did not subside; instead, he felt even more deluded, as if he was still in darkness. He did not feel that he had received from the Lord what he truly wanted. If a person becomes established in knowledge and attains the highest peace and joy in life, then why should he fight at all? Instead, Arjuna thought it would be better for him to leave the battlefield, live in solitude, and remain absorbed in contemplation of the Atma. When several paths are

shown to reach the same destination, it is natural for a person to ask which path is easier or better. Similarly, after hearing the Lord's teachings on Atma-jnana and Karma Yoga, many doubts and confusions arose in Arjuna's mind. Therefore, placing complete trust in the Lord, Arjuna prays to Him to definitely show one clear path by following which he can be freed from this sorrow and grief and attain his true welfare.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha
jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām karma-yogena yoginām (3-3)**

Comm. The Lord says: Oh sinless Arjuna! In this world, there are two paths for people to attain the Supreme Truth and find peace and joy through spiritual practice. One path is followed by the Sankhya Yogi, and the other by the Karma Yogi. For the Sankhya Yogi, the path is devotion to knowledge, and for the Karma Yogi, it is devotion to selfless action. Not all people have the same inclinations. Some people are eager to work for the welfare of living beings, improving life, and transforming energy in the world. Others prefer to detach from physical actions, reflect on creation, existence, and dissolution, and contemplate the Creator to understand the true nature of themselves and the world. Those who follow the path of detachment are Jnana Yogis, and those who engage in action are Karma Yogis. The paths of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga complement each other. Both paths aim to connect the soul with the Supreme and break free from worldly attachments to attain liberation or the divine state. A Sankhya Yogi reflects deeply on truth and illusion, soul and non-soul, spirit and nature, and through discernment, first lets go of attachment to the body from their mind. In Sankhya Yoga, letting go of attachment to the body is essential, whether or not one abandons external actions. When ego is eliminated, the practitioner becomes self-realized, breaks worldly ties, and remains established in the soul. The Sankhya Yogi deeply understands spiritual truths, applies them, and gains knowledge through experience. With this knowledge, the practitioner sees the soul and the Supreme as one, realizing their unity with the Divine. The visible world appears like a dream, and the practitioner experiences the Divine everywhere. When a Sankhya Yogi focuses solely on the Supreme Truth beyond the perishable and imperishable, surrendering completely, they naturally attain the path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga). Based on their social order, nature, abilities, and circumstances, a Karma Yogi performs prescribed duties justly, avoids sensory pleasures, remains detached from the results of actions, stays balanced in success and failure, and gives up all selfish intentions to become established in Yoga. Swami Sivananda explains that Jnana Yoga requires four internal practices: strong reasoning, emotional detachment, six virtues: those are mental focus, sense control, patience, detachment from material desires, faith, and peace, and a desire for liberation. One cannot practice both Karma

Yoga and Jnana Yoga simultaneously. Through Karma Yoga, the mind is purified, and the Karma Yogi naturally gains knowledge of the soul and non-soul. By performing prescribed duties for the welfare of oneself and the world without selfish motives, one understands what actions are right and wrong. When there is no attachment to actions or their results, the actions become selfless. Selfless actions purify the mind, making it free from attachment and aversion, leading to mental balance. This balance brings a calm mind and steady intellect. A Karma Yogi attains the divine state and becomes liberated in this life. A Karma Yogi sees the Lord as the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the universe and dedicates their body to serving Him for the world's welfare. By following Karma Yoga, a Yogi may later attain Jnana Yoga or Bhakti Yoga and achieve liberation. In Karma Yoga, by dedicating all actions to the Lord and believing "there is nothing but God," one surrenders fully, which becomes the path of devotion. While performing selfless actions, a Karma Yogi feels contentment in the soul. Actions that bring soul-level satisfaction are free from sensory attachments. This leads to a mind free from attachment and aversion, gradually reducing identification with the body. In this state, a practitioner moves from Karma Yoga to Jnana Yoga. Thus, Karma Yoga prepares the ground for all other spiritual paths. The Lord's teaching of Karma Yoga is not meant for sages meditating in Himalayan caves but for worldly people immersed in material life.

**na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'śnute
na ca saṁnyasanād eva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati (3-4)**

Comm. Without performing actions, no one can ever become free from attachment and aversion or achieve a state of balance. Similarly, if you only stop doing actions outwardly without giving up attachment to their results in your mind and intellect, you cannot achieve spiritual success or remain established in the self. Actions that are free from the desire for sense pleasures and where the mind is unaffected by success or failure are called selfless actions (nishkama karma). The power of selfless action lies in performing work without expecting any results, which is called "nishkarmata" (selfless action). Performing duties prescribed by scriptures without desire does not cause bondage from actions. Therefore, without starting action, one cannot achieve the state of selfless action. According to some philosophical texts, Sankhya yogis attain the state of Brahman by completely renouncing all actions by nature. However, the Bhagavad Gita does not approve of this view.

As long as the body exists, performing actions is unavoidable. Therefore, renouncing action means giving up attachment to the results of actions and dedicating the outcomes to God, which leads to selfless action and liberation. By performing duties in the material world, the heart becomes purified. Once the mind is purified, adopting the path of renunciation makes it easier to attain knowledge of Brahman. In both Karma Yoga

and Jnana Yoga, God advises not to abandon action but to detach the mind and intellect from the connection to its results. A Karma Yogi considers the body as part of the world and dedicates themselves to the welfare of others, performing scripturally prescribed actions, maintaining a desireless relationship with the world. Similarly, in Sankhya Yoga, a seeker renounces identification with the body, understanding that all actions arise from the qualities of nature interacting with each other, and remains established as a witness in their true self. Through this meditative practice, when detachment arises, all connections with the world are severed, leading to selfless action and liberation. Without intense detachment, it is difficult to give up attachment to actions in Sankhya Yoga. However, in Karma Yoga, by performing actions for the service of others and offering the results to God, attachment is removed. When prescribed duties are performed, the heart becomes pure, and detachment naturally arises. Success in both paths is achieved by those who have no attachment to the material.

**na hi kaścīt kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ (3-5)**

Comm. Without a doubt, a person cannot remain without action even for a moment in any situation. This is because all humans are compelled to act due to the qualities born of nature. Actions are related to the body. Sitting, standing, sleeping, and even breathing are actions. At the mental level, the efforts and reactions of the mind, intellect, and senses are also actions. Relationships with the world, both externally and mentally, are actions. In the realm of nature, nothing from the smallest particle to the largest entity is inactive. Everything in the world is constantly changing. The term “changing” means being influenced by the flow of transformation. Nature does not allow anything to remain still. Every object born from nature moves toward destruction every moment. The body, made of the five elements, moves toward destruction every moment, and this process is called “action.” The impressions of actions from past lives remain in this life as tendencies, compelling a person to act. Depending on a person’s nature, their actions are influenced differently by the dominance of one of the three qualities: goodness, passion, or ignorance. This is why it is said that a person is compelled to act under the influence of these qualities. In Sankhya Yoga, the balance of these qualities is considered nature, and their imbalance is considered action. Therefore, nature is the cause, and the qualities are the effect. For a person who transcends these qualities, there is no identification with the body, and thus no sense of being the doer. Therefore, the actions performed by the body of such a transcendent person are not connected to anything and do not create bondage.

**karma-indriyāṇi samyamya ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate (3-6)**

**yas tv indriyāṇi manasā niyamyārabhate’rjuna
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogaṁ asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate (3-7)**

Comm . A foolish person who forcibly restrains their senses from external pleasures but mentally indulges in sensory objects is a hypocrite. However, O Arjuna, a wise person who controls all senses through the mind, remains detached from actions and their results, and practices Karma Yoga through the senses is considered superior. Lord Krishna previously stated that action is inevitable for humans. In these verses, he explains the relationship between actions and senses, identifying who is considered superior and who is deemed foolish or ignorant. Whether an action binds or liberates depends on the connection of the mind, intellect, and senses with the action. Actions are linked to the sensory objects of the world. The desire for pleasure arises first in the mind when encountering objects, people, or situations. When sensory objects appear, the mind perceives them through the senses. Due to efforts in this life or tendencies from past lives, the qualities of goodness, passion, or ignorance in the mind create attraction or aversion toward objects. When the senses connect with or detach from objects with a pleasure-seeking mindset, desires are fulfilled, leading to temporary happiness. Thus, the mind plays a primary role in seeking and enjoying worldly pleasures, from the rise of desire to satisfaction. Over many lives, the soul, bound to the body, remains engrossed in sensory pleasures, causing the senses to constantly chase such joys. Due to destiny or intense effort, in some lives, a person turns away from sensory pleasures and directs the mind toward spiritual liberation. A yoga practitioner initially disciplines the senses through the mind, engaging them in actions for the world’s welfare. Even if the senses interact with objects, the mind remains undisturbed due to detachment from actions and their outcomes. With steady intellect, the mind maintains balance, achieving pure consciousness and supreme bliss beyond sensory pleasures. Karma Yoga combines “karma” (duty) and “yoga” (offering the results of actions to God before performing them). A person who controls the senses through the mind and performs actions with the intent of Karma Yoga is considered the best in society. Another type of person has an intense desire for worldly pleasures in their mind. These desires constantly fuel thoughts of sensory enjoyment and new cravings. However, due to fear of shame, physical limitations, or to pose as a saint for wealth or fame, they outwardly restrain their senses. They pretend to be great renunciants, keeping their senses away from pleasures externally. But mentally, they face no barrier to indulging in sensory pleasures. Such people are called hypocrites and deceivers by Lord Krishna. These inhumane individuals’ resort to false behavior to fulfill their selfish desires, deceiving society.

**niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hy akarmaṇaḥ
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te na prasid’dhyed akarmaṇaḥ (3-8)**

Comm. Actions like penance, vows, fasting, and worship, performed according to scriptures, are called prescribed actions. The term “prescribed actions” refers to duties approved by scriptures and the proper observance of duties based on one’s social and spiritual order. Actions that harm one’s body or mind, cause harm to the world, and lead to social condemnation are forbidden actions. Lying, violence, theft, and similar acts are

forbidden actions. Performing forbidden actions brings sin. Desire-driven actions cause bondage, leading to repeated cycles of birth and death. Therefore, one should perform selfless actions approved by scriptures, keeping societal norms in mind.

The human body is obtained to practice spiritual discipline for the soul's liberation. To sustain the body, necessities like food, clothing, and shelter are required. To acquire wealth or resources, one must engage in some form of occupation or work. Actions prescribed by scriptures based on one's family traditions or social and spiritual order are called prescribed actions. Actions performed for social or national service, considering one's skills, abilities, and circumstances, are also prescribed actions. Fulfilling one's duties to support oneself and family, following one's righteous path, and performing actions to atone for past karma are included in obligatory duties. Prescribed actions are those inspired naturally by the intellect. The intellect naturally inclines toward actions appropriate to one's social and spiritual order. Prescribed actions are not motivated by the mind's desire for results. Actions driven by desire for sensory pleasures or expectation of rewards are not considered prescribed actions. For example, the urge to eat arises from the intellect's prompting, making eating a prescribed action. However, craving delicious food arises from the mind's desire, turning the act of eating into a desire-driven action due to attachment to taste. In response to Arjuna's question about which actions to perform, Lord Krishna says that, for a warrior, fighting—though it appears violent—is a prescribed action. Performing prescribed actions is better than abandoning actions, and performing them selflessly is even better.

Abandoning actions is not beneficial for oneself or the nation. The term “body's journey” can also mean the soul's journey through countless births, taking various bodies from insects to humans. When the soul reaches its ultimate destination, the Supreme Soul, and is freed from the cycle of birth and death, this journey is complete. By mastering Karma Yoga, the soul's journey through the body ends, and the soul merges with the Supreme Soul.

**yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara (3-9)**

Comm. Actions not done for sacrifice lead people to bondage. Actions done for sacrifice do not cause bondage. So, Arjuna, give up attachment to actions and their results and always do your duties for the sake of God. Earlier, Lord Krishna said to do prescribed duties. Now, he says to do actions for sacrifice. This means duties should be done only for the purpose of sacrifice, as Lord Krishna firmly states. What is sacrifice? Sacrifice was explained in earlier verses as the process of creation and its purpose. Lord Krishna also describes different types of sacrifice in detail in the fourth chapter. According to Shankaracharya's commentary on the Gita, “Sacrifice is God Himself.” The all-pervading Supreme Soul is the essence of sacrifice. Creation comes from sacrifice, exists through

sacrifice, and merges back into sacrifice. All processes of nature are part of sacrifice and are meant for Lord Vishnu, the master of sacrifice. To keep the world going, nature offers every moment through matter, living beings, and all creation to keep the sacrifice alive. Among all creatures, humans are the best. So, Lord Vishnu has given humans the responsibility to keep this sacrifice going for the world's benefit. Therefore, doing duties for the world's welfare and to please God is action for sacrifice. For example, a farmer growing crops, or people working selflessly for religion, education, health, institutions, national progress, or safety, or providing essential goods to society, trade, business, or study—all these scripturally approved actions are for sacrifice. Actions done selflessly to bring happiness to other people and creatures are actions for sacrifice. Actions for sacrifice are not driven by attachment. Actions done for God also destroy the effects of past actions. Thus, actions offered to God for sacrifice do not cause bondage. Performing sacrifice for God brings His grace, purifies the heart, and leads to self-realization. A Karma Yogi becomes liberated in this life through self-knowledge. Finally, Lord Krishna firmly says, “Arjuna, fight this war as an act of sacrifice.” This war will destroy unrighteousness and establish righteousness. If you don't fight, unrighteousness will win, causing many obstacles in the world's order. People's faith in righteousness will weaken. So, for the world's welfare, engage in this war as a sacrificial act.

**sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo'stviṣṭa-kāmadhuk (3-10)**

**devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ
parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha (3-11)**

Comm. At the start of creation, Lord Brahma created the rule of sacrifice as a duty. He made humans, animals, birds, plants, and moving beings in the physical world. He also made gods, spirits, ancestors, and other beings in the subtle world. Among all, humans are the best creatures. Brahma advised humans to do actions for sacrifice to benefit everyone. By doing these actions, you will grow and prosper. This sacrifice will give you everything you need, like a wish-fulfilling cow. Do these duty-based sacrifice actions to please the gods. The pleased gods will do their duties and provide rain, light, air, crops, and more to make you prosperous. By helping each other prosper, you will gain the highest good. As Brahma, the Supreme Soul creates the world. As Vishnu, He protects all beings. As Shiva, He dissolves creation. All these processes are part of a great sacrifice, carried out by nature. The Supreme Soul is the master of this great sacrifice. He exists in all living and non-living things as the supreme sacrifice. All beings, plants, and moving creatures come from this sacrifice. From a human embryo in the womb to birth, all actions are part of the sacrifice process. Nature carries out this sacrifice process. All visible beings like humans, animals, birds, plants, air, water, sky, sun, moon, planets, stars, and invisible beings like spirits, gods, and ancestors come from sacrifice. Through nature and its qualities, all living and

non-living things are active in this sacrifice. Under the Supreme Soul's guidance, nature's continuous offerings in sacrifice create energies to run the world. The world's form changes every moment. The Vedas call the Supreme Soul's creative power "Prajapati Brahma." At creation, Brahma made humans and gods and set duties for all. Humans are special and superior to other creatures in God's creation. The duty Brahma set for humans is sacrifice. Brahma instructed humans to perform sacrifice as a duty to benefit each other and achieve great good. Brahma said to look at the world and take inspiration from nature's sacrifice to move forward. No single person can meet all the world's needs alone. A farmer grows food but relies on others' duties for clothes and household items. By following their duties based on social roles, people exchange goods as needed. This helps society, nations, and the world prosper, as Brahma instructed. From insects to humans, trees, and all matter, nature creates everything for the world's benefit and prosperity. Brahma advised humans to do their duties as sacrifice for progress and to keep the environment favorable. Human senses are called gods. Each sense has a presiding deity. By controlling senses and using them in sacrifice actions, the gods are pleased. As a result, the mind and senses avoid worldly desires and focus on the soul, leading to liberation. For world welfare, Brahma's sacrifice means following one's righteous duty. Humans should follow duties based on their social roles. This pleases subtle gods like fire, air, water, earth, space, sun, moon, planets, stars, deities, ancestors, and sages. Pleased gods provide all materials needed for sacrifice to benefit the world. By giving up selfishness and helping others, humans gain the Supreme Soul's grace. The Vedas are Brahma's teachings for humanity, containing rules for prosperity and welfare. In family life, raising children, educating them, and guiding them toward world welfare and God worship is a sacrifice action for parents. In renunciation, gaining self-knowledge and teaching worldly people to focus on God is a sacrifice action. Through Brahma, God gave humans two main teachings. First, do duties to benefit the world. Second, realize the Supreme Soul to become liberated. By following these two duties, human life becomes meaningful.

**iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhuñkte stena eva saḥ (3-12)**

Comm. God's teaching shows humans a clear duty vision. It says: "You don't own what you earn, and what you get from the world is meant for the world." This great teaching helps build a healthy human society worldwide. Basic needs like water, air, sunlight, moonlight, rain, minerals, trees, and crops are essential for life. Without these, living beings cannot survive on Earth. Humans get these things from God through the gods. It's a human's duty to use these things for the world's welfare and make everyone happy. If a person uses these things only for their own pleasure, it's like stealing. Foolish people think: "I worked for this, so it's only mine." They plan to use it only for their own happiness. They don't understand that all things in the world come from the gods for everyone. Everyone, including the gods, has a rightful share in these things. Those

who use these things for themselves without offering to the gods are stealing from them. Such ignorant people stay trapped in material bondage and suffer pain across many lives. The body comes from parents, and parents also take care of it. Knowledge comes from teachers. Ancestors, in this world and beyond, always pray for our well-being. As intelligent beings, humans protect and help others, easing their pain and suffering. Animals, birds, trees, and plants dedicate themselves to the world's welfare. They create a healthy environment for everyone's survival. To please the gods, humans perform fire sacrifices and follow scriptures. They gain knowledge from sages for knowledge sacrifices. For human welfare, they sacrifice everything in human sacrifices. They serve and honor ancestors through rituals like shraddha for ancestor sacrifices. They protect other creatures and plants through creature sacrifices. By performing these five great sacrifices, humans use what they get from the gods for the world's good. Our physical strength, skills, wealth, property, rights, respect, and status come from the gods doing their duties. So, we should think of these things as belonging to others and use them selflessly for the world's service. This is the simple way to be free from bondage. Wanting more than what's needed goes against the principles of Karma Yoga. A family head should not see themselves as the provider but treat family duties as a sacrifice. They should take family responsibilities as a spiritual practice. If humans ignore duties and act for selfish pleasure, it leads to rebellion, conflict, and chaos in the nation. This creates disorder in the world's functioning. It causes natural disasters like floods, droughts, earthquakes, famines, and plagues. So, follow your righteous duties sincerely. Perform sacrifices to nourish the gods. Dedicate your life to the world's welfare. This is the practice of Yoga.

**yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ
huñjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt (3-13)**

Comm. The gods give desired things to the world. Sages and great sages provide knowledge. Ancestors nurture their children and wish for their well-being. Humans serve all living beings. Animals, birds, trees, and other creatures are dedicated to the welfare of creation. To please these subtle and gross deities, scriptures describe five great sacrifices: for gods, sages, ancestors, humans, and other beings. A householder performs these five sacrifices daily and uses the remaining food or materials to sustain themselves or fulfill their duties. Noble people use their rightfully earned wealth for charity, building temples, planting trees, and other helpful acts to gain divine grace. Eating food or using materials after sharing them for others' welfare is called "drinking nectar" by scriptures. This destroys all sins and actions that cause bondage across lifetimes. A selfish person who earns wealth with others' help but uses it only for personal pleasure commits and consumes sin, as per the Lord. A person who works with desire for results but also uses wealth for others' benefit does not earn or consume sin and progresses toward yoga. According to Swami Ramsukhdas, in the practice of karma yoga, actions are for the world, while the remaining "yoga" or balance frees the practitioner from bondage.

**annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḥ anna-sambhavaḥ
yajñād bhavati parjanyo yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ (3-14)**

**karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi brahmākṣara-samudbhavam
tasmāt sarva-gataṁ brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam (3-15)**

Comm.All beings are born from food. Food is the Supreme Being. The body of beings is made from food, water, air, fire, and space, forming essence, blood, fat, flesh, marrow, bones, ovum, and semen. The union of ovum and semen creates the body. Thus, air, fire, water, and food sustain all beings directly or indirectly. Water is predominant in food, and water comes from rain. Gods like the sun, moon, Varuna, Indra, and Pavan control rain. To please these gods, the Vedas prescribe various sacrifices. The Manu Smriti says offering ghee and food in the sacrificial fire reaches the sun and causes rain. In karma yoga, offering ghee in fire is not the only sacrifice. Any action done by humans for Vishnu's pleasure is also a sacrifice. Actions done for the welfare of others are true sacrifices. In the world, humans must perform duties as sacrifices. A student studying is a sacrifice. A wife cooking food is a sacrifice. A doctor treating patients is a sacrifice. A teacher teaching in school is a sacrifice. An employee serving the nation honestly is a sacrifice. A farmer growing crops is a sacrifice. Doing business to meet others' needs is a sacrifice. When actions are free from desire, attachment, bias, and inequality, they become nectar-like and end the pain of birth and death. Such nectar-like actions are called sacrifices. Offering ghee and food involves giving up materials. Donating wealth removes attachment and hoarding tendencies. Fasting and penance involve giving up sensory pleasures. Performing duties involves giving up selfishness and desires. Thus, renunciation is the essence of all sacrificial actions. The Lord says sacrifices for the world's welfare create the universe. When humans perform their duties, gods also fulfill their roles, providing rain, light, air, and coolness to the world. Actions originate from the Vedas. The Vedas give knowledge of duties. Just as a constitution sets rules and duties for citizens, the Vedas, revealed by the eternal God, guide human actions. Scriptures say the four Vedas—Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva—emerged from God's breath. Since God is eternal, the Vedas, revealed at creation's start, are also eternal. By performing Vedic sacrifices without attachment to worldly pleasures, humans attain the Supreme Being. In Vedic sacrifices, the omnipresent Supreme Being is always present. The sacrifice itself is a form of God. Selfless actions for the world's welfare lead to realizing the ever-present God. Just as water exists underground but is accessed through wells, God, though omnipresent, is realized in sacrifices by devotees, sages, yogis, and seekers. God is the witness to all actions. In selfless, beneficial actions, a karma yogi feels God's presence and gains peace and joy. In selfish actions, attachment to the body and desire for results prevent feeling God's presence. Under the influence of ignorance, foolish people doing forbidden acts neither feel God's presence nor believe God watches their actions. But it is true that God is present in all actions, observing and granting results at the right time.

**evaṁ pravartitaṁ chakraṁ nānuvartayatīha yaḥ
aghāyur indriyārāmo moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati (3-16)**

Comm. Beings come from food. Food comes from rain. Rain comes from sacrifice. Sacrifice comes from action. Action comes from the Vedas. The Vedas come from the Supreme Being. From the Vedas come actions, sacrifices, rain, and so on. This is the cycle of creation. Since the beginning of creation, humans, as the highest beings, have been given the duty to keep this cycle moving. By sincerely fulfilling this duty, humans gain true knowledge of the Creator. The world is a place for action. The world and humans are not separate. Humans are tied to this cycle through the rope of action. Performing duties according to one's role, nature, and situation is following the cycle of creation. By selflessly performing duties, a karma yogi attains the Supreme Being through sacrifices rooted in their role. A person who ignores their duties and the world's welfare, indulging in selfish desires and harming others, lives a sinful life. They disrupt the cycle of creation and waste their rare human birth. Instead of striving to attain the Supreme Being, the ultimate goal of human life, they live a meaningless life. Lord Krishna says, "Arjuna, perform your duty of fighting to support the cycle of creation."

**yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād ātma-trptaś ca mānavaḥ
ātmany eva ca saṁtuṣṭas tasya kāryaṁ na vidyate (3-17)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna describes the traits of a wise person who has realized the Supreme Being. A person perfected in karma yoga remains immersed in the Supreme, feeling supreme peace and joy beyond sensory pleasures. This person is content within, attains liberation while living, and is fully satisfied. Such a great person has no duties left to perform. Ordinary people find joy in sensory pleasures, family, food, water, and wealth. But this joy, satisfaction, and contentment is not lasting. Due to attachment to the world, people keep desiring new things. Thus, worldly attachments bring temporary physical pleasure, satisfaction, and contentment. A perfected yogi has no attachment to the world, so their joy, satisfaction, and contentment come from the unity of their soul with the Supreme. A person who realizes the Supreme has all desires fulfilled. By being one with the Supreme, they feel love, satisfaction, and contentment in their true self. Those connected to the world have duties to perform. For a karma yoga practitioner, duties are performed only to attain the Supreme. For a wise person who has realized the Supreme, there is no need for duties or non-duties, actions or inaction. Their duties are complete. This is the state of liberation while living for a person perfected in karma yoga.

**naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāśya sarva-bhūteṣu kaścid artha-vyapāśrayaḥ (3-18)**

Comm. A person perfected in karma yoga has no needs left in the world. They have nothing left to gain from the world. Thus, they have no purpose in doing actions or not doing actions. They have no selfish connection with any person or thing. They have no

need to gain anything. This perfected yogi is beyond the rules of scriptures. They have no material, spiritual, worldly, or otherworldly needs. Such a great person has no selfish interest in doing or not doing actions. For a wise person who has realized the Supreme Being, there is no sense of body-identification. Their body functions automatically according to destiny. Even if their body works for the world's welfare, they feel no selfishness, expectation of reward, or pride in their heart.

**tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara
asakto hy ācāraṁ karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ (3-19)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna sums up the essence of karma yoga. Until a karma yoga practitioner attains the Supreme Being, they must follow their duties according to their role and stage in life. For a person who has realized the Supreme, no duties remain. Their mind and senses perform actions for the world's welfare according to destiny. Following this principle of karma yoga, Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna to perform duties selflessly without attachment. Thoughts like “I will do this action,” “I won't do this action,” “this action is fruitful,” or “this action is useless” arise due to attachment to actions. Attachment to being the doer, not being the doer, the action, or its results binds a person. Performing actions without attachment is the highest form of action. By carefully performing duties without attachment, a person becomes free from the bondage of actions and attains liberation. Carefulness means ensuring no trace of pride, ego, or desire for recognition remains while performing duties. The actions of an attached person flow from the world toward themselves. The actions of a karma yogi flow from themselves toward the world. Thus, an attached person becomes bound by actions, while a karma yogi becomes free from the cycle of birth. Attachment to actions causes bondage, while detachment leads to the easy path of liberation. The pleasurable objects in the world, provided by nature, are not meant for sensory indulgence. They should be used as tools for spiritual practice. This mindset creates a detached connection with the material world. Even when the act of performing actions ends, a practitioner must keep the sense of detachment alive in their heart continuously.

**karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhim āsthitā janakādayaḥ
loka-saṅgrahaṁ evāpi sampaśyan kartum arhasi (3-20)**

Comm. Lord Krishna provides examples like Janaka to prove the principle from the previous verse that one can attain the Supreme by performing duties without attachment. In the past, kings like Janaka and Ashvapati, while living as householders, performed duties like ruling, governing, and fighting righteous wars without attachment and attained ultimate perfection. Through their lifestyle, philosophy, high ideals, and dedicated personality, such ideal individuals perform selfless actions to guide others away from wrong paths and onto the path of truth, which is called guiding society. For a perfected person who has attained true knowledge, there is nothing left to do in the world. Yet,

for the sake of guiding society, they engage in actions for the world's welfare to inspire others to perform their duties. An example of such a personality in our generation is Abdul Kalam, who can be considered a karma yogi.

As a distinguished scientist, he made unparalleled contributions to nuclear science. Placed as the President of India, he governed impartially and led a disciplined, ethical life. By sacrificing personal interests for the sake of guiding society, he became an ideal of duty in national service for today's youth. Calling such a great soul a modern Janaka would not be an exaggeration. In this verse, Lord Krishna mentions two points. First, if your goal is liberation through attaining the Supreme, perform duties without attachment. Second, even if you have attained perfection and are liberated, do not abandon actions for the world's welfare to guide society. A commentator explains the word "Janaka" as "one who gives birth," meaning selfless, detached action gives birth to or reveals the true self in the heart. Every great person connected with yoga is a Janaka.

**yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate (3-21)**

Comm. People who have attained perfection through yoga in their country, community, caste, or stage of life are considered great individuals. Others follow their actions with respect and trust. The Vedic and worldly duties that these great individuals validate through their words are accepted by ordinary people as scriptural and followed with faith. In everyday life, we see that children's character is shaped by imitating others in the family. If family elders engage in bad habits like violence, theft, addiction, or smoking, it affects other family members, especially children. Similarly, in a spiritual family environment, great yogis like Vivekananda and Chidananda Saraswati have been shaped through imitation. Therefore, parents and elders in a family must be mindful of their actions. Those who teach students or disciples through their conduct are called ideal teachers or guides. Following great individuals has been a tradition of Sanatana Dharma since ancient times. Sages, seers, and wise people express their philosophy and spiritual experiences in authentic scriptures or texts. These are meant for the welfare of humanity. Wise individuals should ensure their teachings protect societal order and do not harm any caste, stage of life, community, or religious tradition. Ordinary people should also be cautious not to fall prey to deceitful, self-proclaimed "babas" or "yogis" who mislead with sweet words. In this verse, Lord Krishna advises Arjuna: If you abandon your duty of fighting as per your role, it will set a precedent for the future. Since you are considered a great person due to your lineage, clan, and Kshatriya abilities, you must keep this in mind and fight.

**na me pārthāsti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana
nānavāptam avāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi (3-22)**

Comm. O Arjuna! For Me, in the worlds of humans, gods, and even in Brahmaloka, where I reside, there is not even the slightest duty-bound action to be performed. There

is nothing that I need to achieve which I have not already attained. Yet, during My incarnations, I perform actions with a sense of duty, for the purpose of educating the people of the world. Even though, during My incarnations, I appear to engage in actions like ordinary humans and seem affected by worldly dualities like disease and sorrow, separation and union, laughter and tears, still, My divine nature remains undisturbed in all situations. Apart from My incarnations, I am the one who, in My unmanifest form, creates the universe, sustains it, and ultimately dissolves it at the proper time. On this earth, the Lord has performed many divine acts by assuming various human forms. Taking the form of the best among men, He has taught the human world through His own example that “I Myself am the incarnation of action.” Whatever action is of the highest benefit to the world, “I” become its example. From the beginning of creation, the Lord has set in place the system by which the entire management of the universe runs through action governed by Nature. Just as enlightened souls who have attained union with Yoga do not require any duty-bound actions in the world, similarly, the incarnated Lord also has no remaining obligations during His divine play. God is Himself complete, the Lord of all, fully satisfied, and the ultimate cause of all causes. Still, during His human-like incarnations, He engages in actions under the influence of Nature, for the welfare of the world. If Lord Krishna had desired, He could have ended all the troubles of the righteous Pandavas in a single moment. But the Lord did not rely on His divine power. For the sake of teaching the world, He assumed the role of a charioteer and entered the battlefield of war on Arjuna’s chariot as part of His duty. Through this, He set an example to all humans, from the most worldly-minded to the liberated ones, that everyone must engage in action for the welfare of the world.

**yadi hy ahaṁ na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ(3-23)**

Comm. The Lord says: If I do not engage in action during My incarnations, keeping in mind the welfare of the world and the need to guide the people, then humans will neglect their own duties by following My example. They will lead idle and negligent lives, without considering their duties. As a result, there will be chaos and confusion in society. The society will head toward destruction. That is why, to educate the people, I perform actions and set an example for all to follow. Only through My worldly and divine actions is the welfare of the world truly achieved. It is clearly mentioned in the Shrimad Bhagavatam that Lord Krishna, during His childhood, acted as a playful friend, in Mathura as the slayer of the demon Kamsa, in Dwarka as a householder, and on the battlefield as a powerful warrior. Above all, during His divine incarnation as the blissful Supreme Person, whatever conduct He displayed has remained a great example of action for all humanity for all ages. The Rasa dance with the gopis and the divine love play with Shri Radha in Vrindavan were also aimed at creating a stream of loving emotion in the world. The world is governed only through love. Only through love does

union between man and woman become possible. Only through love does the cooling light of the moon nourish the sap in trees. It is due to love that trees become full of leaves, flowers, and fruits. It is because of love that animals, birds, and other beings remain bonded. It is love that keeps the entire universe tied together as one thread. The chain of actions performed by God during His incarnation is called divine play or Leela. This Leela is inspired by God Himself for the purpose of teaching the world. If the Lord Himself did not engage in action, then everyone would stop performing their own duties by imitating Him. On the basis of this teaching, national leaders, heads of communities and groups, family heads, and individuals known in society for their wisdom must all be very cautious and engage in their duties, keeping in mind that others follow their example. “To live for oneself alone is inappropriate in this world”—this is a great lesson of worldly life. Everyone we meet in our lifetime is placed by God for the welfare of someone else. Therefore, fathers and sons, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters—all should protect each other’s rights and fulfill their own duties, while becoming companions on the path of divine welfare. The Lord tells Arjuna: O Arjuna! You see, even though I am a Kshatriya, to fulfill My promise and for the welfare of the people, I am performing My duty eagerly as your charioteer. The effect of My action will be seen across all three worlds, because everyone follows My actions as ideals. Therefore, you too should not abandon your duty and must engage in battle.

**utsīdeyur ime lokā na kuryāṁ karma ced aham
saṅkarasya ca kartā syāṁ upahanyāṁ imāḥ prajāḥ(3-24)**

Comm. O Arjuna! If I do not perform actions keeping the welfare of the world in mind, people will imitate me and become lazy and careless, by not doing their duties. As a result, obstacles will arise in the functioning of the world, and the cycle of creation will be destroyed and corrupted. Moral values in society will decline. Misguided, immoral, and unnecessary individuals will cause chaos and disorder in society. Sin will spread widely, pushing the entire human society toward destruction. People will become lazy and abandon their responsibilities according to their lineage, caste, class, and religion. The moral values of men and women in society will deteriorate. The rules and principles of caste, class, and religion will vanish. As a result, women will abandon their family duties and be used by misguided men for physical pleasure, leading to the birth of mixed-caste individuals in society. The dominance of such individuals will destroy the peace and happiness of society. Another special purpose of taking incarnation on Earth is to help people understand the divine essence of God’s birth and actions, so they follow them and become righteous. By following the principles laid down in scriptures, people will lead disciplined lives, achieving spiritual progress and naturally attaining peace and happiness. Following God’s actions does not mean imitating acts like lifting the Govardhan mountain, stealing butter like child Krishna, or engaging in playful dances with the gopis. If people imitate God’s actions for selfish pleasure without understanding their essence, it will surely

lead to their downfall. Therefore, God repeatedly emphasizes that wise individuals, with great care, perform selfless actions for the welfare of the world. People should follow the footsteps of such great souls, analyzing their conduct with spiritual understanding. Thus, as an incarnation, I perform actions with utmost care, which people across ages consider as an example. In the Yoga of Despondency, Arjuna argued before God that fighting would destroy families, leaving women unprotected and causing harm. This would lead to the rise of mixed-caste individuals in society. But God says here, O Arjuna! If you do not fight and abandon your duty, everyone—men and women—will forsake the principles of family, caste, and religion. As a result, mixed-caste issues will arise in society. From this, the conclusion is obtained that: “Performing one’s duty without attachment is indeed beneficial for society.”

**saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata
kuryād vidvāṁs tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṅgraham (3-25)**

Comm. Ordinary people perform actions with the desire to enjoy their results. In this verse, God says, O Arjuna! Just as desire-driven individuals perform their duties according to their religion, caste, and stage of life with faith and as per scriptural rules, wise enlightened individuals should also perform their worldly and spiritual duties for the welfare of all beings. Here, God inspires both desire-driven individuals and liberated souls to perform their responsibilities. Whether the detachment of wise individuals is visible or not, the effect of their selfless actions naturally influences others. For liberated souls, there are no obligatory duties left. Since they lack desire and attachment, they might neglect actions. Therefore, God instructs them to engage in selfless actions for the education and welfare of others.

**na buddhi-bhedaṁ janayed ajñānāṁ karma-saṅginām
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran (3-26)**

Comm. The Lord here explains how a wise and realized person should consciously perform actions for the welfare of society. A person who is engaged in actions with desire for results, without neglecting the duties of his caste, class, or stage of life, and acts according to scriptural injunctions, should not be confused by a wise person through advice on detached action or self-knowledge. The enlightened person, for the sake of guiding others, should perform all duties with equanimity and be a model for common people by remaining engaged in action. Ordinary ignorant people, whether for survival or for gaining material pleasure, respectfully accept actions as a means to earn wealth rightfully. They think, “I have to work – without work, I cannot maintain my family,” and thus engage in action with desire for results. They are unaware of what liberation is or that the ultimate goal of human life is to attain freedom (moksha). Some act just to stay alive, while others, being attached to sense pleasures, engage in work. Even though they are referred to as ignorant here, they do not neglect their duties nor do they violate

moral or social norms. Through their actions, the needs of others are fulfilled, and material development takes place in the world. So that the cycle of worldly activities does not get disrupted, the Lord advises:

The wise and realized persons should not cause any doubt or disrespect in others' minds regarding duty by teaching them about detachment or self-realization. Otherwise, those who are faithfully engaged in action may give up their duties after hearing such teachings from the wise. If that happens, instead of progressing on the spiritual path, their downfall from their current position will occur. This advice also applies to the heads of families or society. The behavior of a realized person who is established in karma yoga, who acts without attachment and ego, should be followed. By getting inspired from them, even those with desires will eventually change at the right time.

**prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate (3-27)**

Comm. From birth to death, all worldly and spiritual actions in the human body and senses happen only through the three modes (gunas) of nature (Prakriti). Only an ignorant person, whose inner consciousness is deluded by ego, thinks, “I am the doer” – that is, “I am doing everything.” The Lord says, Prakriti consists of three gunas – sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance). The state where these three gunas exist is Prakriti. Prakriti is not separate from the gunas; they are one. All beings in the world – humans, animals, birds, insects – are influenced by these three gunas of Prakriti. In the world, people relate to one another based on these gunas. Prakriti is the lower (apara) power of God, while consciousness is the higher (para) power. The union of consciousness (Purusha) and Prakriti creates the universe. Consciousness remains unchanged, while Prakriti keeps changing and keeps the world active through these three gunas. From Prakriti arise sattva, rajas, and tamas; from these come intellect, ego, mind, the five subtle elements like space, and so on. The five senses, five sense objects, and twenty-three such elements together make up the gross and subtle body of humans. The gunas are responsible for connecting the inner mind and senses to the sense objects, and from these gunas, actions arise. Deciding with intellect, reflecting with the mind, hearing sounds with the ears, touching with the skin, seeing with the eyes, tasting with the tongue, speaking words, grasping with the hands, walking with the feet, excreting through organs – all these bodily functions happen through the gunas. Whatever happens in the world happens under the influence of the gunas of Prakriti. The pure self (consciousness), being without attributes and form, is actually not involved in any action. Saying “I did this” or “I did that” is a mental tendency that arises in the inner self. The mind and intellect get bound in this egoistic sense of doership. This sense of “I” connects itself to the actions driven by gunas. The body is a part of lower nature (apara Prakriti). Considering the inert body as oneself and accepting it as “I am this body” is called identification (tadatmya).

This identification is ego (ahankara). The true self is never the doer. It is impossible for the true self to possess doership. The self can never be identified with the body. But due to lack of wisdom, humans wrongly identify with the body and accept themselves as the doer. Till today, in many births as gods, humans, animals, birds, spirits, demons, etc., people have acted but have not realized their true self. The soul whose intellect is deluded by ego, who constantly identifies with “I am the doer,” assumes himself to be the doer. Have we ever thought – who circulates the blood in our body? Who controls digestion? Who controls the heart and brain? The answer is never “I.” If “I” cannot do these internal functions, how can that “I” do any other action? Therefore, the “I” that exists within ego is false. This is due to ignorance and lack of wisdom. From Prakriti arises the Mahat principle, and from that, ego arises. The self, which is merely the witness of the actions of Prakriti and the gunas, becomes deluded and, instead of staying detached, accepts the actions of gunas and Prakriti as its own – this is ego. The ego born from doership has no relation to wisdom. When wisdom awakens, the egoistic tendencies dissolve.

**tattva-vit tu mahā-bāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate (3-28)**

Comm. Sattva, rajas, and tamas are the three qualities born from nature. The entire creation is made up of these three qualities, so the whole world is characterized by them. The human body consists of twenty-four elements: ten senses, five great elements, five subtle elements like form and taste, mind, intellect, consciousness, and ego. All these are the products of sattva, rajas, and tamas qualities. All actions in the body are driven by these qualities. The bones, flesh, and skin of the body are all material substances. In nature, intellect and discrimination are caused by sattva, which is called “good.” Movement, speaking, sitting, standing, and activity are caused by rajas. Understanding, thinking, and knowing are caused by sattva. This is the knowledge of the division of qualities. The interaction of the body, senses, mind, and intellect with material objects influenced by qualities makes the mind active, leading to actions. This is called the division of actions. Qualities and actions, meaning matter and activity, are constantly changing and have a beginning and an end. The conscious soul (purusha) never engages in any action. The soul has no connection with qualities or actions. However, in the presence of the soul’s all-pervading existence and energy, the twenty-four elements of the body and external matter become manifest. Ignorant people mistake the body, made of these quality-driven elements, as “I,” leading to a sense of doership in their mind. By associating with the qualities and actions of the body, they become subject to favorable and unfavorable experiences. As a result, they develop attachment to actions and their outcomes, getting trapped in the bondage of karma. On the other hand, a wise person who understands the essence of qualities and actions recognizes that material objects and activities arise from the interaction of qualities within nature. Such a wise person remains unaffected, staying as a mere witness in their true self. The wise consider themselves distinct from qualities,

actions, matter, and activity, avoiding being deluded by ego or trapped in bondage. Seeing, hearing, eating, and drinking are all actions. The object seen, the sound heard, and the food or drink consumed are all material. Both matter and actions are influenced by qualities and lack the ability to manifest on their own. They are manifested only through the existence of the soul. However, the soul has no connection whatsoever with them. The conscious soul has an eternal, inherent connection with the Supreme Truth. In reality, it has no connection with the ever-changing nature. Only due to misunderstanding does the soul become deluded, giving rise to ego. From the perspective of Vedanta, the division between purusha (soul) and prakriti (nature) is the division between self and non-self. The soul is Brahman, and nature has no independent existence in Brahman.

**prakṛter guṇa-sammūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet (3-29)**

Comm. An ignorant person, deeply deluded by the influence of nature's qualities, becomes attached to material qualities and actions. They consider themselves the doer of all actions. As an enjoyer, they engage in actions with a desire to experience their results. Such people, with limited knowledge and an interest in material enjoyment, should not be confused or doubted about actions by enlightened beings who teach selfless action. Calling them "less intelligent" means they are attached to material objects and actions due to their desire for worldly and otherworldly pleasures. Driven by the desire for sensory enjoyment and material accumulation, they engage in actions and experience their results. They are completely unaware of the ultimate goal of human life, which is liberation. They consider the world to be merely a place for action and enjoyment. For the sake of nourishing enjoyment and ego, they perform their duties with faith and according to prescribed methods. Relying on the perishable results of actions, such people are called "those with little intelligence" by God in the seventh chapter (verse 23). An enlightened person, fully aware of the truth of qualities and actions, should not create doubt or confusion in their minds by teaching that "actions cause bondage" or "the world is illusory." Care should be taken so that such people do not become disturbed and abandon their duties. By remaining engaged in their duties, these less knowledgeable individuals will gradually purify their minds. In the future, they will strive to attain spiritual progress.

**mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ (3-30)**

The great purpose of the Bhagavad Gita is established in this teaching given by God, which is the essence of Karma Yoga. In this verse, God's teaching integrates knowledge, action, and devotion. The phrase "surrender all actions to Me" indicates the path of devotion. The term "with spiritual consciousness" refers to the path of knowledge. The statement "fight without desires, without possessiveness, and free from feverish anxiety"

describes the path of Karma Yoga. By acting with discerning intellect, free from ego, and considering it as following God's command, one dedicates actions with spiritual consciousness. God is the creator, sustainer, and ultimate doer of the universe. From this perspective, nothing exists outside God's control or shelter. Earth, water, air, fire, space, cosmic principles, and ego are all under God's authority. The movement of planets, the evaporation of water from oceans, the burning of fire, the flow of air, the attraction of the earth, the cosmic pull of space, and the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world all happen by God's will and power. Humans have no agency in these processes. The body, made of the five elements, five principles, and ego, and its actions cannot be outside God's control. Since the beginning of creation, all living and non-living, movable and immovable things are surrendered to the all-pervading Supreme Being. There is no need for a new act of surrender. True dedication is simply acknowledging oneself and one's possessions as belonging to God. Surrender is not about renouncing actions or objects in their essence. Offering objects to God while considering them as one's own yields material returns, but surrendering ego by acknowledging "I belong to God" leads to attaining God. Accepting this truth and living under God's shelter is surrender with spiritual consciousness. Rejecting this truth is ignorance or lack of discernment. God tells Arjuna to dedicate all actions to Him with a mind free from discernment and judgment. This means not claiming any connection with the actions. For the enlightened, only effort or activity occurs, not action, due to the absence of doership, and it bears no fruit. Turning away from God and strengthening ties with the world gives rise to desires and needs. By acknowledging a connection only with God, one ceases to desire new worldly objects, feels no attachment to possessions, and does not grieve over losses. The complete absence of desire, attachment, and grief in the heart is true surrender. Mental disturbances like attachment, aversion, joy, sorrow, worry, and anxiety are symptoms of a feverish mind. When afflicted by this fever, laziness, inaction, negligence, and grief arise, leading to destruction. While instructing Arjuna to fight, God assures the wise, the devotee, and the yogi to relinquish the burden of all actions to Him and become free from desires, attachment, attachment-aversion, joy-sorrow, and other disturbances. Do not waste the present by grieving over the past or imagining the future in sorrow or joy. Accept the present situation as duty, renounce desire and attachment, and face it. You are merely an instrument in the battle; the outcome is already determined by Me (God). One who considers actions as belonging to God becomes His servant, attendant, or worker, following His commands. Like devotee Hanuman, who obeyed Lord Rama's commands by carrying the Gandhamardan mountain or crossing the ocean to reach Lanka, this is the pinnacle of a devotee's obedience. As long as one considers actions as their own, they are not God's actions, nor do they carry God's divine power. Surrendering actions to God means accepting them as His command and engaging in daily, occasional, worldly, and divine actions without attachment. Like a soldier fighting an enemy without knowing the outcome or questioning their life, their only thought is fulfilling their duty and fighting

for the command. This is the complete surrender of dutiful action. In the view of the wise, God is all-powerful, the foundation of all, all-pervading, all-knowing, the supreme Lord, the ultimate goal, the greatest benefactor, the most beloved, and the most compassionate. Living beings, clinging to perishable worldly objects through countless births, remain trapped in the cycle of birth, action, and death, suffering misery. God grants human birth so that humans, among all beings, can strive to attain the Supreme Soul. When a seeker's goal shifts from the world to the Supreme Soul alone, fulfilling dutiful actions becomes possible, and flaws like desire, attachment, and clinging diminish. Attaining equanimity in the heart leads to realizing one's true self. Upon fully experiencing the true self, the sense of doership completely vanishes, and one becomes one with the ultimate purpose.

**ye me matam idam nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto'nasūyanto mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ(3-31)**

**ye tv etad abhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāms tām viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ(3-32)**

Comm. The teaching given by Lord Krishna in the previous verse is the final conclusion of Karma Yoga and is beneficial for the world. It is as follows: (a) Dedicate all actions to Me with discernment and judgment, renouncing the sense of doership. In actions, "I" (God) am the goal, and humans are the cause. (b) Perform your duties without expecting results, free from attachment, and without worries. (c) Stay free from distorted mental states like attachment, aversion, joy, sorrow, worry, and anxiety, and engage in actions while considering them for God. This teaching of God remains eternal and unchanging across all times. Regardless of caste, religion, color, or stage of life, when ordinary people adopt this teaching as a practice with faith, the path to liberation from the bondage of actions opens for them. During spiritual practice, they do not blame others for obstacles faced in daily life but accept them as the result of their past actions and engage in duties without attachment. Such wise people have deep devotion, faith, and unwavering trust in Me (God). God inspires Arjuna, saying that if ordinary people can attain liberation by following this teaching, what more can be said for a wise person like you? On the other hand, those with disordered minds and intellect who view this teaching negatively and consider it harmful blame others for their suffering. They even accuse God of punishing them and take excessive pride in their doership when achieving pleasures. Know such people as utterly foolish, devoid of all knowledge. The egoistic tendency in their hearts causes their downfall in every way. These ignorant people, driven by attachment and aversion, are bound by ego, attachment, and desires, repeatedly taking birth in lower forms and remaining trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Those who do not follow God's teaching lack understanding of truth and untruth, sin and virtue, righteousness and unrighteousness, bondage and liberation, and other spiritual knowledge.

Their understanding of what is beneficial or harmful is also destroyed.

**sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati (3-33)**

Comm. In this verse, Bhagavan inspires seekers of Karma Yoga to keep practicing until they overcome the nature born from the three Gunas and attain liberation while living. All living beings are born with bodies according to their past life impressions (Sanskaras). Except for humans, other beings experience pleasure and pain according to nature in the bodies they receive. Humans act according to the nature that arises from past-life impressions. Even a person with knowledge of the soul and the non-soul acts under the influence of their own nature. In that case, what can be achieved by denying the scriptural rules or the teachings of great saints? Therefore, as told in the previous verse, even a wise person is not able to fully engage in action without attachment. Under the control of nature, one cannot completely give up desires, attachment, and grief from within. Due to destined experiences (Prarabdha), there will certainly be some attachment and hatred in the mind. Therefore, correct performance of duties as per scriptures becomes difficult. Still, the special quality of human birth is that only humans have the priority of willpower over action. Until the determined intellect merges into the divine level of Supreme Truth, one cannot act free from the influence of the three Gunas of material nature. Reading scriptures and gaining scholarly knowledge about soul and non-soul is easy. Giving lectures is also easy. But in real life, to change one's past-born nature and behavior based on the knowledge that "the body is different from the soul" is difficult. Right now, Arjuna is seen deciding not to fight. Therefore, it is primarily necessary to purify the inner impressions with intense spiritual effort. After many births of spiritual practice, if in one birth some weakness of nature arises, the seeker gains the strength to overcome the three Gunas. Instead of true inner practice, if one suppresses his true nature and outwardly shows that he is following Bhagavan's words, then it is just hypocrisy. Rather, when a seeker acts according to his own nature, and even if there are faults in it, the teachings of the scriptures or the Guru help guide him. As a result, with the help of discrimination and intellect, the willpower to change one's nature awakens inside the heart. According to Lokmanya Tilak's commentary on "Karma Rahasya": even if nature is powerful, due to the independence of the soul, willpower gets awakened. When willpower becomes strong, scriptural rules and the words of the Guru become effective, and the person becomes capable of changing his nature and engaging in proper action. Thus, scriptures and the Guru's guidance never go in vain. To stop the senses from being attracted to pleasures at both physical and mental levels, by decisive intellect, is strong willpower. Bhagavan gives this warning to the seeker – until he fully realizes the spiritual truth and remains always united with God, if he suddenly gives up duties and calls himself a false Sannyasi, he is sure to fall. Instead, remaining in one's own nature, following scriptures and Guru's words, and gradually calming attachment and hatred through practice is necessary. Only then will the senses become free from the grip of their natural tendencies. This is the method of Karma Yoga explained by Bhagavan in the Gita.

**indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
taylor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau (3-34)**

Comm. Each of the senses has attraction and repulsion towards its respective objects. For ordinary people, this means – “I like this” and “I don’t like that.” If these feelings are positive, then character is built. If they are negative, then life becomes meaningless. Due to contact with material nature over many lifetimes, the longing for sense pleasures becomes very strong. As long as there is a physical body, this feeling of attraction and repulsion towards sense objects will definitely remain. As long as attachment and hatred are present in the heart, equanimity (balance) cannot be attained. So, for a seeker, these are obstacles. What is attachment and hatred? And how can a Karma Yogi seeker become free from them? – These must be thought about. Attraction, liking, or love for sense objects is called “Raga” (attachment). Similarly, whatever person, thing, event, or situation causes discomfort, and from which one wants to stay away – that is “Dvesha” (hatred). Whenever the senses and the mind come in contact with sense objects, these feelings of Raga and Dvesha arise. According to the qualities of the object and the mind’s liking or disliking, Raga or Dvesha is formed. Actually, no object is naturally pleasant or unpleasant. Depending on a person’s qualities and inner tendencies, the same thing may be enjoyable to one and painful to another. Even the same object may feel pleasant at one time and unpleasant at another. Therefore, Raga and Dvesha remain separately in every object. When a person becomes influenced by these qualities of the object, the intellect becomes disturbed, and emotions like joy and sorrow arise. Only when Raga and Dvesha are under control, can one follow Bhagavan’s teachings on Karma Yoga. Excessive Raga and Dvesha destroy the seeker’s discrimination and drag him into sensual temptations, leading to sinful actions. This distracts the seeker from his goal of achieving equanimity.

So, the presence of Raga and Dvesha in the heart is an obstacle for the seeker. To remove them, Swami Ramsukhdas has shown important methods in his commentary Sadhak Sanjivani. The tendency to engage in prohibited actions like intoxication, gambling, lust, etc., and failure to engage in divine actions like chanting, austerity, meditation, satsang, and yoga are due to being influenced by Raga and Dvesha. Because of this, even ordinary people show signs of Raga and Dvesha. In seekers, subtle feelings like “I am practicing”, “I am doing service”, “I helped others” arise and stay inside. Along with these egoistic feelings, hatred towards others also arises. When a seeker becomes free from Raga and Dvesha, there is no ego left, and even attachment or hatred towards worldly people does not arise. We cannot completely destroy the flow of action, but we can make our actions free from Raga and Dvesha. If a seeker considers his willpower weak in removing Raga and Dvesha, then first he should surrender to Bhagavan, the supreme well-wisher. Serving the world with selfless attitude is the only practical way to destroy Raga and Dvesha. When we don’t consider things like objects, women, children, money, etc., as ours, but as

meant for service, and use them accordingly, then Raga and Dvesha naturally go away. If we keep thinking others are the cause of our happiness or sorrow, then Raga and Dvesha will rise. But if we think that happiness is a blessing from God and use that happiness to serve others, Raga-Dvesha ends. In sorrow, if we think it is God's will or result of past karma and give up the desire for joy, then we remain balanced. This is the deep and beautiful principle taught by Bhagavan in the Gita.

**śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam (3-35)**

Comm. Doing one's own duty based on one's own nature, even if it has some faults, is better than perfectly doing another's duty. Performing one's own duty may even lead to death, but it is still better. Doing another's duty, even if well performed, is dangerous. Actions done based on one's natural qualities, caste, spiritual stage, ability, and situation – that is called “Swadharma” (own duty). Swadharma is natural and easy to perform. By performing one's duty, the heart becomes pure, and one gets higher impressions (Sanskaras). Based on Sanskaras, one takes birth, and Bhagavan gives us nature and duties accordingly. Duties of different castes and spiritual stages are different. Scriptures describe four castes: Shudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya, and Brahmin. Duties of Vaishya are superior to Shudra, Kshatriya superior to Vaishya, and Brahmin's duties the most refined. This is because performing the scripturally prescribed duty of each caste gradually elevates the soul toward divinity and realization of God. In Aryan society, this fourfold caste system is designed for self-upliftment through Karma Yoga. In countries or religions where caste system is not present, one must decide their Swadharma based on personal interest, nature, and ability. This way, occupational structure and responsibility develop in society. If someone abandons their own duty and does someone else's, that is Paradharma (another's duty), and it is sinful. For example, non-violence is ideal for Brahmins of Sattvic nature. But if a Kshatriya imitates that and gives up his duty to fight, it leads to chaos. Even if a Kshatriya dies in war, it is beneficial for both this world and the next. According to Swami Vivekananda, instead of copying others' ideals, it is better to pursue one's own ideal sincerely, even with effort. No spiritual practice ever goes in vain; it bears fruit in future births. Instead of trying to become a Sannyasi by imitating one, a householder should try to become an ideal householder. Even a householder can become God-realized by fulfilling his own duties. No one is inferior in their own field of duty. So even if another person's duty looks good, it may not be good for us. That same duty may be dangerous or harmful for others. Despite differences in duties based on caste and stage of life, the goal is the same – to attain equanimity and freedom from Raga-Dvesha. Some have also interpreted Swadharma as duties of the soul and Paradharma as duties of the body and material world. Purity, eternity, detachment, compassion – all qualities of the true self – are Swadharma. Birth-death, gain-loss, wealth, honor, etc., are part of Paradharma. Whatever is done without nature's influence is Swadharma.

Whatever is done through body, mind, and material world is Paradharma. By following Swadharma, man becomes free and realizes the eternal Supreme. Paradharma creates bondage. The main purpose of the Gita is to teach the importance of Swadharma. If today's youth follow Bhagavan's teaching, the disorder and moral decline in society can be corrected.

Arjuna Uvācha

**atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpam carati pūruṣaḥ
anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ (3-36)**

Comm. After hearing all the principles of Karma Yoga, Arjuna has a question in his mind. He wonders why humans fail to practice Karma Yoga. Like an ordinary person, he wants to know from his own experience. Why does a person, despite knowing right from wrong, still commit sinful acts? Is it because of God's will that a person gets involved in sinful actions? Or is it due to the force of strong past karma that one engages in sin? Many doubts arise in Arjuna's mind. Well-wishers told Duryodhana that giving the kingdom back to the Pandavas would benefit everyone, using scriptures as proof. But Duryodhana said, "I know what is right, but I cannot follow it. I know what is wrong, but I cannot stop myself." He added, "Some force in my heart directs me, and I act as it commands." This shows that even an egoistic person like Duryodhana knew sinful actions were wrong but felt helpless and couldn't stop, even if he wanted to. This is also the experience of ordinary people—we know what is good but cannot stop doing bad actions. It feels like some unknown force makes us act against our better judgment. Our soul is eternal, pure, unchanging, and full of joy. The soul can never be the cause of sinful actions. Arjuna's question is very important. God has already hinted at the reason in the context of Karma Yoga, saying that even a diligent person's senses can overpower their mind. Even a wise person is forced to act under the influence of nature. In forthcoming verses, God explained the cause and the solution.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam (3-37)**

Comm. God says, "Arjuna, desire arises from the quality of passion (rajo guna), and this anger is like a fire that is never satisfied with pleasures." Desire and anger are forms of attachment and aversion. They block the path to well-being, so they are your enemies. Neither past karma nor God forces a person into sin—desire alone tempts people with various pleasures and leads them to sin. The senses' attachment or aversion to things like form or taste creates desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and

envy—the six enemies in the heart. Among these, desire and anger are the strongest and most harmful. Desire and anger are not separate. Where there is desire, anger follows. When something blocks the fulfillment of desire, anger arises toward the obstacle. Desire and anger come from the quality of passion (rajo guna). All actions in the body are rooted in passion. When the soul, due to ignorance, identifies with the material body, desire arises under the influence of nature’s qualities. Passion creates desire, and desire strengthens passion. Like a seed and a tree, desire and passion feed each other. Desire is never satisfied by enjoying pleasures. The more pleasures you feed it, the stronger desire grows, like fire fueled by ghee. Even if a person is given all the world’s wealth and pleasures, desire will not be satisfied. Desire is all-consuming. When desire turns into anger, it leads to many terrible sins. An angry person loses the sense of right and wrong, ignores elders and loved ones, and behaves improperly. Thus, anger is called a great sin. Desire and anger are the cause of all harm in a person’s path to well-being. They are the greatest enemies. If desire shifts from worldly pleasures to seeking the soul and God, it becomes a quest for divine knowledge. Ordinary people wonder how the world can function without desire. The solution is that the world does not run on desire. The world operates through the three qualities of nature (gunas) and the sense of duty in the flow of actions and things. Desire is not needed for this. Just as difficulties come without desiring them, favorable situations also come naturally by God’s will. No one desires illness, pain, sorrow, or failure, yet they come. Similarly, happiness and success come naturally through performing duties without desire. Duties should never be abandoned. No one in the world has ever had all their material desires fulfilled in their lifetime. Desires can never be fully satisfied, but they can be given up. If you see desire as an enemy, not a friend, it becomes possible to abandon it. Abandoning desire destroys attachment, and without attachment, the sense of “I” and “mine” vanishes. Thus, giving up desire leads to eternal happiness. The core teaching of Buddhism is: “Human life is full of suffering—desire is the cause of suffering—destroying desire ends suffering, and ending suffering leads to liberation.”

dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathā darśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛtam (3-38)

**āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena jñānino nitya-vairiṇā
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca (3-39)**

Comm. O Arjuna, just as fire is covered by smoke, a mirror by dust, or an embryo by the womb, human wisdom is covered by desires and anger. Desires are never satisfied or calmed. When indulged, desires grow stronger, like a fire fueled by wood. For a wise seeker, desire is a constant enemy. Like clouds in the sky hiding the sun, desires in the human mind obscure the pure consciousness of the soul. These clouds are

created by the sun itself, just as desires arise from the soul's interaction with the senses and mind. The intensity of desires determines how much wisdom is clouded, causing instability in a person's judgment. The Lord gives three examples to explain how desires cover wisdom. Desires are divided into three types: subtle desires, gross desires, and intense cravings. Subtle desires arise from seeing or hearing about unattainable objects needed for survival. Gross desires come after enjoying an object once and wanting to enjoy it again. Intense cravings develop when repeated indulgence turns desire into an unending thirst. Just as fire covered by smoke still burns, subtle desires born of purity do not destroy the soul's ability to shine. These subtle desires cause restlessness and emotional disturbance in the mind. In this state, wisdom is not completely blocked, and judgment remains intact. Subtle desires naturally fade away when one performs regular duties. The Lord explains gross desires using the example of a mirror covered with dust, which cannot reflect clearly. Similarly, the mind clouded by gross desires cannot clearly perceive all things. Only the desired object occupies the mind. This is a flaw in the mind, where focus is lost until the desire is fulfilled. Like dust wiped from a mirror only to gather again, fulfilling one desire leads to another, weakening judgment. This cycle of desires continues in the mind. The final example is an embryo hidden by the womb, invisible from the outside. Similarly, intense cravings completely cover the soul's wisdom in the mind. This leads to ignorance, where the mind cannot grasp true knowledge. Cravings born of ignorance destroy judgment and lead to ego-driven thoughts. A person becomes lazy, sleepy, careless, and deluded, abandoning their duties. Just as a child breaks through the womb to emerge, a person, after many lives, comes into contact with a true teacher, saint, or scripture. This awakens a desire for divine knowledge in the mind. When ignorance is destroyed, the true self is realized. Through faith in God and worship, mental disturbances are removed. Performing duties and practicing selfless action removes impurities in the mind. Studying scriptures and following a teacher's guidance removes the veil of ignorance. Though desires cover wisdom, they are always weaker than the true self. Indulging desires does not end them; instead, they multiply, like fire fed with fuel. Thus, desires are considered difficult to overcome. In the Mahabharata, King Yayati, even after enjoying youth for a thousand years, remained unsatisfied. In the end, unfulfilled, he returned his kingdom and youth to his son Puru and retired to the forest. Therefore, fulfilling desires cannot end them; only renouncing desires brings peace. Desires are the eternal enemy of the wise because ignorant people find temporary pleasure in fulfilling them. But a wise seeker feels uneasy when desires arise. During indulgence, desires feel like sinful acts, causing pain to the wise. After indulgence, the mind remains restless with regret. Thus, desires never bring happiness to the wise. A wise person always considers desires as an enemy. This enemy of desire prevents the seeker's mind from achieving steady wisdom, detachment, and selflessness.

**indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate
etair vimohayatyeṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam (3-40)**

**tasmāt tvam indriyāṇy ādau niyamyā bharatarṣabha
pāpmānam prajahi hy enaṁ jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam (3-41)**

Comm. The senses, mind, and intellect are where desires reside. In reality, desire exists in the sense of “I” and spreads its influence over the senses, mind, and intellect. Due to the three qualities of nature, the soul identifies with the body, thinking the body is “I,” which creates a sense of doership in the mind. With the intention of enjoyment, the body and senses connect with desirable objects, awakening a wish to obtain what is unattainable. The process is this: desire first enters the mind through the senses. The mind, which is full of thoughts and doubts, decides whether to accept or reject the desire based on whether the object brings pleasure or discomfort to the senses. The intellect is the decisive part of the mind. The intellect understands desire based on its wisdom and past impressions, either accepting or rejecting it. If the intellect lacks wisdom and becomes attached due to the sense of “I” as the enjoyer, it is considered enchanted by the power of desire. Desire captivates the senses, mind, and intellect, residing in the ego and destroying the power of judgment. It tempts people with the promise of happiness through indulgence, leading them to sinful actions. When the senses, mind, and intellect are not under a person’s control, desire takes over them. The human body is given solely to attain the truth of the Supreme Soul. In this body, like a chariot, the soul journeys to cross the ocean of worldly existence. The senses are like horses meant to pull this chariot on the path to liberation. The intellect is the charioteer, guiding the chariot to the goal of attaining the Supreme Soul. The mind is like the reins connected to the horses, meant to be controlled by the charioteer to manage the senses. In this arrangement, desire tempts the senses, mind, and intellect with worldly pleasures, leading the soul’s journey to liberation astray. The horses, charioteer, and reins fall under the control of desire and lose their way. Like loose reins, the mind becomes weak. Unable to reach its goal, the soul wanders in the world, trapped in the cycle of birth and death. If the senses, like horses, are controlled, the intellect, like a wise charioteer, remains trustworthy, and the mind, like strong reins, stays firm, then the soul will succeed in attaining the Supreme Soul. Desire only captivates those who identify with the body. A person who thinks of the body as “I” or “mine” is body-conscious. Desire covers wisdom and binds the body-conscious person. Desire cannot even touch the pure true self. Therefore, the Lord says, O Arjuna, best of the Bharata dynasty, if you control the senses from the start, desire will not easily enter the mind. When the senses are restrained, the mind can gradually be controlled too. A seeker can remove desire from the mind through practice and detachment, keeping the senses, mind, and intellect under control. Engaging the senses in selfless service to the world, chanting the name and qualities of God, meditating, and performing duties is called practice. Understanding that worldly pleasures are temporary and that the human

body is only for attaining the Supreme Soul, and thus staying detached from desires for this world or the next, is called detachment. True understanding of the formless Supreme, the words of a guru, the teachings of saints, and scriptures is called knowledge. Living in the material world, using this knowledge to experience the divine form, incarnations, and their mysteries directly is called wisdom. Desire, with its enchanting power, prevents the mind from awakening the wish to pursue this knowledge and wisdom. Thus, desire is called the destroyer of knowledge and wisdom. In reality, desire covers wisdom and stops the mind from awakening the drive to attain the Supreme Soul. Desire can never completely destroy knowledge and wisdom. Because desire arises from ignorance. Through intense practice and detachment, it is possible to completely remove desire from the mind. The flow of desire in the mind should not be like a wild river but like a controlled stream with a clear path. As a result, desire will not cause destruction but will aid in liberation.

**indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manah
manasaś ca parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ (3-42)**

**evam buddheḥ param buddhvā samstabhyātmānam ātmanā
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam (3-43)**

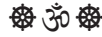
Comm. Due to the soul's identification with the body, the senses, influenced by the qualities of sattva (purity), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance), become capable of perceiving their respective sense objects such as sound, form, and taste. Therefore, the senses are superior and more subtle than the body and the material world. The subtle desires that exist in the inner mind manifest through the senses and come into the grasp of the intellect. Each sense knows only its own subject — for example, sound is known by the ear, touch by the skin, and form by the eyes. Taste is known by the tongue, and smell is known by the nose — not the other way around. But the mind knows all five senses and their objects. The mind is the inner sense and superior to the external senses and their objects. The mind is always active. The mind is extremely subtle and fast-moving. The intellect governs the mind. The intellect understands the condition of the mind — whether it is calm or restless. The intellect is drawn towards understanding, discrimination, and analysis. A stable intellect can comprehend the state and quality of the senses, the mind, and the sense objects. Thus, the intellect is more powerful, more subtle, and more superior than them. Above the intellect lies the “Self,” the divine portion of the Supreme. This “Self” is the source, support, cause, and mover of the body, senses, mind, intellect, and ego. As said in the Kathopanishad — this soul is subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest. This Self is the ear of the ears, mind of the mind, speech of the speech, life of the life-force, and the eye of the eyes. It is the eternal witness and all-pervading within all beings — that is the “Self”. The Self is extremely subtle, expansive, full of knowledge, eternal, and therefore always considered supreme and most powerful. Lord Krishna calls “desire”

hard to conquer and refers to Arjuna as “Mahabahu” (mighty-armed), reminding him that the Self has infinite power. The omnipotent “Self” is present within. By realizing the power of the Self, one can conquer the difficult enemy called “desire” by mastering the mind, intellect, and senses. When the living soul considers itself connected with the insentient body, both worldly and spiritual desires arise. The infinite power lies within the Self. From the Self, existence and strength arise in the intellect, mind, and senses. Because of its relation with the body, the living soul forgets its own power and believes itself to be under the control of the mind, intellect, and senses. To destroy the enemy called “desire” from the inner being, one must realize the power of the Self. Although desire resides in the inert body, it becomes known to the intellect only with the help of consciousness. When consciousness disconnects from the inert part and joins with the intellect, desire is destroyed automatically. The knowledge of the Self is the main method for destroying desires. With the power of the Self, and by becoming wise, one can calm the restless mind with firm intellect, break the ego of the body, and purify the inner being from all desires. If the mind and intellect have even a little attachment, neither wisdom awakens nor does detachment arise. Pure mind is true mind, pure intellect is true intellect, and pure soul is true soul. Because except for the Self, nothing else is truly pure. Only pure intellect can unite the mind with God. In the chariot of the body, the soul is the charioteer, intellect is the driver, mind is the reins, senses are the horses, and sense objects like sound are the paths. Truly, the driver must be under the charioteer, reins under the driver, and horses under the reins. But if the intellect (driver) lacks discrimination, and the mind (reins) cannot control the senses (horses), the soul (charioteer) goes astray and cannot reach the destination. “Desire,” which lures one with sensual pleasures and rules over the material world, is the main enemy of the bound soul. God has given this human body to attain the Supreme. So renouncing desire is not difficult. It only seems difficult because of excessive importance given to sensual pleasures. The core teaching of Karma Yoga in this chapter is: the Karma Yogi does nothing for himself, wants nothing for himself, and considers nothing as “his.” There are three basic mantras for a Karma Yogi: (1) “Nothing is mine”: Body, objects, and positions are all temporary. The Self is eternal. The temporary can never become eternal. (2) “I need nothing”: The Self is always complete and lacking nothing. So what is the need for anything? (3) “I do nothing for myself”: The Self is consciousness, a part of the Supreme. Action is inert. When the Self wrongly identifies with the body due to ignorance, ego arises. This ego, feeling of “I,” gets attached to action and its fruits. So it is correct to say that the Self does nothing for itself. When one has this conviction, desire cannot arise easily within. Once all desire is destroyed, the seeker achieves the ultimate goal — realization of the Supreme. Rich–poor, praise–blame, honor–dishonor, fame–defame, gain–loss, birth–death, health–illness — all are the results of past karma. Feeling happy or sad in such situations is due to one’s own ignorance. A person who serves others in good times, and remains unaffected and desireless in bad times, gets

liberated easily from worldly bondage. For Karma Yoga, one must have a firm resolve to renounce attachment to what is not truly theirs, and act not out of enjoyment but out of service. A seeker gains true welfare by putting this principle into practice with determined intellect. Man is free to make such a decision. No one is helpless.

**“Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Geetaasu Upanishatsu Brahma
Vidyaayaam Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishnaarjuna Samvaade Karma Yoga Naama
Triteeyodhyaayah.”**

Thus, chanting “Om Tat Sat,” the Third chapter of the Gita, called Karma Yoga, concludes. This chapter is part of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in the Gita, a scripture of Brahma Vidya and Yoga Shastra.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter-4 (Jnana Karma Sannyasa Karma Yoga)

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān aham avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt (4-1)**

Comm. Lord Shri Krishna, from His own side, tells Arjuna the history and tradition of Karma Yoga and indicates that this Yoga is not new. The Yoga that I am speaking of has existed since the beginning of creation, passed on through the Guru-disciple tradition, and practiced from age to age. In the creation of the universe, after the formation of the five great elements, the Sun was the first gross object to be created. Physically, the Sun is the source of heat and light. But in truth, the Sun is a conscious divine deity endowed with divine qualities. Lord Krishna says that at the beginning of creation, He instructed this eternal selfless Karma Yoga to the Sun god as His first disciple. The Sun god is the symbol of commitment to duty and action. He has no personal needs; he gives life to the world. The Sun is the center of consciousness for all living beings. The Sun is also called Savita, which means the Brahman endowed with Maya (illusion). This Brahman with Maya is the origin of both matter and life. The consciousness of living beings originates from this supreme consciousness. Therefore, the instruction received by the Sun naturally reaches

all living beings. So, Lord Krishna's purpose in first telling this Yoga to the Sun god was to inspire the whole world to practice it for the welfare of all. In the Mahabharata it is described: "O Sun God! You are the eye of the entire universe, the soul of all beings, and the inspirer of all those who perform actions." Later, Manu (son of the Sun god) practiced this Karma Yoga through his actions and accepted it. The Sun god did not teach Manu through words but inspired him through his actions and duties. The scripture that Manu wrote for people to attain enjoyment and liberation is known as Manu Smriti. First, Manu gave this Yoga knowledge to his eldest son Ikshvaku. The lineage that came from the Sun god is called the Solar dynasty (Surya Vamsha). Lord Rama was the 58th descendant of Vivaswan (Sun god) in this lineage. In this verse, when Lord Krishna says "Imam Yogam" (this Yoga), He refers to the selfless Karma Yoga described in Chapters 2 and 3. This Yoga integrates action, knowledge, and devotion. Lord Krishna first gave this Yoga Shastra to the great duty-bound Kshatriyas. The idea was that if the leaders of a nation follow this Yoga with dedication, the people would follow by example.

This would bring welfare to all of humanity. The Sun, Manu, and Ikshvaku, all these Kshatriya kings mentioned by the Lord, were householders who practiced Karma Yoga and attained the Supreme Brahman and surrendered to Him.

**Evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣhayo viduḥ
Sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa (4-2)**

Comm. O Arjuna! In this way, this eternal selfless Karma Yoga has been received by Rajarshis through the lineage of the Guru-disciple tradition. Kings born in the Kshatriya clan with sage-like spiritual awareness and conduct were honored with the title Rajarshi. Kings like Janaka and Nimi attained realization of the Supreme through Karma Yoga while serving as rulers. When Karma Yoga becomes the path of rulers, the common people of the kingdom naturally follow a life based on that Yoga. Therefore, Lord Krishna suggests that family leaders, community heads, village chiefs, and rulers should be knowledgeable about this Yoga. Over time, this noble tradition of Karma Yoga started fading from human society. Forgetting the purpose for which one received the human body leads to the loss of Karma Yoga. Since God is eternal, the paths to attain Him — Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, or Bhakti Yoga — are also eternal. They are never truly lost. But due to the lack of great souls who have realized these paths, these practices become hidden and unrecognized. For a long time, there was a lack of realized Gurus, and suitable disciples to receive this knowledge were also few. To preserve this Guru-disciple lineage, more than 5000 years ago, Lord Krishna, a great man born in the Kshatriya clan, showed this path of Karma Yoga to Arjuna. Today, in the name of civilization, mankind has become deeply attached to sensual pleasures and forgotten the path to liberation. As a result, they keep taking birth and death repeatedly in this mortal world. Monarchies and royal rule have almost disappeared from the face of the earth. But now, in India, many householders

living according to the Varna-Ashrama system are sincerely practicing Karma Yoga with faith and devotion, following the teachings and conduct of saints and sages. In the place of Rajarshis, today's realized Gurus are preserving and spreading the practice of this Yoga. Saints like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, Swami Ramsukhdas, Swami Chidananda Saraswati, and others have shown this path of Yoga to the world. These great saints can be seen as examples of how Karma Yoga is being revived and shared globally.

**sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purāṇaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam (4-3)**

Comm. O Arjuna! You are My devotee and beloved friend. That is why this ancient Yoga has been told to you by Me today. This Yoga is the highest knowledge and contains deep spiritual secrets. This Yoga, which I had once taught to the Sun god, has been passed down through generations. Since you have surrendered to Me and I understand your inner turmoil, I am revealing this ancient Yoga to you now, on the battlefield. Everyone knows that Arjuna was the friend of Shri Krishna.

A friend is one who shares moments of sitting, sleeping, eating, walking, happiness, and sorrow—always staying close. Whether by family ties or noble character, the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna was very intimate—they were extremely dear to each other. This was their deep friendship. Now Arjuna has become the disciple and has surrendered to Lord Krishna. Arjuna rejected the mighty Narayani army equipped with weapons, and instead accepted unarmed Shri Krishna as his charioteer. This reflects Arjuna's deep faith and trust in the Lord. On one side was his duty to fight in the war; on the other was the grief of seeing his relatives and elders die in that war. Arjuna had fallen into a deep moral crisis. Thinking that participating in such a war was sinful, Arjuna was mentally disturbed. To become free from this sorrow and pain, Arjuna accepted Shri Krishna as his Guru and surrendered himself to receive guidance. Arjuna said to Lord Krishna: "I am Your disciple. I surrender to You. Please show me the path to overcome this sorrow and confusion." When someone places complete faith in another and surrenders wholly, it becomes a true relationship of devotee and Lord. Along with surrender, Arjuna's heart was filled with sincere curiosity. This curiosity (jijñāsā) is itself a powerful form of spiritual practice, which qualifies a person to receive the knowledge of Yoga. The core teaching of Lord Krishna in this verse is: to realize the Supreme, one must first become dear to the Lord. Second, one must become a completely surrendered and exclusive devotee. Third, there must be intense longing within for spiritual knowledge. This Yoga is a union of devotion (bhakti), knowledge (jnana), and action (karma). Therefore, the Lord says this path of Yoga is most excellent and full of deep secrets. From the perspective of devotion, the divine play (lila) of God's incarnation in human form is very mysterious. When the formless, all-pervading Brahman appears in

human form, even gods, demons, and humans cannot easily recognize Him. Devotees wait birth after birth just to witness the Lord’s divine incarnations. Though appearing in human form, the Lord revealed His divine identity to Arjuna. That is why this Yoga is called the greatest secret. According to Sankhya philosophy, the greatest mystery is how the eternal, unchanging soul identifies with the perishable body and matter due to lack of discrimination, mistaking the unreal as real and vice versa. The understanding of soul-God, Purusha-Prakriti, Brahman and Supreme Brahman involves deep mysteries about the form and formless aspects of God. In the Karma perspective, offering the body and the world to God and serving selflessly while remaining detached from the world is the central teaching of Karma Yoga. Attachment to action binds the soul, but through disciplined Yoga practice, this attachment can be broken and one becomes free from the cycle of birth and death. Though actions are performed through the body by the light of consciousness (Swayam), the Self remains untouched by them. Only due to illusion does the Self mistakenly associate itself with matter and action—thus becoming bound. This is the core mystery of Karma Yoga.

Lord Krishna chose the battlefield and Arjuna’s mental condition as the perfect moment to teach this Yoga. In conclusion, the Lord declares that this Yoga is supreme. This Yoga leads the soul out of all forms of suffering and bondage, guiding it to eternal peace and union with the Supreme. Thus, it is the ultimate good for human life.

Arjuna Uvācha

**aparaṁ bhavato janma paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ
katham etad vijānīyāṁ tvam ādau proktavān iti (4-4)**

Comm. Arjuna asks: “O Lord! Your birth is known to all as recent—you are the son of Devaki.” “I have known you since childhood as my friend.” “It is indeed true that the Sun god was born at the beginning of creation from Aditi.” “And the kings like Manu and Ikshvaku whom you mentioned also lived long before you.” “In that case, how could you have instructed the Sun god long ago?” “How am I to understand that you were the original teacher of this ancient Yoga?” Arjuna did not ask this question with doubt or argument, but out of sincere curiosity. Though he had heard from sages like Bhishma and others during the Rajasuya Yajna that Shri Krishna was the Supreme Lord, he had not fully realized it. If Shri Krishna is a divine incarnation, then His birth, actions, human-like behavior, and supernatural traits all naturally raise many questions. So, Arjuna placed this question before Him in order to understand the mystery of His divine birth. Because only the Lord Himself is capable of revealing the truth behind His incarnation. Arjuna’s question not only helped clarify this for himself but also resolved the doubts of countless seekers. In the next verses, Lord Krishna provides a detailed and divine answer to Arjuna’s question .

**bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna
tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha parantapa(4-5)**

Comm .Earlier, in Chapter 2, Lord Krishna said that the soul is eternal and immortal. It takes on new bodies again and again and leaves them as well. He also said: “O Arjuna! There was never a time when you, I, or these kings did not exist.” That means, with different bodies and names, you have existed in every age. Similarly, I too have manifested in this mortal world in various incarnations many times. I am aware of the past, present, and future of all living beings along with My own incarnation history. Because I take incarnation while being fully aware of My divine nature. On the other hand, living beings take birth only because they are bound to material nature. Taking a body out of one’s own will while staying in true form, and taking birth due to the force of nature—these are entirely different. The Supreme Being is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss, and is beyond time. For Him, past, present, and future are all one. No soul takes birth accidentally in this world. Due to attachment to the body, the soul becomes subject to nature, qualities, and karma, and so it keeps taking new births. At the time of death, because the eternal soul is wrapped in a subtle causal body, knowledge of previous lives remains hidden. Therefore, no soul remembers anything from its past lives. The divine play (lila) of My incarnations is extremely deep and mysterious. Even great sages have not been able to fully realize the secret of My incarnations despite performing intense penance during My divine appearances. The Ramayana says that in Dandakaranya forest, out of thousands of sages, only a few like Bharadwaja recognized Lord Ram as an incarnation of God. Most others addressed Him only as the son of Dasharatha. In Tulsidas’s Ramcharitmanas, when Lord Rama grieved for Sita, Lord Shiva called it divine play (lila), but even Goddess Parvati could not believe it and tested Him. Now, even though Arjuna is constantly with Lord Krishna, he still cannot recognize Him as God. One cannot recognize an incarnation without special grace from the Lord. Only when the Lord’s grace awakens devotion and surrender in a seeker’s heart, does the Lord reveal Himself.

**ajo ’pi sann avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro ’pi san
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā (4-6)**

Comm. The Lord says: “I am birthless and my Self is unchanging and indestructible.” That means I have no growth, decay, or destruction—My divine existence is eternal. I am the ruler of all beings—meaning I govern all souls who are born through the elements and influenced by nature and karma. Even though I am unborn, I manifest in this world by taking support of My pure spiritual nature. I take form through the power of My own divine Yogamaya (divine illusion). This Yogamaya power keeps all beings—from Brahma to the smallest creatures—under its influence, so none can know My true blissful

form. But this Yogamaya has no effect on Me in My divine form or in My joy-giving nature—because it is My own energy. Though I am eternal and unchanging, I appear and disappear by My own divine will. My manifestation and disappearance are My divine play (Lila). In truth, like the sun, I am always present, always revealed. It is only in the perception of living beings that I seem to appear or disappear. The way I become manifest or hidden is unique, and it depends entirely on My will. In My incarnations, I can change from small to large in a moment, and from large to small in the next. The form in which I sit now on the chariot and give teachings to Arjuna is not even My real form. Using My Yogamaya, I change My form according to necessity. In incarnation, I am not bound by the material nature composed of the three qualities (gunas). Rather, nature follows My command and will. In the Bhagavad Gita, we see that Lord Krishna incarnated as a charioteer in the battlefield. Now, for Arjuna’s sorrow to be removed, He is acting as a teacher. Later, He takes the cosmic form (Vishwarupa), then the four-armed form, and again the human form. The details of the Lord’s incarnation are full of divine mystery. Ordinary people think He was born from Devaki’s womb. But in truth, He did not take birth from her womb. In the prison cell, He appeared before Devaki in His four-armed divine form. After Devaki’s prayers, He assumed the form of a baby and was seen lying in her lap. Unlike ordinary beings, who are bound by nature and karma and take birth because of past deeds, the Lord’s birth is not due to fate. The cause of His appearance is only His own will. The Lord’s nature is existence, consciousness, and bliss. God, in His true form of Sat-Chit-Ananda (existence-consciousness-bliss), takes on a human body. Due to nature, the human body goes through the stages of childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age in that order, growing and then declining. But in the divine body of God’s incarnation, no such physical changes take place. For the sake of His divine play (lila), He takes whichever form is needed at that time. In the same way, God says that actions are also not under the control of His qualities (gunas). The actions that happen according to My will are My divine play (lila). My superhuman play has been considered, for ages, as a path of welfare for human society. The all-powerful God taking a human body and appearing for the welfare of living beings is a great opportunity in the spiritual field of the world. During the time when God appears on this earth, He is in His Sat-Chit-Ananda form, with an unchanging divine body, intellect, and the form of the Lord of knowledge. In this period of incarnation, God delivers the devotees—who have been waiting for births after births—from the ocean of worldly existence. All the plays (lilas) that God performs happen only through the shelter of Yogamaya. That Maya power of God is indescribable. The worshippers of Lord Sri Krishna call that power “Sri Radha”. It cannot be said that the Yogamaya power is different from God or identical to Him. It is the same non-dual (advaita) reality that, for the sake of performing loving divine play, tasting love, and giving the bliss of love to all beings, appears in both the forms of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. The sweetness (madhurya) power, majesty (aishwarya) power, and others that God has shown in His play are transformations of this Yoga power. Another form of God’s Yoga power is

the power of beauty, through which everyone becomes attracted to Him.

**yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam srijāmy aham(4-7)**

Comm. The Lord takes incarnations on Earth by His own will. But when does that will arise? Lord Krishna says: Whenever righteousness (Dharma) declines and unrighteousness (Adharma) rises, I descend upon Earth. When people lose faith in Dharma, and sinful practices increase in society, I incarnate for the welfare of the world. The Lord, by His Yogamaya power, knows when Dharma is weakened and Adharma is increasing, and He decides to incarnate. Signs of Dharma's decline and Adharma's rise are visible throughout society. People abandon their duties and indulge in material pleasures and hoarding. Influenced by tamoguna (darkness), people become lazy and sleep excessively. Violence, theft, robbery, kidnapping and other crimes become widespread. People neglect the scriptures like Vedas, Puranas, and Shastras. The words of saints are misused and insulted for selfish purposes. People act violently toward one another for personal gain. Concepts of virtue and sin, justice and injustice, Dharma and Adharma become blurred. Good, righteous people who want to live by truth and justice are persecuted by demonic forces. Social disorder reaches extreme levels. Duties based on caste, class, and stage of life (varna-ashrama) are no longer practiced. Rituals and spiritual practices disappear or become distorted. Eventually, such disorder spreads from society to the state level, and even leads to the threat of wars between nations. Humanity becomes vulnerable to global destruction, such as through nuclear war. Compassion and humanity are lost. Evil and immoral people oppress the innocent, weak, and virtuous. Goodness and morality decline while evil and immorality spread. This situation is the true sign of Dharma's decline and Adharma's rise. At such times, the Lord Himself says "I create" — that is, He manifests of His own will in human form to restore Dharma. His divine play (avatar lila) follows a system already established in nature. According to the Bhagavata Purana, even Lord Buddha was an avatar. When materialism spread and atheists rejected the Vedas and corrupted spiritual traditions, Lord Buddha appeared. The Lord does not incarnate only in India — He is the Lord of the entire world. Wherever, whenever, and in whichever form is suitable for protecting life and Dharma, He incarnates. According to the needs of the time, the Lord reveals the spiritual principles that people can understand in that era. To spread the path of Dharma, to turn people away from material pleasures and toward God, He sends saints, great souls, and true Gurus to Earth at different times.

**paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge(4-8)**

Comm. The Lord says: I incarnate in every age to protect the virtuous and to destroy the wicked. I also come to firmly re-establish righteousness (Dharma). The goal of restoring Dharma includes promoting wisdom, detachment, and selfless action. It involves helping

people free themselves from lust, anger, and hatred and turn toward God. Living life according to the Vedas is called Dharma. When Adharma grows, people no longer value the Vedas, Puranas, and scriptures. Sages, saints, yogis, and devotees cry out in suffering due to the oppression of the wicked. God gives human life for the purpose of realizing the Supreme. When the evil stand in the way of this goal, the Lord decides to take incarnation to protect the righteous and destroy the sinful. Through His divine play, the Lord destroys the wicked and re-establishes truth, justice, and Dharma. Even the sinful souls who are slain by the Lord attain liberation due to the divine nature of His actions. When the Lord says “to establish Dharma,” He does not mean just one religious path like Islam or Christianity. Each religion on Earth has a human founder, but our Sanatana Dharma (eternal religion) has no founder. The Vedas were born from the breath of the Lord at the beginning of creation, and thus Sanatana Dharma is eternal. The Lord Himself is the founder of Sanatana Dharma. That is the uniqueness of our eternal religion. In this Dharma, people strive for divine life, selfless service, self-realization, and ultimately, knowledge of the Supreme. One might ask: If the Lord can create and destroy the universe by His will, why can’t He restore Dharma without taking an incarnation? The answer is found in the teachings of Shri Ramanujacharya. The word “Sadhu” refers to the Lord’s devotees. These devotees long to see the Lord, and even a moment of separation from Him feels like a lifetime. Therefore, to satisfy His devotees’ longing, the Lord incarnates. The Lord finds great joy in appearing before His devotees, speaking to them, and playing with them. The Lord also destroys the evil who trouble His devotees. Through this, true devotion (bhakti) is established as the highest Dharma. This is the main purpose of the Lord’s incarnations. The Lord does not wait for a new age to arrive before He incarnates. Just as He instantly came to rescue Gajendra (the elephant), without any delay. Or how He became an endless stream of cloth for Draupadi when she prayed. Or how He appeared to Dhruva without being called at a set time. Similarly, He appeared to devotees like Tulasidas, Mirabai, and Surdas. When His play in the world ends, He disappears from form, but leaves behind His Name. That Name remains eternal for all time. The Lord has left His divine Name in the mortal world for us. The Name holds all the divinity of His incarnations. The Name is as powerful as His Yogamaya (divine energy). Those who missed seeing the Lord in person during His earthly play can still experience His full divinity through chanting His Name. To spread the glory of the Name, Lord Chaitanya incarnated. Without listening to the Lord’s pastimes or chanting His Name, devotion cannot awaken. Whether one follows the path of knowledge or action, they must rely on devotion to see the Lord. Knowledge and action require discipline, but to become a true devotee, one must listen to His pastimes, understand their meaning, and chant His Name. When faith, trust, and surrender arise in the heart, devotion begins. When one surrenders fully, all ego is removed, and true devotion awakens. When that flow of devotion arises in the heart, the Lord becomes visible to the devotee. The Bhagavata Purana says that chanting the Lord’s Name destroys sins from countless births and leads one to the supreme abode.

**janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna (4-9)**

Comm. O Arjuna! My birth and actions are divine, meaning pure and supernatural. A person who gains knowledge of this divinity and whose inner self becomes free from ego, that devotee, after leaving the body, does not take birth again and attains Me, the Supreme Soul. The Lord is explaining to Arjuna how one can attain divine qualities by gaining complete knowledge of the mystery of His divine incarnation and supernatural actions. The bodies of living beings are born from material elements, full of sin and virtue, temporary, diseased, worldly, changeable, and made of five elements. The Lord's form is free from sin and virtue, unchanging, supremely divine, and it manifests without being born. It is divine, conscious, radiant, pure, and supernatural. The all-powerful, eternal, blissful Supreme Soul, the ultimate destination of all beings, manifests in a tangible form through His divine power to uplift the world. All of the Lord's actions, big or small, are divine play (leela). Just as the Lord's divine play is pure, human actions should also be free from attachment and divine. The Lord's manifestation reflects His benevolence toward living beings and detachment toward actions. Similarly, humans should have benevolence toward living beings and detachment in their actions. In reality, this attitude is the essence of the divine knowledge of the Lord's birth and actions. Those who realize the self are true seers of truth. Only such seers can understand the divinity of the Lord's birth and actions. By understanding this divinity, one experiences completeness within. By attaining the divinity of the Lord's incarnated form, a true seer becomes liberated in life. Even gods, eager to witness the divinity of the Lord's birth and divine play, cannot fully comprehend the mystery of His incarnated form. The mighty Kansa, despite using all his material power, could not understand how the Lord was born from Devaki's womb in a prison. When Mother Devaki fervently prayed to the Lord to protect her eighth unborn child from Kansa's wrath, the Lord manifested in His four-armed form. Then, the Lord, as a newborn child, lay in Devaki's lap and began His divine play. Seeing the manifestation of Lord Shri Rama, Mother Kaushalya was filled with joy. Her eyes were captivated by the Lord's beautiful, cloud-like radiance. Overwhelmed by seeing the four-armed form holding conch, disc, mace, and lotus, Mother Kaushalya requested the Lord to perform childhood play. The essence of the Lord's manifestation is difficult for gods, demons, and humans to comprehend.

Similarly, understanding the essence of the Lord's divine play is not easy. When Krishna and Balarama went to Mathura in Akrura's chariot to see the Dhanuyatra at Kansa's invitation, wise men, yogis, and devotees could not recognize the Lord's incarnation. The wise doubted whether this boy with hands and feet could be the unmanifested, infinite creator of countless universes, the Supreme Brahman. Yogis thought it impossible for an ordinary boy to slay the demoness Putana, subdue the Kaliya serpent, or lift the Govardhan mountain. They believed this could not be the

Lord Krishna who performs divine play in Gokula. Not seeing the flute in Krishna's hand, a devotee thought this could not be the one whose flute sound stops the wind, cools the sun's heat, stills the river's flow, makes peacocks dance, and causes cows to stop grazing. Thus, despite hearing about the Lord's divine play in Gokula, when wise men, yogis, and devotees saw the incarnation as an ordinary boy, doubts arose in their minds. Studying Vedas and Puranas to gain knowledge about the Lord's formless and manifest forms is one thing, but directly witnessing or hearing about His incarnation in the mortal world and accepting His divine nature is another. Fully understanding the essence of the Lord's incarnation without any doubt or contrary thoughts, and accepting the manifest form as the all-powerful, omniscient, eternal, blissful Supreme Soul, is the divine knowledge of His birth and actions. All of the Lord's actions are free from attachment, ego, and desires, pure, and aimed at the welfare of the world. The purpose of His divine play is to awaken morality, righteousness, love, and devotion in human hearts, establish and spread dharma. Reading, hearing, chanting, and remembering the Lord's divine play purifies and sanctifies the inner self. Having firm faith and reverence in the divine play of the Lord's birth and actions awakens devotion toward Him. Only a devotee truly belongs to the Lord. There is no one as compassionate, loving, and uplifting as the Supreme Lord.

Whether a wise person or a yogi, once they accept the Lord as their own in their heart, the Lord truly becomes theirs. This can only be understood through experience. By understanding the Lord's divine essence and surrendering to Him, the Lord claims the devotee as His own. The Lord is immensely compassionate. When a devotee becomes absorbed in the Lord's divine play, the Lord does anything for them. Hearing the devotee's heartfelt prayers, the Lord makes even the impossible possible. To fulfill the devotee's desires, the Lord manifests in any form or relationship before them. The Lord incarnates to liberate devotees from the ocean of worldly suffering and grant them His divine presence in His supreme abode. Understanding the essence of the Lord's divine play is profound. Through His divine play, the Lord fulfills the devotee's wishes. In the Lord's childhood play, Mother Yashoda's maternal love, herding cows with friends, and the rasa dance with the gopis all reflect the flow of divine love. In the Lord's rasa dance, the eternal and divine love between the soul and the Supreme Soul was demonstrated, aimed at defeating the god of desire. Though the Lord's rasa dance with the gopis appears worldly, understanding its deeper essence destroys a seeker's lustful tendencies. The sole purpose of the Lord's incarnation is to shower infinite grace on living beings. Sages and seers perform penance across lifetimes, enduring hardships, to attain liberation. But a devotee, by understanding the divinity of the Lord's earthly play and fully surrendering to Him, attains the divine abode. The moment one fully comprehends the divinity of the Lord's birth and actions, the Lord is directly realized. As a result, attaining the state of Brahman, one does not take birth again after leaving the body.

**vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā man-mayā mām upāśritāḥ
bahavo jñāna-tapasā pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ (4-10)**

Comm. Lord Krishna advises to give up attachment to material things, fear, and anger, and surrender to Him with pure love. Through the penance of divine knowledge about birth and actions, purify your heart and become free from negative tendencies. Many devotees have attained my divine nature in the past. Experiencing divinity in the heart is not as difficult as climbing the Himalayas. In this verse, God assures that one can attain His divine essence. “Free from attachment, fear, and anger” refers to the principle of Karma Yoga. “Absorbed in me and surrendered to me” means being fully devoted to God with exclusive love. This signifies the unity of the soul with God, which is the essence of the path of devotion. “Purified through the penance of knowledge” means achieving purity of heart through the penance of divine knowledge about birth and actions. This involves being free from ego and negative tendencies, which is the principle of Sankhya philosophy. Regardless of the path of spiritual practice, when Karma, devotion, and knowledge come together, the seeker attains God’s true nature. Attachment to perishable things leads to faults like fear, anger, greed, possessiveness, and desire. When one is attracted to God, attachment to worldly things naturally disappears. Love for God makes worldly pleasures seem insignificant and awakens detachment. Fear arises from the worry of losing what one has gained. Anger comes from obstacles in attaining desires or resentment toward those who cause loss. When detachment and discrimination arise, fear and anger are destroyed. Understanding the divine nature of God’s birth and actions brings devotion. A devotee immersed in devotion is attracted only to God and takes refuge in Him alone. Not claiming perishable things as one’s own or for oneself is the penance of knowledge. Through this penance of knowledge, all sins and afflictions are destroyed, and the heart becomes free from ego. Purified by this penance of knowledge, many devotees have attained the Supreme Being, who is eternal, conscious, and blissful.

**ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ (4-11)**

Comm. O Arjuna, son of Pritha, I show grace to my devotee according to the sentiment with which they take refuge in me. This verse contains the core principle of Sanatana Hindu Dharma: “As many beliefs, so many paths.” This is the essence of Vedanta philosophy. Different philosophies like Advaita, Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, the six schools of philosophy, and practices like knowledge and Karma Yoga may exist. However, the ultimate goal of all spiritual practices is to attain the Supreme Being and achieve liberation. Some worship God to attain liberation, while others worship for material gains. No one worships God for both material enjoyment and liberation at the same time. Therefore, God grants grace to a person according to the sentiment with which they take refuge in Him. To a worshiper

who seeks the fruits of their actions, God, as the Supreme Lord, grants what is beneficial. Those who aspire to achieve yogic perfection also attain success in yoga. To a wise person who seeks liberation by merging with God, God grants the opportunity to merge into His divine form. From this perspective, all beings are moving toward me in some way. In this sense, no one is truly a non-devotee; everyone is my devotee, following my path. The difference lies in how much a devotee engages their mind, intellect, and heart in worship according to their nature. Based on this, they may remain far from or come closer to me. When a devotee takes one step toward God, God also takes one step toward the devotee. God's one step is enough to reach the devotee if the devotee's heart is filled with longing. The devotee's faith is what brings God's grace to them. Knowing this secret, pure souls fully follow the path established by God. They emulate God's divine pastimes during His incarnations and become His beloved. One who becomes God's beloved realizes that God is the ultimate well-wisher and refuge. If a devotee approaches God as a friend, God accepts it and holds the devotee close to His heart.

God says: If a devotee approaches me as a servant, I serve them if needed. If a devotee desires me as a son, I take birth as their son. If a devotee worships me as the embodiment of knowledge, I awaken detachment and discrimination in their heart, granting liberation. When a devotee feels longing to attain me, I become eager to reach them. If a devotee cannot bear separation from me, I cannot stay away from them either. This is my nature; I am free from pride. Therefore, I have no fear that serving a devotee will diminish my divinity. Residing in the heart as the witness and guide, God destroys negative tendencies and awakens virtues that lead to truth. Devotion is not the result of any spiritual practice. When one fully surrenders to God, devotion naturally awakens in the heart. Among the sentiments like servitude, friendship, parental love, and sweetness, the sentiment of surrender is the highest. The realization that only God is mine and I belong only to God is the essence of exclusive surrender. Becoming aware of one's eternal relationship with God is true surrender. Upon surrendering, the devotee becomes certain, fearless, sorrowless, and free from doubt. God's actions may differ, but His sentiment remains the same. God shows equal grace and love to both the most devout and the most atheistic person. Even Kansa, a wrongdoer, was constantly thinking of Krishna to kill Him, long before Krishna's birth. Hearing a divine prophecy, Krishna became Kansa's sole focus. While preparing to kill Krishna with weapons on a stage, Kansa saw Krishna everywhere. Unable to identify the real Krishna among the cowherds, Kansa was filled with doubt. Just as a philosopher or supreme devotee sees God in the form they seek, Kansa saw the child Krishna everywhere. In the end, falling from the stage, Kansa took refuge at Krishna's feet. Krishna granted him liberation. Thus, we read in the Bhagavata: "Falling from the stage, I died, but divine will saved me." Whether a believer or an atheist, God considers every being His own. God does not consider Himself superior to the soul, as all sentiments originate from Him. This is the greatness of God.

**kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ
kṣipram hi mānuṣe loke siddhir bhavati karma-jā (4-12)**

Comm: In this human world, the results of properly performed actions are quickly obtained by worshiping deities. Success from actions can be directly observed. Only humans have the right to perform new actions. Other creatures act according to their natural instincts in the bodies they receive. The human body is designed so that humans can perform any action with the help of their mind and intellect. Deities have the power to provide material enjoyments for the management of the physical world. When humans desire things like children, a spouse, wealth, respect, or fame and perform rituals like sacrifices, vows, or fasting according to rules, deities become pleased and grant the desired results.

After enjoying the results of desire-driven actions, those results are destroyed. The happiness gained from the results of actions lasts only for a short time. However, the benefit is that worshiping deities for desired results develops divine qualities in humans. As a result, through gradual refinement, humans attain higher castes, classes, or stages of life and move toward the Supreme Being. Upon reaching a higher level of intelligence, humans turn away from material pleasures and, desiring liberation, give up selfishness and engage in selfless service to the world. The success a human achieves through actions makes their life fruitful. Therefore, the human birth and the achievements from actions are highly significant. For this reason, in the third chapter, God advises those engaged in desire-driven actions to practice selfless actions, creating clarity in their minds and not stopping them from performing actions. The results of worshiping God and deities are different. Worshiping God leads to ultimate liberation. Through worshiping God, the worshiper becomes a devotee. Attaining God is not achieved through actions but only through intense longing. The main reason intense longing does not arise in the heart is the desire for worldly pleasures. Deities, pleased by worship and rituals, grant results without considering what is beneficial or harmful. However, when God is worshiped for desire-driven actions, He considers what is beneficial for the devotee and grants results according to His will. Therefore, it is appropriate to end prayers to God by saying, “Lord, let Your will be done.”

**cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāram api mām viddhy akartāram avyayam (4-13)**

Comm. Based on qualities and actions, I created the four castes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. Though these creations and actions originate from me, know that my eternal divine nature is truly non-doing. All beings and humans were first created by Brahma. In the Satya Yuga, there was no caste or class system. In the Mahabharata’s Shanti Parva, in the “Bhrigu-Bharadwaja dialogue,” Bhrigu says: “There is no distinction of castes; this entire world is Brahman. Created by Brahma, it became

divided into castes due to actions.” Initially, all humans were known as Brahmins as Brahma’s descendants. Later, due to their actions, some became Kshatriyas, some Vaishyas, some Shudras, and others took on different roles. Over time, due to the decline in Brahma worship and contemplation, likely starting in the Treta Yuga, the three castes—Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra—emerged from Brahmins based on different actions. Over time, due to their actions, people developed qualities dominated by Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas. Brahmins, who remained devoted to Brahma worship, became Sattva-dominant, endowed with qualities like peace and self-control. Kshatriyas, dominated by Rajas with secondary Sattva, engaged in actions like bravery, valor, fighting, and protecting people. Vaishyas, dominated by Tamas with secondary Rajas, engaged in farming, trade, and cattle-rearing. Shudras, dominated by Tamas, engaged in serving the other three castes. Thus, society was divided into castes based on qualities and actions. The main goal of this caste system was the welfare of society, maintaining order in actions. Every caste had equal respect in society for their roles. In rituals like sacrifices, people from all castes were needed and participated. Even today, all castes cooperate to perform complete and proper rituals like sacrifices. Through birth after birth and pure practices, a person rises from the Tamas-dominated Shudra caste, progressing step by step to the Sattva-dominated Brahmin caste. Some consider the four-caste system based on the dominance of actions and qualities. Others consider it natural, based on birth. Some believe it is divine, due to destiny or past actions. Thus, there are three perspectives on the caste system. Even today, though the caste system seems somewhat relaxed or unnecessary, its foundation is crucial for the prosperity of society, communities, and nations. Only a laborer can contribute labor. Entrepreneurs and farmers use their resources to provide society with essentials like food and clothing. Disciplined soldiers protect society and the nation. A wise and knowledgeable administrator can guide society and the nation with well-thought-out ideas, fostering moral values and material progress. The Rig Veda’s Purusha Sukta, verse 12, states: “The Brahmin was His mouth, the Ksh Ascertain the Kshatriya was made from His arms, the Vaishya from His thighs, and the Shudra was born from His feet.” This Vedic mantra explains the basis of the four-caste system. The meaning is that Brahmins, who teach knowledge and religious duties, are like the mouth of the Supreme Being. Those who protect society with their strength and sacrifice are Kshatriyas, the arms of society. Those who provide essentials like food and clothing are Vaishyas, like the thighs that bear the load. Those who serve all at the lowest level, contributing labor, are Shudras, the feet of society. In terms of dominance, the mouth (Brahmin) represents knowledge, the arms (Kshatriya) represent action, the thighs (Vaishya) represent material exchange, and the feet (Shudra) represent service and labor. No part of the body is unnecessary. Just as the four limbs make the body fully functional, knowledge, strength, materials, and service are essential for the prosperity of society or the nation. These four elements are also vital for success in daily personal life. Observing Arjuna’s situation on the battlefield, despite his immense

strength, powerful weapons like Gandiva and Pashupata, and a well-organized infantry, he lacked proper knowledge or willpower due to a confused mind. Therefore, he wanted to flee from the battlefield. The principle of the four-caste system, taught by God, holds great importance. God is eternal. RTX God's lower energy, nature, and qualities are eternal. The soul's actions in the body, caused by nature's qualities, are also eternal. God says: I am the Supreme Lord, the creator of all, and the cause of qualities and actions.

I created the Shudra as Vaishvanara, the Vaishya as Hiranyagarbha, the Kshatriya as Prajna Ishvara, and the Brahmin as Turiya Brahman. Thus, I am the creator of the four castes, yet my eternal divine nature remains unaffected. God advises that regardless of one's caste or actions, one should perform duties without attachment to results, for the sake of inner purity and the welfare of the world.

**na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karma-phale spṛihā
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti karmabhir na sa badhyate (4-14)**

Comm. God has no need for actions. In His unmanifest form, He is present everywhere. He is all-knowing, resides in all beings, and is the ultimate doer. In the material creation, He is only the ultimate cause. The immediate cause is material nature. The universe is governed by God's divine Yogamaya power. God remains only a witness, observing as a spectator. Though creation, destruction, and other activities happen in God's name, He remains non-doing and detached. God has no sense of doership or desire to enjoy the results. Therefore, God has no desire for outcomes or expectations from anything. In His incarnations, divine pastimes, creation, or destruction, God has no sense of doership or desire for enjoyment. Whatever actions God performs are done without attachment, desire for results, or possessiveness, solely for the welfare of the world. The system where beings receive results according to their actions is free from inequality, favoritism, or cruelty by God. Like the sun, which provides heat and light equally to all without discrimination, God performs divine actions with impartiality for the welfare of all beings. Actions done by ordinary humans with attachment or aversion, due to doership or desire for enjoyment, lead to bondage. Doership and enjoyership are the essence of worldly existence, but both are unreal. They have no connection with the true nature of the soul. Great souls who understand God's divine actions perform actions like God, free from possessiveness, desire for results, or attachment, for the welfare of the world. Therefore, their actions are called efforts or activities, not causing bondage. God is not a part or fragment; He is complete. Therefore, He is beyond desires or wishes. From a worldly perspective, human nature is different from God's. Though the soul is a part of God, it carries a cause. The soul, bound by a subtle body, takes birth repeatedly. Only humans are subject to qualities and actions due to the causal body. Actions themselves are not the cause of bondage. Attachment and aversion in

the human mind corrupt the intellect. Actions driven by attachment and aversion cause bondage. The soul and God are one in essence. If they were not one, the soul could not attain liberation through knowledge of God's essence. When we realize that God is non-doing and non-enjoying despite performing all actions, and His divine actions are free from doership and enjoyership, the sense of bodily identification naturally disappears. The soul has no connection with the actions of the body. The soul remains non-doing, non-enjoying, and a witness. Through this realization of the unity of the soul and God, a person becomes free from the bondage of actions.

**evaṁ jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṁ kṛtaṁ (4-15)**

Comm. In the past, those seeking liberation understood God's divine actions in their true essence. They gave up desire for results, acted selflessly for others' welfare, and attained liberation. Therefore, O Arjuna, just as your ancestors performed actions without doership or enjoyership, follow their example and engage in your duty by fighting in the war. Our culture is Sanatana, meaning what existed before, exists now, and will continue in the future. Suppose the head of a family says that their ancestors followed the tradition of daily Shaligram worship and performed five sacrifices (for gods, ancestors, sages, humans, and beings) before eating. All family members must follow this tradition. Additionally, they must spend ten minutes in the morning and evening meditating on God selflessly. Not all family members may easily accept this instruction. They may argue against it, saying there's no time for it.

They may say that with work, business, going to clubs, or watching movies, there's no need to meditate on God. They may argue that ancestors followed these practices because modern materialistic trends didn't exist then. By rejecting ancestors' ways, they destroy the Sanatana Dharma tradition for future generations. This creates a conflict of views between generations. If spending ten minutes meditating on God without motive, gain, or desire is unacceptable, imagine how troubled our daily life has become. If a tradition involves blind faith or harms moral values, it's right to abandon it after careful thought. But rejecting traditions that purify the mind, intellect, and heart and build character is ignorance. Without contemplating God, the intellect and discrimination will never awaken. Life will feel full of busyness without peace or happiness. Success in life at any level will not be achieved. Abandoning ancestors' noble thoughts and selfless actions leaves no other path to awaken spiritual consciousness. With this understanding, our ancestors valued traditional contemplation of God, keeping Sanatana Dharma eternal. Understanding the essence of scriptures, Vedas, and texts is very difficult for ordinary people. The easiest path is to follow the practices of great saints. In the third chapter, God said that when scriptures are unclear, one should follow the path of the virtuous. Citing the example of sage-kings like Janaka, God advised Arjuna to follow their footsteps.

By mentioning tradition, God indirectly reminds Arjuna that his grandfather Bhishma fought and defeated his guru Parashurama. Thus, for a Kshatriya, fighting even revered elders to uphold justice and duty is not misconduct or sin. Rather, it aids liberation by fulfilling one's duty. Desires for righteousness, wealth, or pleasure come and go. But liberation is something everyone desires at all times. Enjoying happiness in heaven is not liberation. Liberation is completely ending suffering and its causes forever. The greatest joy in life is called liberation. God commands Arjuna, as a seeker of liberation, to fight for the welfare of the world, just as past seekers did selfless actions.

**kiṁ karma kim akarmeti kavayo 'py atra mohitāḥ
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt (4-16)**

Comm. In this human world, even learned people get confused and cannot decide what is action (Karma) and what is inaction (Akarma). God tells Arjuna to listen carefully as He explains the true meaning of action and inaction. If you understand the principle of action, you can be free from the bondage of worldly attachments and negative outcomes. This means your actions will not cause bondage. Generally, people think that doing proper work according to scriptures is action (Karma). They think abandoning one's duties and walking away from action is inaction (Akarma). But just knowing this much does not truly clarify what action and inaction are. There is a need to deeply understand the principle of action. According to Ramanuja's explanation, actions that lead to liberation are true Karma. Knowledge related to the soul is considered Akarma (inaction).

**karmaṇo hy api boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ (4-17)**

Comm. It is important to understand the nature of action (Karma). It is also important to understand the nature of inaction (Akarma). It is necessary to know what forbidden action (Vikarma) is. This is because understanding the essence of the flow of actions is very difficult. The nature of an action cannot be determined just by outward behavior. The purpose behind the action determines whether it is Karma, Akarma, or Vikarma. Actions done with desire, following scriptures, become Karma. Such actions arise from desires. Due to attachment or aversion, there is attachment to the action and its results. Because of the sense of doership and enjoyership, such actions cause bondage. Inaction (Akarma) means completely abandoning action in its essence. But in the eighteenth chapter, God says that abandoning action due to delusion is Tamasic (ignorant) abandonment. Abandoning action out of fear of physical hardship is Rajasic (passionate) abandonment. Abandoning the desire for results and attachment to action is Sattvic (pure) abandonment. Actions performed with Sattvic abandonment are considered Akarma. In Sattvic abandonment, the connection to the action is broken. Performing actions while remaining detached, or staying detached even while acting,

is the true state of Akarma. When there is no possessiveness, desire, or expectation of results, all actions naturally become Akarma. Actions forbidden by scriptures are Vikarma. When desire grows excessively into craving, actions turn into Vikarma. Forbidden behavior is Vikarma, and neglecting prescribed duties is also Vikarma. Sins like lying, deceit, theft, adultery, and violence are Vikarma. Just these definitions are not enough to distinguish between Karma and Vikarma. An ignorant person, unaware of scriptural principles, may mistake good deeds for sins or sins for good deeds. An action that is a duty for one person, based on their caste, stage of life, or authority, may be forbidden for another, making it a sin or Vikarma. For example, earning a livelihood by serving all castes is a prescribed duty for a Shudra, but it is forbidden for a Brahmin. Accepting donations, teaching the Vedas, and performing sacrifices are duties for a Brahmin to earn a livelihood. But these are Vikarma for other castes. Similarly, for a householder, earning wealth justly and being with their spouse is a scripturally approved action. But for a Sannyasi, touching wealth or women, or even looking at them, is a sin and Vikarma. Even though sacrifices are prescribed actions, if performed by someone without faith, they become fruitless and are called Akarma. If a sacrifice is performed with pride or arrogance, it is considered Vikarma, a forbidden action. Thus, even wise and intelligent people struggle to determine what is Karma, Akarma, or Vikarma. Arjuna is confused about whether fighting in the war is Karma or Vikarma. The nature of an action changes based on the intention behind it. If the intention changes, an action can become Akarma or Vikarma. Some commentators interpret Vikarma as a distinct type of action. For a self-realized, content great soul, there is no need to perform actions or any loss in abandoning them. Actions performed by such great souls are considered distinct actions (Vikarma). These actions are pure, without alternatives, and meant only to teach others. Such actions do not create impressions of good or bad. This distinct action is called Vikarma. Such actions are divine and free from sin. According to Shri Ramanujacharya, all actions related to the body are Karma. All actions related to the soul are Akarma. Karma leads the body toward enjoyment, but Akarma leads the soul toward liberation. Thus, there are different opinions among sages about the definitions of Karma, Akarma, and Vikarma. For the common person's understanding, the principle of action can be divided as follows: Actions are of two types: Karma and Vikarma. Karma can be divided into three types: Prescribed duties (Vihita Karma), which are scripturally approved and beneficial for oneself and others. Daily bodily duties are also included in prescribed duties. Occasional duties (Naimittika Karma), which involve following the rules of society, family, religion, or nation. Desire-driven actions (Sakama Karma), done with a sense of doership and desire for results for enjoyment. If prescribed duties are performed without desire for results, they become Akarma.

**karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt (4-18)**

Comm. A person who performs actions outwardly but keeps their mind calm without desiring results is wise. A person who outwardly abandons actions but inwardly focuses on soul contemplation, maintaining the flow of inaction (Akarma), is also wise. Such a person is the wisest among humans and is a true Karma Yogi. When actions are offered to God, they become inaction (Akarma) and do not produce binding results. Abandoning actions due to fear of physical hardship or delusion is also considered inaction (Akarma). In this state of inaction, one engages in dutiful actions through discernment, seeing action within inaction. Merely abandoning actions outwardly does not make them inaction (Akarma). Even in inaction, if there is a sense of doership, it is considered action (Karma). Similarly, when actions are performed without a sense of doership, they are inaction (Akarma). Even if it appears outwardly as inaction due to soul contemplation, self-realization, or self-contentment, the subtle body continues to perform actions out of love for God. Seeing inaction in action can also mean that activities of the senses, mind, intellect, and body are called action (Karma). The soul has no connection with these activities. Thus, detaching the sense of “I” and “mine” from actions and recognizing the soul as a non-doer is seeing inaction in action. A person who understands this principle of action and inaction is connected to the Supreme God. For such a connected person, no duties remain unfulfilled. Therefore, they are considered to have completed all actions. According to Swami Ramsukhdas, when the soul identifies with the body and engages in actions, it is Karma. When the soul remains detached as a witness, it is Akarma. In both performing actions and abandoning actions, a Karma Yogi remains free from desire for results and ego, always detached. The detachment of a Karma Yogi, or Akarma, is for the soul, while action (Karma) is for the world. Remaining detached in both action and inaction, being established in the soul, and achieving equanimity in the mind is Karma Yoga. According to Shri Ramanujacharya, Akarma is knowledge of the soul. The integration of action and knowledge in this verse means: one who pursues soul knowledge through action and remains established in the soul without abandoning action is wise and connected. According to Pandit Giridhari Sharma, the principle of action and inaction relates to the connection between the world and God. By knowing the essence of God, a person attains liberation after death. There is no other path to liberation. Therefore, God considers it appropriate to teach knowledge in the Gita for liberation from the inauspicious world. One who sees the actionless God in the visible world of nature (action) and sees the world operating within God’s inaction, recognizing that the entire world is superimposed on God and nothing exists beyond Him, is wise and connected. In this verse, God advises Arjuna: You want to abandon the righteous war to remain actionless and attain inaction (Akarma). See action subtly within that inaction. If you fight the war as your duty, free from attachment, aversion, desire, and expectation of results, it will not cause bondage and will be Akarma. By seeing action and inaction with subtle insight, you will gain the wisdom of the wise.

**yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇaṁ tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ (4-19)**

Comm. Efforts to perform scripturally approved actions with the body, mind, and intellect are called initiation or endeavor. Desire (Kamana) and resolve (Sankalpa) are the seeds of action. Attachment to objects of enjoyment and thinking about them in the mind is resolve (Sankalpa). The desire to obtain even a small portion of worldly or heavenly enjoyments, like a spouse, children, wealth, respect, or fame, is Kamana (desire). Resolve leads to desire. In other words, resolve is the cause of desire, and desire is the effect of resolve. Controlling resolve and desire is the state of a conquered mind. Actions are considered free from desire and resolve if: (a) there is no desire for gaining or losing anything, (b) there is no sense of “I am doing this for myself” in the mind, and (c) the purpose of the action is only for others’ welfare or to teach others. When there is no resolve or desire, action becomes inaction (Akarma). Even when performing actions out of duty or for the welfare of others, a realized person remains completely detached. In the path of active spiritual practice, recognizing the soul as detached and non-doing, and experiencing direct realization of God, is “knowledge.”

The main teaching of the Gita is: Perform actions free from selfishness, desire, and ego. While performing actions, do not see yourself as the doer. God’s Yogamaya is the power that engages in action, God’s resolve is the cause of engaging in action, and ultimately, God’s will determines the result of the action, intended for one’s own and the world’s welfare. An ordinary person, while performing actions, mentally associates with the action through ego, feeling “I am doing this.” Similarly, expecting results creates a sense of enjoyership, feeling “this is for me.” During action, the sense of doership, emotional attachment, and concern for success or failure subtly connect with the action. When actions are performed for God, the flaws of doership, desire for enjoyment, and expectation of results are destroyed. For those whose efforts are free from attachment and ego, and who have true knowledge of inaction, with no connection to action, all their accumulated actions are burned in the fire of knowledge, like fuel in a fire. This means their actions lose the power to produce binding results.

Even current actions become free from good or bad impressions. Due to the absence of doership and enjoyership, destined actions (Prarabdha Karma) only create temporary situations and then dissolve. Such great souls are addressed as “Pandit” (wise) by the learned. Everyone praises the glory of renunciates who detach from worldly objects. But it is not easy to recognize a Karma Yogi who performs all duties in the householder stage while remaining detached, based on their outward behavior.

**tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgaṁ nitya-tr̥pto nirāśrayaḥ
karmaṇy abhipravṛtto ’pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ (4-20)**

Comm. One who completely abandons attachment to actions and their results, is

free from ego, does not depend on worldly objects, and remains content in contemplation of God, even while engaging in actions for the welfare of others, does not truly perform actions. This means they have no connection with the actions. Attachment to actions and their results usually arises due to the desire for sensory pleasures and mental impressions of enjoyment. When actions are performed with a desire for enjoyment, attachment to results causes mental agitation, making the intellect unsteady. Due to the lack of resolute intellect, actions become flawed, and good results are not achieved. Thus, whether desire-driven or prescribed actions, attachment to actions and their results turns even good actions into forbidden actions (Vikarma). For example, building a temple is a noble action. But if there is attachment to building the temple at any cost, one may resort to dishonest means to gather resources, which is a forbidden action. Actions are performed through human effort, but their results depend on God's will and the course of time. Therefore, all actions should be performed with a sense of duty, offered to God. When actions are offered to God, they become inaction (Akarma). Due to the absence of attachment and aversion during action, one remains immersed in God's blissful nature, attaining self-contentment in the mind. This self-contentment is distinct from the satisfaction gained from achieving desired results. Enjoying the results of actions brings temporary satisfaction. Once the duration of the action ends, that satisfaction also ends. But the self-contentment gained from performing selfless actions remains eternal, aiding in attaining God in this world and beyond. Permanent happiness or eternal satisfaction cannot be achieved by depending on perishable objects. In the world, one must rely on some object, person, or power to attain something unachieved or to protect something achieved. Dependence on objects, people, or powers is subject to change due to their material nature. Thus, neither permanent happiness nor assurance of protecting possessions is achieved through them. As long as one associates with perishable actions and objects, the soul cannot experience its inherent eternal satisfaction. By taking refuge in the eternally attained Supreme God, there is no need to depend on anyone else. God is the ultimate, certain provider of all desires and the protector of all. For a spiritual practitioner or realized person whose actions and results are dedicated to God, there is no need to depend on any person, object, situation, or power. They have no need for actions, nor is anything left unattained. They have no person or object as their own that needs protection. They remain surrendered to God, fulfilled in all desires. Being independent of place, time, objects, people, or situations is called being without refuge (Nirashraya). Such fulfilled persons remain in constant bliss, having attained the essence of God. In this state, no worldly event makes any difference to them. A person who is eternally satisfied, even while performing actions, does not get bound by them. A connected person who can see inaction in action and action in inaction has no duties left to fulfill. Therefore, whatever actions they perform or refrain from are all in accordance with scriptures. They perform all actions selflessly for the welfare of others.

Thus, their actions are not truly actions (they become Akarma).

**nirāśīr yata-cittātmā tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ
śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam (4-21)**

Comm. A Karma Yogi who is free from attachment, desire, and possessiveness, who has controlled his senses, whose mind is free from attraction and repulsion, and who gives up gifts, luxuries, and collection of items— such a wise person, even while doing actions for maintaining the body, does not incur any sin. Because, he has no desire for anything else. All his efforts are aimed only at attaining God. He performs all actions considering them to be God’s will. He acts to keep the body healthy and capable for spiritual practice. He has no desire to enjoy sense pleasures. He does not collect wealth by wrong means for bodily maintenance. He naturally gives up the desire to gather enjoyment items. He is not just outwardly avoiding enjoyment and hoarding, but has completely given them up from his heart. He does not accept luxury items as gifts or donations. Even if he does very little work, there is no laziness or carelessness in his detached karma yoga. He has no sense of enjoyment in his work. So, being always detached, he does not incur even the slightest sin whether he acts or not. According to Shankara’s commentary, this verse is especially meant for renunciates (Sannyasis). Such a person, due to his past life’s spiritual merit, has attained self-knowledge in this life even without performing rituals like yajnas. He has no desire for worldly or heavenly pleasures. His mind, soul, body, and senses are fully under control. He has given up all possessions like wife, son, wealth, and respect. As long as his body exists due to destiny, he acts without any body-identification only to maintain life— like eating or dressing. Such actions do not bring any sin or virtue. He remains unaffected by success or failure of actions. A renunciate with wisdom and dispassion who begs only for bodily needs, is not harmed in any way. For such monks, doing bodily-maintenance actions is permitted by scriptures.

**yadṛcchā-lābha-santuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsarah
samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate (4-22)**

Comm. One who is free from desires, detached, and satisfied with what comes naturally due to past karma, has no jealousy towards others, and is not disturbed by favorable or unfavorable situations, and sees success and failure equally— even while doing actions, he is not bound by their results. Such a Karma Yogi accepts whatever comes as God’s will and remains always happy in mind. If he gets favorable things, he uses them for the welfare of the world. If unfavorable things come, he accepts them as repayment for past deeds and patiently tolerates them. He does not desire new material pleasures. He experiences the dualities of heat-cold, joy-sorrow, honor-dishonor, etc. in this world, but since he has no goal of gaining results and no attachment or hatred in the mind, he remains free from happiness-sorrow type dualities. When a person hears about others having more knowledge, wealth, intelligence, or fame, and feels jealous—this is called envy (Matsarata). A person who is proud of their own knowledge, wealth, or intelligence

feels jealous of others who are praised for those same qualities. This envy can even exist among relatives, friends, and close people. One may even feel happy when unrelated people suffer loss. This subtle fault of jealousy hides inside egotistical people. A realized Karma Yogi's mind is free from ego, and because he has no unfulfilled desires, he is free from jealousy. He is not affected by the results of any actions and remains steady. Such a Karma Yogi rises above all dualities, remains free from envy, acts with a balanced mind as per scriptures, and is not bound by karma.

**gatasañgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-cetasah
yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagraṁ pravilīyate (4-23)**

Comm. Actions done to worship God are called yajna. Good actions done with the idea of offering to God are real yajna. One who is not attached to results, whose mind is free from attachment and hatred, and who is fixed in the knowledge of the unity of Brahman and Atma, whatever actions he does with body, mind, or speech, all become peaceful and fruitless. In this way, all karmas of this life get destroyed.

Even past life's karmas lose the power to bear fruit. To be free from even a trace of desire or attachment to enjoyment or results is called "Gata-Sangasya." When a person has no body-attachment or ego in any part of their body, mind, or senses, they become completely free from bodily identity. As they see only Brahman in everything, they feel unity with Brahman and keep their mind always absorbed in the Supreme. This is called action done with knowledge. Whatever duties are prescribed for a person according to his caste, stage of life, ability, and clarity— if he performs them selflessly to maintain the tradition of yajna karma, then that becomes real yajna. This is a different way of seeing inaction in action. In just one verse, Lord Krishna says all the karmas of a Karma Yogi are dissolved. So, by renouncing desire for results, being free from body-attachment, and staying always in the knowledge of the Supreme, the actions performed as yajna merge with all previous karmas. Such a person's actions lose the power to produce any result.

**brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma-karma-samādhinā (4-24)**

Comm. In yajna, the spoon, the ghee, the act of offering, and the fire— everything is Brahman. The person offering it (the yajamana) is also Brahman. The act of pouring ghee into the fire is also Brahman. As a result of seeing Brahman in all these, whatever such a devotee gains becomes non-different from Brahman. Just as ghee offered into fire becomes one with it, in the same way, all means and goals merge and become yajna. And the only fruit of such yajna is realization of Brahman. This verse teaches that by seeing Brahman everywhere, even yajna becomes a way to attain Him. "Seeing Brahman everywhere" is called Brahma Drishti. All actions and objects are part of nature. If you observe carefully, all objects are constantly

changing and moving toward destruction. So everything is just the movement of time. Due to attachment, things appear stable. But all actions lead to destruction. Thus, this world is actually empty. The Brahman alone exists behind this ever-changing world. It is the unchanging, inactive principle. It alone is truly real. So, in perishable things, one can see the imperishable Brahman. The result of continuous Brahma-buddhi is that the seeker undoubtedly realizes the Supreme Brahman. If every action is done selflessly as yajna, the mind becomes pure and eventually reaches Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna said, “A realized person sees Brahman everywhere.” Before meals, this verse is chanted as a mantra. Eating is also a yajna. In this yajna, the hands that offer are Brahman, the food is Brahman, the eater is Brahman, the digestive fire is Brahman, and the act of eating (offering food to that fire) is also Brahman. So the result attained by such a person is also Brahman itself.

**daivam evāpare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāv apare yajñam yajñenaivopajuhvati (4-25)**

Comm. The previous verse said that knowledge of seeing Brahman everywhere comes through yajna and other actions. So, knowledge gained through yajna is considered higher. All yajnas done to please gods like Brahma, Shiva, Ganesh, Sun, Moon, Indra, Varuna, etc., are called divine yajnas. Ordinary people offer things in fire to gain temporary worldly pleasures. But yogis offer their inner faults—attachment, ego, desire—into the fire of knowledge to attain Supreme Self. These yogis do not perform rituals for material gain. They offer mantras, do worship, give donations, feed the poor, and do good deeds only for inner purification. All these god-centered yajnas are performed with devotion and according to scriptures, only to attain realization of the Supreme. The yogi, seeing Brahman everywhere, offers his own body, actions, and ego as offerings into the fire of Supreme Knowledge and becomes one with the Supreme Self. According to their understanding, the Supreme is the fire altar, and the soul is the offering. They offer it into the fire of Brahman. Because of ignorance, the soul gets identified with the body and does worldly actions. But that too becomes a yajna. The Supreme Lord is the true enjoyer and master of all yajnas. He is separate from the body, mind, senses, and intellect, and is pure bliss and consciousness, present everywhere. He is the ultimate receiver of all yajnas. When a person becomes one with the Supreme, and constantly meditates on the oneness of soul and God, then offering the soul into that fire becomes the real yajna. Just like offerings burn and disappear in fire, in the same way, all faults of the soul like impurities, disturbances, and ignorance are destroyed. The soul becomes free from all imperfections and merges into the Supreme.

**śrotrādīnīndriyāṇy anye saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati
śabdādīn viṣayān anyā indriyāgniṣu juhvati (4-26)**

Comm. In this verse, the practice of controlling the senses is described as a form

of sacrifice (Yajna). Some spiritual seekers devoted to Brahman offer their senses into the fire of self-control. This means they withdraw their senses from objects like sound, form, taste, smell, and touch, becoming sense-controlled. The natural tendency of the senses to enjoy objects is stopped by detaching them from such desires. Engaging the senses in worship of God is considered a sacrifice (Yajna). Controlled senses lose the power to engage the mind in worldly enjoyment. For those who control their senses to attain God, their mind does not dwell on worldly objects but constantly focuses on God. Just as fire burns an object to ashes, self-control is like a fire that destroys the outward tendencies of the senses. By following the guidance of a proper guru, spiritual practitioners (Brahmacharis) keep their minds controlled, staying away from sensory pleasures. With the help of discernment, contemplation, chanting, and meditation, the senses are controlled. After completely destroying attachment to sensory objects, a practitioner's state remains the same in solitude and in practical life. Other Karma Yogis, living as householders, offer sensory objects like sound, form, taste, smell, and touch into the fire of their senses. This means their senses remain detached while experiencing these objects. They accept only permitted objects and restrain their senses from forbidden ones. For a self-controlled person free from attachment and aversion, praise or criticism (heard by ears), beauty or ugliness (seen by eyes), cold or heat (felt by skin), tasty or tasteless (experienced by tongue), and pleasant or unpleasant smells (sensed by nose) do not create any disturbance. This is the offering of sensory objects like sound, form, touch, taste, and smell into the fire of the senses. Through this, attachment to sensory objects is destroyed in the mind. When the mind and senses are free from attachment to objects and the desire for enjoyment, the craving for sensory pleasures burns away like straw in fire. In practical life, the practitioner's mind, free from attachment and aversion, remains in a state of equanimity.

**sarvāṇīndriya-karmāṇi prāṇa-karmāṇi cāpare
ātma-saṁyama-yogāgnau juhvati jñāna-dīpite (4-27)**

Comm. In this verse, the practice of Samadhi Yoga is described as a form of sacrifice (Yajna). Through the physical body's connection with sensory objects, actions are performed by the five knowledge senses and five action senses. The ears are engaged in hearing, eyes in seeing, hands in touching, tongue in tasting, and nose in smelling. Actions like speaking, sitting, standing, moving, and expelling waste are performed by the action senses in the body's external parts. The five vital energies (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Samana, and Udana) perform various functions inside the body through air. Prana regulates breathing, Apana moves downward, Vyana controls contraction and expansion, Samana maintains balance, and Udana moves upward. All these internal vital energy functions sustain the body. A meditative Yogi offers all these sensory and vital energy actions into the fire of Samadhi Yoga, ignited by knowledge of God. In this Samadhi sacrifice, self-control is the fire of mental tendencies, and knowledge of God keeps the mind awakened.

The practitioner restrains all actions of the ten senses and five vital energies, focusing the mind on the knowledge that “God alone is all-pervading.” They remain immersed in divine bliss with this knowledge-driven mindset. Offering all sensory and vital energy actions as a sacrifice is contemplation of the soul. After offering these actions, who is eating? Who is walking? Who is thinking? Who feels hunger or thirst? After offering everything, what entity remains to be considered the doer? The body, perceived as “I,” is unreal and not permanent. Then, who is “I”? When all actions cease, the absence of a doer and the soul’s witness-like nature provide the answer, leading to self-realization. To distinguish Samadhi Yoga from sleep, it is described as a form of sacrifice. In the state of Samadhi, the distinction between soul and non-soul remains awakened. In sleep, the senses’ tendencies are absorbed in ignorance, but the five vital energies remain active. Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras describe restraining the senses and vital energies through practices like Asana and Pranayama. In Hatha Yoga Samadhi, the Kumbhaka practice is used to restrain vital energies. In Dhyana Yoga, the mind achieves focus through continuous contemplation of the divine object. As meditation deepens, the mind’s activities cease. In Ashtanga Yoga, the three components—Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi—together form self-control Yoga. This is the state of Samadhi. In this state, all sensory tendencies become calm. Vital energy actions also gradually cease automatically. By meditating continuously on God, either in a form (Saguna-Sakara) or formless (Nirguna-Nirakara) as the chosen ideal, the mind is restrained in Samadhi Yoga. A Yogi performing the Samadhi sacrifice calms all sensory and vital energy actions, focusing mental tendencies on knowledge of God, and attains Samadhi. In a pure mind, the knowledge that God is all-pervading remains awakened.

**dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā yoga-yajñās tathāpare
svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāś ca yatayaḥ saṁśīta-vratāḥ (4-28)**

Comm. A sincere seeker, with a firm mind, offers his mind, body, and wealth for the goal of attaining God, through various forms of yajnas (sacrifices), as described in scriptures. There are two types of material yajnas: Śrauta and Smārta. In the Śrauta yajna, people donate wealth and items earned righteously to gods, learned people, and sacred places, hoping for happiness in this life or afterlife. In the Smārta yajna, people use their wealth (earned honestly) without attachment or desire for results to build water tanks, temples, community shelters, food services, health or education centers. Even without money, householders can offer their time, effort, and words in selfless service. They can also worship God with love and devotion, by offering leaves, flowers, fruits, and food. Some people also follow strict rituals or vows, like Chandrayana or Chaturmasya. Great sages practice self-control and concentrate their senses and minds to realize God—this is known as Tapoyajna (sacrifice through austerity). In Tapoyajna, they completely give up the desire for physical pleasure. For a Karma Yogi, doing one’s own duty (swadharma) according to one’s caste, stage of life, and nature, with full sincerity,

is also a kind of Tapoyajna. Even when very difficult situations or people come, if the seeker happily continues to do his duty, without getting distracted— that is the highest form of penance. For this purpose, one may do things like eating only fruits or milk, tolerating the heat of the sun, or living in forests—this is all part of Tapoyajna. According to Adi Shankaracharya, concentration of mind and senses is real penance. Earlier, the Lord has said that inner balance is called yoga. To remain steady in pleasure-pain or success-failure, and not feel joy or sorrow in the mind, is a sign of mental control. So, Yogayajna means control over the activities of the mind. Some scholars say that the first two steps of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga—Yama and Niyama—are also part of Yogayajna. Yama includes: Truthfulness Non-violence Celibacy Non-stealing Non-possessiveness Niyama includes: Cleanliness (inner and outer) Contentment Austerity Surrender to God Self-study . A seeker who sincerely follows these, and is free from attachment, hatred, and ego, is called Samsitavrata Yogi by the Lord in this verse. Such a yogi practices calmness, self-control, and discipline to help unite his soul with God. Some Karma Yogis study Vedanta, Upanishads, Sankhya, and other scriptures, until they realize the full nature of God. Such a seeker who remains firmly in knowledge and reflects on the truth of the soul is performing Jnana Yajna (sacrifice of knowledge). In Jnana Yajna, thinking is more important than action. In the householder stage, reading scriptures like Ramayana, Gita, Bhagavata daily is called Swadhyaya. But Swadhyaya alone is not Jnana Yajna. To read scriptures with deep thought and questioning, understanding God's form, His birth and deeds, the nature of the soul and Brahman— and to apply this knowledge in life— is true Jnana Yajna.

**apāne juhvati prāṇaṁ prāṇe 'pānaṁ tathāpare
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ(4-29)**

**apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati
sarve 'py ete yajña-vido yajña-kṣapita-kalmaṣāḥ (4-30)**

Comm. In these verses, the Lord describes Pranayama (breath control) as a form of yajna. It involves controlling the movement of breath inside the body. Breath is made to move in the opposite direction, by stopping the flow of air (inhalation and exhalation) to gain spiritual experience and reach God. This practice of controlling prana is a yajna.

Inside the body, breath (air) is divided into five types: Prana (in the heart) Apana (lower part of the body) Samana (in the navel) Udana (in the throat) Vyana (throughout the body) These are known as the five pranas. Breath movement also has three forms: Puraka (inhalation) Rechaka (exhalation) Kumbhaka (holding breath) When breath goes out or comes in through the nose or mouth, it is Prana. When waste is expelled from the body, it is Apana. Holding breath in or out is Kumbhaka. Prana goes upward, and Apana moves downward. Breathing out is the function of Prana, breathing in is of Apana. When the outer breath is offered into the inner breath, it becomes Puraka. Here, Apana is like fire,

and Prana is like the offering. In Puraka, outer air enters through the left (Chandra Nadi) or right nostril (Surya Nadi), joins the Prana in the heart, and merges with Apana at the navel. In Rechaka, inner breath is offered into outer breath, and Prana (fire) merges with Apana (offering). When both Puraka and Rechaka are stopped completely, it is Kumbhaka. All five types of air are held in place—this is also called offering Prana into Prana in the fire of yoga. Kumbhaka helps increase the yogi's lifespan. Basic Puraka and Rechaka practices are generally safe. The process of Pranayama is explained in detail in Patanjali Yoga. One must learn this under the guidance of a realized teacher. Doing Kumbhaka incorrectly can harm the body. Swami Sivananda recommends that householders and Karma Yogis do only Puraka and Rechaka—it is very beneficial. Those who eat one part solid, one part water, and keep one part empty for air are called Mitahari (moderate eaters). Moderate eating is very important in yoga to control senses and mind. Such a yogi offers his senses into Prana as an offering. If he practices this with detachment, devotion, and without desire for results, then all his past karmas—good and bad—are destroyed. The person doing such Pranayama realizes the truth of yajna.

[Further instructions and methods of pranayama are also explained.] Pranayama Yoga: Sitting in Siddhasana, Padmasana, or Sukhasana and controlling the movement of inhalation and exhalation is called Pranayama. Inhalation is when external air enters the body, and exhalation is when internal air is released. Pranayama consists of three types: external (Rechaka), internal (Puraka), and retention (Kumbhaka), which are long and subtle, based on place, time, and measure. First, inhale through the left nostril (Chandra Nadi), then hold the breath (Kumbhaka), and finally exhale through the right nostril (Surya Nadi). Next, inhale through the right nostril (Surya Nadi), hold the breath (Kumbhaka), and exhale through the left nostril (Chandra Nadi). Repeating this cycle of inhalation, retention, and exhalation is Pranayama Yoga. During Pranayama, the mind's tendencies become calm. External Retention Pranayama (Bahya Vritti Pranayama): Exhaling the breath and holding it out is called "External Kumbhaka." The method is to exhale while chanting eight Pranava (Om) mantras, hold the breath out for sixteen Pranava mantras, and then inhale for four Pranava mantras. Performing exhalation and inhalation with external retention is called External Retention Pranayama (Bahya Vritti Pranayama). Internal Retention Pranayama (Abhyantara Vritti Pranayama): Inhaling external air and holding it inside is called Internal Kumbhaka. The method is to inhale while chanting four Pranava (Om) mantras, hold the breath inside for sixteen Pranava mantras, and then exhale for eight Pranava mantras. Performing inhalation and exhalation with internal retention is called Internal Retention Pranayama (Abhyantara Vritti Pranayama). Stambha Vritti Pranayama: Comfortably holding the breath, whether inside or outside, at any point is called Stambha Vritti Pranayama. Inhale for four Pranava mantras, exhale for eight Pranava mantras, and during this process, hold the breath comfortably for sixteen Pranava mantras at any time. Additional Details: For breath control, the internal region includes the navel, heart, throat,

or the inner tip of the nose. The external region extends from the nostrils up to sixteen finger-widths outside. During Puraka Pranayama, if the breath is drawn to the navel, it should be exhaled up to sixteen finger-widths outside. If drawn to the heart, exhale up to twelve finger-widths; if to the throat, eight finger-widths; and if to the tip of the nose, four finger-widths. Due to the close relationship between the count and time in Pranayama, rules should not be violated. For Kumbhaka with sixteen Pranava mantras, take four seconds, and for Rechaka with eight Pranava mantras, take two seconds. The count of mantras is called “Matra,” and the time taken is called “Kala.” The length and subtlety of Pranayama depend on the increase or decrease of time and measure. According to earlier teachings, controlling the breath in Pranayama leads to control of the mind. Controlling the mind and senses, achieving focus, is the control of breath. There is no specific rule for place, time, or measure to control the breath. From verses 24 to 30, God describes various types of sacrifices (Yajna), such as Brahma Yajna, Offering-to-God Yajna, Self-control Yajna, Samadhi Yajna, Material Yajna, Austerity Yajna, Yoga Yajna, Self-study Yajna, knowledge Yajna, Pranayama Yajna, and Controlled-diet Yajna. After understanding the essence of these sacrifices, one realizes that a sacrifice is not just offering into a fire altar. Each of these sacrifices has its own significance based on its practice. By performing any of these sacrifices, one can attain Brahman.

**yajña-śiṣṭāmṛta-bhujo yānti brahma sanātanam
nāyaṁ loko ’sty ayajñasya kuto ’nyaḥ kuru-sattama (4-31)**

Comm: Lord Krishna has described various types of sacrifices (Yajnas) in the previous verses. The core principle is that when a person gives up selfish material desires and performs actions selflessly for the welfare of others, it becomes a form of sacrifice (Yajna). Perfection or success is achieved by following the rules of Yajna. Offering all material energy for the welfare of the world is called Yajna offering. Regardless of caste, religion, or nation, viewing all as children of God and performing duties sincerely for the welfare of humanity leads to living a liberated life while in the body. This is like drinking the nectar of Yajna’s remnants (Yajnaashishta Amrita). Performing actions selflessly for the education of others, free from attachment and aversion in the mind, brings supreme peace and joy, which is like the nectar of Yajna’s remnants. By partaking in this supreme blissful nectar, a person who understands the essence of Yajna attains the Supreme Brahman (God). Lord Krishna says, “O best of the Kurus, Arjuna! Selfish people who seek bodily pleasures and ignore the welfare of the world remain engrossed in sensory enjoyment.” Such people have no place in this mortal world. This means they cannot find peace even for a moment in this world, let alone attain happiness in the afterlife like Brahma’s realm. Human birth is a unique opportunity where a soul can perform dutiful actions as Yajna and become free from the cycle of birth and death. Actions done for selfish bodily desires are not dutiful actions; they are desire-driven actions (Sakama Karma). Performing duties for family, society, or nation without desiring results, as part of one’s responsibility or

prescribed duty (Swadharma), is Yajna Karma. Every effort, when done selflessly with a sense of duty, becomes a Yajna. The human body is meant for performing Yajna. By performing actions solely for Yajna, a person attains liberation. A person who does not perform their prescribed duties as Yajna according to Vedic rules cannot hope to attain peace. By neglecting duties in family, social, or religious spheres according to one's caste and stage of life (Varnaashrama), a person becomes an object of disdain everywhere. A person who ignores Yajna Karma finds it difficult to attain human birth again. Such a soul may be born in lower realms of existence. A person practicing spirituality attains constant happiness and peace during their lifetime and merges with the Supreme Brahman after leaving the body.

By attaining the company of the Supreme Lord, they enter the eternal divine abode of God. The nectar of Yajna's remnants mentioned in the Gita is nothing but the realization of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma Tattva Jnana) or knowledge of God, called the Yajnaashishta Prasada. This is the knowledge through which the unity of the soul and the Supreme Soul is realized.

**evam bahu-vidhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe
karmajān viddhi tān sarvān evam jñātvā vimokṣyase (4-32)**

Comm. Various types of Yajnas are described through the words of Brahma, meaning through Vedic teachings. A person who fully understands the essence of Yajna continues to live in the body but remains in a state of unity with Brahman. The resolute intellect of such great souls is absorbed in the knowledge of the Supreme Soul. The words from their mouth also express only the expansion of Yajna. Offering all physical, verbal, and mental actions to God and performing them for His pleasure is Yajna. Actions performed without attachment, solely for the welfare of all beings with a Brahman-focused intellect, become Yajna. The Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Soul, is always present in such Yajna Karma. Only actions free from desire can be offered to God. In desireless actions, there is no attachment to results, so the sense of doership does not arise. All actions performed through the body, mind, and senses, if done without desire for results and without the sense of "I am doing," become Yajna Karma. Due to differences in practitioners' natures and devotion, their spiritual practices also vary. All prescribed duties and spiritual practices for attaining God, known as Yajna, are performed through the actions of the mind, senses, and body, influenced by nature and qualities (Gunas). Even renouncing mental activities like resolve and indecision is a form of action-based practice. The soul has no connection with any of these actions. The soul is always a non-doer and beyond actions. Lord Krishna says that all Yajnas arise from actions, meaning the soul remains detached while performing them. The soul is all-pervading and no action occurs within its essence. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that if he thinks abandoning the duty of fighting the war will lead to welfare, that abandonment is also born of action. True welfare is not achieved through actions but by disconnecting from

attachment to prescribed actions. This disconnection makes the action a welfare-oriented Yajna Karma for oneself and others. Therefore, the pure meaning of Yajna Karma is “worship and contemplation.” The process of Yajna is action. Actions performed for world welfare with a controlled mind are Yajna. The expansion of the mind is the material world. Actions arising from the mind’s expansion are desire-driven actions. The entire material world exists as the offering material for Yajna. All these material objects must be offered in the Yajna of dutiful actions. Complete cessation of the mind is the cessation of the material world. When the mind ceases, the result of Yajna is attained. Yajna Karma is the gateway to liberation. A person seeking liberation, by understanding the essence of Yajna and performing actions with a detached mind, destroys past accumulated Karma. Current good or bad actions do not cause bondage. By partaking in the nectar of knowledge gained from completing Yajna, a person enters the eternal Brahman. Lokmanya Tilak interprets “Brahmanomukhe” as “in the mystery of Karma,” explaining that the Gita’s broad perspective of Yajna shows that a Brahman-realized Yogi sees only Brahman everywhere. Such great souls believe that practices like austerity and meditation are performed in the presence of Brahman. The “mouth of Brahma” is likened to the famous Vedic fire in which offerings are made. In every Yajna, the fire is considered the basis of offerings. All Yajnas should be performed considering the fire as the mouth of Brahma.

**śreyān dravya-mayād yajñāj jñāna-yajñāḥ parantapa
sarvaṁ karmākhilāṁ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate (4-33)**

Comm. From this verse onwards till the end of the chapter, Lord Krishna praises the yajna of knowledge (Jñāna Yajna) and explains the highest level of knowledge. Performing fire sacrifices (homa) to please gods like Indra and Varuna is called material sacrifice (Dravya Yajna). In the fire pit, which is like the mouth of Brahma, items like ghee, milk, sugar, sesame, barley, rice, sandalwood, camphor, incense, and fragrant herbs are properly offered. To enjoy heavenly pleasures, people donate money and items to priests as offerings or fees, feed Brahmins, serve saints, and help the poor with food and clothes—this is also Dravya Yajna. Donating money for building water tanks, schools, hospitals, community shelters, and temples is also a form of Dravya Yajna. Depending on the person’s faith and intention, Dravya Yajna can take many forms. But usually, in Dravya Yajna, there is some personal desire involved, so the person becomes attached to the results and has to experience the fruits of those actions. On the other hand, a Karma Yogi works for the welfare of society but remains detached and selfless. He is not attached to his actions or their outcomes. He works only to please God. His mind remains free from the sense of doership. Such a spiritual seeker sees the soul (Atma) as the real doer, unchanging, and pure consciousness. There are three faults in the mind—impurities (Mala), restlessness (Vikshepa), and ignorance (Avarana). Mala is the collection of sins. Vikshepa is the wandering of the mind. Avarana is the darkness of ignorance. By doing selfless karma, the first two faults (Mala and Vikshepa) are

removed. Going beyond action and material, if one seeks only spiritual knowledge, that becomes a Jñāna Yajna. This Jñāna Yajna removes the veil of ignorance and awakens the deep desire to know the oneness of Atma and God. Since Jñāna Yajna is based on thinking and understanding, it does not need any material or physical ritual. There are eight inner practices to attain spiritual knowledge: Viveka – Knowing the difference between soul and body, truth and untruth. Vairagya – Giving up untruth and becoming detached from the world. Six Virtues (Shat Sampatti) – a) Shama – Controlling the mind from worldly objects. b) Dama – Controlling the senses from pleasures. c) Shraddha – Strong faith in God and scriptures. d) Uparati – Staying away from worldly activities. e) Titiksha – Patiently bearing pain, insult, joy-sorrow. f) Samadhana – Making the mind free of doubts. Mumukshutva – Intense desire for freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Shravana – Listening to scriptures from a realized Guru. Manana – Thinking deeply about what was heard. Nididhyasana – Removing wrong ideas and focusing only on truth. Tattva Vichara – Realizing the one formless conscious Truth beyond nature and qualities. A person who uses his body, mind, and senses to practice these steps is truly doing Jñāna Yajna. Lord Krishna says, “O Arjuna, among all sacrifices done with material, the Jñāna Yajna is the best, because it gives the immortal knowledge of the oneness of soul and God.” So, He proves that knowledge is higher than material offerings. If a seeker does not perform rituals like fire sacrifices or donations, but follows self-control, scripture study, and meditation— that is considered a greater form of sacrifice. Until one gives up attachment and ego, Dravya Yajna remains on the physical level. But when a person does it many times and loses interest in the material parts, and gains divine faith and knowledge— then his yajna is considered superior. Every action in yajna helps awaken knowledge in the mind. Lord Krishna again says, “All actions, tools of action, and the results of action eventually dissolve in knowledge.” That means, the final result of all actions is spiritual knowledge. Whenever we do an action, we get some feeling or experience from the effort, tools, and result. That experience is called knowledge. Actions alone do not end action. Only the rise of understanding and wisdom ends action. The final result of all action is knowledge. Just as milk goes through stages to become curd, butter, and finally ghee, in the same way, action goes through stages to become knowledge. All Vedic rituals finally aim to bring realization of God. Swami Sivananda said: “Just as all rivers finally merge into the sea, all selfless actions ultimately lead to self-realization.” Madhvacharya explained: When knowledge arises, all ritual parts of devotion come to an end. All rituals and worship ultimately end in knowledge. When knowledge destroys all past good and bad karmas, even the seed of karma gets burned. Then no impressions or confusions remain. The difference between seeker and goal also disappears. What can be greater than such knowledge? A knowledge where joy-sorrow, heaven-hell, peace-restlessness all become one. This knowledge is the highest achievement.

**tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ (4-34)**

Comm. In the last verse, Lord Krishna said Jñāna Yajna is the best among all yajnas. The effort done to attain knowledge is called Jñāna Yajna. How can one get the knowledge of soul and God from a wise teacher or Guru? This is what Lord Krishna tells in this verse. By God's grace, a person becomes detached from worldly pleasures in this life and starts turning towards God. It may happen due to good deeds in the past or by effort in this life. When he comes in contact with saints and God-realized souls, he starts feeling faith in the spiritual path. When faith in God arises, a strong desire to know the Supreme Truth is born in the mind. This leads to a deep longing in the heart to experience God.

While studying scriptures, questions arise about the different paths to attain Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasures), and Moksha (liberation). A person wonders how to live a worldly life and yet remain centered in God—it seems very difficult. Lord Krishna says this is the right time for a seeker to go to a self-realized Guru. Only one who has experienced the Truth can give knowledge about the soul and God. God Himself is the first Guru who spread this divine knowledge to the world. The Guru-disciple tradition is a great feature of Sanatana Dharma. Even though Lord Krishna is God Himself, He tells Arjuna to go and learn from a realized Guru. This shows that true knowledge cannot be gained in just hours or days. Only simple verbal advice can be given in that time. But real divine knowledge comes through long practice of hearing, thinking, and meditating. Only a Brahmanishtha Guru (one who is absorbed in God) can guide the disciple correctly. Only an experienced person can help remove obstacles and show the right path. To receive this knowledge, one must first empty the mind of worldly thoughts—this is not easy. But realization of God is not impossible, and only the Guru can show the way. The Guru is even greater than scriptures. The Guru's words do not need any extra proof from scriptures. When the disciple feels intense desire for knowledge, he naturally finds the Guru—or the Guru comes to him. There are many real-life examples of this divine meeting, like Swami Chidananda meeting Swami Sivananda, or Swami Vivekananda meeting Sri Ramakrishna. This meeting happens due to the deep longing (Jijñāsa) in the disciple's heart. The relationship between Guru and disciple is divine and meant to lead to realization of God. Before receiving knowledge from the Guru, the disciple must prove his readiness in three ways: Pranipata – Offering full surrender by bowing down in front of the Guru. It shows complete humility and devotion. There should be no doubt in the disciple's mind about the Guru's wisdom. He must see the Guru as God Himself. Service (Seva) – The disciple must serve the Guru with body, speech, and mind by obeying his commands with full dedication. This helps the Guru decide that the disciple is ready to receive knowledge and will use it for the welfare of the world. Questions (Pariprashna) – The disciple must ask questions sincerely and repeatedly until all doubts about the soul and God are cleared. This is a great tradition of Sanatana Dharma. Such

freedom and honesty is not found in most other religions. The disciple should never try to force or argue with the Guru. Only when the disciple asks with humility and simplicity, the Guru clears his doubts. True disciples ask deep spiritual questions such as: Who am I? What is Maya? What is bondage? What is the nature of God? How is the soul related to God? What is liberation? How does a realized person live in the world? Only a self-realized Guru can give clear answers to these. The Guru, out of love and duty, gives knowledge to such a disciple. When the disciple shows sincerity, respect, humility, and obedience, the Guru becomes pleased and knowledge flows from him like milk from the udder of a loving cow. This knowledge becomes a blessing for the disciple.

**yaj jñātvā na punar moham evaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava
yena bhūtāny aśeṣeṇa drakṣyasi ātmany atho mayi (4-35)**

Comm. Lord Krishna explains the nature of knowledge. O Arjuna! After receiving knowledge from a great teacher and realizing God, you will never again fall into confusion. So, what is this confusion (moha), and how does it cover one's understanding? In the first chapter of the Gita, Arjuna was confused. He was sad about killing his relatives and dear ones in the war. Because he saw people as "mine" and "not mine," he became emotionally attached to his loved ones. This emotional attachment is called "moha" (delusion). Moha is a wrong understanding of the mind. It makes us see wrong as right. It is caused by ignorance and increases darkness in our thoughts. It makes us see everything in a wrong way. The different physical appearances of people are not real—they are illusions (maya). Because of this maya, a person feels separated from God and sees the body as the real self. We then become attached to people and things related to the body. When they are born or die, we feel happy or sad. These reactions are all effects of moha. After receiving true knowledge from a Guru, a person becomes free from body attachment and realizes his real self. Once you truly know who you are, there remains no further question like—Who am I? What is the world? What is maya? What is God? When a person knows the Self, the feeling of "I" and "mine" goes away, and moha ends forever. Actually, moha has no real existence. What does not exist is destroyed, and what truly exists is experienced. Once you experience true knowledge, it never goes away. True knowledge is eternal and unchanging. Once moha is removed from the mind, it never returns again. The knowledge of Truth or the removal of ignorance happens only once, but it stays forever. Through the teachings of realized souls, the seeker realizes the soul (Atma) as all-pervading and infinite. He sees no difference in the forms and qualities of any being. He feels a hidden, eternal power present everywhere. Once this is known, he sees all living beings as not different from himself. That is the experience of "tvam" (you). After seeing the same essence in all beings, he sees the entire universe as the form of the one blissful Supreme God. That is the experience of "tat" (that). When the seeker sees the world in himself, that is self-realization. When he sees himself in God, that is realization of God. A person who is always united with the Self understands the complete unity of soul and God. This is the experience of "asi" (are). Thus, experiencing "tat-tvam-

asi” (That You Are) is called perfect knowledge. The Gita uses different words like liberation (moksha), supreme state (param pad), merging in Brahman (nirvana) to describe this same realization. In this state, the yogi is no longer separate from God. His ego completely ends. To others, he may appear to have a mind and body, but actually, he sees all beings as full of God. Only Brahman remains for such a realized soul. There is no difference between seer, seen, and seeing.

**api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛttamaḥ
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva vṛjinaṁ santariṣyasi (4-36)**

Comm. After explaining how to gain true knowledge from the Guru and its benefits, Lord Krishna now speaks about the greatness of that knowledge. Arjuna is worried that fighting a war is a sinful action. So Krishna comforts him. He says—O Arjuna! Even if you are the greatest sinner, you can cross the ocean of sin through the boat of divine knowledge. No sin is strong enough to stop you if you gain this knowledge. But this doesn’t mean one should commit sins on purpose and then try to escape their result through knowledge. Krishna gives this teaching not just for Arjuna, but for all human beings. He gives hope even to great sinners. Anyone can take refuge in knowledge and free themselves from sinful tendencies. Even a person deeply engaged in sin can one day awaken the desire for truth and start the journey to save himself. To get knowledge from the Guru, there is no selection process and no requirement of being sinless or virtuous. For example, the dacoit Ratnakar became the great sage Valmiki after getting knowledge from the realized saint Narada. So, even a sinner, in this very life, can go to a saintly person, receive this divine knowledge, and transform his life. Just like lighting a lamp instantly removes darkness,

realizing the soul removes the sins of many lives at once. Good and bad actions (punya and papa) are both judged by knowledge. Whether an action is good or bad depends on our understanding and awareness. That is why only knowledge can truly free us from sin. Even the worst sinner has the natural right to seek this knowledge and make an effort to receive it. There is no rule in our eternal religion (Sanatana Dharma) that prevents anyone from getting this knowledge. If someone truly wants to change, and takes shelter in a realized master, he can receive divine knowledge and be uplifted. Once this light of knowledge is received, the darkness of sin disappears immediately. A person rooted in knowledge knows that his real self is separate from the world, unaffected, eternal, and infinite. Then, all his past sins—done in this life or previous ones—are erased. He becomes forever free from the bondage of actions (karma). This boat of knowledge always remains safe and helps a person reach liberation (moksha).

**yathaidhāmsi samiddho ’gnir bhasma-sāt kurute ’rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā (4-37)**

Comm. Lord Krishna explains the greatness of Brahma Jnana (knowledge of the Supreme). He says, “Arjuna, a blazing fire burns all wood and fuel to ashes instantly, leaving

no trace.” Similarly, the fire of knowledge about the soul and God destroys all good and bad actions. Once a person realizes the soul is pure and detached, feelings like happiness, sorrow, joy, grief, and other worldly conflicts disappear. Ignorance, ego, attachment, desire, and aversion—these disturbances in the mind are destroyed. When all good and bad actions, both past and present, are destroyed, the soul becomes free from the bondage of actions. This freedom is called Kaivalya Moksha (complete liberation). All actions from this life and past lives are stored in the mind as impressions (Samskaras). Actions not yet experienced are called accumulated actions (Sanchita Karma). The fire of true knowledge destroys all past accumulated impressions. Some actions from past lives have caused the current body; these are called Prarabdha Karma (destined actions). The power of Prarabdha Karma to give results cannot be destroyed. Prarabdha Karma is exhausted only by experiencing its results. After gaining soul knowledge, the soul is detached from the material body. Even when experiencing Prarabdha Karma, the mind does not feel joy or sorrow. After realizing God, the false sense of identifying with the material body due to ignorance is destroyed. Therefore, favorable or unfavorable situations from Prarabdha Karma do not cause joy or sorrow, as there is no sense of being the experiencer. According to Adi Guru Shankaracharya, if Prarabdha Karma were also destroyed after gaining knowledge, the body created by it would cease to exist. In that case, not even a single breath would remain in the body. While experiencing Prarabdha Karma, good and bad tendencies arise in the mind, intellect, and senses; these are called Kriyamana Karma (current actions). With true knowledge, the sense of doership, attachment, and desires disappear, so Kriyamana Karma does not create impressions in the mind. All current actions, before and after gaining knowledge, become actionless (Akama). When all accumulated and current actions are destroyed, impressions causing desire, aversion, joy, and sorrow vanish from the mind. All results of actions are destroyed along with the actions themselves.

**na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayaṁ yoga-sāmsiddhaḥ kālena ātmani vindati (4-38)**

Comm. There is nothing purer than knowledge in this world. Knowledge makes the soul pure and holy. A person practicing Karma Yoga or Samadhi Yoga eventually gains knowledge within their own soul. Earlier, Lord Krishna said that by approaching a guru, bowing, serving, and asking questions sincerely, the guru teaches knowledge about the soul and God. In this verse, Lord Krishna says that a dedicated Yogi naturally gains knowledge within themselves over time. This seems to contradict His earlier statement. The solution is that knowledge is not something external that one person can give to another. Knowledge is the nature of the soul, always present in every person. How can the soul’s nature be separate from itself? The soul is knowledge itself, revealing itself. But ignorance covers this knowledge, keeping it hidden. When a guru is pleased with a practitioner’s devotion, they show the path to realize the soul’s knowledge and bliss. Following this path, the impurities, distractions, and coverings in the mind are destroyed. Then, a dedicated Yogi realizes the

soul's knowledge within themselves. Until the mind is purified, a practitioner searches for knowledge in the world through actions. This search is due to ignorance. Just hearing the guru's words does not remove ignorance or its covering. To purify the mind, practices like reflection (Manana) and constant meditation (Nididhyasana) are needed. Through constant meditation, depending on the success of Karma Yoga, perfection may come quickly or take a long time. A dedicated practitioner will surely gain knowledge. In this advanced Yogic state, the mind's tendencies start taking the form of the soul. As Yoga practice matures, these tendencies dissolve, leaving only the self-revealing soul. Lord Krishna says that knowledge is attained within the soul's own nature. After realizing the soul's truth, all connection with the world is completely cut off. All accumulated impressions of good and bad deeds in the mind are destroyed, leading to great purity. Therefore, there is no practice as purifying as knowledge in the world. After true knowledge of God, faults like falsehood, deceit, violence, desire, aversion, joy, sorrow, ego, and attachment disappear completely. This makes the Karma Yogi a perfected, pure person. Because of this, seeing, touching, bowing to, or thinking of such a wise person, or hearing their divine words, purifies others. The touch of a realized wise person even purifies the water of the Ganga. Scriptures say that bathing once in the Ganga washes away sins from many lives. When a wise person bathes in the Ganga, it destroys the sins of all who bathe in it. The Ganga becomes pure again through the wise person's bath. The great purity of knowledge is evident from this.

**śraddhāvān labhate jñānaṁ tat-parāṁ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śāntim acireṇa adhigacchati (4-39)**

Comm. A person who believes in God, is devoted to Brahman, and practices spiritual discipline controls their senses. Such a person gains knowledge of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma). By gaining this Brahman knowledge, they quickly find supreme peace and joy. This means they become liberated while still alive. A dedicated Yogi shows strong belief in the existence of Brahman; this belief is called Shraddha (faith). Faith in God arises in the heart for two reasons. One reason is Prarabdha, or impressions from past lives. The other reason is effort in this life. Good actions like meeting saints, keeping good company, chanting God's name, or listening to His stories awaken pure faith in God. This effort is called Purushartha. Deep trust in God, saints, wise people, religion, and scriptures, as if they are directly experienced, is called Shraddha. When the mind has faith in something, it does not see faults in it. Trying to understand the deep truth of that thing is called Tatparta (eagerness). The soul is a part of the Supreme Soul, and the Supreme Soul is present everywhere. Instead of accepting the changing world as real, accepting only the eternal, all-pervading Supreme Soul as real is "knowledge." This knowledge of the Supreme Soul brings eternal peace and joy. It is the main way to attain the blissful Supreme Soul. When there is faith in this knowledge and its realization, eagerness in spiritual practice naturally grows. Without faith, laziness and inactivity come into spiritual practice. With strong faith and intense Yoga practice, detachment from worldly pleasures arises. This leads to control

over the mind and senses. Control over the senses is the measure of eagerness in spiritual practice. Going to a guru, bowing, asking questions, and serving to gain knowledge are external practices. These external practices do not always give results. Issues like distrust, ego, or deceit can arise in the guru-disciple relationship or service. Faith, eagerness, and sense control are internal practices of a seeker. These internal practices prevent flaws like hypocrisy or pride in spiritual efforts. The more faithfully spiritual practice is done, the quicker the mind and senses become controlled. Disturbances like desire, aversion, joy, sorrow, ego, and attachment are removed from the mind. The heart becomes pure. In that moment, the veil of ignorance lifts, and the eternal Supreme Soul is revealed. Supreme peace is the nature of the soul, present in everyone naturally. Just as darkness disappears the moment a lamp is lit, knowledge reveals the blissful Supreme Soul instantly. This is how supreme peace is attained.

**ajñāś cāsraddadhānāś ca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko ’sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanah (4-40)**

Comm. In the previous verse, Lord Krishna said faith, eagerness, and control lead to gaining knowledge. In this verse, He explains how the opposites—lack of faith, ignorance, and doubt—cause a person to fall and lose happiness. Most people don’t have deep knowledge of Vedas, scriptures, Upanishads, or spiritual practices. Still, they have devotion and trust in God, deities, and priests. With limited means, they live simply and honestly. Even if they are ignorant, their faith and lack of doubt give them a chance to gain knowledge later. But some people lack the ability to judge what is good or bad. They don’t trust scriptures, deities, priests, saints, or God. Such people are full of pride and ego, showing demonic tendencies. Some others are very learned in various philosophies. But they see faults in every philosophy and cannot trust any of them. These faithless people, trapped in doubt, also miss out on gaining knowledge. Trust leads to faith. When faith arises, doubt disappears. Faith and trust awaken devotion in the heart, making a person humble. Some people, with little knowledge, think they know everything due to ego. Instead of showing faith to gain knowledge, they seek faith for their own worship, honor, or praise. Such people may seem wise outwardly but are actually very foolish. Instead of gaining knowledge, they collect sins. Doubt is a flaw in the heart that prevents a person from finding peace. It also stops them from letting others live in peace. Such people cannot make anyone their own nor earn anyone’s trust. A doubtful person, no matter how much scriptural knowledge or skill they have, cannot face life’s situations mentally. Ignorance, lack of faith, and doubt block a clear mind. To gain knowledge, a positive, faithful, and firm belief is needed. Doubt scatters the mind and prevents finding the truth. A wise person’s goal is to know the soul’s true nature.

Accepting a realized saint’s teachings with trust makes the path to knowledge easier. Doubting a guru’s words makes gaining knowledge impossible. Doubt clouds judgment and is a form of ignorance. It is an expansion of Maya (illusion). With faith,

devotion, and surrender, doubt vanishes, and judgment awakens. A person without judgment lives a useless and joyless life. Ignorant and doubtful people cannot find peace even in the afterlife after death. A person always trapped in doubt misses out on material happiness while alive. A person without faith in spiritual truth cannot attain a human body again. Because of ignorance, lack of faith, and doubt, a person cannot attain dharma, artha, and kāma.

Then how can such a person ever attain moksha, that is, liberation? Due to these three faults of the inner mind, a human being falls deeper into worldly bondage. Indirectly pointing to Arjuna, the Lord says: “O Arjuna, at this moment your inner mind is surrounded by doubt. Because of this, you are unable to decide what is dharma and adharma, and what is duty and non-duty. Come out of this circle of doubt. Otherwise, if you remain in this condition, you too will surely fall.”

**yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ jñāna-sañchinna-saṁśayaṁ
ātmavantam na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya (4-41)**

Comm. In the path of Karma Yoga when a person offers all his actions to God, and has no attachment or possessiveness for the results of actions, and when all doubts in the heart are removed through the direct experience of God— then such a realized soul is not bound by karma. In the phrase “Sannyasta-karmāṇām”, Lord Krishna is not talking about giving up outer action completely. He advises to renounce attachment, selfishness, and desire for the results of action, and to perform all work only to please God and for the welfare of the world. This is called true renunciation in Karma Yoga. A Karma Yogi sees inaction in action and action in inaction, which means he remains detached whether acting or not acting. Earlier, the Lord said that when the faults of the mind—impurity, restlessness, and ignorance—are destroyed, then the knowledge of the Supreme Self automatically arises. This fire of knowledge burns all past karmas—both good and bad—into ashes. All stored impressions of karma are destroyed. When the soul realizes its oneness with the Supreme, then all doubts vanish. In the purified mind, no longer does anything other than the eternal Truth seem real. So the mind becomes free from doubts. A Karma Yogi who has complete control over his mind and senses, and who has realized the soul, is called a wise person (Ātmavanta). Such a person, being doubt-free and without any sense of “mine,” performs the duties prescribed in the scriptures, but those actions no longer bind him.

**tasmād ajñāna-sambhūtaṁ hṛt-sthaṁ jñānāsinātmanaḥ
chittvainaṁ saṁśayaṁ yogam ātiṣṭhottīṣṭha bhārata (4-42)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna gives the essence of Karma Yoga. He says, “O Arjuna, son of the Bharata dynasty! First, purify your heart through selfless action. Then, using the sword of wisdom, cut away the doubt born from ignorance in the heart.” Be ready to fight, by giving up attachment to the result of action and being firm in Karma Yoga. Right now, you are completely ignorant of the Self. Because of fear of your relatives dying in

battle, you are doubtful and hesitant about doing your duty as a warrior. This doubt is your inner enemy. When you think the body is the real self, then emotions like attachment, ego, joy-sorrow, likes-dislikes arise. These bring fear of success or failure and create doubts in the mind. Qualities like faith, compassion, and forgiveness live in the heart. Even God stays in the heart as the inner controller (Antaryami). But when the heart is filled with desires, sense pleasures, and delusion, this is called ignorance (avidyā). And from this ignorance, doubt is born, which blocks the light of knowledge from appearing. Doubt is the root of all sin. Doubt means holding two types of ideas about one thing. When we don't know the true nature of something, we get confused by its various names, forms, and appearances. Then we begin to doubt its value, usefulness, and permanence. So, doubt always comes from ignorance. The entire world is revealed by the reflected light of the soul. But due to confusion, we see things as real and unreal, soul and not-soul. Once a person realizes the soul's true nature, this doubt is removed. Whether this realization happens through karma, devotion, or knowledge—there may be many doubts in the seeker's mind about the right path. Lord Krishna gives the solution: “O Arjuna, perform your duty as selfless action. When your mind is pure, the eternal knowledge of the Self will appear by itself inside you. That is Self-knowledge.” Use this knowledge like a weapon to destroy all doubts from the heart. All those confusions in your mind—remove them through wise thinking. With self-control, perform your duties as sacrifice (yajna) as per the scriptures, and overcome all mental disturbances. This is called the real battle. The final result of this path is supreme peace, which, once attained, is never lost. Your true Self is always peaceful. Actions may begin and end in the body, and their results also come and go, but the Self remains unchanged. Actions and results are many, but the Self is always one and constant. When this Self-knowledge arises, doubt naturally disappears from the heart. Because this chapter explains both Karma Yoga and Knowledge (Jñāna), it is named: “Jñāna-Karma-Sannyāsa Yoga” – The Yoga of Renunciation through Knowledge and Action.

**“Om Tat Sat iti Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītāsu Upaniṣatsu Brahma-Vidyāyām
Yoga-Śāstre Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Arjuna-Saṁvāde Jñāna-Karma-Sannyāsa-Yogo Nāma
Caturtho'dhyāyaḥ”**

“Thus, in the Upanishads of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the science of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the fourth chapter entitled ‘Jnana Karma Sannyasa Yoga’ (The Yoga of Knowledge and Renunciation of Action).





SRI PARAMATMAAYE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter-5 (Karma Sannyāsa Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

sannyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa punar yogaṁ ca śaiṁsasi
yac chreya etayor ekaṁ tan me brūhi su-niśchitam (5-1)

Comm. In Chapter 3 and 4, Arjuna heard Lord Krishna praise Karma Yoga (Path of Action) in many ways. He also received encouragement and instructions to follow it. Lord Krishna clearly said that a person who becomes perfect through Karma Yoga gains true spiritual knowledge by himself. By following Karma Yoga, one naturally gets knowledge of God's true nature. No other separate practice is required to get this knowledge. On the other hand, by giving up all material pleasures and actions, one can also approach a self-realized person and, through service, humility, and questions, gain that knowledge. Knowledge offered in this way is greater than sacrifice done with material things. There is nothing more pure in this world than knowledge. The inner enemy called doubt that lives in the heart can only be destroyed by gaining knowledge. With the boat of knowledge, one can cross the ocean of sins which is this material world. In this way, the Lord has praised Jnana Yoga (Path of Knowledge) and explained its practices in many places. Arjuna, at first, saw his own relatives and teachers on the enemy side, and thought fighting would be sinful. So he had decided not to fight. From Lord Krishna's teachings, he understood that instead of giving up fighting, he could go to a wise spiritual teacher and get knowledge

about the soul. That could help him find peace and reduce his current pain. But in the last verse of the previous chapter, Lord Krishna encouraged Arjuna to cut off the doubt created by ignorance using the sword of knowledge and to continue performing selfless action. Lord’s teachings on both giving up work (Sannyasa) and doing work (Karma Yoga) created confusion in Arjuna’s mind. Now he is wondering which one—Jnana Yoga or Karma Yoga—is the best path for him. Lord Krishna is full of bliss and attracts everyone toward Him. That is why His name is Krishna. So Arjuna respectfully addresses Him as Krishna and expresses that, since Krishna is all-powerful and all-knowing, only He can give the correct answer to this question. Arjuna wants to clearly ask: “O blissful Krishna! Please tell me—between gaining true knowledge by hearing, thinking, and meditating on the words of wise teachers (Jnana Yoga), or performing selfless action without attachment (Karma Yoga)—which one is better and beneficial for me?”

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**sannyāsaḥ karma-yogaś cha niḥśreyasa-karāv ubhau
tayos tu karma-sannyāsāt karma-yogo viśiṣyate (5-2)**

Comm. In reply to Arjuna’s question, Lord Krishna says: Both Sannyasa (renunciation) and Karma Yoga (action) lead to the same result—liberation. Here, the word “Sannyasa” refers to the Sankhya Yoga, or the path of knowledge. Both Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga help a person reach the truth of the soul and God. But among the two, Karma Yoga is better than Sannyasa. In this verse, Lord Krishna praises Karma Yoga. The literal meaning of “Sannyasa” is complete renunciation. Both Sankhya Yoga and Karma Yoga cannot be practiced at the same time. The Karma Yogi gives up attachment to work and results and performs actions by offering them to God, seeing himself as separate from God. On the other hand, the Sankhya Yogi feels that actions performed by the body, mind, and senses are done by the qualities of nature, and he remains focused on the blissful form of the soul. The Karma Yogi accepts nature, its qualities, and matter, and thinks of himself as separate from God. But the Sankhya Yogi accepts nothing apart from one Brahman and sees no difference between himself and God. The Karma Yogi sees all action, materials, and results as part of illusion (Maya) and sees them only as Brahman. Thus, the methods of Karma Yoga and Sankhya Yoga are opposite. By doing work and offering its results to God, the soul becomes free from bondage. So rather than giving up action, doing it as an offering to God is always better. The Karma Yogi gains the knowledge that everything he has belongs to God—even his body, mind, and intellect. When this understanding becomes strong, the feeling of “mine” disappears. When he sees everything as God’s, mental renunciation is also complete. Such a practitioner always lives in a state of renunciation and experiences divine joy. Only when the heart becomes equal and balanced through selfless action can one see Brahman everywhere. So even for gaining success in

Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga is necessary. But for success in Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga is not necessary. Sankhya Yoga practice can be with or without action. In answer to Arjuna's question, Lord Krishna does not promote giving up all actions but instead explains the Sankhya Yoga path where knowledge can be gained even while acting. In Sankhya Yoga, thinking and discrimination are most important. Without deep dispassion and wisdom, this path cannot be successful. On the other hand, Karma Yoga means making the best use of the current situation. Success in Sankhya Yoga depends on the seeker's efforts, goal, dedication, and devotion to a teacher. So it is only possible in some special situations. According to Shankaracharya, there is no use of action in achieving liberation. Liberation can be attained only through knowledge. However, for the good of others, even a liberated soul must act without attachment and teach the right path. After explaining all these, Lord Krishna concludes: "O Arjuna! For gaining supreme peace, following Karma Yoga with dedication will be an easy and suitable path for you."

**jñeyah sa nitya-sannyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati
irdvandvo hi mahā-bāho sukhaṁ bandhāt pramucyate (5-3)**

Comm. Here, Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna as "Mahabaho" meaning "mighty-armed". This means Arjuna has the strength to succeed in Karma Yoga. O mighty-armed Arjuna! a Karma Yogi who has no attachment or hatred toward success or failure in actions, and who remains balanced in both, and is free from the dualities like happiness and sorrow, such a person is considered always in the state of renunciation (sannyasa). Because such a Karma Yogi becomes free from worldly bondage easily. Renouncing actions due to anger, hatred, or other outer reasons is not real sannyasa. Actions do not bind a person. But attachment to action becomes the cause of bondage. In Karma Yoga, if all actions are offered to God, then likes and dislikes disappear from the heart. When the mind is not disturbed, there is no inner conflict. A Karma Yogi, remaining undisturbed, becomes free in this very life. Even if he doesn't wear saffron robes, such a Karma Yogi without likes and dislikes should be considered a true renunciate. Giving up attraction and hatred is a key part of Karma Yoga. When we are attached or hate people, objects, or situations without reason, then conflicts arise in our mind and intellect. All opposing feelings like happiness-sorrow, respect-insult, success-failure, joy-grief, heat-cold, are all linked to sensory experiences. When one expects uncertain results from actions, then these dual feelings (conflicts) arise. The biggest obstacle to freedom from the world is this duality. If there is even a little impurity or bad quality inside, Karma Yoga practice cannot be complete. As long as body-attachment exists, likes and dislikes will remain. Thinking "I am doing good", "I am serving", "I am practicing" — this ego is more dangerous than any vice. Ego exists even in good deeds, in a very subtle form. If someone criticizes or insults, this ego turns into anger. A Karma Yogi, free from ego, works selflessly for the welfare of the world. Then likes and dislikes go away. We must experience the results of past actions. The soul is free and independent. It has no connection with favorable

or unfavorable situations. Accepting this truth firmly removes likes and dislikes. Arjuna thought begging and living without fighting was better. Now, Lord Krishna tells him — Arjuna, do your duty without attraction or hatred. This itself is true renunciation. To practice Karma Yoga, Sankhya Yoga (the yoga of knowledge) is not required. So, a Karma Yogi is already a renunciate from the beginning. Though the soul is eternal, the mind and senses are drawn to perishable pleasures. The conflict between need and pleasure keeps us bound to the world. When likes and dislikes are destroyed, one experiences the soul constantly. The state without desire is freedom from duality. A Karma Yogi in this state easily becomes free from worldly bondage.

**sāṅkhyā-yogau prithag bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ
ekam apy āsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam(5-4)**

Comm. Ignorant people say that Karma Yoga (path of action) and Sannyasa Yoga (path of renunciation) give different results. But wise people do not say this. Because from either of these two paths, a person who practices sincerely reaches the Supreme God. The word “balah” used here means “ignorant people”. The result of action (karma) is never material. The result of action is always in form of impression and knowledge. For a realized person, though the methods of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) are different, the final goal of both is the same—knowledge of the Self and liberation (moksha). Therefore, understanding the sameness of the result is a sign of wisdom. Controlling the mind’s activities is the aim of yoga practice. According to Yoga philosophy, there are five types of mental activities. They are: direct perception, inference, verbal testimony (rightly or mistaken), sleep, and memory. These may be valid or may be illusions. To stop these mind activities, selfless service, worship, and pure actions are needed. Once the mind’s movements stop completely, the outer world disappears from the heart, And the pure soul remains established in its own nature. After the mind becomes fully calm, then hearing the scriptures, reflecting, and deep meditation gives rise to self-knowledge. The result of this knowledge is liberation, as clearly said in the scriptures. On the other hand, the Sankhya (knowledge path) practitioner believes: “This world is imaginary, only the blissful Supreme God is real.” He tries to stay constantly absorbed in the knowledge of God. He considers the world as just an illusion of Maya (delusion), And stays unattached to worldly pleasures. From a practical view, the world appears as made of many things — like subtle elements, living beings, and matter. But Sankhya practice removes this illusion and sees the One cause— Brahman (Supreme). When the desire to know the truth becomes strong during practice, then one gets knowledge from a Guru or a realized master. In this way, realization of the soul is the final result of both the knowledge path and action path.

**yat sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate
ekam sāṅkhyam cha yogam cha yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati (5-5)**

Comm. The supreme state gained through Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) is also attained through Karma Yoga (path of action). Therefore, those wise people who understand that both are equal in result, they have truly understood the reality. There is no difference in the final result of Sankhya (knowledge) and Karma Yoga. When someone is perfect in either of these, Then the inner desire to know the truth becomes deep, and ignorance disappears, Then the result — Self-knowledge—is attained. The true nature of the Self is to be fully content, meaning without any desires. In this knowledge, one naturally remains detached from the world. This is the practice of Jnana Yoga. The things of the world to which one is attached, by dedicating them for the welfare of the world and remaining unaffected, one practices Karma Yoga. Using the body selflessly for service is Karma Yoga. And separating the Self from the body and remaining detached is Jnana Yoga. Through either of these practices, when perfected, the ego of body, the desire to live, fear of death, greed, and doership are all completely destroyed. At the end of both practices, the link with action and nature gets cut off. The only result of both is attainment of God, as accepted by the Lord Himself. A person who knows this truth is a true knower, or a wise person, says the Lord. In all our actions, knowledge, wisdom, and right thinking must be there. In Swami Sivananda’s teachings, the practice of “Be good and do good” includes both knowledge and action. “Be good” means knowing one’s true Self— this is the path of knowledge. “Do good” means doing selfless actions— this is Karma Yoga. In the practice of “Be good”, detachment and selflessness arise naturally. In the practice of “Do good”, even without attachment, selfless actions lead to Self-realization. “Be good” and “Do good” are two different paths, but both take the seeker to the same destination — realization of the Supreme Self.

**sannyāsaḥ tu mahā-bāho duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ
yoga-yukto muniḥ brahma na chirēṇa adhigachchhati (5-6)**

Comm. Lord Krishna says at the start of the chapter that performing actions (Karma Yoga) is better than renunciation (Sannyasa). This verse confirms that statement. Following the path of renunciation without performing actions is very difficult. Without Karma Yoga, giving up actions completely delays achieving the ultimate truth. Sometimes, it may not lead to success at all. Through sincere Karma Yoga, a person does not feel attached to actions done by the mind, senses, or body. By performing good actions with devotion to God, the mind becomes free from attachment and aversion. This calms the mind’s fluctuations. In this state, a dedicated practitioner focuses on God’s true form. This leads to quickly realizing the Supreme Being. Actions done with desire cause bondage. Actions done without desire purify the mind and help achieve liberation. A raw fruit stays strongly attached to the branch. A ripe fruit naturally falls from the branch. Similarly, a mature practitioner, through Karma Yoga, becomes free from the influence of nature and its qualities. This means they become detached from material nature. A practitioner with discernment, six qualities (self-control, calmness, faith, endurance, detachment, and contentment), dispassion, and a desire for liberation is

called a true devotee in Vedanta. Such a devotee, a disciplined sage, quickly realizes the Supreme Being. Complete renunciation is true Sannyasa. In Sannyasa practice, all activities of the senses must be fully controlled. In the material world, practicing unmanifested worship or Sannyasa in a human body is very difficult. Great scholars say it is as hard as walking on a sword's edge. By practicing good actions without expecting results, the senses gradually come under control. Through perfect Karma Yoga, the mind and intellect become free from conflicts caused by attachment and aversion. When a person becomes disciplined, detachment awakens. The thoughtful person naturally attains Sannyasa. Then, by taking refuge in a guru and adopting Sannyasa, they practice knowledge-based devotion. This leads to liberation.

**yoga-yukto viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ
sarva-bhūta-ātmā-bhūtātmā kurvan na api lipyate (5-7)**

Comm. Lord Krishna describes the qualities seen in a practitioner from the start of Karma Yoga until they gain knowledge of the Supreme Being. The connection with God through dedicating actions is Karma Yoga. The purpose of actions is to awaken devotion to God. A person who is neither pleased nor upset by hearing, touching, seeing, eating, or smelling is called sense-controlled. A sense-controlled person directs their mind and senses toward actions as per their will. Because their senses are controlled, their mind and intellect are free from attachment and aversion. Desires do not arise. Through sense control, mental focus, and steady intellect, all impurities of the mind are destroyed. Attachment to enjoyment and accumulation pollutes the mind. With a firm goal toward the Supreme Being, the mind's fluctuations become calm. This is the state of a pure soul. Laziness and negligence are major obstacles in Karma Yoga practice. Keeping the body free from indulgence and laziness is being a conquered soul. Whether maintaining the body or supporting a family, one must strive to be self-reliant. A conquered soul has full control over all bodily actions like speaking, eating, sitting, walking, and sleeping. Such a person respects reality and truth and faces any adverse situation. A Karma Yogi sees the Supreme Being in the hearts of all beings. They feel unity with all beings. A Karma Yogi sees the world with the belief that "all are children of God." They develop qualities like compassion, forgiveness, and generosity. Lord Krishna says that one soul exists in all beings. Due to ignorance, not everyone knows this universal presence. A Karma Yogi feels the eternal soul within themselves. They see the Supreme Being in the form of the soul in all beings. Realizing that "the soul of all beings is my soul" prevents harmful thoughts toward others. A Karma Yogi serves others selflessly, without pride, considering it service to God. Their constant goal is to attain the Supreme Being, so they are called disciplined. Whatever a Karma Yogi does is only for the satisfaction and attainment of the Supreme Being. Their actions are free from desire, attachment, and expectation of results. Thus, a Karma Yogi does not get bound by their actions. Their actions become like non-actions. For a perfected Yogi, doing or not doing actions makes no difference.

**naiva kiñchit karomīti yukto manyeta tattva-vit
paśyan-śṛṇvan-sprīṣan-jighran-aśnan-gachchan-svapan-śvasan(5-8)**

**pralapan visṛijan grihṇan unmīlyan nīmīlayan api-
indriyāṇi indriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan(5-9)**

Comm. A person who is successful in Karma Yoga and has clearly known the Self is a true knower. That person performs all activities like seeing, hearing, touching things, smelling flowers, eating food, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, excreting, lifting things with hands, and blinking the eyes —But he thinks that all these actions are being done by the senses towards their own objects. He believes, “I am the soul — I am not doing anything myself.” Earlier, Lord Krishna had already explained that all actions are done by the senses, mind, prana (vital force), and sub-prana. These are all products of Maya (illusion). The mind, senses, and prana act only in their own material fields. The qualities (gunas) of nature work upon other qualities. Only the gunas are active — they do all work. A true knower understands that the eternal Supreme Self is beyond nature and has no qualities or actions. Nature never remains inactive, and the Self never becomes active. Due to mistaken identity with nature, one feels as if actions are being done by the self. Just like when you sit in a moving car, your body feels as if it is moving. In the same way, when the soul is attached to active nature, even though it is inactive, it feels like it is doing all actions. But the soul is really not the doer or enjoyer. A knower, even while doing actions through body and senses, remains aware of his true nature. All activities happen only in the senses and prana. Just like in a dream, actions appear to happen in the mind, senses, and prana, But they are not real, and consciousness is not actually involved in them. Similarly, the entire visible world appears like a dream because it is temporary and unreal. Only the ever-blissful, eternal Brahman (Supreme Self) is true. This entire visible world appears real because it is superimposed on the eternal Brahman. In truth, this is the covering of Maya. A Sankhya Yogi (knower of the truth) realizes this and experiences his oneness with the inactive, changeless Supreme Self. After realizing the truth, he has no attachment to any object or action. He becomes completely free from likes and dislikes. As long as one identifies with the body and world, one thinks he is the doer. But once he remains in his true self, he feels that he is not the doer at all. The meaning of “I do nothing at all” is that there is no real action — only existence is there. That existence is pure consciousness, full of knowledge and bliss, and changeless. True knowledge or liberation is to feel oneness with that blissful Brahman. Both Sankhya Yoga and Karma Yoga are fundamental teachings of the Gita. In either of these two paths, when practice matures, devotion automatically joins.

**brahmaṇy ādhāya karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā(5-10)**

Comm. In all types of spiritual practice, action (karma) is necessary. Whether it is the path of Karma Yoga, Sankhya Yoga (knowledge path), or the path of devotion (Bhakti

Yoga), actions must be done. Laziness or inaction is not approved by the scriptures in any way. When action becomes non-attached, it does not cause bondage. A person has two kinds of relationships with action. One is the feeling of being the doer (kartapan), The other is the expectation of results (phala-asha). To remove these attachments, we must connect actions to someone else. Everything in this physical world is a manifestation of Brahman (the Supreme Being). The Ishopanishad also says, “Everything is connected with the Supreme Brahman.” Because of the presence of consciousness (chetana), the body is able to do actions. So Brahman is the basis of all actions. Therefore, we must relate all our actions to that Supreme Brahman. To offer our actions to Brahman, we must dissolve our ego into the soul. Giving up the thought of “I am the doer,” And having no desire for the result, Then our actions become established in Brahman. Offering actions to Brahman and giving up results — both mean the same. According to our social duties, capabilities, and situations, If we perform our duties without ego, without attachment, and with thoughts of God, Then that is called “Brahmanyadhaya karmani” — offering actions to Brahman. If actions are offered to Brahman, the person is not affected by good or bad results. Just like a lotus leaf is created from mud, and floats on water, But still, water does not stick to the leaf. In the same way, if actions are offered to God, Then the person is not bound by sin or virtue (good or bad results). What is sin? Mistaken understanding is the root cause of sin. Thinking “I am the body”— when in reality I am not the body - is a sin. Thinking “I am the doer” - when I am not the doer —is also a sin. The soul is a part of the Supreme God. Not accepting this truth, and identifying oneself as separate with ego — is sin. Considering false things as true and true things as false — this ignorance leads to sinful behavior. Everything visible in the world is perishable. The real self (soul) is eternal and unchanging. The eternal soul can never truly connect with something that is temporary. There is nothing in the world that always stays in its original nature. So many rises and falls have happened in this world. Many great emperors came into this world and left. The possessions and titles one calls “mine” never go with anyone. Things like wealth, children, wife, status, reputation, and awards Stay in our thoughts, creating the feeling of “mine.” First, by turning away from God, due to ego, attachment, and desires, We fail to know the true nature of things — this is ignorance.

Second, thinking that the impermanent is permanent and the false is true, The emotions of love and hate toward the world pull people toward sin. A person who knows the truth of the soul and non-soul, Becomes free from attachment and surrenders all actions to Brahman, the Supreme Controller. He accepts all actions as the will and command of God, Like a servant carrying out the orders of his master. A Karma Yogi clearly knows what is duty and what is not duty. He performs his duty without any desire for results and in a detached way, And surrenders himself completely to God. Such a person is not touched by the effects of good or bad actions (sin or virtue).

**kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalair indriyair api
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgam tyaktvātma-śuddhaye(5-11)**

Comm. A Karma Yogi acts without attachment to purify the mind. They give up attachment through senses, mind, intellect, and body. The mind makes decisions, the intellect thinks, and the senses do actions like seeing or hearing. A Karma Yogi acts without attachment using only the body, mind, intellect, or senses. A wise person knows that actions are not connected to the true self. The soul is always present and does not act. They do not feel “I am doing” or have pride in acting. Without attachment, there is no bondage. Senses, mind, intellect, and body are objects of false identification with the self. One must avoid attachment in all these activities. Thinking of objects, body, or senses as “mine” creates desire for results. Desire and the sense of being the doer make the mind impure. Acting without expecting results, dedicated to God, purifies the mind. Yogis act to realize the eternal, pure, wise, and free soul. They act to purify the mind. Some believe pure actions purify the mind. Others believe pure thoughts purify the mind. Vedanta says pure thinking purifies the mind. Constantly thinking about the Supreme Being slowly frees the mind from illusion, nature, and ego. This calms the mind’s fluctuations. Lord Krishna said earlier that a disciplined person’s actions merge with the Supreme. Does the mind of a disciplined person remain impure after gaining self-knowledge? The answer is that a disciplined person knows “the soul is in all beings.” They see their own soul in all creatures. They act to guide others toward purifying their minds and uplifting their souls. They appear active outwardly but remain calm and focused on the soul inwardly. A burnt rope looks like a rope but cannot bind anything. Similarly, the actions of a liberated person are like a burnt rope. They are done for the welfare of others. A perfected Karma Yogi’s mind is fully pure. They act without attachment, following God’s will, for the world’s benefit.

**yuktaḥ karma-phalaṁ tyaktvā śāntim āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm
ayuktaḥ kāma-kāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate(5-12)**

Comm. Lord Krishna explains how actions cause bondage or liberation. A Karma Yogi gives up desire for results and acts selflessly for others’ benefit. This brings great peace and liberation. A person with desires acts for personal enjoyment. They stay trapped in the cycle of birth and death. By practicing Karma Yoga, one gains knowledge and eventually liberation. This may happen quickly or take time. A person who thinks “I am the doer” or “I enjoy” takes full responsibility for actions. They act for worldly or heavenly rewards. They always remain bound. Attachment to objects, people, desires, or relationships causes the cycle of birth and death. A disciplined person achieves the result of Yoga. They stay rooted in the Supreme Being, the source of all souls. They see themselves as one with the Supreme Being. They give up desire for results and attain ultimate peace. A person practicing for results is still bound by those results. This makes their practice imperfect.

Feeling separate from the Supreme Being shows the influence of illusion. A practitioner will gain true knowledge later. But they are still ignorant now. So, practitioners must remain careful until they achieve perfection. When the doer becomes selfless, desire for results naturally fades. Acting selflessly for others' benefit breaks ties with material things. This lets one experience the eternal Supreme Being. Breaking ties with perishable things brings pure peace. When the mind is free from thoughts and fluctuations, it becomes fully calm. This brings unbroken joy in the mind. This is called ultimate peace. No greater peace exists beyond this. Once attained, this peace never fades.

The word “ultimate” shows this peace is permanent. According to Shri Ramanujacharya, realizing the soul is ultimate peace. This is the highest result of practicing Karma Yoga.

**sarva-karmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī
nava-dvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan(5-13)**

Comm. A controlled person, or Sankhya Yogi, has wise understanding. They mentally give up connection with daily, occasional, desired, and forbidden actions. They do not act or make others act with the sense of being the doer. They stay happy in their true self within the body, which has nine openings. A person who fully controls themselves and goes beyond body, mind, intellect, and nature is called “mastered.” A Sankhya Yogi does not consider themselves the doer but sees the body as the doer. Ignorant people think the body is their true self. They say things like “I live in the house” or “I sleep on the bed.” A Sankhya Yogi sees the body, received due to past actions, as the soul's dwelling place. The body stays until the results of past actions are experienced. A Sankhya Yogi constantly feels their true, natural state. The true self is always full of joy. This joy is unbroken, steady, and limitless. The mind, senses, and other faculties get a reflection of consciousness from the soul. In Vedanta, this reflection is called “Chidabhasa.” This reflection of consciousness enables the body, senses, mind, and intellect to act. The soul is never the doer or motivator of any action. Thus, a wise person does not see themselves as the doer.

**na karṣṭitvaṁ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛijati prabhuh
na karma-phala-saṁyogaṁ svabhāvas tu pravartate (5-14)**

Comm. The Supreme Being did not create the soul as a doer in the world from the beginning. The Supreme does not connect the soul to experience the results of actions. Being the doer, performing actions, and experiencing their results happen in the body due to nature. The Supreme Being is inactive. Nature, as the Supreme's power, creates, sustains, and destroys the world. Nature, within the body, drives the sense of doership, actions, and experiencing results, with the Supreme as the source. The word “Prabhuh” refers to the soul residing in every being's body. Human actions, the sense of doership, and experiencing results are not related to the true self. The soul is neither the doer,

the motivator, the enjoyer, nor the one who makes others enjoy. The soul is completely detached. The sense of being the doer is not God's creation.

Ignorant people, influenced by ego, consider themselves the doer. The soul has no connection with objects, people, or action-related things. Humans are completely free to perform actions. Each being gets a body based on their past actions. Humans receive a body, intellect, and circumstances to experience good or bad results of their nature, guided by divine inspiration. Different beings have different natures. Each person's qualities and tendencies vary due to their past impressions. Due to differences in past actions, the mind creates thoughts based on its nature. The intellect judges right and wrong based on its nature. Ego imposes the sense of doership on the soul based on its nature. Senses perform actions like hearing or seeing based on their nature. All actions in the world happen due to the nature of beings. Good and bad impressions from past lives appear as nature or destiny in the current life. These impressions are the seeds of actions, with qualities of purity, passion, or ignorance. From an ancient time, the soul's tendency to act flows like a worldly stream. After many lives, when actions are exhausted, the soul gains liberation. God does not connect humans with the results of actions. Humans are fully free to connect or not connect with action results. If God connected souls with action results, souls could not free themselves from them. Due to ignorance, the soul sees itself as the physical body. It considers itself the doer and connects with action results. This causes it to experience happiness or sorrow.

**nādatte kasyacit pāpaṁ na chaiva sukṛitaṁ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛitaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ(5-15)**

Comm. The Supreme Being has infinite knowledge, wealth, strength, fame, beauty, and detachment. The Supreme always delights in the soul. The Supreme is all-pervading and complete. By calling Himself "Vibhuḥ," God refers to the Supreme Being present in all creatures. God also refers to the all-powerful, formless Supreme who controls the world by His will. The entire world is the form of the Supreme with qualities. As the Supreme with qualities, God is the ultimate goal of souls and the giver of action results. As the Lord of all sacrifices and their enjoyer in divine form, God remains detached from actions and their results. To clarify, God says He does not accept anyone's sins or merits. Even though God accepts offerings and actions from devotees as the enjoyer of sacrifices, He remains unattached. Though born in the mortal world, God is unborn. Though creating the world, God is not the doer. Though residing in every being's heart, God is undivided. Due to eternal ignorance, knowledge is hidden. Humans cannot understand the soul, the Supreme, or the nature of actions. They imagine doership, actions, and results in themselves and God, becoming deluded. Nature, powered by the Supreme, governs all actions in the world and the body.

The Supreme has no connection with the sins, merits, good, or bad actions in the

body. Humans are fully free to connect themselves with actions and their results. Accepting unnatural things as natural is ignorance. Due to ignorance, humans think they are the doer of actions performed by the body. This causes them to feel happy or sad based on action results. They view results as sinful or virtuous. Space is the field for fire, water, air, and earth elements. Their presence and actions do not affect space's detachment. Similarly, nature's actions in the body do not affect the Supreme's unchanging and detached state. When a flower is placed near a crystal, the flower's color appears on the crystal. In reality, the crystal's clarity remains unchanged. Similarly, due to the closeness of the soul and nature, nature's actions seem to belong to the soul. When true knowledge is gained, the veil of ignorance from nature is removed. The soul's joyful nature is revealed. The Supreme is eternal joy, all-pervading, and complete. The eternal cannot connect with the temporary.

**jñānena tu tad ajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitam ātmanaḥ
teṣāṁ āditya-vaj jñānaṁ prakāśayati tat param(5-16)**

Comm. A person who practices yoga gains self-realization and attains knowledge of the self or Brahman. After gaining self-knowledge, the veil of ignorance is destroyed, and one experiences their true nature. Thinking that the divine self and the body are the same is ignorance; knowing they are separate is knowledge. Through direct knowledge, one realizes “I am Brahman” and attains self-realization. Just as the sun removes darkness from the earth and reveals all things, direct self-knowledge ends ignorance in the mind and reveals the complete divine nature. After gaining the knowledge of the unity of the self and the supreme soul, a wise person considers themselves one with the supreme soul. The supreme soul exists naturally in all beings, but ignorance prevents its realization. No other practice is needed to reveal the supreme soul; it is self-illuminated. To remove the veil of ignorance, the mind needs knowledge in the form of understanding. Once ignorance is removed through discernment, the self-existent supreme soul shines like the sun.

**tad-buddhayaḥ tad-ātmānaḥ tan-niṣṭhāḥ tat-parāyaṇāḥ
gachchhanti apunar-āvṛittim jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ(5-17)**

Comm. After knowing the essence of clay, the true nature of all things made of clay is automatically understood. Similarly, once the ultimate truth is known, complete knowledge of the self, supreme soul, Brahman, and the supreme Brahman is gained naturally. The mind and intellect of a person perfected in self-knowledge remain immersed in the supreme soul. The faculty that makes firm decisions is called intellect. A spiritual seeker first determines through intellect that the supreme soul is all-pervading. This firm conviction in the supreme soul's existence is called “intellect focused on it.” Once the intellect confirms the supreme soul, the mind naturally begins to contemplate it. To keep the mind steady in the supreme soul's nature, one must constantly remember its divine bliss in all actions. Accepting that the indivisible supreme soul is all-pervading is necessary. Continuously contemplating in this way is the seeker's state of “being one

with it.” By being devoted to the supreme soul and renouncing all non-self-objects, one remains absorbed in the ultimate truth through meditation, which is “steadfastness in it.” Experiencing constant union with the supreme soul, one’s existence merges into it and becomes the supreme soul itself; this is “complete devotion to it.” A great person who has attained oneness with the self, has steadfast devotion to Brahman, and sees the supreme soul as the ultimate source of all bliss and refuge, possesses complete knowledge of the truth. When true knowledge awakens through discernment between the real and unreal, the unreal completely vanishes. The connection with the unreal causes impurities like sin and merit, which bind a person. Through true knowledge gained in yoga practice, all impurities like defilements, distractions, attachments, and aversions are destroyed, and one attains the supreme state. Reaching the abode of the supreme soul, a yogi does not return to worldly existence. This irreversible state is called the supreme abode, eternal bliss, or nirvana by the divine. Attaining the supreme soul through true knowledge is achieving liberation from rebirth. The supreme soul is ever-present, unchanging, and beyond birth or destruction. A great person who has become the supreme soul does not undergo coming or going, nor does their soul depart; they merge into Brahman.

**vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni chaiva śva-pāke cha paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ(5-18)**

Comm. A person with knowledge of the self and supreme soul sees everything equally. Those devoted to Brahman, who have direct realization, are established in the knowledge that “everything is Brahman.” A knower of Brahman sees only the same Brahman essence in all beings, despite differences in their bodies, natures, qualities, and forms. In the mind of a perfected wise person, all sense of difference is completely destroyed. In their view, only the supreme Brahman, full of truth, consciousness, and bliss, exists, and no other entity remains. To explain this, the Lord gives examples of a learned and humble Brahmin, a low-occupation Chandala, a sacred cow, a majestic elephant, and an ordinary dog, showing the perspective of equality. There are differences in the qualities of sattva, rajas, and tamas among them. Practical differences in dealing with a Brahmin, Chandala, cow, elephant, and dog are inevitable. It is neither appropriate nor possible to treat them all the same in practice. Even though practical equality is not possible, a wise person sees the supreme soul as fully present in all beings from a spiritual perspective. Despite differences caused by nature, a wise great person never shows partiality in their feelings of kinship, love, care, or compassion toward these beings. Just as the body’s different limbs have practical differences but no distinction in affection, the same applies here. In matters of national duty, one should not discriminate based on caste, stage of life, religion, race, or community. For the welfare of all, equal treatment in perspective is necessary. Just as the sun’s rays take only the water essence from the holy Ganga to the filthy drains, ignoring impurities. A wise, perfected great person focuses only on the indestructible supreme soul in the hearts of all beings. They consider the body, qualities, and tendencies as nature-based and constantly changing.

**ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ
nirdoṣaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitaḥ(5-19)**

Comm. In this verse, the Lord explains the essence of the entire Gita scripture: how achieving equality and liberation is useful through practice and perfection in human life. A wise great person whose intellect is firmly established in the equal nature of Brahman conquers the material world and becomes free from nature while still alive. This means they are liberated from the cycle of birth and death. The supreme soul is completely detached from nature, so it has no flaws or inequalities. A great person whose mind is flawless and has attained equality is considered established in the supreme soul. The word “mind” in the verse should be understood as referring to intellect. The mind stays steady only during meditation, not in daily activities. When the mind is restrained, the intellect enters a state of equality. The expansion of the mind is the world itself. When the intellect constantly remains in equality, it naturally merges into the supreme soul. Brahman is the inner and outer essence, true, and unchanging. Brahman is immovable and all-pervading. While each drop of water flows in a river’s current, the riverbed below remains still and stable. Similarly, all of nature’s manifestations are superimposed on the eternal, immovable Brahman, flowing every moment. Brahman remains untouched by any impurity in nature’s flow. Everything happens in Brahman, but Brahman is unaffected. Flaws and distortions arise from the three qualities of illusion (maya). Since Brahman is beyond these qualities, illusion cannot touch it. In the world, qualities and flaws are present everywhere. In nature’s domain, no object can be free of qualities or flaws. But a wise great person’s mind, free of attachment, aversion, and duality, remains established in their pure conscious nature. This is the state of a wise person established in the supreme soul and Brahman. One established in Brahman does not face death again; at the end of their destiny, they merge into Brahman, attaining liberation without a body. The individual soul becomes one with the universal soul.

**na prahṛīṣyet priyaṁ prāpya nodvijet prāpya cha apriyam
sthira-buddhir asammūḍhaḥ brahma-vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ(5-20)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna tells about the qualities of a person who has realized the Self (Atman). Such a person does not become happy when they get something they like. Also, they do not become sad when they face something unpleasant. Their mind always stays calm and steady. A person whose delusion is completely destroyed becomes focused and steady in the knowledge of the Supreme Soul. In truth, all living beings are always existing in the Supreme Being. But because of ignorance, people become attached to the world. They start thinking the body, mind, and intellect are their true self. So, they do not experience their natural state in the Supreme. One who experiences his natural state in the Supreme is called “established in Brahman.” Such a person accepts both good and bad situations with equal mind. Even when they receive honor, insult, physical pain,

happiness, or sorrow, their mind remains undisturbed. They stay in a state of highest mental happiness. Being free from delusion, knowing that everything is happening because of the qualities of nature, the wise person realizes their true self as a non-doer. A person who has achieved wisdom has no doubts, confusion, or attachment in their heart. For them, there remains no further questions about the relation between the world and Brahman, or the difference between soul and God, or body and soul.

**bāhya-sparśeṣv asaktātmā vindaty ātmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute (5-21)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna explains the difference between three types of happiness. These are: worldly happiness, happiness from spiritual practice, and unbroken happiness from union with the Supreme. When a person thinks “I am rich,” “I am wise,” “I am happy with my family,” etc., it is called happiness from external things. But all these types of happiness are short-lived, like lightning in the sky. People wrongly think these are permanent and try to enjoy them. But in reality, true happiness comes only when one separates from objects. In deep sleep, we forget all things and rest in our true conscious self. That is why people long to sleep. A Karma Yogi, who stays unattached to external pleasures and remains in their true self, gains pure and steady happiness. A person who thinks sensory pleasure is happiness never finds peace through thinking about the Self. In the beginning of spiritual practice, detaching from objects and thinking of the Self gives happiness inside. But unless ego is completely destroyed, this joy is not unbroken. Because of the restless nature of the mind, the joy is not constant. Only when the person fully realizes their oneness with the Supreme, the impurities and ego go away. When the mind becomes peaceful through Karma Yoga and gets knowledge from a Guru, the seeker realizes the Self. When wrong knowledge is removed through deep thinking and meditation, the Supreme Self shines within. In the pure consciousness, the knowledge of the Supreme is felt directly. In this state, the wise person becomes one with the Supreme and enjoys infinite, eternal joy. This divine joy is called “imperishable happiness.” The meaning is: even while living, the wise person gets liberation and enjoys the highest joy. After realizing Brahman, such a person feels no difference between external or internal touches. They see that the Lord, who is the soul of all beings, is full of bliss and is present everywhere. When the truth of God, who is Sat-Chit-Ananda (truth-consciousness-bliss), becomes fully awakened in the heart, the wise person always enjoys bliss. The happiness gained during spiritual practice is not the eternal bliss. Eternal bliss comes only when one becomes one with the Supreme Being.

**ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva te
āद्या-anta-vantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ(5-22)**

Comm. Arjuna’s mother Kunti Devi was very intelligent, self-controlled, wise, and

detached from worldly pleasures. She lived her whole life with renunciation, following righteousness and devotion to God. By calling Arjuna “Kaunteya,” Lord Krishna wants to remind him of the greatness of his mother, Kunti. He says, “O Arjuna! You are the son of the noble Kunti Devi.” So, it does not suit you to run away from the battlefield out of attachment and affection for people or things. When a person gets to enjoy a desired object or comes in contact with loved ones like wife, son, and friends, the mind feels a kind of joy. But the joy we feel from sense pleasures is only a reflection of the joy of the soul. When desires are fulfilled, the mind becomes peaceful for some time, and then the soul’s bliss reflects on the calm mind. The happiness felt at that time is actually the soul’s reflected joy. But due to ignorance, people mistakenly think they are getting joy from objects or persons. In reality, joy is the true nature of consciousness—it can never come from lifeless objects. When we think that sense objects are the cause of happiness, we develop strong attachment. From attachment come desire, anger, ego, and many wrong actions. These bad qualities push a person into sinful deeds. As a result, people suffer in this life and also in the next life. Wherever worldly pleasure ends, pain and suffering begin there. So, pleasures from objects are the cause of sorrow. Also, the enjoyment of senses is temporary like a dream or a flash of lightning. Happiness comes when the living being (consciousness) connects with objects. But both the object and the sense-using body are material. Both the body and objects are constantly moving towards destruction. How can eternal joy come from things that are temporary? Either the object gets destroyed, or the body loses power—both are certain. So, such happiness can never be permanent. The more a person is attached to sense pleasures, the more physical pain he will face. Connection with matter is the cause of the great sorrow of birth and death. According to Patanjali Yoga, a person suffers from three types of pain: First is Parinama Dukha—when pleasures result in loss of strength or energy. Even though it seems like joy, it turns into suffering later. Second is Tapa Dukha—when we don’t get the desired object, or we lose it, or cannot enjoy it due to physical problems, the sorrow that arises is called Tapa Dukha. Third is Samskara Dukha—when the experience of a lost pleasure brings pain in memory. Enjoyment is short-lived, but separation and pain are always there. A wise person understands this and never desires or enjoys such pleasures. They accept only those worldly enjoyments that are needed for life, without attachment. A wise and thoughtful person understands that worldly joy is temporary and is the cause of desire, anger, and other problems. So, they give up sense pleasure and search for eternal bliss. The Chandogya Upanishad says: “There is no real happiness in small things. Only the infinite is real happiness.” When one directly experiences the infinite Brahman in the Self, they enjoy boundless joy in deep meditation. Worldly happiness is only a faint reflection of that infinite bliss.

**śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhum prāk śarīra-vimokṣaṇāt
kāma-krodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ(5-23)**

Comm. A person who can control the urges of desire and anger in their mind before leaving their body is truly free from attachment to material pleasures. This perfected karma yogi stays connected with the supreme soul and enjoys eternal happiness. Such a person is considered a true human being in this world. All material pleasures, desires, and anger in the world are linked to people and objects. Even a slight attachment to material pleasures in the mind can block the path to self-knowledge. As long as the soul is in the body, desire and anger will always exist. The body is made of the five elements, and nature and its qualities are always active to sustain it. Because of nature and its qualities, various thoughts and desires arise in the body. Besides this, the human mind and senses connect with external objects and people through the idea of enjoyment. Things like women, men, wealth, honor, and status are objects of the senses and mind. Attachment to these creates a wish to obtain them, which is called “desire.” Because of desire, a flow of thoughts and doubts arises in the mind, which is the urge of desire. If the mind and senses don’t get what they want, or if enjoyment is blocked, an intense feeling of opposition arises in the mind. This is called “anger,” which comes from desire. Anger causes a burning feeling in the mind, changes the face’s color, and makes the body tremble. This is the urge of anger. The strength of desire and anger can be mild, medium, or strong, depending on the depth of attachment. In a person with tamasic qualities, desire becomes intense and turns into craving and delusion. A wise, self-controlled person keeps the urge of desire under control. After controlling the urge of desire, anger naturally weakens. The willpower in the body is a gift of nature for spiritual practice. This willpower makes it possible for a person to attain the supreme soul. For this, pure consciousness and discernment are necessary. The Lord says to control the urges of desire and anger before leaving the body. This means that even a liberated yogi might lose control over desire and anger. So, until the last breath, a liberated person must have the ability to control and destroy these urges in their mind. A yogi must always stay alert and careful about this.

**yaḥ antaḥ-sukho antar-ārāmas tathā antar-jyotir eva yaḥ
sa yogī brahma-nirvāṇaṁ brahma-bhūto adhigachchati(5-24)**

Comm. A great soul who finds joy in the self enjoys satisfaction by focusing on the supreme soul. A sankhya yogi whose mind is lit by the knowledge of the supreme soul has all sins destroyed. This yogi feels their existence in Brahman and attains nirvana, or ultimate liberation. A sankhya yogi who finds joy only in the supreme soul, present in all beings, feels happiness in it. The self never feels dislike or sorrow toward itself. This is inner joy. Free from attachment, a yogi constantly thinks of the supreme soul’s blissful nature. All their actions are focused only on the supreme soul. Such a seeker is called one who finds joy within. By truly experiencing the supreme soul, a yogi feels happiness inside. The supreme soul is the source and foundation of all knowledge and discernment. In the view of a wise person, only the supreme soul, full of knowledge and bliss, exists, and nothing else has a separate reality. This supreme soul knowledge stays

fully awake in the seeker's heart, called "inner light." Inner joy, inner focus, and inner light are three states the Lord describes together. This means a sankhya yoga seeker has no connection with the external material world. Their joy, devotion, and knowledge come only from the supreme soul. At the highest level of sankhya yoga, a yogi gives up ego, attachment, desire, and anger. They constantly think of the supreme soul and become one with Brahman. In this state, there is no difference between the yogi and Brahman, called the Brahman state. In this state, the sankhya yogi's identity merges into nirvana Brahman, leaving only Brahman. The seeker becomes one with the supreme soul and is fully devoted to it.

**labhante brahma-nirvāṇam ṛiṣayaḥ kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ
chhinna-dvaidhā yatātmānaḥ sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ(5-25)**

Comm. A disciplined person whose mind is absorbed in the supreme soul works for the welfare of all beings. This wise person, free of doubts through knowledge of the supreme soul, becomes sinless and attains nirvana Brahman. The Lord firmly states that even a karma yoga seeker attains supreme soul knowledge and merges into Brahman. A self-controlled person does not identify with the body, so their mind has no ego or attachment. By controlling the senses, their mind stays calmly focused on the supreme soul. They see the supreme soul as equally present everywhere and work for the welfare of all beings. After gaining true knowledge of the supreme soul, all impurities, distractions, and veils are destroyed. Their mind becomes free of doubts. Free from attachment to material pleasures and without likes or dislikes, they attain equality. By attaining equality, all accumulated and ongoing actions, along with flaws, are destroyed. A yogi becomes sinless. The term "rishis" usually refers to those perfected in Vedic mantras, but here it means wise, equal-seeing people. In this state, a wise person experiences the all-pervading Brahman everywhere. They merge into nirvana Brahman. Just as the ocean and waves have no difference in water, the soul and supreme soul have no difference in nirvana Brahman.

**kāma-krodha-vimuktānām yatīnām yata-chetasām
abhito brahma-nirvāṇam vartate viditātmanām(5-26)**

Comm. After a yogi gains knowledge of what is real and unreal, desire and anger cannot enter their mind. After controlling the mind and senses, the mind becomes calm, and self-knowledge naturally appears. The mind of a wise person becomes completely pure. Without desire and anger, impurities in the mind and intellect are destroyed. By controlling the mind's activities, distractions are removed. Through self-realization, the veil of ignorance is destroyed. As long as the body exists, a perfected person who sees Brahman feels the supreme soul everywhere and lives liberated in peaceful Brahman. When they leave the body, they merge into Brahman. For a disciplined, desire-free, self-knowing person, "Brahman nirvana" is not just in

their heart or mind. Brahman nirvana surrounds them completely. When they walk, they step in Brahman nirvana. Their breathing happens in Brahman nirvana. Their eyes see only Brahman nirvana. Brahman nirvana flows through their body like air. The word “around” means Brahman nirvana is everywhere—above, below, inside, outside, here, there, and in everything. A person who sees Brahman lives in the circle of liberation during their life. When their destined experiences end, they merge into Brahman. What undergoes creation, existence, and destruction is “manifest Brahman. (Vana Brahma) ” Beyond that is nirvana Brahman.

**sparśān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś chakṣuś chaiva antaram mukham
prāṇa-apānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantara-chāriṇau (5-27)**

**yatendriya-mano-buddhir munir mokṣa-parāyaṇaḥ
vigatechchhā-bhaya-krodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ (5-28)**

Comm. Through the eight steps of yoga (yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi), a seeker practicing meditation yoga reaches samadhi and attains liberation in life. In this verse, the Lord explains meditation yoga. Not letting thoughts of sensory pleasures like touch, sight, taste, or sound enter the mind is giving up material enjoyment externally. All connections to enjoyable objects must be given up through service in karma yoga and discernment in jnana yoga. Sit in a comfortable pose like sukhasana, padmasana, or siddhasana, keeping the spine straight to meditate. Focus both eyes on the spot between the eyebrows, at the front of the nose, to calm the mind. In meditation, keep the eyes half-closed and fixed on the eyebrow center to avoid distractions from the external world. Balance the breath in the right (sun) and left (moon) nostrils to withdraw the mind from the outer world. When the breath becomes very subtle, it stops, making it easier to calm the mind. When the breath is balanced in the nostrils, the mind naturally focuses on the chosen object of meditation. When the mind and intellect become steady, no new thoughts arise in the mind. The mind and intellect flow like a steady stream of oil, absorbed in remembering the chosen object. In karma yoga practice, the senses, mind, and intellect are controlled and stay under the seeker’s command. With awakened discernment and detachment, the senses, mind, and intellect become disciplined, obedient, inward-focused, and devoted to God. Controlling the senses, mind, and intellect is victory over them. Controlling the senses is “pratyahara,” meaning restraining their activities. Controlling the mind is “dharana,” meaning keeping the mind fixed on one point. Controlling the intellect is “dhyana,” meaning keeping the intellect firm in a single resolve. A person who constantly meditates on the supreme soul’s all-pervading nature is a “muni.” This body is given to attain the supreme soul. A person whose sole aim is to experience the ever-present supreme soul and strives for it constantly is “devoted to liberation.” Desire, fear, and anger are the main obstacles to attaining the supreme soul. Fear and anger arise

from desire. If someone stronger blocks desire, fear arises; if someone weaker blocks it, anger arises. Humans have a strong desire to live. But death is the strongest, so the desire to live creates fear of death. By staying detached from material pleasures and desiring only the supreme soul, effort toward it destroys desire, fear, and anger. When a seeker firmly realizes that nothing is needed except the supreme soul, they become free instantly. As soon as worldly attachments are destroyed, the natural state of liberation is experienced.

**bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛidaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛichchhati (5-29)**

Comm. Indra, Varuna, Yama and other gods control their respective worlds. There are also many gods who control their own universes. But Lord Krishna is the Lord of all such gods. He is the greatest Lord among all. By His divine and indescribable power (Maya), He creates, sustains, and destroys countless universes. He does all this playfully and keeps everything under His control. So, He is called the Almighty, the Supreme Controller, the All-Knowing, and the God of all gods. Due to ignorance (Maya), people cannot recognize the Supreme Creator. A person who is fully conscious and free knows God as the one who accepts sacrifices and penance. He is the Lord of all worlds, and the selfless well-wisher of all beings. Such a person attains peace. God lives in the hearts of all beings as the Inner Self (Antaryami). When a Yogi offers his actions to God, God becomes the receiver of those actions. When an ignorant person acts with body-attachment, God still gives power for those actions. So, in every living being, God experiences the results of all actions. If such a powerful Lord is our friend, helper, and protector, then how can there be fear, worry, sorrow, or unrest? One who understands the truth and greatness of God sees Him everywhere—in every heart. This deep realization awakens divine knowledge in the heart of a true devotee. That devotee then feels he is serving only God—whether in gods, Brahmins, the poor, or the helpless. Once a person accepts God as his friend and shelter in the heart, Pure devotion arises and true understanding of God’s nature becomes easy. The one who knows God’s true nature gets eternal joy and liberation (Brahma Nirvana). This state is called the seat of peace. In this verse, Lord Krishna gives three teachings: First: Do not desire anything for yourself. Second: No person or thing in the world truly belongs to you. Third: The Supreme Lord is your most dear and closest one, and you can experience Him even while living. God is full of mercy, so He naturally shows kindness and works for the good of all. Even though we say God is our friend, we mostly trust people and objects instead. When sorrow comes, and separation happens, we lose that trust in God due to inner conflict. Once the desire to know God’s true nature arises, It becomes impossible for a devotee to live without remembering and worshipping God. By having faith, love, the company of great souls, listening to scriptures, reflection, surrender, and deep prayer—God’s grace begins to flow. Only by His grace can we know His form, greatness, truth, and

divine acts. And this brings complete peace. In this chapter, Lord Krishna has explained that through the practice of Karma Yoga (Path of Action) and Sankhya Yoga (Path of Knowledge), a person can attain the supreme state, peace, and divine joy. Since both the ideas of Karma Yoga and Sannyasa Yoga (Path of Renunciation) are explained here, This chapter is called “Karma Sannyasa Yoga” (The Yoga of Renunciation of Action).

**“Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam
Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade Karma Sannyaasa Yogo Naama
Panchamah Adhyaayah” ||5||**

“Thus in the Upanishads of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the science of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the fifth chapter entitled ‘The Karma Sannyaasa Yoga.’”





SRI PARAMATMAAYE NAMAḤ
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter-6 (Atma Sanyama Yoga)

śrībhagavān uvāca

**anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa saṁnyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cākriyaḥ (6-1)**

Comm. A self-controlled person who performs prescribed duties without attachment to the results, considering the work as a sacrifice, is truly a renunciate and a yogi. In the previous chapter, Bhagavan explained Sankhya Yoga and said that seeing the material world as illusion and completely breaking its connection is real renunciation. As long as the body exists, the soul's connection with nature appears to exist. Mentally giving up all attachment to the world and working only for maintaining the body and the welfare of others is true renunciation. A householder maintains sacred fires like Shrouta and Smarta at home.

Merely giving up these fires or rituals like austerity and charity is not renunciation. A Karma Yogi does not desire any object or favorable condition for himself from this world. Therefore, even if he gets the results of actions, he remains detached. That is Karma Yoga. Bhagavan Shri Krishna says, one does not become a yogi or a renunciate simply by giving up fire or action. One who understands that actions are inspired by God and performs them for God, without being affected by the outcome, is a real renunciate and a yogi. If a person gives up attachment, he becomes naturally free. Actually, the soul is already free,

but attachment hides the experience of that freedom. When one performs duties without desiring the results, for the benefit of others, previous bad impressions are destroyed and the desire to act reduces. When equanimity arises, one experiences the presence of the Supreme Self. In “Gita Darshan” by Swami Akhandananda Saraswati, it is clearly explained how a Karma Yogi living a household life can follow the path of renunciation. Doing some physical exercise, asana, or pranayama is not yoga in itself. These are only parts of yoga. How a yogi behaves with others is Yama—truth, non-stealing, etc. How a yogi behaves with himself is Niyama—cleanliness, austerity, contentment, surrender to God, etc. A yogi lives with discipline, speaks truthfully, practices non-violence, and keeps the body healthy through asana and pranayama. This is inner yoga. First comes right behavior, then discipline, and then care of the body. Then one controls the breath, withdraws the senses from objects, and through concentration, fixes the mind in one place. Keeping the mind fixed for a period of time is called meditation (dhyana). When the mind becomes fully absorbed in the object of meditation, it is called samadhi. Remaining in self-awareness through these stages is the real goal of yoga. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi are the eight limbs of yoga. A person who sits in asana, closes his eyes, holds his breath, and meditates, is considered a yogi and a great soul. One who gives up cooking with fire (niragni), and completely gives up the connection with fire, is a renunciate and the best among all. In the Upanishads, “Agni” (fire) also means “woman.” According to Chhandogya Upanishad, woman is referred to as Agni. One who gives up relationship with woman and renounces pleasure and luxury while remaining a householder is called niragni. But Bhagavan Shri Krishna does not accept a person as a renunciate who gives up family, renounces wife, abandons actions, and claims to be a sannyasi. This is the revolutionary and unique teaching of the Gita. Bhagavan says, if someone leaves home midway, breaks relationship with wife, practices asana and pranayama, and gives up actions, he cannot become great. Wearing saffron cloth and doing asana, pranayama, and meditation is not enough to become great. Then what should be done? Bhagavan says, the truly great person is one who has both renunciation and yoga. He may not sit in asana but performs his duties. He has not abandoned his wife and lives in family life. Since he completes his duties, he is not inactive. He is not a karma yogi, but a yogi. He is not a wife-renouncer, but a renunciate. How can a person become a renunciate and a yogi without leaving the household or giving up action? Bhagavan answers: such a person is a buddhi yogi—he has wisdom. In humans, the intellect is supreme. A stone lies in one place and is of no use. It has no value. Value arises when one performs his duties rightly. One who performs actions is a yogi. There are deep ways to perform action. For that, two conditions are needed. First: do only your prescribed duty, not every action. Even birds do actions. Duty has two aspects: giving up forbidden acts and performing prescribed acts. Action should follow discipline. Discipline means instruction from scriptures, gurus, God, family, and society. One should not break discipline for the sake of desires. Do your duty, avoid wrong acts. Let us see

how a person performs duties. When we relate this with scriptures, we understand what liberation means. Scriptures say that yogis and renunciates attain liberation. On the other hand, one who dies in the battlefield, fighting the enemy, also attains liberation because he was doing his duty. Dying while performing one's duty becomes a path to liberation. We may engage in various service works—food donation, clothes, medicine, helping the sick, and organizing good company. These actions purify the intellect. But we must remember one thing. As long as we don't receive appreciation or visible results from our service, we don't feel fulfilled. We wait for praise or rewards. But this desire for results reduces the value of the work. There should be inner joy, purity, and development of inner happiness. Inner happiness is independent joy. It is not dependent on anything. Joy from ornaments, praise, positions, or material gains is not real joy. Even joy from the idea of heaven is not true happiness. Real joy is what we get from doing good work. So who is a renunciate? One who does not depend on the results of action. Bhagavan does not say that fruits of actions won't come. They will come—but don't depend on them. Sometimes doubt arises: what if the result is not favorable? Still, continue to do your good action—it will never go waste. Even if you don't get the result, you'll have the satisfaction that you did good. Your mind will not feel regret or become impure. Observe: while doing the work, do you feel a sense of completeness? The work you do should match your personality, strength, situation, intelligence, and knowledge. You should feel completeness in that work. Do not look at the result. Thinking about results makes you stumble. You stop focusing on the work and become attached to what will come. If you are engaged in good work, that engagement itself is a result. Doing good is truth, knowledge, and bliss.

One who works without attachment to results is a renunciate and a doer.

He is not inactive and not just a yogi. Living in the household, working with his strength, mind, good feelings, and knowledge is complete. One who feels joy while working will also have joyful results. He has no need to look at the results. The fruit of joy is only joy. One who does not feel happiness in work cannot experience purity of knowledge or good intentions. Such a person—whether dressed as a renunciate or yogi—has incomplete action. This is the principle of household living. Shri Krishna teaches how householders should act and how to perform work.

**yaṁ saṁnyāsam iti prāhuḥ yogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava
na hy asaṁnyasta-saṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana (6-2)**

Comm. O Arjuna, son of Pandu! The wise call sannyasa the same as Karma Yoga. You should know that sannyasa and Karma Yoga are the same. No one can become a yogi or sannyasi without giving up the desire for the results of actions. Giving up desires is called yoga, and it is also called sannyasa. The mind often recalls many things from past events or future imaginations. When the mind gets attached to these thoughts, feelings of attraction or aversion arise. These attached thoughts

become desires. If a person does not give up these desires, they cannot become a yogi, whether through knowledge or action. Thinking about worldly pleasures as enjoyable is called desire. Once a desire for an object or pleasure forms in the mind, it occupies the mind until it is fulfilled. Not being able to give up these thoughts is called unrenounced desire in the verse. A person cannot become a yogi if they do not give up sensory pleasures, enjoyments, and desires. Yoga means connecting with God. By giving up all worldly desires, one feels their eternal connection with God. Even if someone practices spirituality while attached to worldly things, they are not called a yogi according to the Gita, even if they meditate deeply in a forest. Only when a person fully detaches from worldly objects and actions are they called a renunciant or yogi. Giving up the sense of being the doer or enjoyer is the core of sannyasa. Whether practicing Sankhya Yoga or Karma Yoga, without fully giving up desires, the mind cannot connect with God. Therefore, giving up desires is necessary for both a yogi and a sannyasi.

**āruruṣor muniḥ yogaṁ karma kāraṇam ucyate
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate (6-3)**

Comm. For someone who seeks yoga, selfless actions help purify the mind. Realizing the self and gaining self-knowledge is called the state of yoga or Brahmi sthiti. In this state, staying calm and one with God requires mental tranquility, meaning no desires in the mind. Yoga is the practice of connecting with God. The eightfold yoga path in the scriptures is like a ladder to reach God. Each step of this ladder is a stage of yoga, like Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Dhyana Yoga, or Bhakti Yoga. For someone eager to know God, the first step is to focus on actions. The state of yoga is the highest level of this yoga ladder. To reach this state, a person must start by performing all actions thoughtfully and selflessly. By doing selfless actions, one becomes detached, actions become inaction, and the mind becomes pure. Performing duties according to one's role and righteousness, without expecting results, leads to success in Karma Yoga. Tranquility means the mind becomes completely calm, like a steady stream of oil, fully absorbed in God. Only after mastering the mind can one avoid desires or distractions. Until a practitioner masters meditation, they must continue selfless actions. Through contemplation and meditation, one realizes the truth of God. This is called the state of yoga or attaining Brahman. According to Shankaracharya, this state is true sannyasa. In this state, a wise sannyasi stops performing actions completely. In this state, a sannyasi has no duties left to perform. The Lord also says that through actions, we should embrace new ideas and the innovative views of the younger generation. New ways of performing actions are constantly being discovered over time. These discoveries benefit all of humanity. To awaken the desire to know God through yoga, one must first engage in actions that benefit the world to begin their spiritual practice .

**yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasv anuṣajjati
sarva-saṅkalpa-saṁnyāsī yogārūḍhas tadocyate (6-4)**

Comm. Here, Lord Krishna uses the word “yogarudha” to describe the wise person, similar to the “sthitaprajna” person described in Chapter 2. A person who is joined with yoga remains detached from all sensual pleasures that come by fate. He is also not attached to actions done as spiritual practice. Such a person is called “yogarudha” – firmly established in knowledge. Shri Ramakrishna said: “If only a small bit of dust remains on a thread, it cannot enter the needle.” Similarly, even a small desire in the mind prevents it from getting absorbed in God. Unless one becomes free from the desire for enjoyment and indulgence, one cannot reach yogarudha state. A person should only enjoy what is necessary for survival. If enjoyment increases, then right and wrong understanding is lost. The seeker must reject the desire to get favorable things, situations, people, or objects. If favorable things come due to past karma, one should not be happy about it. To become yogarudha, one must give up all desires – good or bad. When, through reflection and meditation, the mind becomes steady in the Supreme Soul, then there is no desire to act. According to Shankaracharya, giving up attachment to action is true renunciation. All actions come from desire (sankalpa). Giving up desire is also the same as giving up action. According to Lokmanya Tilak, renunciation means giving up desire for the result. In divine understanding, accepting or rejecting anything is not counted as desire or action. The state where one is not happy or sad whether actions succeed or fail is yogarudha. Thinking about worldly pleasures with attachment or hatred is called sankalpa (mental desire).

From attachment arises sankalpa, and from that, desire grows. So, when there is no attachment, desires also go away automatically. A wise person who has given up all desires is like a calm sea with no waves. Such a person naturally does not think of pleasure and has no interest in daily or forbidden actions. He should not be attached even to inaction. Attachment to not doing anything is laziness and ignorance. Because of God’s great mercy, human life is given for liberation. If we waste this time in dreaming about pleasures, nothing can be more foolish. Sankalpa and vikalpa (mental planning and confusion) are based on past and future – not present. They have no relation to the current moment. At every moment, wisdom calls us from within to do our duties. Mental imaginations are just expansions of the mind. They are not real. Only God exists everywhere. When this is realized, giving up desires becomes possible. Things, people, and actions are temporary, but their loss is certain. If we accept this truth, we reach eternal reality. Even for our liberation, we should not have desire – because that also creates bondage. To control action, enjoyment, and desire, human effort is necessary. Gita is a book of human effort, not fate. Fate brings results, and nature works on its own. But the Gita says, we must be as courageous as possible in our personal life.

**uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ (6-5)**

**bandhur ātmātmanaḥ tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat (6-6)**

Comm. In human life, we must use wise thinking and self-control to help our soul reach liberation. We are not born to use mind and senses to drown in worldly pleasures. Even if we suffer due to past karma, and face many problems in spiritual practice, we must rise again with courage. The only goal of life is liberation. The seeker should always reflect on himself in every situation. He must keep trying to raise his soul upward, not let it fall. A wise seeker whose body, senses, and mind are under control becomes a friend to his own soul. The one who has conquered his own lower nature and become established in the real self is called “atma eva atmana jitaḥ.” When a person feels no need to depend on anyone for anything, he has conquered himself. The mind then becomes helpful when it is not attracted by illusion and worldly powers. A calm and controlled mind can achieve even the impossible. But a restless mind cannot even enjoy worldly pleasures. When someone connects “I” and “mine” with things that are not truly self, it is like becoming one’s own enemy. Enjoyment through senses may feel good at first, but it causes deep sorrow and rebirth. External enemies can only harm the body, not the soul. But internal enemy – an attached mind – harms the soul through many lifetimes. The senses, mind, and intellect are not the real self. According to Panchadashi, the body and related things are false self. One who has not conquered this false self always remains in the grip of this enemy. As long as the mind is covered in illusion, self-realization is not possible. A desireless and controlled mind is the closest friend of the soul. A pure mind inspires the intellect to turn toward God. In the pure mind, one can hear the voice of wisdom from within. Pure mind, pure intellect, and pure soul – all are the same. In the Gita, the word “atma” is used in many ways – body, senses, mind, intellect, soul, and true self. The connection between body and world is constantly breaking. One who understands and accepts this can uplift himself. God lives in the heart of every being as the Supreme Soul. Experiencing this presence in the heart is called yoga. Adi Shankaracharya says in Viveka Chudamani: the Guru only shows the path. You have to walk it yourself. Only when you are able to walk the right path, can you cross the ocean of the world. It is wrong to think that the Guru will take you to the top. It is a mistake to believe that God will come and rescue your soul, or that luck will do it. Others cannot eat food for your hunger—you must do it yourself. Lord Krishna assures that upliftment or downfall is not dependent on fate. In this human body, with effort, one can rise from the depths to the top. The more one improves his nature and actions, the higher he will rise. Bad nature and wrong actions will lead to fall. Doubts arise—whether our work is controlled by past karma or God’s inspiration. Then how can the mind be brought under control and work done? Lokmanya Tilak, in “Gita Rahasya,” explains: Even if a person mistakenly thinks the body is the self, the soul still

has independent power. By focusing the mind on God, the lower qualities are suppressed and the good qualities grow. Then the soul's power becomes visible in the mind. At that time, one should take the opportunity and gain control over the mind and senses.

The soul resides in the body as the supreme power above mind, intellect, and all. A person should not leave effort to God's will. Don't sit idle thinking fate is against you. With strong will, even the result of extreme sin or merit can be changed in this very life. God does not separate himself from the inner self. So God doesn't make his own plans—he merges his will with that of the devotee. If you act with full heart, you will surely receive God's help. Some people believe in fate and planets. But in Bhagavata (11.23), it is said: fate and planets don't give sorrow—our mind does. So the seeker must have full faith in scripture, God, and Guru, and live by their guidance to uplift the soul. Becoming a guru or appointing a guru is not the message of Gita. You must gain knowledge from the guru, and then make your own mind your teacher. Don't look at the faults of others. Focus on correcting yourself. “Be your own guru. Uplift yourself.” – this is the teaching of the Gita.

**jitātmanah praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu tathā mānānāmānavānjati (6-7)**

Comm. The person who controls his mind and senses remains calm in situations of happiness and sorrow, respect and insult, and favorable and unfavorable conditions. Such a person, who has conquered his senses, goes beyond dualities and experiences God everywhere. Until a person removes all dualities like attraction and hatred from the mind, he cannot reach a steady state of yoga. As long as the mind feels attachment or dislike toward things, people, or situations, there will be mental ups and downs. A person becomes free from these dualities when the mind is calm and unaffected. When the mind becomes peaceful and balanced, it naturally connects with the Supreme Soul. For a person with a peaceful and stable mind, God is fully visible at all places, times, and in all forms. When the mind is disturbed by desires and dislikes, happiness and sorrow, or respect and insult, one cannot feel the presence of God. Honour and dishonour are only based on one's own mental belief. If someone gives you respect, consider it as their good nature and kindness, not your own greatness. Similarly, if someone insults you, think of it as a way for you to get rid of past sins, and feel compassion toward that person. Do not see faults in the person who insults you. When you accept respect, it reduces your earned good karma. When you bear insults, it reduces your bad karma. Praise, honour, and respect are like poison. On the other hand, if you walk on the right path and get insulted or blamed, it is like nectar. By thinking like this, a spiritual seeker can stay peaceful even in situations of honour or insult. Pleasures and luxuries may come at one time but may go away at another time. What comes today, may not stay tomorrow. The house, wife, children, wealth, and fame which gave happiness once, become causes of sorrow when we fear losing them.

By closely observing the pain of the poor, sick, and old people around us, we will feel that worldly pleasures are bitter like poison. Some people live under the open sky without shelter, struggle to get food, and don't even have clothes to cover their shame—still, they survive in God's creation. Cold and heat come due to nature; pleasure and sorrow come due to one's own thoughts. Honour and dishonour also come from one's habits and beliefs and don't last long. If there is anything eternal in this world, it is the Supreme Soul (God). Only a person with a calm and controlled mind can understand this eternal truth. Sri Ramakrishna said: "Just like you can't see your reflection clearly in moving water, you cannot feel God in a disturbed mind."

**jñāna-vijñāna-trptātmā kūṭa-stho vijitendriyaḥ
yukta ity ucyate yogī sama-loṣṭrāśma-kāñcanaḥ (6-8)**

Comm. A person whose heart is fully satisfied with knowledge from the scriptures and his own spiritual experience—Who controls his mind and senses and remains steady at a divine level—Who sees mud, stone, and gold with the same attitude—Such a yogi is called one who is established in yoga, or established in God. The Bhagavad Gita explains the science of the Supreme Soul (God). According to Adi Shankaracharya's commentary, listening to scriptural knowledge creates understanding in the mind—that is called jnana (knowledge). When that knowledge is reflected upon and meditated on again and again, it becomes realization—this is called vijnana (wisdom). A yogi who has succeeded in yoga remains completely satisfied in the true knowledge of God—both with and without form, and with or without qualities. For such a person, there is nothing more left to know about the soul and the Supreme. A goldsmith places a piece of gold or silver on an iron block and strikes it with a hammer; this block is called "koot". No matter how many times it is hit, the block stays still and unshaken. In the same way, a yogi with self-control remains steady in the knowledge of the Supreme Soul, even when great sorrows come repeatedly in life. Such a yogi is called "kootastha" (firm and unchanging). A person who remains balanced is called a "kootastha yogi". Even though they live in the world and deal with things, they remain detached because they understand the world is temporary and full of illusion. Only the one who has realized the soul (self-realization) can attain this equality of mind. They do not get confused by the different appearances of things, considering material things as non-eternal and not the true self. Although mud, stones, and gold look different and have different uses, for the yogi, all are seen as the same because they have no attachment to them. Because they have no desire to collect material things, nothing in the world becomes valuable to them. If we see mud, dust, and gold as symbols of tamas, rajas, and sattva (the three qualities of nature), then we understand that the yogi has gone beyond all three and lives always in the pure state of sattva.

**suhṛn-mitra-dhṛṣṇa-madhyastha-dveṣya-bandhuṣu
sādhūṣvapi ca pāpeṣu sama-buddhir viśiṣyate (6-9)**

Comm. In the previous verse, God said to see things like soil, stone, and gold with equal vision. This shows a perfected person's detachment from material enjoyment. In this verse, God says a person is the best who treats people with different qualities, feelings, and behaviors appropriately on the outside. But inside, they see everyone as part of the Supreme Soul with equal vision. God considers such a person the greatest. This person sees well-wishers, friends, enemies, neutral people, peacemakers, jealous people, relatives, saints, and sinners with equal understanding. Such a person is a true knower of Brahman (the Supreme). A person who wishes good for all beings in their heart is a true friend. A true friend sacrifices their own interests to help others. A neutral person does not take sides between friends or enemies. A mediator tries to bring peace between two conflicting people or groups.

A perfected person does not focus on people's different qualities or natures. Instead, they see the pure soul present in everyone. The soul is always pure and the same in everyone. Seeing all beings as souls removes bad qualities from the heart. This naturally brings good qualities and good behavior. Bad qualities must be completely given up to achieve equal understanding. A person who believes "the Supreme Soul is present in everyone" becomes a true friend to all beings. In their view, all souls are waiting for liberation. The only difference is that some are at the start of the path to liberation, while others are closer to the pure Supreme Soul. But everyone has the ability to attain eternal truth. The four goals of human life are wealth, desire, duty, and liberation. Wealth is external and serves the body, but it also increases pride. Desire is internal and drives enjoyment of material things. There is no end to the thirst for desire or wealth. Duty resides in the intellect and decides what is right or wrong, good or bad, and appropriate or not.

Duty controls and balances wealth and desire. Wanting too much pleasure or wealth is not the key to a successful or special life. These should be limited to what is needed to live. The real purpose of life is to gain equal understanding and attain the Supreme Truth. When the intellect is balanced, it avoids attachment to wealth and desire. This leads the soul toward liberation. Equal understanding is the center of achieving all life's goals. The Gita teaches that you should never lose the balance and equality of your intellect in any situation. All forms of yoga taught by God in the Gita aim to keep the intellect balanced. The Gita's teachings are not just for specific groups like Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, or Shudras, or only for Hindus. They are for everyone in the world because the need for intellect is universal, timeless, and applies everywhere. All humans need intellect at all times and in all places.

**yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānaṁ rahasi sthitaḥ
ekākī yata-cittātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ (6-10)**

Comm. In this verse, God begins teaching about the process of meditation yoga. In the previous verse, God said meditation yoga is needed to achieve equal understanding.

Meditation yoga helps purify the heart and focus the mind. Scriptures describe many types of yoga, like penance yoga, mantra yoga, chanting yoga, hatha yoga, raja yoga, knowledge yoga, and pranayama yoga. The foundation of all these yoga practices is focusing the mind. Without controlling and focusing the mind, no yoga practice is possible. Meditation means connecting the soul with the Supreme Soul by constantly remembering God in the mind. All yoga practices start with faith in God and end with becoming one with the Supreme Soul in deep meditation. By nature, humans are attached to material things, beings, and enjoyment through many lifetimes. So, the mind does not easily try to know its true self or connect with it. If the senses are not controlled, even meditating in a quiet Himalayan cave will not stop the mind from being drawn to material pleasures. To detach the mind from material thoughts, one must first free themselves from attachment to many material things. When there is no desire for physical pleasure, the urge to collect material things stops. Not being attached to collecting material things is called non-possession. Not having desires for physical pleasure or pride is called desirelessness. In family life, one should live with minimal needs for the family's sake, not with attachment to material enjoyment.

For ascetics, renunciants, or celibates, all thoughts of collecting unnecessary things must be completely given up. A meditation yogi should practice in a solitary place. In family life, meditation should be done in a separate worship room or a quiet place in a temple. For ascetics, renunciants, or celibates, places like riverbanks, forests, or mountain caves are best for meditation. If there is even a slight connection with the material world, the mind cannot stay focused during meditation. So, during meditation, one should firmly believe that they have no connection with anything except the Supreme Soul. With daily practice, this belief strengthens in the intellect. This makes it easier for the mind to focus on God. Every day, we meet friends, face enemies, engage in business, and use our intellect to earn wealth. But we do not feel the need to detach from these and spend a few moments connected with God. In family life, detaching from the world does not mean abandoning duties and running to the Himalayas. If self-realization becomes the goal of life, a seeker in any stage of life performs duties with equal-mindedness. All duties done with equal-mindedness, without attachment to results, become a spiritual practice.

Such actions lead to well-being.

**śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiram āsanam ātmanah
nātyucchritaṁ nātinīcam cailājina-kuśottaram (6-11)**

**tatraikāgram manah kṛtvā yata-citta-indriya-kriyah
upaviśyāsane yuñjyād yogam ātma-viśuddhaye (6-12)**

**samaṁ kāya-śiro-grīvaṁ dhārayann acalaṁ sthiraṁ
saṁprekṣya nāsikāgram svaṁ diśaś cānavalokayan (6-13)**

Comm. In the above verse, God explains how to practice meditation yoga. Yoga

practice begins with sitting in a proper posture. So, first, the seating arrangement must be described. The place for meditation should be clean and holy. Naturally holy places include riverbanks, mountain caves, forests, pilgrimage sites, temples, and sages' ashrams. These places are considered sacred. These places are suitable and easily available for ascetics. For householders practicing meditation, a temple courtyard with fresh air, a large garden, or a room in their home should be chosen for meditation. The meditation place should not be wet or damp but dry and clean. If the place and environment are not pure, they can affect the senses. There should be no drains, sewers, or polluted environments nearby. A seat made of wood, stone, or cement should be placed on a flat surface for easy sitting. The seat should not be too high or too low but within two feet from the ground. If the seat is made of wood or stone, it should be firmly fixed to the ground and not wobble. If the seat is too high, there is a risk of falling asleep during meditation.

If it is too low, the ground's cold or heat may feel uncomfortable, and there may be fear of insects or reptiles biting. The meditation seat should be used only by the person meditating. One person should not sit on another's meditation seat. The seat of great saints or sages holds the power of their meditation. First, spread kusha grass on the seat. Kusha grass is considered holy because it is believed to come from Lord Vishnu's hair. So, kusha grass is used for purification and rituals. Place a holy deer skin over the kusha grass. Then cover it with a soft cloth made of cotton. Instead of deer skin, a woolen blanket can be used. Covering the seat like this prevents the yogic energy in the body from being lost to the earth's energy during meditation. This shows how scientific our traditions are. On this prepared seat, sit in a posture like Padmasana, Sukhasana, or Swastikasana that feels comfortable for the body. Practice sitting continuously for at least three hours. The upper thighs and lower neck are called the "body" (kaya). During meditation, keep the body, head, and neck straight and aligned with the ground so the spine does not bend. During meditation, focus both eyes on the tip of the nose. If the eyes are open, external sights may distract the mind. If the eyes are closed, sleep may come. So, keep the eyes half-open, focusing on the middle of the eyebrows or the tip of the nose. But keeping eyes half-open for long may strain the eyes or head, causing pain. If there is any pain in the body, meditation cannot happen. Some yoga teachers say to keep eyes open and focus on a point, the "Om" symbol, a mantra, or the deity's idol. So, based on your comfort, keep eyes closed or open and focus on the eyebrows, nose tip, or an external object while meditating. The body's restlessness or activity prevents the mind from staying still. So, during meditation, pay special attention to keeping the body still. Sitting on the prepared seat, control the heart and senses, and continuously focus the mind on the form of your chosen deity. This practice is meditation. Withdraw the mind and intellect from material thoughts and control them to focus on the deity during meditation. Believe firmly that "the deity is the only focus" and fix the mind on it. Before meditating, completely withdraw the mind from worldly thoughts. During meditation, do not hold onto thoughts that come

to the mind, nor try to chase them away. Repeatedly bring the mind back to the deity, and over time, external thoughts will calm down. Practice meditation every day. Meditation yoga is not practiced for worldly success or wealth. The only goal of yoga practice is to attain the Supreme Soul. Meditate to remove flaws like attachment, hatred, sin, distraction, and ignorance from the heart.

**praśāntātmā vigata-bhīr brahmacāri-vrate sthitaḥ
manaḥ saṁyamya mac-citto yukta āsīta mat-parah (6-14)**

Comm. Before starting yoga practice, the mind should be peaceful and happy. With the feeling of detachment, the mind must be purified and kept calm to practice meditation yoga. If one gives up desires and cravings for sense pleasures, the mind becomes free from attachment and hatred, and becomes calm. By following celibacy (brahmacharya), keeping the mind peaceful and fearless, and focusing the mind steadily on the soul, One must carefully meditate only with the aim of realizing God. The word “Yukta” used by the Lord means — one must be alert. Trying to become a yogi while still doing sinful or immoral acts is useless. When one practices yoga with good conduct, fearlessness naturally arises. When a person leaves the attachment to the body and the feelings of “I” and “mine,” then fear disappears. For meditation, one must firmly believe that: “God is all-powerful and present everywhere at all times.” When the mind becomes firm in this belief, fear vanishes.

If death happens during meditation, it should be considered a great blessing and fortune. To become a yogi, one must bring all the senses fully under control. For progress in meditation, one must completely give up the desire for women and gold and follow complete celibacy. In the path of renunciation, one must strictly stay away from contact with women. That’s why, according to the scriptures, in the renounced order, one must leave home and live alone or with a guru to practice yoga. In Arya tradition, among the four stages of life, brahmacharya (celibate student life) is the first stage. In Brahmin families, when a child enters youth, they are traditionally sent to the guru’s ashram after performing the sacred thread ceremony. Living in the guru’s ashram, they practiced Vedic mantras and learned strict brahmacharya from the guru. The power generated in the body by preserving energy (virya) during celibacy brings natural control over the mind and breath. Brahmacharya doesn’t only mean preserving energy but also means living a controlled and disciplined life under the guru’s guidance. A meditation yogi must also live a self-controlled and disciplined life with firm determination. In household life, if a man lives in a controlled way and follows scripture-guided behavior, relations with wife are not considered a break of brahmacharya. Such a self-controlled householder can follow the path of bhakti yoga or karma yoga. But in the path of knowledge (jnana yoga) and meditation (dhyana yoga), complete celibacy must be strictly followed. Normally, controlling reproductive desire is called brahmacharya. But according to great saints, even remembering sense pleasures in the mind, seeing tempting things, hearing sensual words,

or touching women breaks control. The real meaning of the word brahmachari is: “One who lives in Brahman.” Living in Brahman means performing one’s duties as sacrifice, which leads the yogi to realize the eternal God. By completely giving up outer sense pleasures and stopping mental disturbances, if the mind stays absorbed in Brahman, Then not just the reproductive organ, but all senses come under control automatically. Impulses don’t come from the body, but are born from thoughts in the mind. The final goal of yoga is to directly realize the Self and the Supreme Soul. The mind naturally stays attached to what it truly loves selflessly. So, the seeker must understand the qualities, power, and mysteries of God — the dearest friend and well-wisher — and practice keeping the mind fixed on Him with deep love. “Matparah” means: God is the highest goal, the supreme destination, the only shelter, and the greatest Master. Consider Him as the protector, helper, and everything, and remain satisfied with whatever happens — this is surrender to God. Understanding God’s qualities, essence, and secrets, the seeker should meditate on the form of God which best suits their nature, liking, and capacity.

**yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī niyata-mānasah
śāntiṁ nirvāṇa-paramāṁ mat-saṁsthāṁ adhigacchati (6-15)**

Comm. A yogi, by fully stopping all mental disturbances, and withdrawing from all worldly relationships, keeps the mind absorbed in God, and by staying established in God’s form, attains the peaceful state of liberation (moksha). Here, the Lord talks about the supreme result of meditation practice. As long as one remains attached to enjoyment and worldly life, the mind cannot be controlled, And one cannot stop mental disturbances. Three types of desires bind us to the world: the desire for wealth, the desire for children/family, and the desire for fame/respect. When all these material desires end, the mind becomes fully and constantly absorbed in God, And one attains liberation. When material desires end, the soul enters God’s divine abode. Though God resides always in His spiritual world, By His power of Yoga Maya, He is also present in the hearts of all beings as the inner controller. When the mind becomes fully absorbed in God, the yogi experiences God’s peaceful and blissful nature in his heart. After achieving that, the yogi feels there is nothing more left to gain. Just as heat is the nature of fire, peace and bliss are the nature of God. He is the ocean of bliss and the shoreless sea of peace. When the yogi meditates on this peaceful form of God, the soul becomes one with the Supreme Soul. At that time, God’s peace and joy spread fully within the yogi’s heart. This is called attaining liberation (nirvana). This state of liberation is the highest result of meditation yoga.

**nātyaśnatas tu yogo ’sti na caikāntam anaśnataḥ
na cāti-svapna-śīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna (6-16)**

Comm. God explains in the next two verses how a person should behave in daily life during yoga practice. God says to Arjuna: Eating too much does not help achieve yoga success. Eating too little or fasting completely also does not help in practicing yoga.

Similarly, a person who sleeps too much cannot practice yoga every day. Not sleeping enough and staying awake too long also creates obstacles in yoga practice. A yoga practitioner should eat in moderation. Fill half the stomach with food, and leave the other half empty for water and air movement. To keep the body strong, eat vegetarian, pure, and balanced food. The type of food affects the thoughts in the mind. The kind of food you eat creates similar kinds of thoughts. Eating animal or bird meat is completely wrong. It increases negative qualities in the mind. Eating more than needed weakens digestion and causes various diseases. Overeating leads to sleepiness and laziness. Too much sleep, laziness, and carelessness are negative qualities. A lazy person who sleeps too much becomes useless and unfit even for material happiness.

They waste the precious time of human life. Staying awake too long without sleep is also unhealthy for the body. Sleep gives rest to tired senses and the mind. After waking from sleep, the body and senses gain energy and become more active. A healthy, capable person should sleep for about six hours. Sleeping less than this harms health. So, a yogi must be careful about sleep and food. Without control over sleep and food, a yogi cannot sit for long in yoga practice or focus the mind on the Supreme Soul. In this verse, God talks about food and sleep but also instructs to control other senses in their activities. Seeing too many colors or forms with the eyes is harmful. Listening to too much noise with the ears is harmful. Getting excited by excessive touch through the skin is harmful. Smelling strong odors is harmful. All these are obstacles to yoga practice. Engaging in good company, devotional singing, or chanting is not harmful even if it affects food or sleep temporarily. This is because the joy from these activities brings divine energy to the body.

**yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā (6-17)**

Comm. For success in yoga, food, daily activities, work, sleep, waking, and even yoga practice must be moderate and regular. “Everything in excess is harmful” means any activity of the body or senses, if too much or too little, does not help yoga practice. The same rules cannot apply to everyone because of differences in caste, life stage, country, time, situation, and profession. So, do what is appropriate and follows scriptures to remove suffering and achieve yoga success. Support yourself and your family with money earned through honest means. Daily food should not exceed the body’s needs. Excessive walking, moving, or talking by the body is wrong. Postures and exercise should match the body’s capacity. The body needs food, drink, sleep, resistance, and enjoyment to keep the mind cheerful. But doing these in an uncontrolled way prevents progress in the yoga path. Coordination in work and effort is essential and necessary. Perform your duties or professional work without attachment to results, with proper effort. Even good deeds like public service, temple building, or organizing good company should not be done beyond

your capacity. Being overly involved in such activities can lead to dishonest ways of collecting resources. Instead of freeing you, this can cause bondage. The term “sleep and awareness” in the verse means sleep and the waking state. Staying detached from worldly relations and focusing the mind on God is called being awake. After mastering meditation yoga, a yogi remains immersed in a sea of joy. In this state, worldly suffering and its causes are completely destroyed forever. For ordinary people, God’s advice in this verse is useful for living a happy life. In 24 hours, a person should divide time into four activities. Six hours for eating and daily activities.

Six hours for professional work and efforts. Six hours for sleep. The remaining six hours should be spent connecting with God through chanting, meditation, devotion, or service. This makes life happy.

**yadā viniyataṁ cittam ātmany evāvatiṣṭhate
niḥspṛhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyo yukta ity ucyate tadā (6-18)**

Comm. After explaining proper food, actions, rest, and sleep useful for meditation, Lord Krishna now describes the final state of a yogi who meditates on the formless and qualityless God. When the mind becomes completely focused and stays only in the form of the soul, And when there is no desire left for enjoying this world or the next, Then that person is called a “yukta” (one who is united). In the eight steps of yoga, the eighth and final step is Savikalpa Samadhi, which is considered the last stage of practice. In Savikalpa Samadhi, there is still the idea of three parts — the one who sees, what is seen, and the act of seeing. This means the person thinks “I am experiencing the soul.” Here, “I” is the seer, “soul” is the object seen, and “experiencing” is the act of seeing. When even this three-part idea goes away and only the soul remains in the mind, Then it is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The Lord here calls such a person who reaches Nirvikalpa Samadhi a “yukta” and a true yogi. Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the final state of meditation yoga. The stability of this state depends on how pure the yogi’s mind has become. The Yoga Shastra mentions five types of mind states: dull, restless, distracted, focused, and controlled. The dull and restless minds are not fit for yoga. When the mind sometimes stays in the soul and sometimes does not, it is called a distracted state. When the mind becomes fully focused, it reaches Savikalpa Samadhi and if fully controlled, it reaches Nirvikalpa Samadhi. To move from distraction to concentration, one must give up all worldly and spiritual desires. If even a little desire for worldly or heavenly pleasures remains, Then the mind gets disturbed and cannot stay in deep meditation. This disturbance in meditation is called “Vyutthana” in the scriptures. “Free from all desires” means the yogi’s mind must be completely empty of all wants to prevent this disturbance. When the mind cuts off its ties with things, people, names, and positions, And gets fully absorbed in the formless soul, all desires die. When the intellect becomes pure through meditation, The knowledge of the ultimate truth arises and desirelessness comes naturally. Without constant remembrance of God and fixing the

mind at His feet, divine realization is not possible. So, this meditation is also an important part of bhakti yoga (devotion). In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the yogi realizes the soul in all beings. He sees himself present everywhere. When he sees his own self in everything, where will any desire remain? Desires arise only for things not yet received. When he experiences the soul present in all, there is nothing left to achieve. This is called self-knowledge which is attained in meditation. So, seeing the soul in all beings is the final state of both meditation and knowledge yoga.

**yathā dīpo nivāta-stho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā
yogino yata-cittasya yuñjato yogam ātmanah (6-19)**

Comm. When the mind is fully controlled, during meditation it stays fixed only on the form of God. Lord Krishna explains the state of mind in Nirvikalpa Samadhi using the example of a steady flame. The mind, like a flame, is normally flickering and shining. But in a windless place, a burning flame does not move. In deep Samadhi, the fully still mind becomes motionless like that flame and stays in the soul. Perfect peace is the true nature of the soul. In that state, the mind neither thinks of any object nor tastes any external pleasure. The yogi's mind stays in such a state that only the soul remains, and no other thoughts or disturbances come. The scriptures call the soul unchanging and eternal. Something unchanging and eternal should never move or change its nature. Then why is the soul compared to a still flame? The answer is, although the soul never moves, Due to the restless mind, different thoughts reflect in the soul like images in a mirror. So the soul appears to move because of the mind's restlessness. When all thoughts stop, the restlessness seen in the soul also disappears. Then the soul is experienced as completely calm and steady. Like when the water surface shakes, the moon's reflection seems to move. But the moon itself does not move.

**yatoparamate cittam niruddham yoga-sevayā
yatra caivātmanātmānam paśyann ātmani tuṣyati (6-20)**

Comm. In the next four verses, Lord Krishna explains who is a yogi and what “yoga” truly means. When the mind becomes free from the world during deep meditation on God, And with pure understanding realizes that the soul and the Supreme Soul are one, Then the yogi remains forever satisfied in the joy of that pure God. This is called the state of yoga. The mind cannot stay in the soul by itself. The mind is material; the soul is conscious. So only the soul stays united with the soul. When thoughts turn away from the world, The mind stops its flow of desires and choices. Then the mind becomes as if it is not there at all.

When the mind becomes fully detached from the world, It no longer depends on any object, situation, or person. The mind, intellect, and soul become one in knowledge and realize the existence of the Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is the ocean of joy and peace. After seeing Him, the yogi remains always content. After experiencing full inner

satisfaction, the yogi no longer needs worldly pleasures. With daily meditation, he realizes that all beings and things are not separate but part of Brahman. Then everything is seen as the form of the Supreme Soul. As long as the mind turns toward the world, One cannot realize their true soul nature. When the mind cuts off all ties with the world, The yogi experiences the true self within. Brahman is eternal, unchanging, invisible, and immortal. The soul also is eternal, unchanging, invisible, immortal, and beyond thought. As long as worldly thoughts exist in the mind, One cannot fully attain the bliss of God. First, the mind must be fully controlled. Then, when the fully controlled mind dissolves, God is realized. At that moment, the soul filled with God's qualities becomes joyful. That's why the yogi remains satisfied within himself. This is the nature and highest state of the soul.

**sukham ātyantikaṁ yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam
veti yatra na caivāyaṁ sthitaś calati tattvataḥ (6-21)**

Comm. The ultimate goal of yoga is to achieve natural divine joy. When a yogi attains the Supreme Truth, they experience a state of joy. This joy is far above the pleasure from desires (rajasic), laziness and sleep (tamasic), and even the pure joy from yoga practice (sattvic). This divine joy is eternal, universal, constant, beyond the senses, and unchanging. God also calls this joy imperishable and absolute in other places. A meditation yogi experiences this boundless, pure joy in deep, unwavering meditation (nirvikalpa samadhi) through a pure, subtle intellect. Staying in this supreme blissful state, the yogi enjoys unbroken joy and never wavers from it. Joy is the true nature of the soul. The senses, which are always focused outward, cannot realize the soul's eternal joyful nature. Pleasure from objects, things, people, events, or situations (rajasic joy) is felt through the mind and senses. If the mind is elsewhere, the senses cannot enjoy pleasure even when connected to objects. In meditation yoga, the mind merges into its true nature, so this divine joy is not felt by the senses. In this eternal, indestructible joy, the intellect does not get lost in ignorance. Instead, the intellect becomes wise and fully awake. This awakened state of the intellect is called "grasped by the intellect." This joyful state is beyond qualities, nature, and senses, so the intellect cannot directly attain it. Like the sky reflected in a mirror, this joyful nature is reflected in a pure, awakened intellect through practices like devotion, meditation, wisdom, and detachment. Scriptures also consider deep sleep a form of joy. During deep sleep, the mind and intellect are inactive, so no joy is felt. After waking, you recall it and say you felt joy. In samadhi, a yogi feels joy in an awakened state of intellect. When negative qualities (tamasic and rajasic) are suppressed and pure qualities (sattvic) fully manifest, the intellect becomes knowledge itself through the soul's reflection. In this state, the yogi feels the soul's unbroken joy. The joy experienced through a pure intellect is eternal and knowledge-based. God calls it supreme joy because it is yoga's greatest achievement, ultimate satisfaction, and frees the soul while alive. After realizing the pure Supreme Soul, the yogi remains forever steady in this supreme, infinite joy. The yogi's meditation never wavers, no matter the

situation or reason. The pleasure from objects and senses is limited and temporary. After enjoying one object, the desire arises for more of that pleasure or a different kind of pleasure from another object. The joy in nirvikalpa samadhi is infinite, complete, eternal, and unchanging. Once this joy is experienced, no other pleasure is desired. If a yogi temporarily engages in worldly activities, is this considered a disturbance or deviation from samadhi? The answer is that the yogi, even in worldly activities, feels the soul's universal presence and remains centered in the soul. If there is even a slight attachment to worldly things, complete fulfillment is not achieved, and there is a chance of deviation from samadhi. Until ignorance is completely destroyed, worldly thoughts can pull the practitioner back into worldly distractions, even from samadhi. Over time, with meditation practice, when ignorance is fully destroyed and no doubt remains about the soul and Supreme Soul, the yogi remains firmly in divine joy. In samadhi, the soul is not affected by impurities. Due to ignorance, external thoughts entering the mind cause deviation or disturbance. In the final state of meditation, realizing the Supreme Soul's blissful nature ensures the yogi never wavers from this supreme joy.

**yaṁ labdhvā cāparaṁ lābhaṁ manyate nādhikaṁ tataḥ
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate (6-22)**

Comm. After reaching a state where a yogi does not consider any worldly or otherworldly gain as greater joy, this is the state of yoga. In this supreme joy, even great suffering cannot disturb the yogi's mind. This state is called the yoga state. This joy is divine, beyond qualities, eternal, and unchanging. It is different from pleasure from objects or devotion. A person seeks slightly more joy than the tamasic pleasure of sleep or laziness and attains rajasic pleasure from objects. After gaining rajasic pleasure, they seek even more joy and attain sattvic pleasure. After gaining sattvic pleasure, they seek greater joy and reach the joy of attaining the Supreme Truth. After gaining this supreme, ultimate joy, the yogi remains steady in it. This joy is infinite and eternal, so there is no greater joy. Like a fish reaching the deep ocean, where there is no larger body of water and no need for one, the yogi has no further need. Compared to this realized joy, all material pleasures, wealth, and enjoyments seem tasteless, trivial, and insignificant to the yogi. Realizing the soul and its welfare is the greatest gain. Attaining the Supreme Truth is yoga's highest achievement. After attaining divine joy, the yogi's sense of identification with the body completely vanishes. The body feels like a shadow to the yogi. After realizing the blissful nature of the Supreme, the soul is forever free from fear, sorrow, and grief. Sudden accidents, the death of loved ones, severe illness, poverty, scarcity, or unjust criticism and insults—none of these can shake the yogi's soul even slightly. The yogi thinks, "These are normal worldly events; they come and go," and does not pay special attention to them. This is the final state of a yogi's yoga practice. Reaching this state is the measure of complete yoga success.

**taṁ vidyād duḥkha-saṁyoga-viyogaṁ yoga-saṁjñitam
sa niścayena yuktavyo yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā (6-23)**

Comm. In the Gita, Lord Krishna gives two meanings for the word “Yoga.” In Chapter 2, He says “Equanimity (even-mindedness) is Yoga.” In this verse, He says, “Separation from the contact of sorrow is called Yoga.” Staying calm and equal in the mind and becoming free from worldly sorrow is the same idea. When one attains equanimity, attachment to worldly relationships drops away. When the connection with sorrow ends, the yogi remains stable in equanimity. Yoga means being free from all pain and sorrow. Accepting worldly connections and material things is the cause of sorrow. The soul’s connection with the non-soul (matter) is false and created by ignorance. This false connection is the cause of birth, death, and suffering again and again. In Yoga, past sins and bad tendencies get destroyed. Even good and bad results of past karma no longer affect the yogi who has reached bliss. Yoga does not mean sorrows will never come again. It doesn’t mean there will be no old age, illness, poverty, or loss of loved ones. These things will come as per past karma. But when the yogi is in deep meditation, these sorrows no longer affect his mind. Truly, the soul never joins with sorrow. When the soul forgets its eternal connection with God and believes in worldly connections, suffering starts. When this false connection breaks, the real connection with God is remembered. The soul then feels its eternal bond with the Supreme. Lord Krishna calls this Yoga. A mind that is detached and clear, supported by firm understanding, makes meditation successful. When the result of meditation is delayed, the seeker may become weak-minded. Thoughts like “I have done so much but gained nothing” or “Will I ever reach realization?” may arise. One should not let such hopeless thoughts come — this is called “anirvinnachitasa” (a mind without despair). Gaudapadacharya says: If a person patiently tries to dry up the ocean with a blade of grass, that patience is seen in a true yogi. When the mind becomes hopeless, the seeker loses patience and turns away from yoga. The seeker must firmly decide: “Even if it takes many births and I face unbearable sorrows, I must attain God.” With this strong faith and determination, the seeker must keep practicing. Self-confidence, faith, and eagerness — these three are keys to success in Yoga. With firm faith and effort, and by following scriptures and the words of the Guru with dedication, the grace of God comes, and the seeker reaches perfection.

**saṅkalpa-prabhavān kāmāṁs tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ
manasaivendriya-grāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ (6-24)**

**śanaiḥ śanair uparamed buddhyā dhṛti-grhītayā
ātma-saṁsthaṁ manāḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid api cintayet (6-25)**

Comm. In these two verses, Lord Krishna explains how to practice meditation step by step—Starting from controlling the senses and ending with deep meditation (Nirvikalpa Samadhi). At the beginning of yoga, one must remove all desires and attachments from

the heart. All thoughts like wishes, cravings, hopes, and attractions must be completely given up. One must firmly control all senses with determination. Practicing yoga with detachment from pleasures helps the mind become free. In worldly life, because of attachment to the body, many thoughts arise. Because of one's nature and habits, some desires and attachments remain in the mind. These subtle desires hide inside and become strong when we remember those pleasures. Such desires become powerful and disturb the mind during meditation. So, desire is the root of all disturbance. Even a tiny amount of desire left in the mind becomes an obstacle to full concentration. Just like even after emptying a perfume bottle, the smell remains, In the same way, even if we give up desires, the craving for pleasures remains in the mind. During yoga, when trying to pull the senses away from objects, old desires create resistance. In meditation, remembering these pleasures breaks focus and concentration. Unless the heart becomes completely free from desire, real devotion will not arise. Desire and yoga cannot exist together. Even desire for liberation becomes a disturbance at the end stage of practice. So, no amount of desire or thought should remain in the heart. The word "indriyagramam" means one must control all the senses from all sides. If even one sense goes out of control, all effort in yoga can be lost. Strongly controlling the pull of senses toward objects is called "dama" (self-control). Making the heart free from desire and attachment is called "shama" (peace of mind). Turning the mind away from worldly matters is called "uparama" (withdrawal). These three — dama, shama, and uparama — are the pillars of yoga. With a calm and wise mind, one must fix the heart steadily on God and think of nothing else. To turn away from the world, one must develop great patience. Being impatient is not good for the seeker. With detachment and disinterest in pleasures, the mind naturally becomes free from worldly thoughts. A pure and good mind can easily unite with God just like clean white cloth absorbs color deeply. As long as the experience of the one meditating, the act of meditating, and the object of meditation remains, it is Savikalpa Samadhi. As long as there is thought, worldly attachment cannot fully go away. Because thought is the base of the world. So Lord Krishna says, "Don't think of anything." Even very subtle thoughts come with some mental movement. If you don't start any new thought, the mind becomes still. When the one who meditates, the meditation, and the object become one and no thought remains — that is Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In this state, only pure consciousness remains in an indescribable way. If worldly memories come during meditation, do not fight them or become attached. Trying to reject or hold on to thoughts creates a link with the world. Instead, think: "God is complete and present everywhere. Nothing exists outside of Him." With this understanding, remain neutral and indifferent — the memory will fade. Truly, in God, there is no world, shape, name, or mental differences. God is full, calm, changeless, and self-existent. You don't need to think about Him; when the mind becomes free from the world, God shines by Himself. This is called unthinkable (achintya) meditation — a state without thoughts. When the seer, seen, and seeing become one, that is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

**yato yato niścarati manaś cañcalam asthiram
tatas tato niyamyaitad ātmany eva vaśam nayet(6-26)**

Comm. The mind is naturally restless and unsteady. It always wanders toward external objects. Restlessness and instability are the two flaws of the mind. Restlessness is the tendency to constantly move toward new objects with strong emotions. Instability is the inability to stay focused on one goal for long. A yogi observes the mind's movements and withdraws it from external objects to focus it on the inner soul. The senses, which are behind the mind, create strong pressure to enjoy their objects. Without the mind's cooperation, the senses cannot enjoy objects. During meditation, desires, doubts, and the senses' urge for enjoyment pull the mind away from soul contemplation. Through discipline, intellect, and wisdom, the mind must be trained to stay focused on the soul. In the waking state, the mind is a continuous flow of thoughts always focused on some object. If this object is related to desires or enjoyment, the practitioner must investigate and, with strong detachment, let go of subtle attachments to it. Thoughts of wife, children, wealth, or status are the main reasons for the mind's instability. Thinking, "These are not eternal; they may seem pleasant at first but ultimately bring only sorrow," one must break attachment to them. As long as you claim objects as "mine," attachment and aversion will remain in the heart. As long as attachment and aversion exist, the mind cannot be free from worldly objects. Accepting that objects and people are given by God for worship and service removes the desire for enjoyment and awakens devotion to the Supreme Soul. During meditation, the worldly thoughts that arise are impurities in the heart and past life's sinful impressions. One must try to forget these thoughts.

As long as you think, "I am part of the world" with body, name, form, or titles, the mind will not detach from worldly objects. Firmly believing, "I am the soul, all-pervading," makes the mind naturally stay focused on the soul. The mind must be freed from the senses' desire for enjoyment and guided by the intellect. When the mind rests in the soul, no object remains as its focus, and mental activity stops. In this state, the mind and intellect merge with the pure consciousness of the soul and experience supreme joy. This is self-realization or realizing the soul. A yogi who attains self-realization can fully control the mind's movements and thoughts. Even when engaging with objects and senses for bodily needs or the welfare of others, the yogi's mind remains detached and merged with God. Meditation practice is the only way to control the mind's flaws. The mind's instability is also caused by past karma or destiny. Despite efforts, due to past karma, mental or divine suffering or adverse situations can disturb the mind. Accepting everything as God's will, one must face adverse situations with patience. In favorable situations, instead of becoming excited, use the happiness for serving the world. Seeing flaws in sounds, touch, smells, and other sensory experiences, detach the mind from them. Repeatedly convince the mind that supreme joy lies in soul contemplation. The soul's love is eternal. Objects seem dear only when favorable, but love for the soul is eternal and

everlasting. The mind arises from consciousness, so the soul is the true place of love for the mind. With this understanding, keep the mind constantly focused on the soul during meditation.

**praśānta-manasaṁ hy enaṁ yoginaṁ sukham uttamam
upaīti śānta-rajaśaṁ brahma-bhūtaṁ akalmaṣam(6-27)**

Comm. When the restless quality (rajoguna) calms and the mind's activity stops, all sins and flaws are removed from the heart. A yogi who sees the entire world with a divine vision certainly attains the highest pure (sattvic) joy. Until the restless quality calms and the mind's activity stops, the mind cannot rest in the soul. Selfish actions, desires, greed, and cravings arise from the restless quality (rajoguna). When worldly thoughts stop, the restless quality naturally calms down.

By practicing the thought, "I am not the body; I am the eternal, conscious, blissful Supreme," the practitioner becomes firmly established in the Supreme Soul. In a pure, sattvic mind, the full reflection of the divine manifests, so the yogi feels they are one with the divine. Here, "Brahmabhuta" does not refer to someone who has attained perfection beyond qualities. A yogi whose heart is free from all worldly impurities and sees the divine everywhere is called "Brahmabhuta," meaning one with the divine. In this state, past life sins are destroyed, and the yogi experiences the highest sattvic joy. This joy comes to the yogi naturally. One does not need to chase this joy. This joy is as pure as the divine itself. The joy from worldly objects is not pure. Worldly joy is mixed with some sin, so it is not free from impurity or sin. In a calm mind, free from restless and negative qualities, the joy that arises from resting in the divine is pure sattvic joy. The meaning of Brahmabhuta joy is that it is attained in all situations, places, times, and forms. This is the highest joy. This joy is not dependent on others but exists independently.

**yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigata-kalmaṣaḥ
sukhen brahma-saṁsparśaṁ atyantam sukham aśnute (6-28)**

Comm. By withdrawing the senses from worldly attachments and practicing meditation with a focused mind, a practitioner detaches from the world. When the mind's activities related to the world stop, the soul merges with the Supreme Soul. This leads to experiencing supreme joy in a pure heart. Physical worldly pleasures are small and temporary. But the joy of the soul is uninterrupted, unbroken, and eternal. After the practitioner's attachment to the body is destroyed, they remain one with the divine nature. When a yogi reaches deep meditation (nirvikalpa samadhi), the mind's activities stop, and it becomes one with the Supreme Soul. Like a water bubble bursting and the space inside merging with the vast sky, when worldly thoughts end in the mind, pure consciousness becomes one with the Supreme Divine. The yogi experiences infinite joy by attaining the Supreme Divine Soul. This is the greatest achievement of human life. No joy in the world is supreme, eternal, and unchanging like this. The Chandogya Upanishad says, "What

does not see, hear, or know anything else is the infinite (Bhuma), the greatest.” What sees, hears, or knows something else is small and limited. The infinite is immortal, while the limited is temporary and mortal. A joy that exists now but disappears the next moment is not true joy. Love, attachment, and desire for the world lead to this limited joy. When all flaws like ignorance are removed from the heart, the yogi easily connects with the Supreme Soul. In this state, the yogi attains supreme joy, transcending all limits and reaching divine bliss, from which there is no return. When the yogi’s sins and merits end, they attain this infinite joy without effort. Attaining something different from oneself causes suffering. According to Shankaracharya, both sin and merit are obstacles to attaining the Supreme Soul. To achieve this divine joy, one must give up attachment to both good and bad actions. Only pure consciousness, detached from the world, can merge with the Divine and attain supreme blissful joy.

**sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānam sarva-bhūtāni cātmani
ikṣate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra sama-darśanaḥ (6-29)**

Comm. After realizing the oneness of the soul and Supreme Soul in deep meditation (nirvikalpa samadhi), God explains how a yogi relates to the world. A yogi with equal vision, perfected in meditation, sees the soul present in all beings. They also see all beings as part of the soul. A yogi who sees the entire world with a divine vision sees their own soul in all beings and all beings in their soul. The soul and Supreme Soul are one. The soul, a part of the Supreme Soul, is bound in a body, so it is called the individual soul (jivatma). The all-powerful, eternal, conscious, blissful Supreme Divine exists everywhere as the Supreme Soul. A perfected yogi sees only the indestructible Supreme Soul in all things, whether living or non-living, in the external world. They consider names, forms, and titles as illusions and ignore them. They accept the diversity of objects as transformations of the Divine. A yogi with equal vision constantly sees only one unbroken conscious soul in everything. A knower of truth sees the one in the many and the many in the one. Although beings are in different states due to their karma, they are all parts of God. The individual soul is not different from the Divine. Just as in a dream, without the dreamer, the dream’s scenes are not real, names, forms, and titles are imagined by the individual soul. Thus, the Supreme Soul is always present in every being. The one, unique, eternal, conscious, blissful Supreme Divine is the true reality. Apart from this, the entire world is nothing. The material cause of cloth is thread. Cloth and thread are related as the base and what is based on it. Cloth is made from thread; without thread, there would be no cloth. Similarly, the Divine is the material cause of the entire world. Like cloth and thread, the world and the Divine have a two-way relationship: “The Divine pervades the world” and “The entire world exists in the Divine.” Understanding this mystery perfectly, a yogi becomes one with the Supreme Soul and sees one unique soul as the foundation in all beings. They realize, “The eternal, conscious, blissful Supreme Soul is all-pervading and complete.” This equal vision is the highest limit of knowledge. In the Gita, God’s detailed description

of yoga mainly focuses on this equal vision. Liberation is attained through the perfection of yoga and knowledge. Some commentators call seeing one's soul in all beings nirvikalpa samadhi. Like a single rope appearing as a snake, stick, or stream to different people, the world appears diverse. But after truly knowing the rope, the snake, stick, or stream all merge into the rope. In nirvikalpa samadhi, after realizing the Divine Truth, the world with its many names and forms merges into it.

**yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati (6-30)**

Comm. In the previous verse, God explained the relationship between the soul and the Divine through self-knowledge. In this verse, God explains the knowledge of the Supreme Soul, the all-pervading, formless Supreme Divine, and its relationship with the individual soul.

A yogi sees the Supreme Soul everywhere. The yogi also feels that all beings and the world exist within the Supreme Soul. Therefore, the Supreme Soul, God, is never invisible to the yogi. The yogi is also never invisible to God. This is possible only when the individual soul and the Supreme Soul are one and the same. God says: A yogi who sees oneness sees Me everywhere, all the time. I also appear directly to the truth-knowing yogi and bless them with My grace. In this state, the oneness of the soul and Supreme Soul leaves no separation between them. The yogi experiences constant, unchanging joy. After realizing that the entire world is one soul, the yogi directly experiences that “the Supreme Soul exists everywhere in many forms.” The idea that “one Supreme Soul appears in many forms” is not the individual soul's imagination but is true and eternal. The relationship between God and His creation is like the ocean and its waves. Just as the ocean and waves are not separate, God and His creation are not separate. In this way, the yogi, staying in the Supreme Soul, cannot stop seeing God within themselves even for a moment. According to Ramanujacharya's explanation, the soul and Divine, or the Divine and the world, are not exactly the same. He says that due to perfect equality, the yogi becomes like the Supreme Soul. As a result, the yogi sees nothing but the Supreme Soul. Due to this likeness, the yogi becomes part of God and becomes His supreme devotee. The devotee feels God within and outside, everywhere. With God's supreme grace, the devotee always remains in this state and attains immortality. The knowledge of the relationship between the soul and Supreme Soul in this verse is very useful for meditation practice. The great commentator Jayadayal Goyandka has explained this clearly for practitioners living as householders. The main points of his explanation are presented below.

[Just as the sky exists within clouds and clouds exist within the sky, God (Vasudeva) exists in all beings, and all beings exist in God.[God (Vasudeva) is the great cause of the entire living and non-living world. He is all-pervading and the only supreme support of the entire universe. All names and forms in the world are part of God's nature. The entire

living and non-living world arise from Him. Just as the Gopis in Vrindavan saw Krishna everywhere with their eyes of love, a practitioner must practice seeing God's form (like Krishna, Rama, Vishnu, Shankar, or Shakti) as their chosen deity in meditation. Choose the form of God that feels closest to your heart and place His idol or picture in front of you. With great faith and love, practice worshiping it properly, believing it is conscious and alive. Through chanting, prayer, and meditation, keep increasing your love for God. During worship, chanting, or prayer, firmly believe that God's idol is not lifeless but conscious. Believe that God sees, hears, smiles, speaks, eats, drinks, and performs all living actions. In solitude, practice meditating on your chosen deity daily and hold their form firmly in your mind. After forming an idea of their form, sit in a quiet place, keep your eyes open, and practice visualizing your deity's mental image in the sky. While moving in the world, remove the names and forms of trees, animals, birds, people, and objects from your mind. Instead, practice seeing your chosen deity's form in their place. With this practice, the practitioner easily sees their deity's form in every object, person, and situation. This is seeing the entire world as God's manifested, personal form. With faith, trust, and certainty, and by relying on God's grace, keep practicing this repeatedly. After some time, when looking at the sky, you will experience seeing your deity's complete, smiling, speaking form. Once the practice of shaping your mind like your deity's form is perfected, the devotee will see their deity's form everywhere, every moment, just by opening their eyes. If the practitioner's faith and devotion are pure, their deity's idol becomes God's living embodiment for them. God, in various forms, directly shows His love for devotees, making them successful and joyful. There is no fixed time for directly experiencing God's vision. It may happen in this moment, this life, or after many lives. It depends on the devotee's longing, intensity, firmness, and faith. Once the knowledge that "everything is the Supreme Soul" becomes firm, the devotee becomes God's form. They always remain one with God's form. After directly seeing God's rare, eternal, conscious, blissful form—an ocean of beauty, sweetness, grandeur, and generosity—the connection between the devotee and God becomes unbreakable forever. After directly seeing God, the devotee's state can only be known by them. Even the one who has this vision cannot describe it in words. This is not something to know; it is only to be experienced.]

**sarva-bhūta-sthitaṁ yo mām bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi sa yogī mayi vartate (6-31)**

Comm. God is one, but He is present everywhere. The same God lives in the heart of all beings and is not different in each being. Though He is one, because of His mysterious power, He remains undivided and present everywhere. A realized yogi meditates on the Lord who is present in all beings as one. Even if the yogi is active in worldly duties, he remains truly established in God. That means, he does everything with full awareness of God. When the yogi stops identifying with the body and material things, He stays in the knowledge of the oneness of the soul and God. Such a realized

person sees only God in all beings. The entire universe is full of that one God. God is not only in living beings, but He is fully present even in every atom. Before, during, and after creation, God alone is the final cause. After gaining this knowledge, all actions of the yogi—by body, speech, or mind—Are seen by him as actions of God alone. This is the state free from all bondage. This free state is also called “natural devotion.” In Advaita philosophy, the soul and God are one in essence. A Sankhya yogi accepts God alone as the ultimate truth and doesn’t accept any other existence besides Him. But in Dvaita philosophy, the soul and God are seen as separate. Yet, due to love and equality, both become one in feeling. Just like a loving couple or faithful friends feel one due to strong love. A devotee needs God, and God too feels the need of His devotee. Here a question arises: if all beings are in God, then what is special about the yogi? The answer is: The yogi feels a special joy of tasting divine love every moment with God. Common people don’t feel this, as they see value only in the world. So even though they live in God, their actions come from ego, attachment, and desire. Because of ignorance, they don’t see the world as divine but consider it a place of enjoyment.

**ātmapamyena sarvatra samam paśyati yo ’rjuna
sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yogī paramo mataḥ(6-32)**

Comm. In the earlier verse, the soul’s oneness with formless God was explained. In this verse, the Lord explains how a yogi feels unity with all beings in the form of God with qualities and form. Lord says: O Arjuna! The yogi sees all beings as one soul, just like himself. He feels others’ needs and sufferings as if they are his own and wants to help them. When he sees others happy, he also feels joy in his heart. This is a sign of divine love and self-realization in service of all beings. This feeling is the realization of Brahman in all beings—”All this is truly God.” A true yogi is the best friend of all beings and always wishes well for the world. He does not practice yoga to gain personal pleasure or power. He helps others turn away from worldly pleasures and shows them the path to God. He accepts the entire world as the form of God with qualities and sees all beings as parts of God’s body. When one part of the body is hurt, the whole body feels the pain and tries to cure it. Similarly, the yogi feels the pain of any being as pain in God’s body and tries to remove it. For the yogi, all beings—from a blade of grass to Brahma—are equal. Such a yogi naturally tries to remove everyone’s suffering and give joy. He never feels proud that he helped anyone. In the Bhagavatam, God also says, “Feel others’ sorrow and joy as your own, don’t remain bound only in your own body’s pain and pleasure.” We feel happy when someone treats us well and feel hurt when insulted. So we should not disrespect others in ways that hurt us. Hurting others’ hearts is considered violence in many religions. Acting kindly to all is the highest religion. Wherever God talks about the realization of soul and God, He always gives importance to equality. Even if someone has many good qualities, without equality, they have not realized the soul. Without equality, one cannot be free from attachment or develop true kindness. The one who has attained equality is the best yogi.

**yo 'yam yogas tvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdana
etasyāhaṁ na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitim sthirām(6-33)**

Comm. Arjuna said: O Madhusudana! You are famous as the destroyer of the demon Madhu and a great powerful person. The equality-based yoga you described—I cannot be sure about staying in that state because the mind is very restless. Here, Arjuna expresses doubt that the yoga method taught by Lord Krishna is difficult due to the restless nature of the mind. This conversation took place over 5000 years ago when people lived more simple and moral lives than now. Still, Arjuna says that in real life, full control over the mind and remaining always in yoga is not possible. Arjuna was a great royal warrior, student of Dronacharya, best archer, and friend of Krishna. Even with all this greatness, Arjuna finds the practice of this yoga difficult. So how can common people like us have faith and try to follow it? Hunger, sleep, and sex are strong natural needs of the body that cannot be stopped easily. Telling a starving person to eat lightly, or telling a person to see a woman as mother in a private situation—are not always practical. In such situations, body's strong natural reactions overpower the mind's wishes. Today's life is more comfortable due to modern science, and people rarely seek forest or caves to do yoga. Even in ashrams, it's rare to see strict rules about simple food, sleep, and lifestyle to support yoga. So Arjuna expresses a practical view that for a normal person, attaining this perfect yoga state of equality is not easy.

**cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
tasyāhaṁ nigrahaṁ manye vāyor iva su-duṣkaram(6-34)**

Comm. Oh Krishna, the mind is so restless, turbulent, strong, and stubborn that it's impossible for a person to control it. Just as it's extremely difficult to stop the moving wind in the sky, controlling the mind is equally challenging. Arjuna isn't asking this question just for himself; he's representing all spiritual seekers, seeking a solution from the Lord. Every spiritual practitioner faces this struggle in the early stages of their practice. The mind is as restless as a flickering flame. Along with being restless, the mind is turbulent, like a churning stick. Just as a churning stick stirs milk or curd, the mind, driven by desires, churns and disturbs the practitioner's inner peace. This causes the practitioner to stray from their spiritual path. The mind is also stubborn, meaning it's unyielding. Once it gets attached to worldly pleasures, it doesn't easily let go, no matter what. It persists in chasing those pleasures. Even if you try to control it repeatedly, like using a goad on a wild elephant, the mind doesn't easily respond. Just as it's nearly impossible to trap the wind in the sky, controlling the restless, turbulent, stubborn, and strong mind is extremely difficult. In the Ramayana, Bali was a mighty warrior with a boon from Brahma that gave him half the strength of any enemy facing him. Because of this, no one could defeat Bali

in direct combat. While Bali fought Sugriva face-to-face, Lord Rama killed him with an arrow from behind. The mind is like Bali. If you try to control it with force, it becomes even more rebellious. To defeat the mind, you need practice, like Sugriva fighting head-on, and detachment, like Rama's arrow from behind, as the Lord has previously explained. Arjuna addresses the Lord as "Krishna" because the name means one who attracts the hearts of devotees. By calling Him Krishna, Arjuna is praying, "O Lord, my mind is so restless and strong." "I feel unable to control it with my own strength." "It's your nature to draw the minds of beings toward you." "So, O Krishna, in your mercy, please attract my mind toward you."

Śrībhagavān Uvācha

**asamśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam
abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate (6-35)**

Comm. Accepting Arjuna's statement, the Lord says, "O mighty-armed one, the mind is undoubtedly very restless and hard to control." "But, O son of Kunti, it can be controlled through practice and detachment." By calling Arjuna "mighty-armed," the Lord indicates that he is a great warrior who has defeated many heroes with his strength. Such a powerful warrior shouldn't feel discouraged by the challenge of controlling the mind. The Lord first acknowledges Arjuna's point that the mind is very restless and hard to control. Then, He offers a solution, saying it can be controlled through practice and detachment. Practice is a form of yoga. In yoga practice, regular efforts like postures, breathing exercises, and withdrawal of senses lead to mastery. According to yoga philosophy, constant effort toward a desired goal is called practice. In other words, continuously focusing on a chosen principle is also practice. Ignoring what you don't want or what isn't your goal is part of this process. The first step in spiritual practice is giving up bad habits. Alongside abandoning bad habits, striving for good habits is equally important. Through the practice of yoga, it's possible to remove the mind's attachment to worldly things. Without practice, no skill can be mastered. Similarly, to attain God, one must practice keeping the mind focused on Him. With faith and persistence, long-term yoga practice leads to success. "The Supreme Soul is the highest, all-powerful, supreme Lord, and the ultimate truth, and attaining it is life's greatest goal." Through regular practice of prayer, worship, chanting, and meditation with firm conviction, the mind gains extraordinary strength. This makes it easier to control the senses and desires like lust and anger. A mind free of worldly tendencies is a controlled mind. When the mind is free from worldly desires, it becomes peaceful. Just as fire dies without fuel, a mind free of worldly tendencies naturally becomes calm. Detachment means having no attachment to pleasures in this world or the next. Detachment involves keeping the mind focused on God, away from sensory pleasures. The more a practitioner listens to stories of God's deeds, chants His name and qualities, or visits holy places, the more they can stay free from worldly desires. By keeping the mind away from things

unrelated to the soul or God, detachment grows stronger. In the path of devotion, when the mind is engaged in serving God, it naturally moves away from sensory pleasures. For a detached person, neither happiness nor sorrow causes significant disturbance in their mind. A mind free from desire for worldly things like spouse, children, wealth, home, status, or heavenly pleasures is truly detached. Fulfilling the appropriate needs of family and loved ones without expecting anything in return naturally leads to detachment from worldly life. Realizing that worldly attachments are the main cause of suffering, sin, and pain awakens detachment. The state where all desires arising from material qualities are absent, through the knowledge of the soul, is supreme detachment. The world constantly changes, but the soul remains unchanged. The soul has no real connection with the world. What seems like a connection is just an illusion created by the mind's focus on the body and worldly pleasures.

Just as a reflection in a mirror isn't real, the world's reflection in the mind isn't real either. When the mirror is removed, the reflection disappears; similarly, ignoring the world removes its reflection from the mind. This act of ignoring is called detachment. True detachment means letting go of both attachment and aversion, staying distant from objects without being entangled. Detachment doesn't mean completely eliminating attachment and aversion, as some trace remains as long as the body exists. Detachment isn't about renunciation, despair, hatred, or rebellion. It's about loosening the grip of both attachment and aversion.

If you love something, it occupies your thoughts; if you hate something, it also occupies your thoughts. Thus, one shouldn't hold strong attachment or aversion toward anything. To control the mind, both practice and detachment are needed simultaneously. Without practice, detachment won't arise, and without detachment, yoga practice won't succeed. Therefore, one should persistently pursue both practice and detachment with a positive mindset for a long time.

**asaṁyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ
vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo 'vāptum upāyataḥ (6-36)**

Comm. Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna! You think controlling the mind and achieving success in yoga is very difficult. But it is not as hard as you believe. One should not give up thinking it is impossible. If a person practices with effort, it is surely possible to achieve success in yoga. If someone's mind is not fully controlled, it is hard for him to realize the Self or succeed in yoga. As long as there is even a little attraction towards sense enjoyment, the mind cannot become controlled. Then meditation becomes difficult. Doing yoga without controlling the senses and mind is like pouring water on wood to make fire—it won't work. But the person who controls the mind and tries sincerely with proper means, He can succeed in yoga. Lord Krishna clearly says this is His firm opinion. With faith and belief, and practice by body, speech, and mind, And by wise detachment,

one can conquer the mind. Then the person becomes successful in both knowledge and action yoga. In both paths, control of thoughts is necessary. By constantly thinking about the Self, the mind becomes peaceful and free from desires. The senses, mind, life energy, and intellect are not the soul. If these are not controlled, one cannot reach equal-minded yoga. A mind under control does not behave stubbornly. A controlled mind follows the intellect and not the senses. It becomes calm, simple, and obedient like a disciplined student, and helps the intellect focus on God.

Arjuna Uvācha

**ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto yogāc calita-mānasah
aprāpya yoga-sāmsiddhiṁ kām gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati (6-37)**

Comm. In the earlier verse, the Lord said that if the mind is not controlled, it is hard to attain yoga success. Arjuna now asks a question.

He says: If someone has faith in scriptures, Guru’s words, and yoga, But due to a restless mind fails to reach God before death, Then what happens to him? Because of incomplete yoga, he doesn’t get liberation. Does his soul fall down? Does he not go to heaven? Does he not take rebirth? These doubts arise in Arjuna’s mind. In Chapter 2, Lord Krishna had said that even incomplete yoga gives no bad result. Even a little practice protects from the great fear of death and shows the path to liberation. Whether one follows the path of knowledge, ashtanga yoga, meditation, or devotion—Any path can lead to Self-realization. The soul is always bound by the three qualities of nature. While trying for liberation, it is very hard to overcome the illusion of nature. This illusion tempts the seeker and ties him back to the world. While living in the world, one cannot avoid all difficulties caused by body, nature, or fate. Because of past karma, the seeker must face such challenges. Even if he has interest and faith in japa, meditation, good company, or self-study, Still he may become weak in practice. In such a state, his inner and outer self are not fully controlled. At the time of death, his mind gets disturbed—Either he loses the feeling of equality or forgets God. This happens due to restlessness, desires, attachment, or body pain. At death, if one forgets God and thinks of worldly things, he doesn’t get liberation. But because he had unshaken faith, he doesn’t lose God’s grace. Arjuna wants to know clearly what happens to such a soul after death.

**kaccin nobhaya-vibhramśāc chidra-bhram iva naśyati
apraṭiṣṭho mahā-bāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi (6-38)**

Comm. Arjuna says: O mighty-armed Krishna! That person who leaves the path to God in between, neither becomes firm in spiritual life, nor enjoys worldly pleasures. Like a small cloud that separates from a big cloud, it neither rains nor returns—it just floats away and disappears. In the same way, a weak seeker practices for some time, but then

leaves the path and gets lost. Such a failed yogi neither reaches God, nor gets the joys of this or the next world. A seeker gives up worldly life in the beginning and tries for Self-realization through yoga. But due to restlessness, he loses focus and becomes weak. At the time of death, lacking wisdom and detachment, he doesn't achieve liberation through incomplete yoga. On the other hand, such a person has interest in yoga and has given up desires and worldly pleasures. So he neither enjoys material pleasures in this world nor desires heaven in the next. During life, he doesn't depend on the world, and at death, he misses both heaven and liberation. Arjuna now wants to know from Lord Krishna what happens to such a person after death.

**etan me saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ
tvad-anyaḥ saṁśayasyāśya chettā na hy upapadyate (6-39)**

Comm. After Arjuna's doubt about the mind's restlessness making yoga practice impossible was cleared, two new questions arose in his mind. The first question is: What happens to a practitioner who, despite having faith in yoga, fails to achieve success and dies? The second doubt is: Does someone who fails in yoga lose both this world and the next, becoming completely ruined? After hearing the Lord say that yoga success is possible through practice and detachment, it's natural for Arjuna to have these two doubts. The Lord's teachings on yoga, given through questions and answers, are simple, clear, and practical. Arjuna has always had faith in Lord Krishna's divine nature. Because of this faith, Arjuna chose the unarmed Krishna as his charioteer over an entire armed Narayani army. With strong trust in Krishna's divinity, Arjuna prays, "O Lord, you know everything, you create and control all rules, you are the Supreme Lord." "You alone know the mystery of the fate and destiny of countless souls across infinite universes." "All events in all worlds, across all times—past, present, and future—are always known to you." "Therefore, no one but you can explain this mystery." Indian philosophy and culture accept the concept of reincarnation. Some religions, like Islam and Christianity, do not believe in reincarnation. Seeing the variety of actions and inequalities in the world, one must accept reincarnation. If actions (karma) have no role, why would God make some people wise and others foolish, some sick and others healthy, some rich and others poor? The answer is that a person's past life's actions (karma) cause the inequalities in this world. God assigns different outcomes to souls based on their actions. Ordinary people cannot understand the mystery of karma. Some enlightened beings or philosophers partially understand this mystery through scriptures. But even their knowledge is limited in this matter. Scholars or experts can explain complex philosophical principles. But they cannot determine the fate of a soul that has strayed from the path of spiritual practice. Only God, the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the world, knows this mystery. As the all-knowing Supreme Soul, present in everyone's heart, God witnesses and knows everything at once. Therefore, only He can explain the fate and destiny of all beings. The Lord's words are the final authority

and the ultimate solution to this matter. Arjuna’s deep trust and faith in Lord Krishna come from a sense of closeness. When a disciple feels close to their guru, they fearlessly express their doubts to seek clarity. Every disciple should have such faith and trust in their guru. This is the essence of devotion to the guru or serving the guru.

Śrībhagavān Uvācha

**pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate
na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatiṁ tāta gacchati (6-40)**

Comm. Arjuna asked, “Does a practitioner who fails to achieve yoga success get ruined, losing both this world and the next?” The Lord answers, “O dear Partha, such a person is never destroyed, neither in this world nor after death.” “Know for certain that a practitioner engaged in the noble task of spiritual progress never faces a bad fate.” The two main aspects of spiritual practice are the goal and the path. The goal is attaining the Supreme Soul, and the path is one that aligns with scriptures and benefits the world. A practitioner following these two conditions, even if they don’t achieve success, does not fall from their current state in this world or the next. With faith and effort in spiritual practice for soul liberation, they never fall into lower births or suffer in hell. Even a little effort toward attaining God is never wasted. Instead, that effort remains alive as impressions (samskaras) in this world or the next. Like a lender who extends repayment time after understanding a debtor’s genuine intent, God, the most compassionate, knows the practitioner’s desire for the Supreme Soul. God holds back the results of past negative actions, provides favorable conditions, and gives repeated opportunities for yoga practice. We see some people in society who have faith in saints, spiritual gatherings, chanting, meditation, and noble causes. They practice under a true guru’s guidance. But due to their nature or attachment to worldly pleasures, they sometimes engage in sinful or unscriptural actions. The question arises: What is their fate? According to many commentators, the desire for God remains like a seed in their hearts. This seed creates faith in saints, spiritual gatherings, and good company. But without practice, detachment does not develop. God protects even these people, gradually purifying their hearts through chanting, meditation, and spiritual company, freeing them from sinful actions and wrong thinking. Even if it takes time, their well-being is ensured in this life or the next. In this verse, Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna as “tata” (son) with great affection, using this term only once in the entire Gita. This reflects the Upanishadic teaching in Sanatana Dharma that the guru-disciple relationship is like that of a father and son. A father never gives false promises or harmful advice to his son. Similarly, a disciple fearlessly seeks clarity from their guru, who is like a father. By calling Arjuna “tata,” the Lord addresses all of humanity as His children, presenting this great principle.

**prāpya puṇya-kṛtām lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate (6-41)**

Comm. Every soul takes birth in a favorable environment based on the good or bad deeds of previous lives. The path of yoga and the desire for enjoyment go in opposite directions. If there is even a little desire for enjoyment, the person falls from yoga and cannot reach God. But if one remains detached from enjoyments and practices with full focus on God, then yoga succeeds. Between this world and the highest divine world, there are many heavenly places like Janaloka, Pitrloka, Tapoloka, Satyaloka, and Swarga. Those who perform rituals like yajnas, charity, and penance with the wish for enjoyment reach these higher worlds. Their good actions, done with a desire for pleasure, take them to Swarga (heaven). But after enjoying the results, they come back to earth. A yogi who could not reach God due to a restless mind or temptations at the end of life is called a “fallen yogi” (yogabhrashta). After death, such a yogi goes to the world earned by their good deeds. Though they don’t reach God, they go to a heavenly world not as a reward, but because they failed to reach God. Their past yoga practice causes this condition—not their actions for enjoyment. Since their goal was God, they do not enjoy that heavenly world fully. Even if they stay there for a long time, their spiritual strength does not get destroyed. The time spent in the heavenly world depends on how much hidden desire for enjoyment remained in them. When they are again ready with the desire to reach God, they take birth in a pure, noble, and prosperous family. “Shuchinam Shreemataam gehe” means: in a home where God’s name is sung, and all people live righteously and depend on God. A home where wealth is earned honestly, no sin is encouraged, and everything is used for good causes is called a noble home. Usually, it is rare to find both wealth and purity in the same family. Where there is spiritual talk, there is often little material wealth, and where there is wealth, there is usually less spiritual practice. A place where both righteousness and wealth exist is like a divine Vaikuntha on earth. That’s why the fallen yogi takes birth in such a noble and pure family to continue their practice. If their mind was detached, they may even take birth in a yogi’s family and soon meet a true Guru.

**atha vā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām
etad dhi durlabhataram loke janma yad īdṛśam (6-42)**

Comm. A seeker who is truly detached from enjoyment does not like staying long in heavenly worlds. Delay in reaching God feels like a punishment to such a person. If a yogi practiced without any desire for enjoyment and did not succeed fully, They don’t have to go to heaven. Instead, they take birth in the family of a realized yogi or a householder who has true knowledge. If not in a noble home, then in the family of a wise yogi who lives a spiritual life. Great sages like Vashishtha, Yajnavalkya, Vyasa, Janaka, Ashwapati, and Raik followed family life and reached spiritual wisdom. Scriptures accept

this path as true. These realized people performed family duties and were respected as Rajarshis and Brahmarshis. Being born in such a family, one gets spiritual inspiration from childhood and guidance from realized yogis. This is considered a great fortune. According to scriptures, one born in a wise yogi's family and detached from enjoyment will surely reach knowledge. In India, many lineages like Acharya, Goswami, and Shastri still carry forward yoga practice. People born in such families are naturally wise and righteous because spiritual impressions are passed through generations. When such past impressions join with a good body, spiritual success becomes easier. Getting such a great birth is very rare. In normal worldly terms, children born into a family continue its name (binduja), But in the spiritual path, children created by teaching and guidance are called “nadja” (spiritually born). Seekers who follow a Guru's teachings are considered spiritually born children.

If one is not born in a noble home, they may still join a yogi family by Guru-disciple tradition. Saints like Kabir, Tulasidas, Raidas, and Valmiki were not born in noble houses. According to some, when a person meets a realized Guru and their life changes, it is like a new spiritual birth. Even before giving up worldly life, such seekers look for realized saints. As soon as their detachment is complete, they meet their destined Guru. That seeker, eager for truth, accepts the Guru like a father and follows him to reach full success. A disciple who truly honors the Guru is often dearer to the Guru than a son.

**tatra taṁ buddhi-saṁyogaṁ labhate paurva-dehikam
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau kuru-nandana (6-43)**

Comm. O Arjuna (Kuru-nandana)! Because the yogi is born in a wise family, The knowledge of God he had in his past life awakens in his heart again. He gets all the resources and a favorable environment to practice again. Then, he becomes more determined to attain knowledge of God. Whatever practice he had done in his past life never goes to waste. The purity in his past mind continues as impressions in the present life. Because of these past impressions, he tries harder and quickly reaches success. So, if one wants to reach God, he must start creating purity, balance, and divine qualities now. Even if someone tries just a little, God, by His grace, creates many opportunities for him. God calls Arjuna “Kuru-nandana” to remind him that he is born in a great family. And that's why Arjuna has natural interest in knowing these truths about yoga.

**pūrvābhyāsenā tenaiva hriyate hy avaśo 'pi saḥ
jijñāsur api yogasya śabda-brahmātivartate (6-44)**

Comm. A spiritual seeker born in a wealthy household, surrounded by abundance, is still drawn to the path of God due to impressions from past lives. If yoga practice in a past life was only just started, those impressions lack the strength to overcome obstacles and lead to God in this life. In this verse, the Lord explains the greatness of yoga to address this issue. Yoga is so powerful that even someone curious about its principles

can attain a state of devotion to the Supreme. If the divine impressions from a past life are weak, strong effort in this life can overcome them. If past life impressions are strong but current effort is weak, the effort fails. Success or failure depends on these divine impressions. Since we cannot know these divine impressions, we should always strive to avoid sinful actions. Even with strong obstacles, a person who has fallen from yoga continues practicing due to past habits. Devotees like Dhruva and Prahlada, despite great challenges, progressed on the path of devotion and reached the ultimate goal. If a person who has fallen from yoga gets swayed by desires for spouse, children, wealth, or status, past life impressions pull them back to the path of God. The rituals described in the Vedas for worldly desires help achieve pleasures in this world or heaven. But these pleasures are limited to sensory enjoyment. When the results of good deeds run out, the soul is trapped in the cycle of birth and death forever. A high-level yogi seeking the Supreme rises above the Vedic rules and restrictions. A person who wants to understand yoga and move toward the Supreme becomes inward-focused. Free from the Vedic rituals for worldly desires, they easily attain devotion to the Supreme. Therefore, there is no question of a yogi who has fallen failing completely. Since they remain engaged in yoga, their liberation is certain.

**prayatnād yatamānas tu yogī saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ
aneka-janma-saṁsiddhas tato yāti parām gatim (6-45)**

Comm. The Lord explains in this verse how a person who has fallen from yoga, born in a pure and wealthy household, returns to the yoga path and achieves perfection. Even after spending a long time in a heavenly realm, a person who has fallen from yoga, born in a wealthy household, has no interest in worldly pleasures. Due to the influence of past life impressions, their desire to attain the Supreme becomes stronger. As their longing and eagerness for liberation grow, the practitioner must face many obstacles with greater effort. Yoga practice from any past life is never wasted. Even a little practice of yoga saves one from the great fear of birth and death. Good deeds from each life accumulate and gradually form a strong foundation of positive karma, guiding one toward liberation. The phrase “purified from impurities” refers to the cleansing of the heart. Attachment to worldly pleasures, material possessions, status, or fame is like a flaw or sin in the practitioner’s heart. Whether in one life or thousands, until the heart is purified and mental tendencies are controlled, the practitioner cannot achieve perfection or devotion to the Supreme. The state just before reaching the ultimate goal is called “perfection.” Therefore, the practitioner should focus on purifying the heart, not on how many lives it takes, and never turn back from the path of practice. With special effort and the strength of past life impressions, the practitioner becomes established in yoga and reaches the highest state of practice in this life. After achieving this perfection, they immediately attain the ultimate goal without any delay. This ultimate goal is called liberation, the supreme state, or merging with the

Supreme. The process of liberation starts with gentle efforts in yoga. Then, due to the restless mind, the practitioner is born as one who has fallen from yoga in a pure and wealthy household. After that, by taking shelter with a true guru and gaining divine knowledge, they reach the supreme abode. Or, over many lives, through dedicated yoga practice, they purify their heart from all sins and achieve liberation in their final life. The Lord clearly explains in this chapter the path of practicing yoga in any stage of life to attain the Supreme. Especially for householders, the practice of karma yoga starts slowly. Addressing Arjuna, the Lord guides all householders toward attaining devotion to the Supreme. The teachings of the Gita show the path to the Supreme for householders, ascetics, educated, and uneducated alike. The Gita's wisdom lifts humanity from the darkness of ignorance to the divine light of the Supreme, helping them cross the ocean of worldly existence.

**tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikāḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna (6-46)**

Comm. The highest goal of life is to reach God. Yoga is the continuous effort to connect the soul with the Supreme God. The complete result of yoga is the direct experience of oneness between the soul and God. The one who gets that divine experience is called a yogi. A yogi always turns his mind inward. In his thinking and actions, he sees nothing apart from the truth of God. He has no desire for success, magical powers, or heavenly joys. Those who practice tough penances like fasting for power are called tapasvis (austerity practitioners). Those who fast or do rituals for heavenly pleasures are also tapasvis. But a true yogi, after experiencing divine bliss, doesn't want anything else. So, a yogi is much higher than such tapasvis. Those who can explain scriptures and teachings using their wisdom are called "Jnani" (learned ones). But if such a person is only interested in the outside world, his knowledge is not useful. Even if someone talks nicely about God's stories, he may not be truly devoted to self-realization. Real knowledge is only what is applied and experienced by oneself. The one whose soul is always satisfied through knowledge and experience is a real yogi. God lives in everyone's heart and is full of knowledge. When ego and impurity are removed, knowledge shines by itself. A yogi who realizes this divine light in his heart does not need to learn more. Therefore, Lord Krishna says a yogi is greater than a scholar, speaker, or ritual doer. A person who performs rituals and good deeds with desires is called a "karmi" (doer). But a karmi is not a yogi. A yogi dedicates all actions and results to God from the beginning. Even his body and materials are seen as God's and used in the service of the world. The final state of karma yoga is "equanimity" or samatā. Such a yogi has no need to do or not do anything. He remains free from all selfish ties and lives like a liberated soul. A yogi aiming only for God is higher than great scholars, tapasvis, or karmis. Though penance, knowledge, and action are all part of yoga, if the goal is worldly, they are not true yoga. Some scholars say this teaching is a repeat of Chapter 5, where karma

yoga is said to be better than renunciation. In Arjuna's current state, he is not ready for renunciation. So, Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna, become a yogi, always stay equal and dedicated in all situations. Whether one follows karma yoga, jnana yoga, or meditation yoga— The final step is surrender to God with faith and devotion. This surrender is devotion (bhakti), the ultimate end of all yoga paths.

**yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ (6-47)**

Comm. Fixing the mind in deep meditation is yoga. Doing work without desire is also yoga. Gaining knowledge from a teacher and becoming humble is also yoga. Those who do homa, fire rituals, and worship gods like Rudra or Aditya are also called yogis here. All these yoga practices involve some form of action. That is why Lord Krishna said earlier: “Yoga is skill in action.” Work done without selfishness becomes devotion to God. Worship of God is an inner act, not for show.

A true devotee sees God's presence, power, and love and has unshaken faith in Him. Among all yogis, the best is the one who joins his inner soul with God and loves Him. That is the opinion of the Lord. Staying united with the Supreme Soul and serving everything as the form of God is called “mad-gatena antar-atmana.” Lord Krishna says this phrase to show the highest stage of yoga. The person who feels deep joy in any good action or yoga practice with faith is truly blessed. Vedas say: “Truth is reached through faith.” By keeping the mind focused on God with full faith, the heart is filled with the light of yoga joy. That state is called devotion (bhakti yoga). Faith, belief, and surrender are signs of devotion. Devotion is essential in all yoga practices. All yogis eventually reach the level of devotion. Yoga practice usually starts with karma yoga and ends with bhakti yoga. Devotion inspires progress through all stages of yoga. When one performs duties without selfishness and offers results to God, karma yoga begins. When karma yoga leads to wisdom and detachment, it becomes jnana yoga. Then, by purifying the body and clearing doubts, the yogi reaches deep meditation (samadhi yoga). After passing through all these stages, the yogi finally connects with God through devotion. When the thought arises: “I belong to God, and God belongs to me,” the mind naturally stays connected to Him. Then, all worldly and spiritual actions become worship of God. Some say that the word “bhajate” (worship) here means serving God. Every being is always engaged in serving others in some way—this is actually service to God.

A yogi free from all bondage and working for the good of all develops divine love and peace. This divine love is the joy of devotion, and by drinking it, the yogi becomes fully content. The Gita starts with Arjuna's grief in Chapter 1 and up to Chapter 6 focuses on karma yoga.

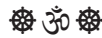
From Chapter 7 to 12, it teaches devotion; from Chapter 13 to 18, it explains deep knowledge. At the end of Chapter 6, Lord Krishna ends with the greatness of devotion

to start the topic of bhakti in Chapter 7. Every practice begins with faith and ends in surrender. At the final stage, devotion becomes pure love in the heart of the yogi. By controlling the mind, one gains deep meditation, and through that, attains equality. That's why this chapter is called "Self-Control" (Atma Samyama). No matter what path one takes, inner balance is necessary.

Without that balance, it's not possible to become truly free.

**“Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga
Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade ‘Atma Samyama Yoga’ Naama Sastha
Adhyaayah,” ||6||**

Thus in the Upanishads of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the science of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Sixth chapter entitled ‘ Atma Samyama Yoga’ .



BHAKTI TATVA



BACKGROUND

Among the nine types of (Navadha Bhakti), śravaṇa (listening) is the first and most important. That is why, in the first verse of the seventh chapter, which starts the middle six chapters of the Gita, Bhagavan tells Arjuna: “Listen to this now.” He tells Arjuna to carefully listen to the complete knowledge and realization of His true nature, with full attention and no doubt. On the path of spiritual progress, a selfless worker, a knower, or a yogi – at the final stage of their practice – becomes a devotee who is fully attached to and dependent on the Lord. Bhagavan Himself begins to describe this state to Arjuna. Only Yogeshwar Bhagavan Shri Krishna has the full authority to speak about this. No one else can know or explain the full glory, power, and majesty of the Supreme Being without doubt. The words of the Gita coming from the divine mouth of Bhagavan inspire and guide one in yoga practice. This is clearly seen in Arjuna’s case. The words of the Lord have such power that just by listening, the hidden spiritual awareness inside the heart gets awakened. Devotion is an inseparable part of spiritual practice. Any spiritual seeker who is free from the faults of rajas (passion) and tamas (darkness) qualities, can become truly pure only by devotion and take shelter of the Lord, and remain established in the mode of sattva (goodness). To remain connected with the Lord, one needs deep love, trust, and devotion towards Him. True devotion is to fully surrender to the Lord with love, faith, and dedication. Serving a master just for his wealth or property is double-minded or impure devotion. People of the world may take shelter of the Lord but still remain attached to wife, children, or wealth –that is also impure devotion. People who desire material things and pleasures take shelter of God with expectations. Such worshippers, who perform actions for expected results, cannot be counted among the “eternally connected” devotees of the Lord. God is very compassionate. He surely fulfills the desires of such devotees. But after

getting the result, those worshippers forget the Lord. They don't see the result as God's grace, but rather claim they achieved it by their own efforts and ego. The 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita are divided into 3 parts of 6 chapters each – called “ṣaṭka.” The first ṣaṭka is about karma (action), the second ṣaṭka is about bhakti (devotion), and the third ṣaṭka is about jñāna–vijñāna (spiritual knowledge and realization). The Vedic statement tat tvam asi (That Thou Art) is explained through the three ṣaṭkas: ‘tvam’ (you) refers to the first ṣaṭka, ‘tat’ (that) to the middle, and ‘asi’ (are) to the final one. The name of each ṣaṭka depends on the main topic – karma, bhakti, or jñāna – it contains. So the Gita explains the truths of action, devotion, and knowledge-realization in this order. From chapter 7 to 12, the middle ṣaṭka describes worship (upāsana). Without full knowledge of the worshipped Lord, worship cannot be complete. Knowing the influence, greatness, and mystery of the Lord's formless and attribute-less form is called jñāna. Seeing or hearing about His form, qualities, and pastimes, and realizing it through yogic practice, is vijñāna. So in this second ṣaṭka, Bhagavan mainly teaches the truths of devotion. The power of devotion is so great that the Lord Himself appears before Arjuna in His universal form. What can be greater than this? According to Śrī Vidyāvacaspati, the Gita teaches four divine goals: (1) equanimity in selfless action, (2) knowledge, (3) divine power, and (4) righteousness (dharma). These guide us to the realization of truth. The 7th and 8th chapters of the middle ṣaṭka describe the nature of knowledge – also called siddha-vidyā. From the 9th to 12th chapters, the Lord's divine glories are described, which point to the path of bhakti-yoga. The truth about knowledge told in chapter 7 and 8 should be well understood by all spiritual seekers. Without knowledge, there is no full understanding of the object of knowledge. At the end of chapter 6, Bhagavan says: Among all yogis, the best is the one who worships Me with full faith and keeps his mind fixed on Me. Though Arjuna did not directly ask, a doubt might have arisen in his mind –how can a limited soul with a limited mind grasp the unlimited Supreme Lord who holds countless universes? What is the complete nature of God? Is it even possible for a soul to understand this? Seeing that Arjuna did not ask, the ever-compassionate Bhagavan Shri Krishna Himself began to explain, asking Arjuna to listen attentively to the knowledge and realization of His own divine nature. To remove all doubts from Arjuna, the Lord explains in detail about His divine powers, strength, wealth, and universal form –all within this second ṣaṭka. According to Śrī Rāmānuja Āchārya, the “complete form” of the Lord includes: His visible form – with qualities, nature, and body, and His invisible power of Yogamaya, which is beyond qualities and formless. Śrī Puruṣottam Goswami interprets “samagra” (complete) as “full of all divine rasas.” He says there are two types of bhakti: One is simple worship of the Lord, the other is worship full of divine moods like love, sweetness, etc. The essence of this ṣaṭka is how the Lord and His devotee stay eternally united, and how intense devotion leads to the highest spiritual success. From chapter 6 to 12, the Gita mainly shows the path of bhakti. The description of the Lord's complete form in chapters 7 and 8 cannot be fully understood by one's own learning or philosophy. Only a realized teacher can explain it through life experience.

A fortunate person may get this truth of devotion from a saint, sage, or realized teacher through satsang. Only one who has deep and exclusive devotion can truly experience the complete nature of the Lord. This cannot be fully known just by studying the Vedas or scriptures. With the blessings of saints and sages, one can understand the greatness of God’s human-like form, actions, and names. This removes doubts and creates a special love and attraction for Shri Krishna. With complete love, one should listen to His pastimes, sing His names, and meditate on His form. This opens the path to the highest goal in life. At the end of life, the soul reaches the supreme state and attains liberation. Pujya Swami Sivananda has said: “To get Brahmajnana (knowledge of God), Guru’s grace is the only true inspiration.” In the book Mananīya Satyāvalī (Odia version of Ponder These Truths) by the realized saint Swami Chidānanda Saraswati, he has explained in simple language how, even in difficult life situations, we can move toward life’s highest goal by following the teachings of scriptures, Upanishads, and Guru’s words. In that book, two chapters – Arjuna’s Condition and Surrender – present some deeply touching truths of the Gita. These should be shared with seekers and lovers of God as of satsang.

Om Tat Sat.



SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 7 (Jnana Vijnana Yoga)

Shri Bhagavān Uvācha

Mayyāsakta-manāḥ pārtha yogaṁ yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ
Asaṁśayaṁ samagraṁ māṁ yathā jñāsyasi tach chhṛṇu (7-1)

Comm. The Blessed Lord said: O Pārtha (Arjuna)! If you keep your mind fixed on Me with deep focus and one-pointed devotion, and if you practice yoga by taking shelter in Me, then you will become able to know My divine glories, strength, and full form. Now, listen to this from Me. I will tell you the complete knowledge about Myself. After hearing it, you will realize that this whole universe, in its formless and formful aspects, is filled with God. The word “complete” includes all divine truths about Bhagavan, and nothing will be left out from it. Just as a fish cannot live without water, in the same way, a true devotee cannot stay without remembering Me even for a moment. Such a person is fully attached to Me. When a person becomes free from the influence of worldly joy and sorrow, gain and loss, favorable and unfavorable situations, and likes and dislikes, then, as per Bhagavan’s instruction, they can remain always connected with Him. The special quality of a devotee is this: they accept all success and failure, good and bad in life, as the will of God, and stay worry-free, fully surrendered to the Supreme Lord. In the last verse of Chapter 6, Bhagavan has said: Among all yogis, the best is the one who worships Me with love and faith, keeping his heart fixed on Me. But, as long as a person does not understand the form, qualities, and power of Bhagavan, it is very difficult to

give up all worldly enjoyments and fix the mind only on the all-powerful, most lovable Supreme Lord. In normal worldly life, people usually rely on human support, money power, physical strength, or their reputation and status during difficulties. But Bhagavan says: If one wants to stay attached to Me, then they must consider Me alone as their ultimate shelter in all situations. This entire universe is My form. Everything – the visible and invisible, movement and stillness, creation and destruction – all happen through My divine Yogamaya power. Taking shelter in God does not mean worshipping Him just to fulfill worldly desires. Instead, one should give up attachment to worldly pleasures, and focus their thoughts only on the Supreme Soul. When one builds a close relationship with God, they will always remain happy, and a unique, divine love will awaken in their heart. Then the seeker will automatically become absorbed in Me and take shelter in Me fully. One whose mind naturally feels attracted to God has truly taken full refuge in Him. When someone accepts their eternal relationship with God through mind, body, and speech, then understanding the complete knowledge and realization of God’s form becomes easy.

**Jñānam te ’haṁ sa-vijñānam idaṁ vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ
Yaj jñātvā neha bhūyo ’nyaj jñātavyam avaśiṣyate (7-2)**

Comm. In Chapter 4, Lord Krishna says that only a devotee can truly understand My complete nature and the essence of knowledge and realization. The one who is the source of the entire universe, whose nature is the sum of all knowledge and wisdom, is the cause of all causes and the goal of all spiritual practices. A wise person follows the path of knowledge and realization to seek this divine truth. After understanding the supreme cause, the knowledge in the mind and intellect transforms into realization through personal experience. The direct experience of the pure, supreme divine essence is called realization (vijñāna). After this experience, no doubts remain about God’s formless (nirguna) or form-based (saguna) nature, and they don’t need to know anything else. Lord Krishna does not just teach Arjuna the philosophy of divine knowledge but strives to help him reach the highest level of self-realization. So, He advises Arjuna to listen to the teachings of knowledge and realization with faith and trust from the beginning. The great householder Saunaka respectfully asked the sage Rishi Annurasa, “O great one, what is that which, once known, makes everything else known automatically?” Knowledge (jñāna) is what is perceived through the senses, mind, and intellect. Realization (vijñāna) is the direct, simple experience of the eternal divine essence. Knowledge is external and indirect, while realization is internal and direct. One must strive to gain knowledge. But realization comes through the Vedantic process, where the ego is destroyed, and the divine truth instantly shines forth. After a seeker understands the difference between knowledge and realization, they naturally gain complete knowledge of the eternal divine truth. They become all-knowing, like the Supreme Soul. This is why the principle of knowledge and realization is highly beneficial and rare. Revered commentators of the

Gita have explained this principle using different spiritual practices. Some scholars say that truly understanding the influence and mystery of God’s formless, attributeless nature is knowledge. Experiencing the true knowledge of God’s formless or divine form, along with His divine play, mystery, greatness, and influence, is called realization. According to Shri Shankaracharya, teachings from the Upanishads, scriptures, Vedic statements, and the words of a guru are knowledge. Knowledge combined with personal experience is realization. By reasoning and reflection, one removes doubts from indirect knowledge, and through contemplation and meditation, they achieve direct realization of Brahman. This self-experience is realization. This way, realizing Brahman is the Vedantic process. This entire universe is a tiny part of God’s complete nature, which originates from Him and merges back into Him. He is the ultimate cause of creation and dissolution. Accepting this is knowledge. The divine experience that “there is no existence apart from Him” is realization. According to Dvaita philosophy, the senses, mind, and intellect are material and cannot know the divine truth beyond nature. The divine truth can only be known through itself. The true experience of attaining the nectar-like divine essence, which creates the universe during creation, is realization. Some believe that the ability of great souls to work everywhere simultaneously is the application of knowledge, which is realization. Just as God works in everyone’s hearts at once, during His incarnation, He transcends nature’s dualities and performs divine acts—this process is called realization. According to Shri Vidyavachaspati, seeing the one essence in many forms is knowledge, and seeing the one expands into many forms is realization. In other words, seeing the cause within the effect is knowledge, and seeing many effects arise from one cause is realization. Seeing the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the manifested world, with its three qualities, in one truth is the process of realization. Various objects made of clay are named differently through words, meaning their names and forms differ. After knowing the fundamental essence of clay, one understands that all objects made of clay contain only clay as the true substance. Similarly, after gaining knowledge of the one true “Sat” (truth) as the root cause of the entire world, one gains real knowledge of all things. The names and forms of all things in the world are mere imagination. In practical life, differences in form and name may seem real, but the true substance is the one “Sat” present in everything. Reviewing all views on knowledge and realization leads to this essence: God’s influence, power, and glory have no limit. Though understanding this is beyond human intellect, accepting that one Supreme Soul exists everywhere is knowledge and realization. In the path of devotion, a seeker first accepts and then knows; in the path of knowledge, they first know and then accept. Thus, in the perfection of yoga, both practices become one. Only God is fully capable and authorized to explain His complete nature. No one else can fully know it, nor will they ever be able to. Therefore, Lord Krishna Himself promises to explain His complete nature to Arjuna. After knowing this, nothing else remains to be known.

**Manuṣyāṇām sahasreṣu kaśchid yatati siddhaye
Yatatām api siddhānām kaśchin mām vetti tattvataḥ (7-3)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna explains how rare a true knower of the Self is, and how great true knowledge is. One who sees no difference between the soul and the Supreme Soul is called a tattva-darshi (truth-seer). Such a person is greater than those who practice austerity, knowledge, or action. Though thousands of people have faith in God, only one among them gives up attachment to wealth, honor, and pleasures and sincerely tries to reach perfection. Even among many who strive in yoga, only rarely does someone truly know the full truth of God. In this verse, Lord Krishna shows how rare and difficult it is to find a true seeker or someone desiring liberation. This does not mean that knowing the Supreme Truth is impossible. Lord wants to say that reaching the truth requires deep dedication to the path of yoga and the company of enlightened saints, which is hard to get. In this world, material things can be gained quickly by money or exchange. But to truly know the full nature of God and attain eternal peace, one needs to do spiritual practice over many lives. Many yogis and wise people try to know the truth, but in the end, some fail due to doubts and leave the path. Even after knowing the difference between truth and untruth, they cannot recognize God within the visible world. Doubts also arise when thinking of God as having a form and qualities, like “Vasudeva is everything.” Only by the Lord’s grace can someone understand His full form through supreme devotion. From the view of existence, awareness, and joy, human birth is a complete birth. Only humans can build their life, knowledge, and happiness. Every human has the birthright to strive for self-knowledge. For this, there is no need for any specific country, caste, religion, or class. Still, why do most people stay away from thoughts of God? The answer is: deep attachment to pleasure and strong worldly feelings like “me” and “mine” from many past lives block love and faith in God. Acharya Shankar said: childhood passes in play and in parents’ arms, youth goes in enjoying company of wife, middle age goes in trying to earn wealth, and old age passes in regret, illness, and memory loss. Thus, the whole life passes without remembering God, the Supreme Father. The desire for liberation (mumukshutva) does not easily arise in most people’s hearts and minds. But by effort, turning away from worldly life, reading scriptures, hearing wise words, and meeting saints, the desire for liberation arises. In today’s world, wealth, position, power, and worldly knowledge help people enjoy sense pleasures easily. So, they may question why one should even care to know spiritual truth. Those who are trapped by pride in wealth, position, or power often think this way due to ignorance. But a thoughtful person feels something is missing in all these material pleasures. He tries to find out what that missing thing is. That missing thing is the eternal truth – the search for supreme peace and bliss. We are all part of that eternal bliss. A part always naturally wants to go back to its whole. A stone thrown up falls back to earth. A river flows toward the ocean. A flame moves toward the sun. So we too must return to our source and know the truth of God to find true love, peace, and joy.

An ignorant person is satisfied with temporary happiness from objects and situations, and endures suffering life after life. Such a person never thinks about the reason for sorrow or how to get free from it. Some others worship God to remove their current suffering and gain material happiness. But they do not seek God as the source of eternal joy and as their true self. That is why God does not come to such people easily. God is present everywhere, always, and in every situation. But people turn away from Him. God never turns away from His children. When the soul truly longs to unite with God, it doesn't take long to find Him. That deep longing in the mind and heart is supreme devotion. Arjuna had this doubt: If God lives in everyone's heart, then why doesn't He inspire all to know Him? The answer is: the soul is under the control of Maya and is attached to worldly enjoyment. Only when the soul evolves through many births does it realize God is its true home. Then the journey of spiritual effort begins. Whoever sincerely starts striving for this knowledge should be called a realized person, even if he hasn't fully succeeded yet. He has turned toward God and the right path, so he is already spiritually successful. Among many such seekers, only one rarely becomes capable of fully knowing My power, glory, and divinity. Trying to get spiritual knowledge is already a great success. The soul, which is bound in ignorance, becomes free by removing that darkness and becomes full of divine light – that is the highest success. In scriptures and history, saints like Shukadeva and Vamadeva are examples of such great realization. They were one in millions. Some may know God in His different forms like incarnations, but it is very difficult and rare to realize God's true nature of eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss. The word “success” can mean many things in daily life – gaining something useful, solving problems, removing doubt, passing exams, getting blessings, or becoming healthy. All these are also called “success” in normal life. And yes, every person struggles in some way to reach some form of success in life. But among them, only those who aim for divine knowledge and act with good thoughts, actions, and company reach the highest success. Such great souls are extremely rare. Among thousands of people, hardly one strives for perfection. And among those who strive and attain perfection, only a rare one knows Me in truth.

Shri Bhagavān uvācha

**Bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva cha
Ahaṁkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā (7-4)**

**Apareyam itas tv anyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
Jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat (7-5)**

Comm. To explain the complete nature of knowledge and philosophy, God first describes the glory of His “lower” and “higher” natures. During creation, God expands Himself and takes three forms of Vishnu. As “Mahavishnu,” He holds the original nature to create material energy. This is also called the great principle. As “Garbhodakshayi

Vishnu,” He enters countless universes and establishes living beings in them. The third form is “Kshirodakshayi Vishnu.” In this form, He exists as the all-pervading Supreme Soul in all universes. The creation, maintenance, and destruction of the entire universe are controlled by these three forms. Nature is included in God’s complete form. The word “nature” literally means the first creation. Therefore, to describe His complete form, God starts with the concept of nature. Some great commentators say God’s complete form is beyond speech and mind. Thus, He cannot be fully known by anyone. The Supreme with nature can be known. Nature is inseparable from God. Hence, with the help of nature, God’s form can be understood. In Vedanta scriptures, the Supreme influenced by illusion is considered the subject of knowledge. The Absolute Supreme, without attributes, is beyond speech and action. For this reason, the Upanishads say, “I do not know” or “I cannot know.” This means God cannot be conceived in general or specific forms. The Supreme Soul creates the universe using lower nature. Nature is the inherent quality of the Supreme Soul. Nature is divided into eight types: earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect, and ego. This is called lower nature. This eightfold division of nature is also mentioned in Sankhya philosophy. Among these, the five gross elements are considered gross creation, while mind, intellect, and ego are subtle creation. The cause of the five gross elements is the five subtle elements: sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, which are part of lower nature. Each subtle creation acts as a carrier for its respective gross element. Space causes sound, and air causes touch. Similarly, fire causes form, water causes taste, and earth causes smell. All five gross elements are combined. Each gross element contains half of its own essence and one-eighth of each of the other four elements, making it complete. For example, the earth element has half of earth and one-eighth each of water, air, fire, and space. First, air is created from space. Fire is created from air, which contains space. Water is created from fire, which contains space and air. Earth is created from water, which contains space, air, and fire. Each gross element contains the subtle elements of the other mixed elements. For instance, since earth contains the other four elements, it has its own smell along with taste, touch, form, and sound. Similarly, air, containing space, has sound and touch. This is called the fivefold combination. In the subtle creation of lower nature, the mind is understood as “I am” in the sense of ego, which is the cause of the mind. In Sankhya philosophy, this is indicated by the feeling of “I exist.” This “I am” feeling includes the desire for enjoyment and curiosity. Intellect is the great principle, through which decisive actions occur. Intellect is the cause of ego. In the eightfold lower nature, ego is understood in a material sense. The inner function of “I am” is called ego. Ego is the most subtle and imagined part of the eightfold nature. The state where the entire material creation exists as a seed in the collective nature is also called ego. The eight types of lower nature mentioned by God in this verse are individual lower nature. Bonding occurs due to attachment to the individual material body. Thus, lower nature includes gross, subtle, and causal collective bodies. Scriptures describe this collective nature as “nature and transformation,” meaning cause and effect. From nature comes the great

principle, from the great principle comes ego, from ego come the five subtle elements. From the pure part of the five subtle elements come mind, intellect, ego, senses, and many combined forms, creating the entire universe. The nature of the entire creation is God's nature. Thus, God creates the universe using lower nature. Just as human nature is not separate from a person, nature is not separate from God. The original nature, called "great Brahman" by God in the fourteenth chapter, is not produced by anything. Thus, original nature is not a transformation or effect of anything. The great principle, ego, and five subtle elements produced from original nature are transformations or effects. However, these seven are also causes of sound, other five objects, mind, and ten senses, so they are called nature. Therefore, the great principle, ego, and five subtle elements are both nature and transformation. O brave Arjuna, know that the living soul, different from lower nature, is "higher nature" or conscious nature. With the help of this conscious nature, the entire world is sustained. This higher nature is the living soul. Since the living soul is related to nature, it is also called nature. The living being, a part of God, is His higher power, which is superior, conscious, and unchanging. Thus, the living being cannot be proven separate from God. Though the living soul is God's form, it is called nature due to its connection with lower nature. When consciousness identifies with lower nature and ego, feeling "I am," it becomes the living soul, called higher nature. The individuality and local feeling of "I am" is also called ego, which is the doer. It considers itself the doer of all actions. This perceived "I am" is higher nature. On the other hand, the functional "I am" is also ego, which is lower nature. In other words, the causal "I am" is higher nature, and the effective "I am" is lower nature. On one side of "I am" is the visible world, lower nature, and on the other side is the Supreme Soul. Without accepting this "I am" or doership, the living soul naturally is the Supreme Soul. Ego causes identification with the body. In this identification, the material part is the causal body, and the one who feels "I am" is conscious. Conscious nature is neither nature nor transformation. It is neither a cause nor an effect. Until the knowledge of the soul is attained, this conscious, related to material, acts as the doer and enjoyer as "I am." When the conscious, revealing lower nature, considers the body as itself, it becomes the living soul, higher nature, called "living being" by God in this verse. The living soul, as God's higher nature, sustains the visible world. Acting with the intent of enjoyment, assuming the world's independent existence, causes bondage. Considering the apparent world as God's form and removing the intent of enjoyment breaks bondage. Though the world is essentially God's form, a desire-driven person sees the body and world with an enjoyment perspective. Attachment to the body, made of blood and flesh, causes a sense of attraction. The body and world are not truly separate. This means individual and collective are essentially the same. The body and world are material, while only the living being is conscious. Between the world and the living being, only the living being has real existence. Due to attachment to the world, the world seems attained and real, though it is unattained and unreal. On the other hand, the Supreme Soul, always attained as the whole, is not felt due to the living being's aversion.

Though higher and lower powers are different, both are God's form. The higher power, holding lower, is accepted as the living being. There is no such thing as the world. It is only an imagined state in the intellect, given existence by the living being's consciousness. Similarly, the "I am" in individual lower nature has no real existence. In delusion, the living being identifies with the causal body, leading to bondage. In higher nature within the living being, there is no substance or action. The living being itself relates to the body and world. Being attached to lower nature and relying on it is sustaining the world. As long as the living being considers the body and world's existence as eternal and real, it will experience sorrow, joy, birth, and death. Identifying with what is entirely different from the living being's nature—body, mind, senses, intellect, and ego—is sustaining the world. In countless universes, there is nothing beyond higher and lower nature. All substances and actions are within lower nature. Earth, fire, air, water, space, senses, mind, intellect, and ego all arise from nature. Nature exists in everything. This is divine nature. When actions occur with attachment to the body through senses, mind, and intellect, the potential for results arises. There is no joy or sorrow in earth or air. Joy and sorrow do not exist in intellect or ego. All this is God's creation. The creation made by God's hands is blissful. The creator Himself is blissful, His will is bliss, and His hands are bliss. He creates bliss from bliss. Then, where do joy and sorrow come from for humans? When the living being considers God's blissful creation as "mine," saying this is my body, my life, my house, my wealth, my wife, my family, joy and sorrow arise from this "mine" relationship. The death of a relative is not the cause of sorrow; the breaking of the "mine" bond instantly turns into sorrow. Sankhya yogis believe this world is an expansion of nature and not sorrowful. The "I am" and "mine" relationship in it is sorrowful. Vedantins believe there is no such thing as joy or sorrow. Ignorance brings sorrow. Sorrow is neither God's creation nor the living soul's nature. Deep attachment to lower nature with an enjoyment mindset is the cause of sorrow. This body is "I am," and everything related to it—substances, people, situations—is "mine." This is the living soul's identification with the body. If someone thinks, "This nation is I am, and all its matters are mine," it means the living soul identifies with the nation. Similarly, thinking the entire world is mine and I am the benefactor of all creation also leads to identification with the world. The more noble and elevated the perspective, the broader the sense of "I am" becomes, and the more one understands oneself. The world is created from higher and lower nature. It exists in earth and in trees. What exists in this body exists in the universe. As in the body, so in the universe. When countless universes are created and destroyed, the "I am" also remains and vanishes. Similarly, in the body, the "I am" is created and destroyed. Where was the "I am" initially? Ego, in the individual causal body, exists as "I am," identifying as "I am a Brahmin," "I am a householder," "I am a celibate," "I am a forest-dweller," "I am a monk." The truth is that "I am" does not truly exist anywhere. By removing lower nature from consciousness and resting in one's true nature, "I am" is realized as the soul. The living soul is not "I am." "I am" is a direct part of the Supreme Lord. The difference

between part and whole is experienced in a pure heart with a limited perspective. “I am” is eternal, pure, enlightened, and free Brahman.

**Etad-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇīty upadhāraya
Ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā (7-6)**

Comm. O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), know for certain that all beings, whether material or conscious, gross or subtle, originate from My two natures—higher (parā) and lower (aparā). The entire world, both conscious and unconscious, is created through the union of My higher and lower natures. Through nature, I am the creator and destroyer of the entire world. The world is created and sustained by the existence and energy of the Supreme Soul. The whole universe arises from God, exists in God, and merges back into God. He is the sole great cause and the ultimate foundation. I create the world in the form of gods, humans, animals, birds, plants, and all moving and stationary things, and I am the material cause of their existence. Similarly, I destroy, and I am what is destroyed. There is nothing else in the world that can be a cause or an effect apart from Me. During the time of dissolution (pralaya), all beings merge back into their original nature. God creates the world and takes on the form of the universe. The Supreme Soul destroys the world, and what is destroyed is also Himself. The Taittiriya Upanishad says, “I am the food, and I am the eater of the food.” Thus, both the lower and higher natures, and all beings born from their union, are the form of God. The cause is God, and the effect is also God. At the end of dissolution, at the start of creation, I resolve to become many from one—this divine will moves as a seed in the cosmic form (Hiranyagarbha). From that seed-like will, the bodies of souls are created according to their nature. I am the material cause and the ultimate cause of the entire gross and subtle world, the supreme treasure. Everything ultimately dissolves in Me. The material world is illuminated by the light of divine consciousness. The grand cosmic form shines due to the combination of matter and supreme consciousness. The higher nature (jīva) within beings knows itself and can know others. The body is part of the lower material nature, which is inert. Due to the soul’s identification with the material body, the body seems permanent. As a result, the illusion arises that the soul is born and dies with the body’s creation and destruction. When one turns away from matter and realizes unity with the divine essence, the veil of ignorance lifts, and they experience the self. Shri Shankaracharya calls the lower nature the unmanifest form of Maya. According to him, God creates and destroys the world through the power of Maya. Though the world, born of Maya, has no direct connection to God’s creation and destruction, God is the support of Maya, meaning He sustains it. Without God’s support, Maya cannot do anything. Thus, God resides in the world as Maya and merges into Maya during dissolution. In Shri Madhvacharya’s Dvaita philosophy, the existence and perception of the entire material and conscious world come from Me, and I am its enjoyer. Hence, I am called the creator and destroyer. According to Shri Vallabhacharya’s pure devotion philosophy, Maya and nature also arise from the Supreme Brahman. Using Maya and nature, Brahman creates

the world for His divine play. According to Shri Vidyavachaspati, the perishable (kshara) and imperishable (akshara) beings are causes of the world's creation. But since everything depends on God, Lord Krishna takes responsibility, saying, "I am the source of the world's creation and dissolution." Some respected commentators explain "prabhava" (creation) and "pralaya" (dissolution) as follows: the supreme power holding the lower nature through divine energy is the world's creation. Completely removing the lower nature from consciousness is dissolution. When the lower nature unites with consciousness, the world arises. Identifying with the lower nature is the world's sustenance. Completely removing the lower nature from consciousness is the world's dissolution. As long as nature exists, I am the cause of its creation, sustenance, and dissolution. If a great soul transcends nature, know that I am the great dissolution, residing in their heart as realization. In the 8th and 9th chapters of the 12th canto of Shrimad Bhagavatam, sages like Saunaka asked Suta: "Markandeya is our ancestor, and no dissolution occurred in his time, so how did he see Balamukunda floating on a banyan leaf during the great dissolution?" Suta replied: Pleased by Markandeya Muni's prayers, Nara-Narayana granted him a vision. Markandeya, inspired, expressed his desire to know the Maya that causes souls to wander through countless births and sought divine grace. God accepted his request. One day, while Markandeya was absorbed in divine contemplation at his ashram, he felt a great ocean rushing toward him from all directions. Beings, animals, birds, trees, the sun, moon, stars, rivers, and mountains were sinking one by one into the ocean. A terrifying crocodile was charging toward the sage to devour him. While running to save his life, he saw a child floating on a banyan leaf. Coming into contact with the child's breath, Markandeya entered the child's stomach. Inside the stomach, he saw all beings, the world, and even his own ashram. Later, through the child's breath, he came out and returned to the ground. When he opened his eyes after breaking his meditation, Markandeya saw he was still seated in his ashram as before. This shows that after millions of years of devotion, Markandeya received the grace to experience the divine vision in his heart. Thus, dissolution is the experience of realizing God in a yogi's heart. At the peak of devotion, the worldly flow ceases in the yogi's heart, leaving only the unmanifest Supreme Soul. That is dissolution. Dissolution does not happen externally. The great dissolution is the indescribable non-dual state while the body still exists. It is a dynamic state. It creates illusion because it is determined only by the intellect.

**Mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñchid asti dhananjaya
Mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva (7-7)**

Comm. God says, "O Dhananjaya, there is nothing in the entire creation, whether cause or effect, that is superior to Me." Dhananjaya is another name for Arjuna, meaning fire. Just as wealth plays a key role in human life, spiritual practice is essential for this world and the next. By addressing Arjuna as Dhananjaya, God indicates that Arjuna is radiant and powerful like fire. God tells Arjuna to gain knowledge of His complete form

and become the greatest treasure in the world. God is unique and unparalleled. There is nothing else besides Him. Since He is all-pervading, supreme, and unique, how can anything be different or superior to Him? Just as beads are strung together in a necklace, the entire universe is woven into God's essence, appearing like a garland. The lower nature, like the beads, is God's form, and the conscious essence, like the thread, is also Him. Though objects and substances in lower nature have different forms and names, the conscious essence pervading them is one and the same. God is interwoven in everything, meaning the entire creation depends on Him. Whether the Supreme Lord is with form or formless, personal or impersonal, has always been a dualistic question. The Brahma Samhita states, "The Supreme Lord Krishna is the embodiment of truth, consciousness, and bliss." Lord Krishna, the source of all incarnations, is the Supreme Lord Himself. He is the original person, the source of all bliss, known as Govinda, and His form is full of truth, consciousness, and bliss. Thus, scriptures confirm that the Supreme Lord incarnates in human form as the Supreme Person and ultimate truth. As a divine person, He performs pastimes in human form. As Yogeshwara, He enters the meditation of yogis in an unmanifest form. He holds countless universes like a garland, being the cause of their creation and dissolution. From the smallest living being to Brahma, from an atom to the great Meru Mountain, only He pervades everything and is their essence. All manifestations are Himself. In the world, place, time, objects, people, and events are all subject to change. But the Supreme Lord, in whose existence the entire world gains reality and permanence, is complete in space and time. That Supreme Person, the Supreme Soul, is the ultimate truth and non-dual knowledge. Just as cotton is the root cause of a thread woven into a garland, the Supreme essence is the root foundation of all creation. After knowing this ultimate truth, nothing else remains to be known. Because that non-dual Supreme is the root cause of everything, and no one else is its producer. The Supreme Lord is the material cause of the entire world. Shri Ramanujacharya explains this verse, saying that though the soul is different from the body in essence, the sense of unity with the body remains, and the body gains power through the soul's energy. Similarly, the entire world, its nature, and its effects are not entirely separate from God. Everything depends on Him. Just as beads depend on a thread, all beings depend on God, gaining knowledge and power like Him.

**Raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ
Praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu (7-8)**

**Puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyāṁ cha tejaś chāsmi vibhāvasau
Jīvanaṁ sarva-bhūteṣu tapaś chāsmi tapasviṣu (7-9)**

Comm: Lord Krishna begins describing His divine powers based on the knowledge of the Supreme Soul. He says: O Arjuna, I exist as taste in water. I am the brightness in the moon and sun. I am the sacred sound "Om" in all the Vedas. I am the vibration of sound in the sky and the strength of manhood in human beings. Since the beginning of creation, every

object has a form and a nature. The form is the external shape, and the name reflects the inner quality or essence. Behind every visible object—known through the senses, mind, and intellect—is the subtle presence of the Supreme. That eternal truth is the origin of all names and forms. With the help of both His higher and lower powers, the Lord exists everywhere in both form and formless ways. All objects created by the lower nature have form. But within every form is the invisible essence, which is the energy of consciousness. In water, He is the essence of taste. Even a single drop of water is not without taste—meaning, the Lord is fully present as taste in water. If taste is removed, water cannot be experienced. The light in the moon and sun comes from the Lord Himself. The light in all planets and stars comes from His divine brilliance. The essence of everything is the Supreme Soul. The Upanishads say, “By His light, everything shines.” The Lord, using His conscious power, appears as the entire creation. This conscious power is symbolized by the sacred sound “Om.” The syllable “Om” at the beginning of every Vedic mantra comes first from the Lord. “Om” is the root of all names and forms. Because “Om” and the conscious power are inseparable, it is also called “Nada Brahma” (the sound form of God). “Om” consists of three parts: A, U, and M. All sounds in the world arise from these three elements. These syllables represent creation, preservation, and destruction—and also describe the form, name, and nature of the soul. Therefore, “Om” is another name for the Supreme Soul. The word “Pranava” is a shorter name for the mantra “Om.” According to the Shiva Purana: “Pra” means world, “Na” means not, and “Va” means owner—so “Pranava” refers to the Supreme beyond the material world. All the Vedas declare that “Om” is the Lord’s true nature. First came “Pranava.” From “Pranava” came the three-part Gayatri mantra. From the Gayatri, the three Vedas emerged. So “Pranava” is the essence of the Vedas. It is expressed in the forms of the Vedas and Gayatri mantra. That “Pranava” is Me. The mantra “Om” is everything for a renunciate monk (sannyasi). During initiation on the banks of the Ganga, the guru whispers this mantra into the ear of the disciple. From that day, the disciple chants “Om” and takes refuge in it. In the Gita, it is said to be the single-syllable Brahman. Sound is the special quality of space (sky). Empty space is born from the subtle sound and remains within sound, and merges back into it. In other words, sound is what gives form to space. Without sound, space has no existence. That subtle sound is Me. Man’s strength and manhood are the presence of the Supreme Soul. The body’s intellect, mind, and physical strength—all are He. Whatever a person desires or does is because of Him. Without His presence, knowledge, and motivation, man would be inactive like a statue. So the Supreme Lord is present in man as strength and purpose. Due to ignorance, people think that getting perishable things is the true goal of life. But real purpose is the effort made with faith to realize the Supreme. The Lord exists as inspiration in such efforts. The earth naturally has fragrance. The Lord says, “I am the pure fragrance of the earth.” In fire, I am the power to burn. Fire has both heat and light, and both powers come from Him. In the body, the Lord exists as the power of life. In ascetics, the Lord is the strength to endure pain and difficulty. The life of a monk is

meant for penance and self-control. According to Adi Shankaracharya, the Supreme exists in every object as its pure nature. The names and forms of things are imagined—they are Maya (illusion). When Maya is removed, what remains is the Supreme Soul present in all things and beings. According to Sri Ramanuja, the soul in the body is the real essence. The body functions through the power received from the soul. In this way, I am present as the essence in the whole universe. Just like I exist as taste in water, light in the sun and moon, and so on. Like how clay is the base material of pots and vessels, the Lord is the material cause of all creation. Since everything in the universe is made from Him, He exists in every object. Just as the taste in water is imagined but felt, the whole world is imagined in the Supreme. To remove Arjuna’s doubt that the world is an illusion, like a dream or snake imagined in a rope, the Lord explains that He is the real essence behind all creation. In creation, He is the doer, the cause, and the result. He is the taste and the water, the light and the moon and sun. He is “Om,” the Vedas, the sound, and the sky. He is the purpose, and He is the human being. Because no one else exists apart from Him, there is no difference between action and cause in the Lord. This difference exists only in human perception. Fire and heat, life and body, penance and monk—all are one Lord. The higher and lower powers are both parts of the Lord, and are inseparable from Him. So all living and non-living things born from these two powers are truly forms of God.

**Bijaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ viddhi pārtha sanātanam
Buddhir buddhimatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham (7-10)**

Comm. Every living being belongs to 84 lakh (8.4 million) types of life forms. Among them, animals, birds, humans, and other living creatures belong to the moving category. Trees, vines, and similar things belong to the stationary category. In every state, the Supreme Soul (God) is the seed of all beings. The Supreme Soul is the root of everything. Ramanujacharya explains the word “seed” as follows: the Supreme Brahman (God) is the only cause of the world’s creation, just like the soul is the cause of all energy, ability, strength, intelligence, and elements in the body. The pure, conscious power that controls the body, mind, and senses, and makes them function, is called intelligence. The power of intelligence is a part of God’s material nature. The pure, wise intelligence of an intelligent person reflects the nature of God. Therefore, only an intelligent person can understand the Supreme God. The power that influences everyone around is called brilliance (tejas). A person who has this special brilliance is called radiant (tejasvi). In radiant people, the Supreme Soul exists as talent or brilliance. Those whose lives are divine have attained this radiant form of Brahman (God). This brilliance shines like light on the faces of such great people. This brilliance is the very nature of God. The brilliance or talent in liberated, wise people can transform even those with bad qualities or behavior into virtuous and righteous individuals. In a living being’s body, the Supreme Soul exists as intelligence and brilliance. Therefore, the entire world of living beings is a form of the Supreme Soul. God says, “O Arjuna, grandson of Pritha! The indestructible seed in all beings, which remains

even during cosmic destruction, is Me.” This eternal seed is never destroyed. Even though the world arises from Me, I remain unchanged and indestructible. This unique quality of God is the eternal truth. A tree begins with a seed. It bears leaves, flowers, and fruits, and in the end, it returns to a seed. Similarly, because of My seed, all beings are born, exist in Me, and ultimately merge back into Me. In the end, only My existence remains. This is called the Supreme Unmanifested or the Supreme Imperishable. This conscious spiritual seed is eternal, free from change or destruction, and is the creator, revealer, supporter, shelter, and root cause of the entire world. When the soul connects with matter, the word “seed” refers to the soul; otherwise, it refers to the eternal nature of God. Even the two leaves sprouting from one seed are not the same size. Similarly, though all beings and objects in creation are different, their creator, the “seed,” is one. The living beings in the infinite universe are also infinite. But the spiritual essence, the seed, of these infinite beings is one. This means that the one God is expressed in many forms, and even though expressed in many forms, He remains one. The scripture says: “That (God) is perfect, this (world) is perfect, the perfect arises from the perfect. Even after taking the perfect from the perfect, the perfect remains perfect.” This means the creator of the world, the Supreme Soul, is perfect, and this world is also perfect. This perfection comes from that perfection. But even after the perfect is created, no part of the perfect is reduced; it remains fully perfect. How is this possible? To prove this, Shankaracharya called the world an illusion (maya). This means the world is not created from the Supreme Soul. Due to ignorance, the Supreme Soul’s nature appears as the world, but it is only imagined.

**Balaṁ balavatām chāhaṁ kāma-rāga-vivarjitam
Dharmāviroddho bhūteṣu kāmo ’smi bharatarṣabha (7-11)**

Comm. O best of the Bharata lineage, Arjuna! Know this also — the desireless strength that stays with the strong is actually “Me”. For the welfare of the world, I exist in the hearts of the strong as strength free from passion (rajas) and darkness (tamas). Keeping the good of the world in mind, I appear among living beings in the form of “desire” that helps in performing good actions. I also take the form of desire like Kamadeva (god of love) and become the cause of the birth of living beings. Some commentators interpret the phrase “desire not against dharma” as referring to the lawful physical union between husband and wife for the purpose of having children. According to them, even the desire born from such rightful union is also a form of God. But God’s rules apply equally to all human beings — regardless of caste, class, age, or gender. So, it is proper to understand that the pure, righteous desires that support dharma are the dwelling place of God. The wish for the welfare of the creation is a form of God. Because, the entire creation runs according to God’s will. In the same way, the soul inside every being also has the nature of wishing well for oneself and others. The inner strength that helps a self-controlled person to resist emotional urges and attachment is also God’s form. Wanting food to satisfy hunger is not a sin. But choosing wrong ways to get tasty food due to attachment

to taste — that is a sin. So, the thought behind a desire must be pure, peaceful, and for good. When a thing is not with us but lives in our mind as a craving — that is called “kāma” (desire). When an object is with us and the mind is deeply attached to it — that is called “rāga” (attachment). After enjoying a thing, if one still has special attraction to it — that is called “moha” (delusion). The desires, attachments, and delusions that go against dharma are called maya-born (illusion-based). But even that maya is not something separate from God, because the world is made through God’s maya-shakti (power of illusion). In fact, the demoniac qualities (asuric nature) are also a form of God’s power. Only the qualities and nature of those are different from the pure form of the Supreme God. The demoniac nature is nothing but the defects created in the human body by lower nature (apara prakriti). We can never fully stop thoughts or desires from arising in the mind. But they should not go beyond control; they must stay within our inner strength. Desires that go against dharma pull humans into sinful actions and bring suffering in hell. So, the desire-power in humans that follows dharma and proper limits is a form of God. God says: “I am that ‘kāma’ (desire) by which a person lives his life and lovingly prays to Me for grace.” Therefore, God further says: the person who surrenders to the Supreme crosses maya and attains Brahman. Before one commits a sinful act, the conscience gives a warning — that warning is “dharma”. Dharma lives in the heart like a shadow of the soul and controls the senses, mind, and intellect. One is “action-dharma” (what one follows), and the other is “cause-dharma” (what holds the person). Man holds on to action-dharma, but cause-dharma holds the man. The dharma a person follows can be affected by illusion and lead to defects. But the dharma that holds the soul is eternal, pure, and sacred. “Dharma protects those who protect it” — this is said in scriptures. If one protects the inner dharma (cause-dharma), the outer action-dharma protects him in return. In Bhishma’s life, his only sin was that he did not get angry at the right time. In Jatayu’s life, his only merit was that he got angry at the right time. As a result, Bhishma had to lie on a bed of arrows at death and suffer, while Jatayu attained the feet of Lord Rama. Thus, the Vedas say — “kāma” (desire) and “krodha” (anger) become merits when used to protect dharma and righteousness.

**Ye chaiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasās tāmasās cha ye
Matta eveti tām viddhi na tv aham teṣu te mayi (7-12)**

Comm. According to the previous explanation, the statement “even the form of maya is not separate from God” is supported in this verse. God says, “I am not controlled by the world that appears through nature and its qualities; rather, the entire world, including nature and qualities, is under My control.” The three qualities of material nature—sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance)—are part of My lower energy, arising from My original nature. I am not affected by the flaws of nature, qualities, or maya, nor am I influenced by them. Acharya Ramanuja says, “God, engaged in His divine play, has created this maya for His own amusement.” Accordingly, the world born from nature

gains its existence and expression from God and functions through Him. Nature is always benefited by the Supreme Soul, but no qualities or actions born from nature can reach the eternal essence of the Supreme Soul. The entire world is illuminated by the rays of the sun, but the sun is not affected by the shape, name, or qualities of the illuminated objects. Similarly, the world born from nature is illuminated by the light of the Supreme Soul, present as the soul within living beings, and appears in the form of sattva, rajas, and tamas qualities. The three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas—present in both living beings and matter, develop only through the existence of God. Just as the body feels hunger and thirst due to the presence of the soul, but the soul itself needs no food or water, similarly, nature can perform all actions only because of the Supreme Soul's existence. However, since God has no need to gain anything from the world, He remains free from desire and unaffected. According to Advaita philosophy, the world born from nature is created by the Supreme Soul in the form of maya. Just as clay is present in a pot or jar made from it and influences their functions, similarly, if the essence of the Supreme Soul is present in every particle of the world born from nature and its qualities, why shouldn't the flaws and changes of nature also be attributed to God? Why shouldn't the Supreme Soul, in the form of the soul, be considered affected by the dualities of pain and pleasure? Lord Shankaracharya's principle of "the world is an illusion" provides the solution to this. The Supreme Soul is not affected by any flaws or changes born from the nature and qualities of the world. The relationship between God and the world is not like that of clay and a pot (cause and effect) but like a rope mistaken for a snake—an illusory superimposition. Just as a snake appears on a rope due to ignorance or illusion, that imagined snake exists only because of the rope's reality and appears within the rope. The imagined snake form does not actually create or destroy anything in the real nature of the rope. Similarly, the Supreme Soul gives existence and expression to the world. The world develops in many names and forms, but God has no connection with this. The world cannot appear without the Supreme Soul. Thus, the world is superimposed on the Supreme Soul, just as an imagined snake is superimposed on a rope. The reason a rope appears as a snake to the viewer is due to ignorance or maya. Just as the true nature of the rope is not affected by the imagined snake, the Supreme Soul remains unaffected and unchanged by the qualities of the world. Due to ignorance, the world appears to living beings as maya. According to Shri Vallabhacharya, neither is God within nature and its qualities, nor are nature and its qualities within God. Nature and its qualities exist only within themselves, and they do not touch God. According to Shri Lokmanya Tilak, God does not exist only as divine manifestations in the objects and beings of the world; He also exists beyond the entire illusory world. The universe and its beings are not only God's form; there is also a transcendent form of God, beyond qualities, visible to those who have transcended qualities. Although scriptures describe the world with three qualities as appearing within the Supreme Soul, the nature of God, free from qualities, is completely independent, eternal, and all-powerful. According to Shri Vidyabachaspati, the word "I" in the Gita

refers to the imperishable Supreme Being. In the fifteenth chapter of the Gita, the “Purushottama Yoga” explains that the imperishable Supreme Being does nothing directly, but since He is the foundation of everything, He is considered to do everything. The imperishable Supreme Being is like the ocean; just as water, waves, foam, and bubbles arise from the ocean and are not separate from it, similarly, space, time, matter, the five elements, and everything are included within God. God has no foundation; He is the foundation of everything. This means the Supreme Soul is the conscious foundation, and the entire world is superimposed on Him. The forms with qualities (saguna-sakara) and without qualities (nirguna-nirakara) arising from the imperishable Supreme Being are not separate from Him. As stated in the previous verse, “There is nothing higher than Me,” the world, whether seen as an illusion superimposed on Brahman or as changes born from nature and its qualities, is considered to arise from the imperishable Supreme Being. However, the imperishable Supreme Being has only a “divine manifestation” relationship with it. The imperishable Supreme Being has no “binding” or “union” relationship with nature and its changes. In a binding relationship, two substances mix to create a new substance, where the original substances lose their individual forms and qualities. For example, mixing soda and charcoal creates gunpowder, which has different qualities and functions from soda or charcoal. A union relationship is where two substances mix but retain their forms, like mixing milk and water. In a “divine manifestation” relationship, where two things combine, one retains its independent existence while the other is superimposed on it. For example, a cow grazing on a mountain does not change the mountain’s form or name; the cow’s form is superimposed on the mountain. Similarly, various objects of the world appear in human intelligence and also disappear from it, but intelligence itself undergoes no change. This is called a “divine manifestation” relationship between intelligence and the objects of the world. Similarly, all objects in the world, characterized by sattva, rajas, and tamas qualities, are within God’s nature but have only a “divine manifestation” relationship with Him. According to Nyaya and Vaisheshika philosophies, the world is created through the combination of atomic elements due to God’s will. The atomic elements in earth, water, air, fire, and space are eternal. During cosmic dissolution, only these atomic elements remain. Atoms are the material cause of the world, and God is the efficient cause. According to Sankhya and Patanjali’s philosophy, the three-quality state of maya, or nature, is the material cause of the world. In Sankhya’s view, nature transforms to create the world. Nature transforms into the cosmic intelligence (mahat), which transforms into ego (ahankara), then into the five subtle elements (tanmatras), the five gross elements (mahabhutas), and the eleven senses; this is the order of creation. According to Vedanta, Brahman with maya is the material cause of creation. Lord Krishna in the Gita has repeatedly stated, “I create this world by relying on nature.” God is the creator, material cause, and efficient cause of the world. The world is not separate from Brahman. The entire world is the form of Brahman. Brahman has simply manifested and transformed into the form of the world. The realization that “everything is

Vasudeva (God)” is extremely rare among great souls. The development and expansion of all objects in the world arise from God’s lower nature. Since this nature belongs to God, it is not separate from Him. Through God’s divine play, nature causes the creation, expansion, and dissolution of everything. Although God is the cause and foundation of all states with the three qualities, in reality, nature and its qualities do not reside in God, nor does God reside in them. God is always beyond qualities, eternal, and established in His own glory. If everything resided in God, they would also be indestructible like Him. If God resided in them, His existence would be destroyed with their destruction. But God is eternal and everlasting. Therefore, God is neither in all of creation, nor is all of creation within Him. Thus, God says, “In the Vedas, I am described as beyond qualities, independent, and the master of maya, the Lord of all qualities.” When needed, by controlling nature and its qualities, “I incarnate in the world of beings and perform divine acts for the welfare of the world.”

**Tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat
Mohitaṁ nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam (7-13)**

Comm. All living beings are deluded by the actions of the three gunas — sattva, rajas, and tamas. Because of this, humans cannot easily understand Me or My eternal, guna-less truth. I exist beyond these three gunas. As long as even a little covering of gunas remains in a person’s inner mind, that person cannot understand My true, formless nature. In this verse, Lord Krishna wants to say that the entire universe is My form and is filled by Me. In this way, I am present everywhere and extremely close to all beings. But the beings who are under the influence of the gunas cannot understand My true form due to ignorance. Because of the influence of sattva, rajas, and tamas, many negative qualities arise in the human mind, such as desire for bodily pleasure, greed, eagerness to act, craving, attachment, hatred, carelessness, and clinging. These negative traits cover the knowledge-nature of the soul. As a result, the intellect gets confused and sees countless differences in worldly things. Therefore, a person cannot understand the true difference between truth and untruth, soul and not-soul. This is the result of being deluded by the effects and actions of sattva, rajas, and tamas. Like watching a movie on a screen — we get emotionally affected by the imaginary events shown, forgetting that the screen is real while the movie is not. Similarly, due to the effects and actions of nature and gunas, the world becomes deluded and loses sight of the eternal, unchanging, untouched Supreme Soul behind everything. People consider the flow of nature and gunas to be real and go through joys and sorrows. In this condition, a person cannot understand the mystery of the Lord’s saguna-nirguna and form-formless nature. Although God lives in every being as the inner controller (Antaryami), He stays above the guna-born impurities in their minds. These guna-based impurities arise from God’s external power (apara shakti). These do not have any connection with God’s eternal truth. Because of the influence of the impurities caused by gunas, beings turn away from God and become attracted to the

world. So, the effort to attain God or the curiosity to know His truth does not arise in their minds. According to Adi Shankaracharya, due to maya, which hides knowledge, the world appears like a dream. The world has no true reality. But Ramanujacharya considers maya as God’s divine power. God has created the world using this power. This power is actually the real cause of the world’s creation. All beings, from gods to trees and plants, are formed from sattva, rajas, and tamas — and are all forms of My body. All beings are deluded and do not know Me — who is ever-present in all as the soul. Why do all living beings have this sense of enjoyment even in low things? The reason is: the body is made of bone, flesh, and skin — all under tamasic nature. The gross body is filled with tamas. Within it, rajas becomes active. Because of sattva, knowledge (like discrimination and understanding) arises in the body. The soul residing in the body is above all this. But thinking “this body is mine” is called attachment, and thinking “I am the body” is called ego. Because of ego and attachment to the body, the soul becomes deluded. In this deluded state, a person cannot experience the divine, gunas-transcending truth of God. The soul is completely different from the body made of three gunas, and completely one with God. Even when there is no body, the soul remains. Even when thoughts arise in the mind, the soul is there. Even when there are no thoughts at all, the soul still exists. The impurities born from gunas cover the soul like a veil. As a result, people think the body is the soul and fall into attachment. Thinking proudly of the body’s actions is also delusion. In sattva, the body remains awake; in rajas, it dreams; and in tamas, it sleeps deeply. In all these states, the Supreme Soul remains untouched. Even through actions done with sattva, rajas, or tamas, one cannot know the formless, changeless Brahman form of God. Because the Supreme Soul is conscious and beyond all matter, nature, gunas, and actions. It is free from change, gunas, and beyond mind, intellect, and senses.

**daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te(7-14)**

Comm : The Lord says: Certainly, this divine Maya of Mine (Vishnu’s), consisting of the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas—is extremely wonderful. It is completely different from the qualities of material nature. Material nature appears directly as effects. The lower nature, which is both cause and effect, is called Maya. The body of the soul originates from Maya, exists in Maya, and ends in Maya. All visible worlds, made of qualities and actions, exist in Maya. That is why it is called “made of qualities” (gunamayī). Although the soul is a part of the Supreme Soul, it does not consider itself eternal, unchanging, and ever the same. Especially in humans, not seeing, not hearing, and not understanding everything is Maya. Even after knowing everything, not accepting it and not following it in practical life is the influence of Maya. The Supreme Person, the Supreme Soul, resides in the soul as its essence and is the cause of everything. Yet, the soul not having that knowledge (awareness) is being under Maya. Because of Maya, a person sometimes thinks himself sad, sometimes happy; sometimes weak, sometimes strong; sometimes wise,

sometimes foolish. That is why the Lord has called it “difficult to cross” (duratyaya). In the embodied state, due to identification with the body, it is hard to transcend Maya, which has the forms of sattva, rajas, and tamas qualities. Only those who take the Lord as their sole refuge, consider the Lord alone as the supreme goal, renounce attachment to body, wife, children, wealth, home, honor, position, etc., remain always content with the ordinances of scripture, take shelter in the Lord, and constantly worship Him—they alone, by the Lord’s grace, become capable of crossing this formidable Maya. This Maya is divine, meaning it is created by God. In the words “My Maya” (mama maya), Maya is described as “Mine,” meaning belonging to God. Sri Ramakrishna Deva has said: God has two Mayas—vidya (knowledge) and avidya (ignorance). Through His yoga-maya, He hides Himself and does not let anyone know Him. Knowledge, devotion, and detachment are the play of vidya-maya. By taking refuge in it, one reaches God. Those who remove avidya-maya get the vision of Him and attain Him. To drink the crystal-clear water of Sachchidananda, one must remove the mud of Maya. Sachchidananda is covered by the mud of Maya—those who push it aside and drink the water attain it. The word “Maya” is a symbol of the divine power that produces wonderful effects. This power hides the true form of the Lord and creates in the soul the idea of enjoyment in things like children and spouse. In the Vedanta text called “Sankshipta Shariraka,” it is clearly stated that the object of ignorance in the form of Maya is also the Supreme Brahman. That means both the substratum and the object of Maya are the attributeless Supreme Brahman. When the Lord shows causeless grace to a surrendered soul, the soul gets liberation from the clutches of Maya. The meaning of the words “daivi hi esha” is that Maya resides depending on the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Soul, and it is also contained within His own form as an object. For experiencing it, there is no lack of illuminating knowledge, but ignorance opposed to knowledge is the cause. In Vedanta texts, this process is described: When there was no division of soul, God, world, etc., at that time, Maya or avidya remained dormant in pure consciousness alone. Maya has no origin—it is beginningless. When the time for creation comes, in that part of Maya where the sattva quality is very pure like a mirror, the reflection of pure consciousness occurs, which is called the soul (jiva). Although Maya is one, the effects arising from it—the elements, the inner organs—are infinite, and the reflections in them are also infinite. This reflection is called chidabhasa or jiva. It must also be understood that Maya has no influence on the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Soul; rather, the soul in the form of reflection is under Maya’s control. Here, Sri Nilakantha ji has mentioned that in the Supreme Brahman, Maya exists as an adjunct (upadhi). When Maya enters the form of the Supreme Soul as an attribute, that Maya-qualified one is called Ishvara, and the reflection of that Ishvara is the jiva. In this, the substratum of Maya is established in both Ishvara and jiva. However, Ishvara is the original image (bimba), and jiva is the reflection. In this, the original image has full authority over the reflection. Whatever qualities and objects are in the form of the original image come into the reflection. In this way, the jiva also remains under Ishvara’s control. The original Supreme

Brahman, which is superimposed in both jiva and Ishvara, is described in Vedanta as “Sakshi” (witness). That “Sakshi” illuminates the superimposed Maya and the jiva in the form of its reflection. If the original image in front of a mirror is inert, the reflection is also inert, so it has no knowledge of itself or others. But in Maya, it is directly the reflection of the Supreme Brahman. Therefore, that reflection in the form of jiva, obtaining the conscious essence of the original image, knows itself and all others. As long as the jiva does not understand its oneness with the original Supreme Brahman, it considers the properties of the adjunct as its own. Just as a reflection in water etc. appears distorted when the water moves, similarly, whatever properties like happiness-suffering, disease, heat etc. are in the inner organ where the reflection occurs, they certainly come into the reflection. With this intention, the Lord has called Maya “duratyaya,” meaning worthy of not being crossed. In this, to the extent that the adjunct inner organ has powers of knowledge, action, etc., to that extent it becomes capable of knowing itself. If that knowledge, action, etc. are felt as “I” and “mine,” then the result is also to be enjoyed. When engaged in the worship of the Lord, the inner organ becomes pure, meaning all defects of the adjunct are removed; then, a pure reflection of the Supreme Brahman falls in that adjunct like a clear mirror. Through the guru’s instruction or contemplation and deep meditation on scripture, the unbroken thought “Aham Brahmasmi”—I am the blissful Supreme Brahman—arises. Through that mental modification, the root ignorance arising along with the inner organ is destroyed. When the basis of the reflection is destroyed, upon what will the reflection be superimposed? Therefore, this reflection in the form of jiva merges into the original Supreme Brahman. This is the Vedanta process of crossing Maya. Sri Vidyavachaspati ji has commented on this verse as the title that Maya and Prakriti are the same. Maya is of two types—one is divine Maya, the other is demonic Maya. Where sattva quality predominates, that is divine Maya; if rajas or tamas predominates, that is demonic Maya. Sattva-dominant divine Maya does not cover the soul too much. Therefore, a person bound by divine Maya takes refuge in the Lord and, by His grace, also crosses Maya. For the soul covered by demonic Maya, the idea of taking refuge in the Lord does not arise. Therefore, he always wanders seeking happiness in worldly objects and substances. Those who, without taking refuge in the Lord, take refuge in demigods—even if demonic Maya-bound persons attain Brahmaloaka—they return and repeatedly wander in the cycle of birth and death. Because Brahmaloaka is also within the scope of gunamayi Maya. Sri Bhagavan says: Whoever comes to My refuge crosses this Maya. It is said that the fish which goes near the fisherman’s feet does not get caught in the net. The word “prapada” means the sole of the foot. If a fish clings to the fisherman’s sole, it does not get caught in the net. In Sri Madhvacharya’s explanation, Maya is the goddess presiding over sattva, rajas, and tamas qualities. It is very difficult to transcend the immense power of Durga form with tamas quality of this Maya Devi. Because this Maya power is the basis of all creation, which depends on Maya-adhisha, the Supreme Brahman. The Lord’s this wonderful Maya is expressed as Sri, Bhu, and Durga forms. Without the Lord’s grace, even the combined power of many Brahmas,

Rudras, and Indras cannot equal the shadow of this Maya. The way the Lord shows grace to the soul is very wonderful. Only devotees understand this grace of the Lord in their hearts. The Lord's nature is so generous and loving that when He gives something, He does not leave a chance to say that He gave it. For this reason, His Maya is called "daivi." Swami Shivananda has said: God is the lord of Maya and has full control over it. The veil of ignorance hides the soul from the Supreme Soul. This veil is Maya. When the veil of ignorance is removed, the form of the Supreme Soul is immediately revealed. The individual soul abandons its separate ego identity and experiences oneness with the Supreme Soul's essence. By abandoning all kinds of named identities and religions and becoming solely surrendered to the Lord alone, one transcends this ignorance in the form of Maya.

**Na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyanti narādhamāḥ
Māyayāpahṛta-jñānā āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ (7-15)**

Comm. People who are bad, desire, anger, etc., and get involved in bad deeds, don't worship me. People with bad nature, whose intelligence and knowledge are lost due to illusion, and who are proud and arrogant, don't come to my shelter. Those people lost in the three qualities of Maya, who have lost intelligence and discrimination, and act badly only for enjoyment, spend their whole life collecting money. Those who do not accept the existence of God, and rely on their own pride, arrogance, and ego, and get involved in bad deeds as harmful as poison, are called people of bad nature (Asuri). People of bad nature, during the time of the divine play (Leela) of the Supreme Being, try in vain to stop him using their pride, power, and strength. Those people who are slaves of desire and get involved in bad actions like immorality, and who rely on greed and do things like deceit, fraud, and lies, and who, being slaves of anger, do harm, enmity, and bad behavior – these people are called "sinful" (Dushkriti). The intelligence of these sinful people works against the good of the world. The all-powerful Supreme Soul is present in everyone's heart. The nature (Prakriti) works completely under the direction of God. But the bad person does not accept this. People who do not believe in scriptures, the words of the Guru, the sayings of saints, etc., and who are completely ignorant about God's existence and power, holding onto nature and nature's power – these people are called "very bad" (Naradham). This rare human being, who has the right to attain God, even after getting this body, goes towards hell, animal births, etc., by doing sins, injustice, etc. Not recognizing their own true self (eternal soul), and considering the fragile body as everything, and being attracted to enjoyment, moving towards the world – this is being trapped by Maya (illusion). Not having God-consciousness is called ignorance. In the ignorant person, God-consciousness remains in a sleeping state. At the right time and in suitable circumstances, the divine consciousness within the person wakes up, just like a sprout comes out from a seed. At that time, the person tries to remove the covering of Maya (illusion) by chanting knowledge. Even if a person is trapped by Maya, the Lord

continues to show mercy towards them. Good conduct and bad conduct are the result of the person's own actions. Basically, they are all parts of the Supreme Soul. Only because of doing bad deeds, they do not have interest in the Supreme Soul. If for any reason, love for God awakens in the heart, God accepts them. Therefore, God bears the name of "Patit Pavana" (Savior of the fallen). The saying of the saint Tulsidas comes to mind; when Vibhishana, Ravana's brother, wanted to meet Lord Rama, the gatekeeper stopped him. To get permission, a messenger was sent to Lord Rama; Lord Rama said, "Do you think that Vibhishana, the evil one, wants to come to me out of foolishness?" From this, it is proved that as long as bad deeds, ignorance, and sinful nature remain in the person's heart, it is a long way off for them to go to God's shelter; the person will not even listen to God's name.

**Chatur-vidhā bhajanti mām janāḥ sukr̥tino 'rjuna
Ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī cha bharatarṣabha (7-16)**

Comm. Lord Krishna, the Master of Yoga, said in the earlier verse that sinful people cannot take shelter of God. In this verse, He speaks about those fortunate and virtuous people who have love for God and worship Him. Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas! The sick and troubled person, the one who desires liberation and wants to reach God, the one who wishes for wealth, prosperity, and happiness in this life and the next, and the one who has gained knowledge through study of scriptures and guidance from spiritual teachers—these four types of fortunate and virtuous people worship Me. There are four kinds of blessed people who worship Me: The person in pain, The curious one who wants to know the truth, The one who desires wealth, And the one who has spiritual knowledge. These four types of devotees have different desires, but all are devoted to God. Whether someone prays for wealth or for help in trouble, if they pray to God, they are lucky and good. Worshipping God itself is a sign of being virtuous. When a person suffers from pain, sorrow, or faces danger like untimely death, they pray to God to save themselves. When a person depends on physical strength but everything fails, and they finally turn to God, they are called an "Ārta" (one in distress). Though they call God during trouble, they often cannot keep faith in Him till the end. In the earlier verse, Lord Krishna said such people are covered by illusion (Māyā), and their wisdom is lost. But if someone surrenders to God fully, thinking "If You want to protect me, protect me. If You want to punish me, do that," that person changes from an Ārta into a true devotee. God tests the faith of devotees during hard times. During such moments, spiritual awareness and faith wake up, and the person turns fully toward God. In the Mahabharata, when Uttara (Abhimanyu's wife) cried in distress, God sent Sudarshan Chakra to destroy the Brahmāstra and save her womb. In the court of the Kauravas, Draupadi was helpless and called Krishna, the dearest to the gopīs, with names like Govinda, Dwārakāvāsī, and Keśava. She asked, "O Lord, can You not see how my honour is being insulted by the Kauravas?" Hearing her call, Lord Krishna's heart melted. He appeared as endless cloth

and protected Draupadi's dignity. Similarly, in the deep forest, He heard the call of a suffering deer and in the river, He saved the elephant Gajendra. One who wants to know the soul and God deeply is called a Jijñāsu (the curious seeker). This type of devotee gives up material desires and wants to understand spiritual truth. Even during problems caused by destiny, the Jijñāsu devotee remains steady and worships God with firm desire to know Him. One who wants freedom and oneness with God is also a Jijñāsu. Great devotees like Parīkṣit and Hanumān were such seekers of divine knowledge. Among such devotees, Uddhava is very well known. Lord Krishna gave him divine teachings, which are known as "Uddhava Gita." A person who wants only wealth, kingdom, or power and prays to God for it is called an Arthārthī. He has faith in God and believes God can give everything because He has all powers and treasures. God is full of mercy and just waits for the devotee's sincere prayer. God never runs out of anything and can grant anything to anyone. A devotee who fully surrenders to God and accepts His greatness gets all his desires fulfilled by His grace. The closer a person becomes to God, the less selfish he becomes. Taking shelter in God brings His special mercy. The difference between a soul and God is that God is the giver of all joy, but people under illusion don't believe this. They think worldly pleasures come from money, strength, or effort. Examples of Arthārthī devotees are Dhruva, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Sugrīva. A Jñānī is one who has gained knowledge about God through proper practice and guidance. He has no desires left and worships God naturally. A Jñānī gives up all desires created by illusion. A Jñānī is also one who loves God without any selfish motive. Among Jñānī devotees, Prahlāda is most famous. From childhood, Prahlāda had realization of God and could tolerate all his father's torture. His faith was so strong that God Himself appeared from a pillar when he wished. Saints like Śuka, Nārada, Bhīṣma, and Sanaka are known as Jñānī devotees. One who asks God for something is an Arthārthī. One who cries to God for help is an Ārta. One who wants to understand God is a Jijñāsu. One who knows and loves God deeply is a Jñānī. Ārta, Jijñāsu, and Arthārthī are called Sukṛtī because of good deeds in past lives. They grow in faith and understanding of God's greatness. When they become free from material desires, they can constantly worship God and realize the soul. An Arthārthī is still attached to results of actions, so he cannot fully understand God's love. The Ārta remembers God in danger because he sees no other way to escape. The scriptures say: "Forgetting God in trouble is the real misfortune, and remembering Him in wealth is real fortune." In the Bhāgavatam, Kuntī prays to Krishna, "O Lord, let misfortunes come again and again because they bring Your presence." When You come, I forget the world. The true Ārta never asks anything from God for his own comfort. So, Ārta is better than Arthārthī. A Jijñāsu is not attached to worldly pleasures and remains steady in suffering. His love and devotion are stronger than those of the Ārta and Arthārthī. A Jñānī devotee understands God's full nature and worships Him always, everywhere, and in all forms. Therefore, the Jñānī devotee is the best. Some great scholars explain Ārta, Arthārthī, Jijñāsu, and Jñānī as different forms of love for God. For example, Gopīs were so filled with longing that

they became Ārta when separated from Krishna. “Artha” also means someone who longs for God’s vision, not just money. A Jijñāsu tries to see God in every tree, mountain, river, and living being. He takes shelter of a true Guru to understand God. The Jñānī first loves his own soul, but later, by Guru’s grace, he sees everything as God. Then he experiences unique joy of being free while alive and becomes truly wise.

**“Teṣāṁ jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino ‘tyartham ahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ” (7-17)**

Comm. O’ Arjuna! Among these four types of devotees – the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the person desiring wealth, and the wise person – these wise persons are considered very special. The wise person always worships God, therefore they are called “Nityayukta” (always connected). One who forgets themselves completely, relies solely and constantly only on God for refuge, and always remembers God, is called Nityayukta. While doing all worldly and spiritual activities, the wise devotee remembers God’s name and stays connected with Him. To worship God only for the pure bliss of it, without any desire, is called “Ekabhakti”. Because the wise person possesses these two qualities – Nityayukta and Ekabhakti – they are the best among all devotees. The wise devotee has truly understood God’s real nature and secrets, and this understanding has been achieved. In their view, they see only the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) and nothing else. Their mind and intellect, always free from attachment and desire, remain absorbed only in God. For this intense, unique love, God becomes very dear to them. What God loves, that thing or person also becomes dear to God. There is an attitude of non-dual love between God and the devotee. Material troubles cause some distressed people to forget God. Similarly, some people seeking wealth, after their desires are fulfilled, become ungrateful and do not remember God consistently. The wise person seeks refuge with the Guru and engages in service and scripture study, sometimes forgetting God. But for the wise person (Gyani), the Supreme Soul appears as their own Self. Whatever they do, wherever they are, at whatever time, in whatever way – the wise person experiences the Supreme Soul within themselves. The devotion of the wise person towards God is unique. Unique means that their love is directed towards no one else. After attaining complete knowledge, devotion automatically remains single-pointed within towards God. The love between the wise person and God is like that between Sita and Rama, and Radha and Krishna. This is not like the love between a chakor (bird) and the moon, where they are separate; their love is one. There is no division in their love; their mutual love is boundless. Just as Radha sees Krishna within herself and Krishna sees Radha within himself, similarly, the wise person’s soul is God, and God’s soul is the wise person. The enjoyment of God is called the wise person, and the bliss of the wise person is called God. Both are full of existence, consciousness, and bliss (Chit-Anand). Both are one wave, one bliss. The wise person sees the inner Controller (Anami Lila Purusha), the Supreme Soul, as their main Self. Therefore, as the Soul, the Supreme Soul becomes extremely dear to the wise person.

The meaning of the word ‘atyartham’ is without separation. That is, there is no separation between the wise person and God.

**Udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam
Āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evānuttamām gatiṁ (7-18)**

Comm. All devotees who come to God with a purpose, giving up worldly pleasures and possessions, are virtuous and generous. Those who establish a relationship with God and surrender to Him are also called generous. The four types of devotees—those in distress, those seeking wealth, the curious, and the wise—have a devoted relationship with God, making them generous. These devotees strongly believe that God is all-powerful and supremely compassionate. They rely on God to be free from the sorrows and pains of the world. These devotees move toward God to uplift their souls, preventing them from falling into ruin. They have firm faith that God alone grants the results of their actions. Since their main goal is to connect with God, they later become capable of attaining divine knowledge. The specialty of devotion to God is that it creates purity in the heart and gradually increases love for God. In some cases, the word “generous” is interpreted as “giver.” According to devotees like Ramanuja, “worshipping God is like an offering from the soul to God”. Therefore, all devotees who remember God are generous. Among them, the wise devotee has no goal other than being constantly connected with God. The place of a pure devotee is always in God’s heart, and God resides directly in the heart of the pure devotee. The bond between a pure devotee and God is so close that there is no difference between them. A devotee whose mind and intellect are absorbed in God without distraction is a united soul. Lord Krishna firmly believes that a wise devotee who fully surrenders to Him is the best, remaining steadfast in Him as the ultimate reality. Such a devotee stays in constant devotion and bliss, attaining supreme joy.

**Bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyati
Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ (7-19)**

Comm. A great wise person gains self-realization in this life after many births of spiritual practice and accumulated good deeds. He realizes that “Vasudeva is everything”, meaning the Supreme God, the Lord of all, is present throughout the entire world and universe. The wise person who attains this true knowledge can actually feel and experience this truth. For the upliftment of a soul, God Himself gives this final human birth. Every person has the right to know and realize this Supreme Truth. If in this human life one gets good company, studies scriptures like the Gita, and feels inspired to do spiritual practice, then the seeker should understand that God has shown special mercy on him. From faith, trust, and practice comes devotion, and from devotion comes the realization of this Supreme Truth. First, when someone starts to believe in God, he begins to feel a little love for God. Slowly, this love for God grows, and he gains proper knowledge about God’s true form. After understanding the full nature of God, his love for God reaches the

highest level. The final stage of devotion and knowledge is called Parā-jñāna, matured knowledge or divine power, where one realizes the truth that “Vasudeva is everything.” After many lives of practice, the one who realizes this truth becomes free and attains God as liberation. He does not worship just any idol or statue of Vasudeva. Instead, he feels the presence of the Supreme Lord inside his own heart. For such a wise person, the final goal of life is to surrender to the feet of God and experience supreme joy by feeling that “everything is Vasudeva.” Such great souls are rarely seen in this world. In the third verse of this chapter, Lord Krishna says that out of thousands of people, only one tries to attain real perfection. And among those who try, only one knows God in truth. So, it is very rare to find someone who truly knows the Supreme. A great wise man becomes one with the Supreme, and because of this, he also becomes non-dual—meaning, he sees no separation. Birth and death, sin and virtue, attachment and hatred, heaven and hell, coming and going—all these continue until one realizes the knowledge of the Supreme Self. This supreme knowledge is that “Vasudeva is everything” — which means that except for the Supreme, there is no other real existence. In reality, there is nothing in the name of the world. What we call the world is not different from God. Brahman (Supreme Reality) has appeared as this world. “All this is truly Brahman” — this is the clear and unchanging realization of the truth behind all causes. The one who sees this in all beings remains steady in the vision of the Supreme in everything. The word “Vasudeva” is made of two parts: “Vasu” and “Deva”. “Vasu” means the one who lives in everything and in whom everything lives. “Deva” means one who shines or reveals. The seer, the seen, and the act of seeing — all these are expressions of the Supreme’s form. Leaving aside Vedānta, if we look at other religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj—in none of them do we find the truth that “Vasudeva is everything.” At the beginning of creation, only God existed, and even after its end, only God will remain. So, during the middle time, it is God Himself who appears as this world. That’s why all these visible objects are nothing but Vasudeva. In this world, in many names, many forms, and many shapes — it is God alone who exists. As long as the eyes are turned towards the world, we cannot feel that everything is God. “This entire universe is Supreme Brahman”—this is the truth. “Sa evedam sarvam” – means “He alone is all this.” “Ātmaivedam sarvam” – means “The Self alone is all this.” “Anamevedam sarvam” – means “That One alone is all this.” The meaning of these scriptural statements is: • I alone am everything. • The Self is everything. • That One is everything. This is the idea of sāmānyādhikaraṇa (common relation). The meaning of sāmānyādhikaraṇa is: two different things existing under one same category. Cloth and pot are two different objects. How can they be considered as one? How can we say “Everything is God” and “God is everything”? Rāmānuja said: The Supreme is the soul (śarīrī), and the beings and the world are His body (śarīra). The Supreme is the shelter, and the beings and the world are dependent on Him. The Supreme is the source, and the beings are the supported ones. The Supreme is the master, and the beings are the servants. Just like we say a person is made

up of the soul, body, mind, and thoughts. All these together are called a person. Similarly, when we say everything is God, that includes earth, air, water, sky, fire, mind, cosmic intelligence (mahat-tattva), and nature. All these are part of God. The connection between inert nature (apara prakṛti) and conscious nature (parā prakṛti) is what forms the world. This world is the body of the Supreme who is present in it. From the physical body to the soul inside, everything is nothing but the one Supreme. Śrī Nimbakācārya said: There are two conditions of one object – one is the causal state and the other is the manifested or active state. For example: This is a mango tree, this is a banyan tree, this is its leaf, flower, fruit — all these are the expressed state of the tree. When the tree is in seed form, that is the causal state. In the seed form, God exists. And during the time of use or display, He appears as branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits — many forms. In the manifested state, there is duality. In the causal state, there is oneness or non-duality. “Vasudevaḥ Sarvam” means the power of the Supreme appears as the individual soul and the world. This is the divine energy (śakti) of the Supreme, which is seen as the soul and the world. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya explained that thinking two different things as one happens due to illusion. Because of lack of right understanding, two separate things appear as one. But when true knowledge comes, we realize that one is true and the other is false. Still, the false thing is not different from the real one. The real thing is seen in the form of the false thing. For example, a rope is mistaken for a snake due to illusion. But once knowledge comes, we know it is just a rope, not a snake. So, the snake is only a false appearance of the rope, created by ignorance. In the verse, the word “sarva” (all) means: earth, water, air, sky, fire, and all the countless things made from them. All these exist in the one Supreme. Because people cannot recognize the Supreme, they see everything as separate. But in reality, only one truth exists in all, and nothing is separate from it. So, whatever appears to be separate is false. Just like a snake appears without a real base, this illusion too appears without truth. Therefore, this world is not separate from the Supreme.

**Kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyanti ’nya-devatāḥ
Taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā (7-20)**

Comm. In the fifteenth verse of this chapter, the Lord says that people with a demonic nature, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, resort to falsehood, deceit, and betrayal, and do not worship the Lord. The Lord states that a person whose knowledge is taken away by desire is driven by their nature to seek different deities for fulfilling desires in this world and the next. The desire for sensual pleasures and their fulfillment weakens a person’s power of discrimination. Desires for women, children, wealth, honor, and status cloud a wise person’s inner vision toward the divine soul. Such desire-driven people turn to gods like Indra, Varuna, Kubera, and Yama, performing sacrifices, chanting mantras, undertaking rituals, vows, and worship to fulfill specific desires. For worshipping the attributeless and formless Lord, scriptures accept five forms—Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesha, and Surya—as representations of the Lord. This verse does not criticize these

five forms of deities. Every person is bound by their own nature. Actions and desires from past lives accumulate as impressions, forming a person's nature. A person's nature, shaped by these impressions, varies from one individual to another. Driven by this nature, desire-driven people develop different inclinations to worship various deities. Without strong and firm reasoning, it is impossible for a seeker to remain aware of the divine soul for liberation. In pursuit of peace, people chase material pleasures in the world. Even after obtaining material objects, the peace they seek is not found. This is called knowledge stolen by desire. The phrase "bound by their nature" means that tamasic people worship tamasic deities, rajasic people worship rajasic deities, and sattvic people worship sattvic deities. Those who wish to transcend qualities worship the Supreme Lord. Where there is illusion and pride, desires take many forms. There is no end to desires in human life. Having desires in the mind is not a fault or sin. Whether a resolution in the mind leads to the soul's liberation or downfall is determined by discerning intellect. The distinction between the soul and non-soul, and the determination of desire in accordance with scriptures and righteousness, is made through a discerning and detached nature. Desire clouds intellect and knowledge, leading the soul to downfall. Due to ignorance, people turn away from the Supreme Lord, the inner controller, and seek other deities. The desire for happiness is not created by nature or the Lord but by humans themselves. Therefore, humans are capable of removing desire from their minds if they choose. Worshipping other deities with desire may lead to wealth and prosperity, but not liberation. Only Vasudeva (the Supreme Lord) can free the soul from worldly suffering and grant liberation. Even if there are many desires, if the worshiped deity is the Supreme Soul, the worshiper's liberation is certain.

**Yo yo yām yām tanuṁ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārchitum ichchhati
Tasya tasyāchalaṁ śraddhām tām eva vidadhāmy aham (7-21)**

Comm : The devotee worships which deity idol with respect in order to fulfill their desires. The Lord strengthens the devotee's faith towards that very deity. Because all the gods and goddesses are only the Lord. Only by good fortune does devotion arise in one's heart. Therefore the Lord says that He never breaks anyone's devotion, but instead fulfills it. The worship of the deity, the blessings of the great souls, when the desires of the mind are fulfilled, the devotion and devotion of the devotee towards those great souls and deity increases. By worshipping a specific deity for a specific desire, the devotion towards those deities is awakened by the Lord, and the fruit is also given through them. This example is; some devotees worship Ganesha to gain knowledge, to attain a beautiful wife they worship Mother Parvati, and for good health they worship the Sun God. In this way, the scriptures have the method of worship of different gods and goddesses for different desires. All the gods and goddesses are parts of the Lord's universal form. Therefore, only according to the Lord's will do the deities grant boons to the worshipper. The Lord is present as the Antaryami (In-dwelling Spirit) in the heart of the living being, knowing all the desires and feelings there. The Lord is very generous and compassionate.

He has given the devotee complete freedom as to how they should fulfill their desired aspirations. Knowing the devotee's desire and feeling, He arranges what is beneficial for them. Here the question arises that why does the Lord, knowing full well, allow humans to enjoy, grant fulfillment of desires, and give preference to them, thereby making them even more entangled in the maya (illusion) of the world? The solution to this is that the Lord's divinity is selfless and impartial, that is, without bias. He does not reach any obstacle in the desire and feeling of any devotee. But He gives the fruit in such a way that even if they get what they desire, they do not attain ultimate peace or happiness in it. Based on that devotion and devotion, one reaches the state of ultimate peace and bliss by searching, and finally takes refuge in the Lord. From another perspective, the solution is that the devotee worships whichever deity, it should be considered that the Supreme Soul Himself accepts that worship in that form. If one serves an animal also considering it as God, then in that form God also appears for a darshan. It is said that when the devotee Namdev was making roti for offering, he brought water, while a dog came and took the roti in its mouth and ran away. Namdev, holding ghee to anoint it, ran behind the dog, running and running, shouting; "Lord! Stay, it would be easy for him to eat dry bread if he anoints it with a little ghee." At that very moment, for that reason, the Lord manifested before Namdev in the form of a dog. Its meaning is that the Lord keeps all paths open for the upliftment of the devotee. The devotee, inspired by their own nature, in whichever path they go, finally becomes dependent on the Lord. The living being and the deity, all are under the will of the Supreme. Everything happens only by the will of all the Lords. The Supreme Lord, in the form of the Paramatman, is present in both the living being and the deity. It has been determined in the Vedanta Sutras that according to past impressions, actions proceed further, and the fruit of that action also obtained from God according to karma.

**Sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārāadhanam īhate
Labhate cha tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hi tāt (7-22)**

Comm. Lord Shri Krishna says that devotees with desires worship different deities with faith established by Me. Such devotees sincerely worship those specific divine forms. Through those deities, they undoubtedly receive the results that have already been decided by Me. No other deity has the power to give more or less than what I have ordained. If the deities had the unlimited power to give fruits, then God would not be one — there would be many gods. It is only through faith and devotion that people receive the results they desire. With faith and dedication, their desires get fulfilled. When the soul is deeply connected with faith, then the power of the soul enters that faith. The mind or emotion the soul follows becomes powerful. When faith becomes strong, it becomes capable of fulfilling desires. God says, "I alone am the giver of results. The deities are only mediums." In reality, it is My power that works through the deities. And according to My will, the deities fulfill the desires of the worshippers. According to Acharya Shankar, the Supreme God is all-knowing. He alone knows the results of all kinds of actions. Even

though people depend on deities to fulfill their desires, in truth, the one who gives the result is the Supreme God Himself. God watches over the devotee's welfare and gives the result at the right time. Because God's aim is to uplift the soul. Whatever happens in the world is done by God. A devotee who understands this secret becomes a servant of God. A pure devotee, whenever he desires something, prays only to God. God listens to the call of His devotee — this has been true in all ages.

**Antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tad bhavati alpamedhasām
Devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api (7-23)**

Comm. The results or favors obtained from deities by their worshippers are temporary and perishable. Whether in this world or the next, the duration of these results ends after the enjoyment is over. The outcome of any desire-driven action is impermanent and leads to destruction. In the Lord's creation, everything from the tiniest insect to Brahma, including gods, yakshas, gandharvas, and humans, is subject to change and destruction. People with limited intelligence, desiring children, grandchildren, honour, wealth, or enjoyment, collect materials for worship and spend much time and energy worshipping deities. Due to the peak of their devotion, they may achieve the desired results. However, the obtained results bind humans further and cause sorrow due to their fleeting nature. The end of enjoyment is called sorrow. Although fulfilling each desire may bring momentary happiness, another desire arises, trapping humans in the cycle of pleasure and pain across lifetimes. If the same materials and time are used to worship the Lord selflessly instead of deities, a person could become an eternal devotee and attain supreme bliss. Because people with limited intelligence prioritize material happiness, they do not inquire about the ultimate goal of human life. Devotees of deities have desires for perishable things and consider deities separate from the Lord, so they are called people of limited intelligence. Such people are completely ignorant about liberation, moksha, and attaining supreme bliss. By performing sacrifices and offerings to deities like Indra, one may attain Indra's heavenly realm. However, after the enjoyment of the results of such sacrifices ends, the person must return to the mortal world. Alternatively, when the deities' duration ends, they perish along with them. People with limited knowledge fail to understand that the Lord accepts all worship in the form of deities. Through selfless worship of the Lord via the path of devotion, a pure devotee attains eternal blissful liberation, which is true knowledge. Even if one worships the Lord with a specific purpose, it is never in vain. The Lord is infinite, and His mercy and compassion are also infinite. The Lord is the ultimate giver of happiness to living beings. The glory of awakened devotion to the Lord is such that, whether the devotee's wishes are fulfilled or not, the devotional spirit never goes to waste. The devotional spirit remains in the heart and, at the right time, draws the devotee closer to the Lord. Even if a devotee tries to break this bond for some reason, the Lord never breaks the connection from His side. Even after many lifetimes, this devotional spirit leads to the realization of the Lord, uniting devotion, the devotee,

and the Lord. Worshipping the Lord is very simple and does not require rituals, rules, or effort. It only requires sincere devotion and faith. No matter how skilled a person is in material knowledge, art, or skills, without spiritual knowledge, they are truly of limited intelligence. One who has true knowledge of the Lord's nature and glory is all-knowing. To a wise devotee, the entire world is the Lord's form. Thus, such a devotee always attains the Lord. By constantly remembering the Lord, keeping Him in the heart as a witness, and feeling oneness with His presence in the world, one experiences union with the Supreme Soul, which is attaining the Lord. The Lord says that His pure devotee attains this state of divine realization.

**Avyaktaṁ vyaktim āpannam manyante mām abuddhayaḥ
Param bhāvam ajānantaḥ mamāvyayam anuttamam (7-24)**

Comm : The Supreme Soul, who is full of truth, knowledge, and bliss, takes the help of His divine power (Maya) and appears in a special form for the good of the world. That all-powerful Lord alone takes a human form and appears on Earth. Lord Krishna says, "I am formless." Whether at the time of incarnation or in My all-pervading state, there is no difference in My invisible nature. Just as the soul, which is ruled by karma, remains unmanifest at the time of destruction and takes visible forms like human, animal, bird, etc., at the time of creation - I too do not become a body like that. I always remain unchanged and eternal. Foolish and ignorant people think of Me as an ordinary human being. They cannot understand My supreme, eternal, and matchless divine form. To fulfill the desires of devotees, saints, and sages after many lifetimes, I take a human form with the help of the original divine energy and descend as an incarnation. Seeing the Lord in an incarnation form is like seeing God Himself. This is called the form with attributes (saguna-sakara), but even that is actually invisible. If the soul is unmanifest, then how can the Supreme Soul not be unmanifest? The soul expresses itself through the body. No one can see the soul separately from the body, senses, mind, and intellect. The whole universe is the expansion of God's higher and lower energy. He is the supreme cause and support of this nature and is the highest and best of all. The Lord who appears in a visible form with qualities is also the same formless and attributeless Supreme. His appearance and disappearance are not like the birth and death of ordinary beings. Ignorant and foolish people cannot understand this. Out of His great compassion and love for surrendered souls, the Lord appears in many forms with His eternal, all-powerful, unborn nature to give support to the surrendered beings. Through His divine plays, He fills the beings of the world with joy. During incarnation, God does not go through birth and death like other creatures. When God appears in forms like fish, turtle, or man, and then disappears after His divine play ends and returns to His supreme abode, — it is completely different from the birth and death of worldly beings. There is no one greater than God. God's nature never changes or transforms. The question of whether God is formless or has form only arises in the minds of the unintelligent. God says, "I am neither formless nor with form. I

am not a particular object or statue.” There is nothing in the universe for which I am not the cause. God is present fully in all places, times, objects, and beings, — and beyond all these, He remains always one, full of divine joy, eternally pure and supremely holy. Even when He is invisible, He can appear; even when He appears, He remains invisible. God creates the world only for the welfare of beings — and arranges everything for the good of the world. In the word “Anuttamam,” this feeling of God is expressed. He who is Himself a yogi and gives yoga to others is called Yogeshwara. Lord Krishna is a human-bodied yogi and also the Yogeshwara. He is the form of truth, knowledge, and bliss, full of eternal joy and wisdom. By following the right spiritual path and rising gradually, great realized souls stay in that supreme state. Even though they have a body, they remain united with God in His supreme form, which is called the unmanifest state. Foolish people who are caught in desires cannot see the real unmanifest form of such great souls because of focusing only on their physical body. Ordinary people also cannot easily understand the real, unchanging divine nature of God — which is the base of all beings and which, when known, leads to the highest goal.

**Nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ
Mūḍho ’yaṁ nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam (7-25)**

Comm. Most people are unable to understand the true nature of the Lord, and this verse explains why. The Lord says that He covers Himself with His internal energy, so His complete form is not revealed to living beings. Therefore, deluded and foolish people do not accept Him as birthless and imperishable. Due to His illusory energy, the Lord remains hidden in such a way that ordinary people’s vision cannot penetrate this veil of illusion. However, the entire creation is not hidden from Him. Those who consider Him subject to birth and death, instead of birthless and imperishable, remain concealed from Him by His yogamaya (divine illusory energy). The Lord’s divine energy, which acts according to His will, is called yogamaya. Relying on this yogamaya, the Lord, who is the master of illusion and possesses six opulences, takes on divine qualities and performs incarnations in the mortal world. Through this yogamaya, the attributeless Brahman becomes endowed with attributes, and the inactive Brahman becomes active. Just as it is difficult to understand the nature of Brahman, determining the nature of yogamaya is also extremely challenging. The visible world’s existence is as real as the three-fold (sattva, rajas, tamas) yogamaya. Sri Ramakrishna Dev said that within yogamaya, the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas—function. Yogamaya is the primal energy through which the world of living beings is created and which also has an attractive power. The conscious soul is the purusha (male principle), and the conscious energy is prakriti (nature). This conscious energy is yogamaya. Acharya Shankar said that the combination of the three qualities is called “yoga,” and the illusion that facilitates this process is yogamaya. Yogamaya is responsible for creation, sustenance, and dissolution. Brahman remains detached. As soon as a gross body is formed, the living being becomes entangled in illusion. Due to

mistaking non-self objects for the self, the living being cannot know the Lord. When Mahamaya (the great illusion) is pleased, She frees the living being from delusion, making it possible to have a vision of the Supreme Lord. To gain Mahamaya's grace, one must worship Her energy. When Mahamaya opens the way, the vision of God becomes possible. Lord Krishna, the master of yoga, says that He is not directly visible to everyone. Only a person who has reached the mature state of yoga truly perceives Him. In the heart of a pure devotee, the Lord manifests in a divine, blissful, and knowledge-filled form. For non-devotees, He remains hidden by His eternal internal energy. Just as clouds covering the sun do not reduce its full brilliance, the sun appears invisible only because vision is obstructed by clouds. Similarly, the Supreme Soul is not truly hidden by yogamaya but appears invisible to foolish people due to the lack of the eye of knowledge. Those who love the Lord, are devoted to Him, and have full faith in His qualities, glory, and divine play are the ones to whom the Lord chooses to reveal Himself. Ordinary, ignorant, and foolish people cannot understand that Sri Krishna is beyond birth and death, eternal, true, and the embodiment of knowledge and bliss—the Supreme Lord Himself. An ignorant being can overcome ignorance and know their true self, but understanding the essence of the Supreme Soul depends entirely on the Lord's grace. Only if the Lord wills it can His devotee become capable of knowing Him. By surrendering to the Lord, He removes ignorance and lifts the veil of illusion. In the Srimad Bhagavatam (10.43.17), when Sri Krishna entered the arena with Balarama, He appeared to wrestlers as a thunderbolt-like strong body, to ordinary people as the best of men, to women as the embodiment of Cupid, to cowherd women as their kin, to wicked kings as a punisher, to His parents as a child, to Kansa as death, to the ignorant as a cosmic form, to yogis as the supreme truth, and to the Vrishni devotees as their chosen deity. Thus, the Lord's yogamaya is extraordinary, unique, and divine. He takes on forms according to the feelings of devotees and non-devotees. Swami Shivananda said that when a magician performs tricks, he is not deluded by them because he knows the art of magic. Similarly, the Lord is a great magician. In the play of the world, the illusion He creates does not delude Him or His close devotees, as this illusion originates from Him, and His devotees know its secret. Ignorant people in the world, being spectators, get deluded by it. The Lord desires that to have His vision, one must undertake spiritual practice. Seeing the love, longing, eagerness, yearning, and effort of the spiritual seeker, the Lord becomes pleased and removes the veil of illusion. To create devotees by teaching living beings the path to seek Him in the world, the Lord keeps Himself hidden. If a person loves Him, desires to attain Him, and searches for Him with their heart, they find Him.

**Vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni chārjuna
Bhaviṣyāni cha bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaśchana (7-26)**

Comm. The Lord says to Arjuna that He knows everything about all beings in the universe, including deities, humans, animals, and insects, across infinite cycles of

time—what births they have passed through, their current state, and their future destiny. He knows all beings completely in the past, present, and future. Residing in the heart of every being as the Supreme Soul, He sees their past, present, and future. In His infinite knowledge, everything in creation is always fully visible to Him. Except for His devoted followers, no one else can truly know Him. Earlier in this chapter, the Lord said that among thousands of people, only a few strive to know Him. Among those perfected beings who make such efforts, only one truly understands His nature as “Vasudeva is everything.” For the Lord, there is no distinction between past, future, and present. In His vision, past, future, and present are all the same, so He knows everything. In reality, the distinction of time exists only from the perspective of living beings. All beings are subject to time, but the Lord is beyond time. He is the “Great Time” (Mahakala), the source of all time. Just as the past and future do not exist now, the present also does not truly exist. The present is the junction of the past and the future. The past is beginningless, and the future is endless. The beginningless and the endless never meet. If there were truly a present, it would never turn into the past. The essence is that what changes every moment is not the present, but what never changes is the true present. Therefore, time is not the present; the Lord Himself is the present. Because the soul is subject to time, its knowledge is limited. If a being cannot recognize its own true nature, how can it know the Supreme Soul? A swan can separate milk from water and drink it, but this is not possible for other birds. Similarly, God and illusion (maya) are inseparable. Ordinary people cannot see God beyond the veil of illusion. A perfected being, like the “supreme swan,” can set aside illusion and see God. By attaining a human body, it is possible to destroy the actions of countless births, attain the Lord, and liberate oneself. In this, humans are unique. The merciful Lord grants humans a body through which they can use their uniqueness to achieve spiritual welfare. The Lord’s knowledge is eternal. Everything is within His knowledge. Nothing exists outside His knowledge. In His knowing, there is nothing apart from His own nature. Due to ignorance (“I-ness”), the being holds onto the world. By eliminating this “I-ness” and emptying the world from the heart, one can know the Lord. Knowing the Lord is the liberation of the soul.

**Ichchhā-dveṣa-samutthena dvandva-mohena bhārata
Sarva-bhūtāni saṁmohaṁ sarge yānti parantapa (7-27)**

Comm. O Arjuna, the destroyer of enemies and descendant of the Bharata dynasty! From attachment (rāga) and hatred (dveṣa), which are causes of duality, delusion arises in the mind towards birth and death, pleasure and pain. Due to this delusion created by duality, all living beings in the world fall into deep ignorance. From the moment a person is born, because of the attraction of māyā (illusion), he gets separated from pure knowledge and becomes deluded. The intellect within the body, composed of the three gunas (qualities), becomes divided and creates conflicting thoughts and delusions. Birth and death, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour, like and dislike, cold

and heat, good and bad—these are all pairs of opposites (dvandva bhāva). These dualities act as tools of the power of illusion (māyā śakti) to rob the intellect. In this world, every object is recognized correctly only through the intellect. But when the intellect is deluded by these dualities, a person does not give importance to discrimination (viveka) and is instead driven by desire and hatred, engaging and withdrawing from actions. Pleasure and pain, birth and death—these two main dualities keep a person deluded for a long time. When a person feels happiness or sorrow upon gaining or losing a country, time, object, person, or situation, then attachment and hatred arise toward them. The feeling of “I” and “mine” that lies dormant within the heart is the root supporter of attachment and hatred. Even though gold, diamonds, and pearls are non-living things, people form deep attachment to them and consider them as precious, even though they cannot recognize a person. Similarly, when a person holds hatred towards other living beings instead of love, in truth, he is hating God Himself. Because God is present in all beings as the Self (Ātman). Having hatred toward other beings means turning away from God. When hatred toward others arises, it first burns one’s own heart and then spreads its effect onto others. Because of such deluded thinking, an ignorant person cannot gain knowledge of truth and untruth, self and non-self. Forgetting the ultimate purpose of life, they consider temporary pleasures as the goal and waste their precious birth running after enjoyment. If the only goal is to attain God, then both worldly and spiritual actions become part of spiritual practice. From the moment a living being is born, he starts moving toward death. But because of attachment to the body, people develop hatred toward death and attachment to life. However, birth and death always go together. The moment birth occurs, death is standing on the other side, waiting to arrive. Thus, the illusion of birth and death becomes the main obstacle in attaining self-knowledge. If attachment and hatred turn away from the material world and face toward God, then the highest purpose of life is fulfilled. According to Ramanuja, desire toward pleasure and hatred toward pain arise due to the division created by the qualities (gunas). The root cause of attachment to the body is the impressions (samskāras) from past births that remain in the heart. Due to the experiences of karma (actions) in this birth, new impressions are created for the next birth. The mental habits and desires are all parts of māyā (illusion), which, from the moment of birth, compel a person to act and move forward in the worldly life. Wise people use this power of māyā to attain God, but ignorant people become confused by māyā and keep moving in the cycle of birth and death.

**Yeṣāṁ tv anta-gataṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇya-karmaṇām
Te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā bhajanti mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ (7-28)**

Comm. As soon as a soul is born, it comes under the influence of illusion. The question arises: which person overcomes illusion and worships God to attain Him? God says that due to the impressions from previous births and virtuous deeds in this birth, all sins of a person are destroyed. Those who are sinless and perform virtuous deeds, free

from the delusion of duality, worship God with firm determination and resolute intellect. By performing scriptural rituals like sacrifices, charity, and penance, and following one's own duties selflessly, all negative traits and misconduct are eradicated. Those whose hearts are free from the effects of sinful actions and unaffected by the delusion of duality become pure devotees of God. They understand God's divine knowledge and remain constantly connected to Him. Just as a rusted piece of iron is not attracted to a magnet, a mind clouded by duality cannot focus on God. Keeping the mind focused on God's worship is not a simple matter. Purity of heart is necessary to attain the divine state. Sin is not the true nature of a person. Due to a lack of discernment and flawed judgment, a person acquires sin. With a pure heart and a firm resolve to avoid sinful actions, surrendering to God ends sin. Faith in attaining God, selfless actions, scriptural study, and service to the world lead to earning merit. Through virtuous deeds, one achieves success in the path of karma yoga, and the sinful impressions from past lives are destroyed. Due to the good impressions from previous and current births, such virtuous souls become pure devotees of God. Even amidst worldly joys and sorrows, their hearts remain free from disturbance, as described by the term "free from the delusion of duality." Turning away from the world and focusing on God is the essence of all philosophical understanding. Saints embrace physical suffering and adverse situations because they help destroy old sins and increase diligence in current actions. In material pleasures and favorable situations, past merits are depleted, and there is a risk of indulgence in sensory pleasures. According to the principles of karma yoga, when happiness is attained, it should be shared selflessly with others to earn further merit. Swami Sivananda Maharaj explains that virtuous deeds increase purity, weaken passion and ignorance, calm the mind, stabilize the intellect, and eliminate ego. Progress on the spiritual path begins, and divine consciousness grows brighter in the heart day by day. Forgetting God and living is the greatest sin. Considering oneself and the external world separate from God is a sin. Identifying the body as the self and considering the material world as permanent is a sin. Selfishness, ego, and ignorance are sins. A person steadfast in the goal of attaining God resolves to realize the soul in the present moment. They remain unwavering in their focus until the soul is realized. They firmly believe that only the eternal, pure, all-pervading God is the ultimate truth. This material world is transient, like a mirage in the desert. Such a devotee fully understands that immortality, eternal peace, and everlasting joy are found only in self-realization, as there is not even a drop of true happiness in worldly pleasures.

**Jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya mām āśritya yatanti ye
Te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam adhyātmaṁ karma chākhilam(7-29)**

Comm. Those who take shelter of the Supreme Lord, who is full of eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss (Sat-Chit-Ānanda), and who meditate with focused mind to be free from the pain of old age and death—They truly understand the eternal Supreme Brahman, the full essence of spiritual knowledge, and the secrets of all

actions. All physical and mental sufferings due to bodily changes like birth, growth, disease, decay, and death— To be free from these, one must constantly meditate on the Lord and act according to the teachings of the scriptures. This is what it means to take refuge in God. Even if one has mastered yoga, still old age and death will come when the body weakens. But after gaining knowledge of Brahman, the Self, and the truth of action, The connection with the body ends, and one enters into the state of eternal bliss of the soul. Then, no physical or mental pain is felt. When all sins in the heart are destroyed and realization of truth happens, the material body becomes divine. In a divine body, though birth, death, old age, and disease may exist, they have no effect. The one who attains the divine body is truly liberated while living. When ego and attachment end, one also becomes free from old age, death, and similar miseries. Because attachment to the body is the root cause of birth and death. The realization of “I am Brahman” and “Vasudeva is everything” arises through maturity in any path of yoga—be it jñāna yoga or karma yoga. If this understanding becomes firm through unwavering devotion, then pure devotees live in the divine state of Brahman. Vasudeva is Brahman, Vasudeva is karma, knowledge, the knower, the known, the meditation, the object of meditation, and the one who sustains everything—He is all. When this direct realization is attained, one becomes naturally free from the bondage of birth and death. When this realization remains even at the time of leaving the body, that is true liberation (moksha). If one turns away from the world and makes sincere effort by taking shelter in the Lord, then one receives His grace and love. Only by becoming a pure devotee and receiving God’s infinite grace can one truly understand the essence of the Supreme Self, the soul, and the principle of action. In this verse, the term “Tat Brahma” refers to the attribute-less, formless, eternal Supreme Soul, full of existence, consciousness, and bliss. Among all living beings, both moving and non-moving, there is a pure eternal Self. That eternal Self is different from the material body, which is made of lower nature. Realizing that eternal nature of the soul and feeling that all beings are one with the Supreme Lord is what it means to understand the spiritual truth. The One from whom all beings originate, and from whose pure consciousness all effort arises—that very divine will of God is called “visarga” (creative impulse). Since karma arises from God’s will, karma is also non-different from God. Understanding why and how this creation has been made by the Supreme is to know the real truth of all actions—“karma cha akhilam.” Brahman, the Self, and action—all are forms of the Lord, and none of them have any independent existence apart from Him. If one believes that “old age and death are unavoidable” and accepts that blindly, one may miss the highest success in life. Death awakens a person and inspires him to know the eternal truth within. When one begins searching for the true nature of death, he comes to recognize his true Self. He understands that the whole universe is pervaded by the Supreme Truth—Brahman—and realizes the true nature of all actions in the world.

**Sādhībhūtādhīdaivam mām sādhiyajñam cha ye viduḥ
Prayāṇa-kāle 'pi cha mām te vidur yukta-chetasah (7-30)**

Comm. Devoted followers who know Me as the Lord and Master of all living beings understand that Brahma and all deities are part of My essence. They believe that I, as the inner controller, am the performer and enjoyer of all rituals like sacrifices. These devoted souls, with their minds fixed on Me, remember Me in some form even at the time of death and attain Me. Those who remain connected to God, detached from the world, are called “yukta-cheta” (spiritually focused) in this verse. Devotees fixed on Me do not deviate from contemplating “Vasudeva is everything” even at the moment of leaving the body. Devotees with minds absorbed in Lord Krishna attain liberation, such as salokya (residing in God’s abode), at the time of death. The material creation, dominated by ignorance (tamoguna), is called adhibhuta. Without God, the existence of the material creation (adhibhuta) is impossible. Brahma, dominated by passion (rajoguna), is called adhidaiva. God manifests as Brahma. From the perspective of truth, the essence of God exists within all deities. God, as Vishnu, pervading everywhere as the inner controller and dominated by purity (sattvaguna), is called adhiyajna. Through the company of the virtuous, teachings of the guru, scriptural study, and association with saints, divine consciousness awakens in the heart. By completely severing ties with nature and its actions, one becomes established in God’s essence, and the separate existence of the body and world merges into God’s essence. True knowledge of the soul’s nature is attained. By God’s causeless grace, faith and love for God become strong. Listening to God’s divine pastimes, chanting His names, and singing His glories bring direct experience of divine bliss. Lord Krishna is, in essence, adhibhuta, adhidaiva, and adhiyajna. Lord Krishna is the complete form of God. Devotees perceive God’s entire essence as “Vasudeva is everything” through the eyes of knowledge. Whatever is remembered at the time of death is experienced as Vasudeva. One who knows God as adhibhuta understands even death as a form of God. The attachment to the body before death causes suffering. Death is a simple process, as stated in the Gita (verse 9.19), where God Himself is present as death. Those who worship the formless God contemplate Him as pervading the entire world. In reality, God can be described as both formless and with form, manifest and unmanifest. Just as the sky has the quality of sound but no form, God’s names and pastimes in the material world are with form (saguna), but He is formless (nirakara). Adhibhuta, adhidaiva, and adhiyajna are God’s manifest forms with attributes. When God, through His divine energy (yogamaya), appears in the mortal world, it is His manifest form with attributes. Whether God is with form or formless, He is completely beyond and unaffected by the three qualities of nature (sattva, rajas, tamas).

Summary of the Chapter: At the beginning of the chapter, the Lord told Arjuna, “I will tell you the knowledge and realization of My entire divine nature. After knowing this, nothing else will remain to be known.” The word Jñāna means indirect knowledge, while Vijñāna refers to direct realization or experience. Knowing Brahman only through

words is Jñāna, but knowing Brahman in a special way and remaining always absorbed in that bliss is Vijñāna. Those who are realized (vijñānī) have the direct experience of both the form and the formless aspect of God. God has said that the entire universe, including its origin, existence, and dissolution, happens through the union of His higher and lower nature (para and apara prakṛiti). He has explained that the sky, air, fire, water, earth, planets, stars, living beings, directions, trees, rivers, oceans—all are His divine manifestations. A person who is deluded by the three qualities (gunas) of nature cannot know the Supreme Lord who is beyond all gunas. People with rajasic nature may hear about God but due to delusion caused by maya, their knowledge is stolen, and they do not try to know Him. Those with demoniac tendencies engage in forbidden acts and never take shelter in God. Some fortunate and noble devotees know the divine nature and greatness of God, and worship Him as āṛta (distressed), jijñāsu (seeker), arthārthī (desirer of wealth), and jñānī (knower). Some less intelligent people think of God as just an ordinary person and worship other gods to fulfill their desires. Actually, the devotion that exists in the heart of the worshipper is nothing but “Me.” Even the results that come from worshipping other deities are granted only by Me. Because of the cover of yogamaya and the dualities of attachment and aversion (rāga-dveṣa), ignorant people cannot realize Me. Those who are free from such delusions and are firm in their determination, take refuge in Me and try sincerely—they alone can truly know My nature. By saying “Vāsudevaḥ Sarvaṃ,” the Lord has revealed His all-pervading divine form. The devotees who are surrendered to God are free from old age and death. That means, even in the body, they do not feel the pain of aging, and they are not troubled by the thought of where they will go after death. Tat Brahma refers to the eternal, formless, unchanging, all-pervading Supreme Soul. “Kṛtsnam Adhyātma” means the countless living beings in countless wombs. All actions (karma) include the entire cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction. The Lord said that Brahman, Adhyatma, and Karma are categories of knowledge where the formless Brahman is the main. Adhibhūta refers to the material world made of five elements along with the living beings. Adhidaiva means the presiding deities of the mind and senses like Brahma, etc. Adhiyajña is the indwelling Lord Vishnu in all His forms. This section is the realization aspect of God’s form, where the personal (saguna) form is primary. Karma is limited, Adhyatma is broader than karma, and Brahman is broader than Adhyatma. The full form of the Lord is even greater than Brahman because Brahman is a part within Him. The meaning of “Tat Brahma” is that Brahman is not many—it is One. The entire creation is the form of God. If one does not accept a relationship with God, then everything seems worldly. If one does, then everything appears divine. When in karma yoga or jñāna yoga the focus is only on one’s own effort, it remains worldly. But when attachment and hatred are removed and one takes shelter in God, that path of devotion (bhakti yoga) becomes always divine, sacred, and full of consciousness. In the path of devotion, the devotee receives divine grace and becomes capable of fully understanding the knowledge and realization of God’s complete form. Because the devotee has an eternal connection with

God, he is never separated from Him, and God is also never separated from His devotee. At the time of death, whatever thoughts arise, a sincere and connected devotee never falls away. Instead, he reaches the Lord. Such a devotee of God fully realizes the six topics: Tat Brahma, Adhyatma, the entirety of karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña. The explanation of how this full knowledge is attained is given by the Lord Himself in the beginning of the next chapter in response to Arjuna’s question. The last two verses of this chapter are presented as the introduction to the next chapter.

**Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga
Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade ‘Jnana-Vijnana Yoga’ Naama Saptama
Adhyaayah ||7||**

OM Tat Sat -Thus ends the seventh chapter named “Jñāna-Vijñāna Yoga” (The Yoga of Knowledge and Realization) in the dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, from the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, the Upanishad of Brahnavidyā and Yogaśāstra.



ॐ
SRI PARAMATMAAEY NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 8 (Akshara Brahma Yoga)

Arjuna Ubacha

**kiṁ tad brahma kiṁ adhyātmam kiṁ karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtam ca kiṁ proktam adhidaivam kiṁ ucyate (8-1)**

**adhiyajñaḥ katham ko 'tra dehe 'smin madhusūdana
prayāṇa-kāle ca katham jñeyo 'si niyatātmabhiḥ (8-2)**

Comm : In the last two verses of the previous chapter, the Lord has said that a devotee who surrenders to Him, understanding the six aspects of His complete nature, attains liberation at the time of death. At the beginning of this chapter, Arjuna raises questions before the Lord to gain a clear understanding of those six aspects. Arjuna inquires about the nature of Brahman, Adhyatma, and Karma, addressing Krishna as Purushottama. O Madhusudana! Who is called Adhibhuta, and what is Adhidaiva? Arjuna questions who Adhiyajna is and how He exists within the body. Apart from this, Arjuna wishes to know another profound truth from the Lord: how can a person with a disciplined mind, who has fully controlled all senses, realize the divine essence of the Lord at the time of death? The significance of Arjuna addressing Shri Krishna as “Purushottama” is that Shri Krishna is the imperishable Supreme Person, Narayana Himself. Arjuna desires to hear about the characteristics of the Lord’s complete nature directly from the Lord Himself. Shri Krishna is the ultimate authority, capable of resolving these doubtful questions.

Arjuna also asks: Who is truly the Lord of sacrifice, and in which part of the body does the Lord reside? During His divine pastimes, Shri Krishna has destroyed many demons. Krishna has defeated numerous demons in His divine activities. Therefore, by addressing Him as Madhusudana, Arjuna indicates that by listening to His nectar-like teachings, the demonic tendencies within his heart are destroyed. Arjuna has a doubt that, just before death, the organs of action and senses become weak. As all the vital cells gradually cease functioning, the stability of breathing is not maintained, and the mind and intellect are unable to function independently. In such a pitiable state at the time of death, how can a surrendered devotee be drawn toward the Lord's lotus feet? At the time of death, it is not an ordinary matter for a person with a controlled soul to direct the body, senses, life force, mind, intellect, and actions toward spirituality by their own will. In many places in the Gita, the Lord has used the words Brahman, Adhyatma, Karma, Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajna in various senses. The Gita uses these terms with different meanings in different contexts. For example, the word 'Brahman' has been used to refer to the Vedas, Brahma, Prakriti, Paramatma, and the syllable 'Om' in various contexts. The word Brahman also refers to both Saguna (with qualities) and Nirguna (without qualities) Brahman. Brahman can indicate both forms with and without attributes. Similarly, Adhyatma has been indicated in many places to mean the soul, individual soul, body, life force, senses, mind, intellect, and other subtle elements. What is Adhyatma in the context of the Lord's nature that a devotee can realize at the time of death? Similarly, there are many definitions of Karma. Karma can refer to regular physical actions. The results of actions, whether good or bad, are also called Karma. The Lord's will, as well as the worldly and spiritual thoughts of the soul, are also included in Karma. Karma includes the Lord's intentions and the soul's worldly or spiritual thoughts. Arjuna wants to know which meaning of Karma is intended here. All material entities created by the Lord's inferior energy are called Adhibhuta. Arjuna wants a clear explanation of what Adhibhuta is in the context of the Lord's nature. The presiding deities of Brahma and others in Hiranyagarbha, along with the deities presiding over the senses and organs of action in the body, are considered Adhidaiva. For example, scriptures recognize the Sun as the deity of the eyes, Air for the skin, the Directions for the ears, the Ashvins for the nose, Varuna for the tongue, Fire for speech, Indra for the hands, Vishnu for the feet, Yama for the anus, and Prajapati for the genitals. Here, Arjuna wishes to know what Adhidaiva is in the context of the Lord's nature. The human mind's inquiry is a natural process; it does not find peace until all doubts are completely resolved. In a battlefield, where weapons are used, where questions of victory or defeat, life or death, are constantly present, discussing Brahma-knowledge is truly extraordinary. Since Shri Krishna's divine nature is unparalleled, and Arjuna, as a surrendered disciple, has extraordinary endeavor, this dialogue is possible in the battlefield. Despite the harsh duty of war being present, Arjuna, with a controlled mind, is able to engage in contemplation of Brahman. Arjuna is confident

about the war's outcome. He is certain that if the war happens, victory is assured. His only question is one of discernment: whether the action he is about to perform is right or not, and to what extent the realization of Brahma-truth will assist in this decision. From this, it is concluded that One should not abandon a thought process before reaching its conclusion. Rather, effort must continue until it reaches the level of Brahman from the material level. A thought abandoned without effort remains incomplete. When a thought begins, it is the work of the wise to take it to its ultimate stage.

śrībhagavān uvācha

**akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ svabhāvo 'dhyātmam ucyate
bhūtabhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karmasaṁjñitaḥ (8-3)**

Comm. Lord Krishna said: That which is eternal, the highest, all-pervading, and the root cause of everything is called Brahman. Brahman is that which never perishes and never changes—that imperishable truth is Brahman. Beyond Brahman is the Supreme Brahman, or Parabrahman. The individual soul is Brahman, and the Supreme Soul is Parabrahman. That highest imperishable truth remains even after all beings are destroyed. “Akshara” means the true nature of existence and knowledge—that is Parabrahman. The word “Param Akshara” refers to the supreme, ever-blissful, and conscious God. Brahman is the attribute-less truth beyond time, space, and form. Because the senses, mind, and intellect cannot reach it, it is called “Param” (supreme). The eternal conscious truth is all-pervading—it is one among many and is formless even when it appears in forms. Parabrahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan are actually one and the same truth. The shining light of Brahman is symbolized by the sun. Each ray of that great sun represents one individual soul. In the Gita, Lord Krishna has called the sound “Om” as the one imperishable Brahman. In the Vedas, the word “Om” represents the complete form of God. By understanding the essence of “Om,” one gains the knowledge of Brahman. The knowledge of Brahman is the true knowledge of the Vedas. If discussed in detail, there is no end to the knowledge related to Brahman. The natural self of a living being is called Adhyatma (spiritual self). The gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body are not the true nature of the soul. These are all temporary coverings attached to the soul. The real nature of the soul is Adhyatma. To remain firmly established in one's own self is called spirituality—that is, mastery over the soul. When the soul identifies with the body, it comes under the influence of Maya (illusion). The higher nature or spiritual awareness is the real form of the soul. That is why it is called Adhyatma or the soul's true consciousness. If the soul thinks it is one with the lower material nature, it takes a physical body. If the soul identifies with God's divine nature, it gets a divine body and becomes one with God. The separate existence of each living being is the soul's nature, or Adhyatma. The life-force within the body is the main feature and support of spirituality. The soul is formless and subtle, but its presence, power, and effect are experienced. The formless

Brahman, bound within the body as the soul, creates a sense of individuality. That is called Adhyatma. The conscious divine nature, being a part of God, is actually inseparable from God. So all souls, referred to as Adhyatma, are in truth non-different from God and are His own form. It is not possible to determine the root essence of every object in the world. There is no one basic material substance from which the entire universe is made. It is said that the universe is created through God's will. The rise and development of emotions and thoughts in all living beings arise through sacrifice. That sacrifice is called Karma. That same sacrifice is the basis of the universe's creation, sustenance, and destruction. At the time of total destruction (Mahapralaya), all beings merge into nature along with their ego and stored karma. With the beings, nature also merges into God. At that time, all beings remain in a sleeping or dormant state. At the time of creation, God activates the dormant nature through the will, "Let me become many." In that unconscious nature, the conscious soul enters like a seed. This is the union of the material and the conscious. That union is called the great sacrifice. That act of offering is called "Visarga" (creation through sacrifice). Through this union of matter and consciousness, all living beings are born. This is the origin of all created things. In this act of creation by God, the inert nature begins to move and becomes active. In it, the continuous stream of infinite karma flows until the time of great destruction. So, the main Karma is God's will, and from it, the chain of actions begins. The participation of souls in the creation process of God is Karma. The act of creation is called Visarga or offering, because in this, the dormant state of nature is given up. This great Visarga, the origin of all creation, is a great universal sacrifice. From this universal sacrifice, many types of worldly sacrifices are born. In those sacrifices, the offerings like ghee and other materials are also called Visarga (offering). In the third chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna said: From sacrifice comes rain, from rain comes food, and from food living beings are born. Therefore, sacrifice is the cause of the origin of life. In the Manu Smriti, it is said that God's will vibrates in Hiranyagarbha in the form of the sound "Om." That vibration of Hiranyagarbha is the main Karma, from which the actions of all living beings are created. On the concept of Karma, many learned commentators have interpreted it in different ways, based on scriptures, the words of the Vedas, and the experiences of saints. Karma is also explained as the thought that arises in a person's heart, which creates good or bad impressions (sanskaras). The completion of these impressions marks the peak of the Visarga process. When all the stored good and bad impressions in a soul are fully dissolved in this process, that is the perfection of Karma. Lord Krishna has said that the person whose Karma is complete no longer has any duties left. In this sense, the meaning of Karma is performing one's duties without attachment, worshipping God, and spiritual contemplation. These types of sacrificial actions (Yajna Karma) are explained in earlier chapters in detail. According to another opinion, the process of movement in creation that gives rise to the emotions and thoughts of living beings is called Karma. The process through which the gross five elements and subtle elements (mind, intellect, ego) manifest the form of beings is called Karma. The meaning of Karma is effort. When this

kind of effort arises inside the unmanifest nature, Karma is formed. This Karma is seen in the whole world as a collective action, and in the individual soul as personal action. According to Shankaracharya's commentary on this verse: "Akshara" is the imperishable Parabrahman. The word "Param" indicates the highest and the controller of all. That Supreme Brahman's true nature, which is present within every being as the soul, is called Adhyatma. The sacrifice or offering in a fire (Yajna), like pouring ghee, is called Karma. From this sacrifice, food is created, which helps in the birth of living beings. According to Ramanujacharya: "Param Akshara" means the soul that is beyond material nature, which is called Brahman. The nature of Brahman is called Adhyatma. Here, not the soul itself but the desires and impressions connected to it are understood as "Prakrita" (material). In the Panchagni Vidya (the knowledge of five fires), the final offering is related to the creation in the womb of a woman—this is also called Visarga or Karma. To give up Karma, one must first understand its true nature. According to Lokamanya Tilak: Param Akshara Brahman is that which is absolutely indestructible, unchanging, and described in the Vedanta. The inner nature of each object, which exists in a subtle form, is called Adhyatma. The entire process by which all inert and conscious things are created from Parabrahman is called Karma. A person who is driven by desires performs forbidden actions. But if a person is not controlled by desires, then the actions he naturally performs are called rightful duties. Such rightful actions are called "Swabhavika Karma" in the eighteenth chapter of the Gita. In this way, the word "Karma" has been explained in different scriptures, spiritual practices, and worldly experiences with various meanings.

**adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś cādhidaivatam
adhiyajño 'ham evātra dehe dehabhṛtām vara (8-4)**

Comm. O best of men, Arjuna, the term "kshara" refers to perishable material things like the body, which are called adhibhuta. The lower nature, including the five great elements, and the perishable entities born from it, which constantly decay, are known as kshara. The material body is always subject to six changes: birth, existence, growth, transformation, decay, and destruction. Anything that has a beginning with birth and an end with destruction is considered adhibhuta. In other words, matter or objects that depend on the soul for their existence are adhibhuta. According to Shankaracharya, anything that perishes is adhibhuta. Until the imperishable state is attained, everything that decays is entirely kshara and is called adhibhuta. The Supreme Being, who is above nature, is adhidaiva, the master, controller, and creator of all divine wealth. The divine powers of the gods in the cosmic and earthly worlds are referred to as adhidaiva. Brahma, the creator of the material world, is known as Hiranyagarbha and is adhidaiva. The Supreme Soul manifests as adhidaiva. Brahma, the primal deity, is the life force of the entire conscious and material universe. Thus, Brahma is not separate from God. The vital energy in the body is the divine element, which enables the development of the mind, intellect, and senses. That which is all-pervading is called Purusha or

adhidaiva. Hiranyagarbha is Purusha, and the universe is pervaded by it. Hiranyagarbha is the cosmic soul. Every individual soul is a ray of this cosmic soul. All beings in the universe are governed by Hiranyagarbha. The vast cosmic form, where deities like the sun, moon, and fire reside, is adhidaiva. God says: O best of embodied beings, Arjuna, in this body, I, Vasudeva, reside as the inner controller, the deity of sacrifices, the initiator of sacrificial acts, and the giver of their results. The direct manifestation of the Supreme Brahman is called Paramatma or adhiyajna. As Paramatma, He resides in the heart of the soul, acting as the inner controller, presiding deity, director of all actions, and witness. He, as Paramatma, is the Lord of all sacrificial acts performed through the body and, being situated in nature, is the enjoyer of their results. God declares in this verse that He is entirely non-different from the soul. Though God is the presiding controller of all actions in the body, He remains detached and indifferent. In this vast creation, Prajapati Brahma's great sacrifice is continuously ongoing. In other words, the entire creation is a form of a great sacrifice. The body of the soul is also structured as a field of this great sacrifice, where all deities and the five great elements exist as their representatives. The mysterious connection of matter and consciousness in the body, which forms the vital essence, is called adhiyajna. Although Paramatma resides as adhiyajna in the heart of the spiritual practitioner, He is not directly perceived as the world is. Inspired by scriptures and the words of the guru, the practitioner accepts that Paramatma exists within the world, and the world exists within Paramatma, and begins spiritual practice. At the start of spiritual practice, the dominance of the world prevails, and acknowledging Paramatma remains secondary. As spiritual practice progresses, acknowledging Paramatma becomes more prominent, and the concept of the world becomes secondary. When the concept of Paramatma becomes fully prominent, the practitioner realizes that the world is ever-absent, and Paramatma is ever-present. In this verse, God answers Arjuna's three questions regarding adhibhuta, adhidaiva, and adhiyajna. Addressing Arjuna as "the best of embodied beings" signifies that a person who acknowledges Paramatma's presence within themselves and all beings and acts accordingly is the greatest among men. Seeing faults or virtues in others, as if seeing them in Paramatma, considering disrespect to others as disrespect to Paramatma, and recognizing others' welfare as Paramatma's glory, are signs of acknowledging Paramatma's presence in one's own heart and in all beings. Though Paramatma resides as the inner controller in the bodies of all beings, due to a lack of discernment and knowledge, beings lack the ability to focus on this truth. Therefore, only humans can use their bodies to attain this truth.

**antakāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṁ yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ (8-5)**

Comm. Lord Krishna, the Master of Yoga, says —If a person remembers Me at the time of death, that is, at the moment when the mind is completely withdrawn and

dissolving, and leaves the body in that state, he directly attains My true form. Death or the body's end is not necessarily the pure final moment (antakāla). As long as the soul keeps changing bodies like changing clothes, that is not considered the final moment. Only when all stored impressions are destroyed from the inner mind, and the mind is fully stilled and dissolved, then only pure consciousness remains — which becomes one with the Supreme Soul. After this, there is no more chance of taking a new body. According to Shri Ramanujacharya, even after attaining liberation, the individual soul does not dissolve into the Supreme Soul but attains His divine nature. The soul becomes like the Supreme — not involved in worldly matters and remains established in pure Self. To remember God, it is not necessary to go into deep meditation in a Himalayan cave. If one sees the world as Brahman and remains master over the senses, then such a person can control the mind at the final moment. Singing God's name and glories with deep devotion is called Yoga. The joy and thrill felt inside during God's name chanting is the essence of devotion (bhakti-rasa). If someone considers all beings as parts of God and sees them as divine forms, then the realization that arises is called "knowledge" (jnana). In such a practice of Yoga, Bhakti, and Jnana, if a person remembers God's true form at the final moment, the soul merges with the Supreme Consciousness. When all mental impressions are destroyed, the causal body also comes to an end. This is the eternal law of the universe. There is a proverb: "As you sow, so shall you reap." Whatever kind of spiritual seed one has planted in life, that fruit will surely come. It is foolishness to think that if someone lives sinfully all life, but chants God's name at death, they will be freed from sin. In reality, God will not allow those who hold such false ideas to remember Him at the final moment. This is certain. In this verse, when Lord Krishna says that one who remembers Me at the end will attain Me, He means — Only a person free from all desires, who has attained actionlessness and has Brahman-vision, can remember Me and attain My true form at the final moment. The highest goal of human life is to attain God. One who remembers God over many lifetimes with firm conviction that God exists everywhere, always, and in every form — only such a person can remain undisturbed at the time of death and remember God. Here, "final moment" refers to the separation from both gross and subtle bodies. To focus the mind on God's true form at the final moment is the most difficult task. Only as a result of lifetimes of yoga practice and by God's immense grace can one remember His blissful form at the final moment. Once, a devotee asked Shri Shankaracharya — whom do you consider a true conqueror of the world? Shankaracharya replied — the one who has conquered the mind is the one who has conquered the world. Whether a seeker or My devotee worships the formless or the divine form, If at the moment of leaving the body they remember My name, glories, powers, and divine pastimes, They merge into My divine form. In tradition, it is advised that during someone's final moments, family members should show them their chosen deity's image or painting and read or recite verses from the Gita. When a divine environment is present at that time, habitual remembrance of God arises in the mind. Even the simple feeling — "O Lord, without You, I have no one" — brings divine

grace through remembrance. A person who is liberated while living (jivanmukta), Who has full knowledge of his real Self, Who sees no separate existence in the world but holds the firm belief that “Vasudeva is everything,” such a great soul never forgets God’s presence — even in waking, dreaming, or deep sleep states. There is not the slightest doubt that such a realized person attains supreme bliss.

**yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ (8-6)**

Comm. In the previous verse, according to Lord Krishna, remembering God at the time of death leads to attaining His divine nature. A question naturally arises: what happens if worldly things are remembered at the time of death? On this matter, God says: O son of Kunti, Arjuna, whatever a person remembers at the moment of leaving the body, they attain a state connected to that thing. If a living being is remembered instead of an object, the person moves toward a specific form of existence related to that being. At the moment of leaving the physical body, the thoughts in the mind become fixed in the subtle causal body. After the physical body perishes, unfulfilled desires from past lives remain in the inner mind as impressions in the form of subtle desires. These are part of the subtle causal body. Throughout life, the object or being that dominates one’s thoughts naturally comes to mind at the time of death. In a dream state, even though the senses are inactive and objects are not real, the dreamer perceives themselves as active; similarly, at the time of death, the strongest desires stored in the inner mind rise to the surface, like cream rising when milk is churned. Just as dream scenes are not deliberately created and do not reappear, whatever is remembered at the time of death leaves a lasting impression in the subtle causal body. This impression remains unchanged. Until a new physical body is attained, the impression from the final moment remains fixed in the subtle body. The soul, carrying traces of past-life actions, enters a male body through air, water, food, or breath. It then enters a female body and takes birth at the appropriate time. After the seed of the physical body is planted in the womb, the impressions fixed in the subtle body come to an end. In this verse, Lord Krishna assures that by practicing devotion to God’s name throughout life, one can remember His name and form at the final moment and attain liberation. God does not set any special rules for attaining liberation. The same effort that leads to repeated births in perishable bodies through worldly thoughts can lead to liberation by remembering God. One only needs to change their focus. For other creatures, thoughts at the time of death are governed by nature, but for humans, they depend on their efforts. At the time of death, habitual thoughts outweigh forced efforts. Whatever is practiced throughout life is remembered at the time of death. If every moment of life is spent chanting and meditating on God’s formless, all-pervading nature, one attains that formless essence at death, free from rebirth. A person absorbed in self-realization remains fixed in the soul’s essence at the time of death, attaining its immortal nature. If someone thinks of a dearly loved dog at the time of death, they may have to take birth in a dog’s

body. King Bharata, who thought of his pet deer at the time of death, was born as a deer in his next life. The combination of actions, qualities, and memories determines the physical body in the next birth. If life is spent thinking about wealth, house, land, or gold, those things are remembered at the time of death, leading to a body connected to those objects, places, or environments. Humans repeatedly take birth in the world, experiencing joy and sorrow, good and bad; but by living a spiritual life and remembering God at the time of death, one can attain liberation. Humans are completely free to choose between these two goals and begin their spiritual practice. Humans are their own saviors. Only through discernment, knowledge, and resolute intellect can this be achieved.

**tasmt̐ sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣyasy asaṁśayaḥ (8-7)**

Comm. Lord Krishna’s teaching here is very important for householders engaged in worldly duties. The speciality of the Bhagavad Gita is that it gives direct guidance on how to apply these teachings in everyday life. The firm principle is: “Whatever one remembers at the final moment of life determines the next body.” So, Lord Krishna says: “O Arjuna! Until your last moment, remember Me alone and also perform your duty — in your case, fighting this righteous war.” Since Arjuna was present on the battlefield, fighting was his current duty, so the Lord instructed him to fight. This teaching is not just for Arjuna — it applies to all humanity. According to one’s caste, stage of life, situation, ability, and profession, One must perform their duty without disobeying scriptural rules and always remember the Lord — His qualities, power, form, and mysteries — in all conditions and at all times. By doing this, even at the time of death, the mind and intellect will not wander away from God. The soul is truly an eternal part of God. Surrender means offering the mind and intellect to the Lord by thinking of them as His and always remembering Him. The human body is temporary and fragile. No one can be sure of the future — the final moment may come at any time. Death never comes with advance notice, and no one has the power to escape it. In the verse “mām anusmara yudhya ca” (Remember Me and fight), a great teaching of the Gita is hidden. The person who always remembers God definitely attains liberation — there is no doubt in this. If life passes only in remembering worldly things, Then this human birth — which is the gateway to God — will be wasted. So, we must both remember God and perform our own duties (svadharma) together. Time is divided for worldly activities, But there is no need to allocate special time for remembering God. Since the world is God’s creation, duties according to one’s social order must also be performed as God’s command. If one performs worldly duties with this thought, then all worldly actions become divine actions. The idea that “I will remember God after I finish all worldly work” must be abandoned. It is never possible to give up all worldly actions and then remember God completely. But it is possible to remember God while performing daily work — and this itself is spiritual practice. Sri Ramakrishna said: “Hold God’s feet with one hand and do your worldly duties with the other. Once work is

finished, hold His feet with both hands.” This means: As long as one has responsibilities in the world, one should see themselves as God’s instrument and fulfill their duties. If actions are done as if for God, then both mind and body become united in purpose. Just like a shopkeeper may speak politely to please the customer but never forgets his aim of making profit, Or a tightrope dancer performs many tricks but always focuses on her feet —Likewise, in Chapter 2, God says: “Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam” — “Skill in action is yoga.” So, remembering God and doing worldly work together is not difficult. This practice is called yoga-abhyāsa in the Gita — the practice of yoga. When a person detaches from worldly distractions and puts the mind and life force fully into thoughts of God, Then pure devotion awakens. When the mind and intellect accept no other reality besides God, Then, like Prahlada and the Gopis, one experiences God directly in every atom of creation. That is complete surrender to God. God is always present for the soul. The soul also constantly remembers God. If God even for a moment forgets the soul, the soul would become lifeless. Therefore, God never forgets any soul. But the soul, considering the body and nature as everything, keeps forgetting God over many lifetimes. Even if a person cannot directly perceive God’s form, they can still remember His power and glory through the sun, moon, fire, sky, air, earth, Varuna, Indra, etc. God says: “I exist at all times, in all places. I am the gross, I am the subtle, I am the soul. I am God, I am all-auspicious, I am the indwelling Lord in every heart.” So in this verse, Lord Krishna calls out: “O humanity! While remembering Me, do your duty according to your nature and social order, and perform that duty as a battle for the good of the world.”

**abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā
paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ yāti pārthānucintayan (8-8)**

Comm. In verses 8 to 10, Lord Krishna has described the influence, process, and results of the Supreme Being (Brahman) in the form of “Adhiyajna”—meaning the Saguna-Nirakara (formless with attributes) form of Brahman. Though formless, some special characteristics of the infinite and attribute-filled form of Brahman are mentioned here. Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna! A person who keeps his mind constantly engaged in meditation, free from worldly thoughts, And who regularly thinks of the Saguna-Nirakara Brahman through continuous practice according to scriptures and the teachings of the Guru, that person attains the Supreme Light, the Divine Person, the Supreme Soul. The impressions and habits from past births, which appear as desires and thoughts, can only be removed through spiritual practice (Yoga Sadhana). Keeping the mind always focused on the chosen form of God cannot be achieved through short or temporary practice. For that, one must withdraw the mind from worldly attractions and always stay connected to the feet of the Lord. Remembering the qualities, power, glory, and divine plays (leela) of one’s chosen deity for a long time, and staying mentally absorbed in deep meditation is called “Abhyasa Yoga Yuktah” (connected by the Yoga of Practice). Practice (Abhyasa) has great power. A child learns to recognize their mother only through repeated practice. The more

one is attached to enjoyment of worldly pleasures, the more the mind and intellect remain disturbed. The more one practices laziness, the more dullness they will feel in life. The meaning of “Chetasa Nanyagaminaa” is the feeling of detachment (Vairagya). To attain the Supreme, both detachment and continuous yoga practice are necessary. Without practice, yoga is not possible. Detaching the mind from the world and repeatedly connecting it to the Supreme is called “Abhyasa” (practice). Staying firmly focused on one’s goal is called “Yoga.” When such yoga practice leads to concentration of mind, The intellect gets purified, and divine awareness grows within the heart. Just like an insect trapped in a potter’s cocoon constantly thinks of the wasp and finally becomes a wasp, in the same way, by practicing thinking of the Supreme’s beauty and divine qualities, His image becomes permanently drawn on the canvas of the mind. Just like the seed separates from the ripened fruit, through Abhyasa Yoga, the soul is freed from attachment to the body and stays in constant remembrance of God. Therefore, the aim of yoga practice is to realize the existence of that divine, radiant, supreme being who resides in the heart. By regularly practicing meditation yoga, one definitely attains the form of that Supreme Divine Person at the final moment of life. The term “Divya Purusha” refers to that Supreme Lord Who is the cause of creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the universe. He exists in everyone’s heart as “Adhiyajna” and is present everywhere. In Sanatan Dharma, this Supreme God is called the “Supreme Person.” He is not only formless and without qualities, but also has form and qualities. Everything we see is created from Him alone. The one Supreme God appears in all forms. He is both the material cause and the efficient cause of creation—He is the clay and also the potter. This is the principle of the Vedic Sanatan Dharma.

**kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāraṁ
aṇor aṇīyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ
sarvasya dhātāraṁ acintyarūpam
āditya-varṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt (8-9)**

**prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yoga-balena caiva
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak
sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣam upaiti divyam (8-10)**

Comm. The Supreme Lord is all-knowing, eternal, the controller of all, subtler than the subtlest, the protector and creator of all, of an inconceivable form, radiant like the sun with eternal consciousness, and exists above the darkness of ignorance. A person who constantly remembers this pure, blissful Supreme Lord with devotion, at the time of death, fixes their life force between the eyebrows with a steady mind and the power of yoga. By leaving the body in this way, they attain the supreme divine being. To explain the glory of the Supreme Divine Being, Lord Krishna has spoken these two verses, which are also mentioned in the Shvetashvatara Upanishad. The Upanishad says, “I know that

great being, radiant like the sun, beyond darkness,” meaning this being is radiant, great, and above the darkness of ignorance, and must be known. There is no visible or invisible thing in the world that exists beyond the Supreme Soul’s awareness. He is called “Kavi” because He knows the past, present, and future, making Him all-knowing. Being the cause of everything, He is eternal and older than all. He is the master of all, all-powerful, and present within everything. By prescribing duties and non-duties for humans, He directs them toward God and grants favorable or unfavorable situations as results of sinful or virtuous actions. The Supreme Soul is called “Anushasita” because He enters and controls everything, keeping all things—living and non-living—in their proper limits. He is subtler than the subtlest thing and is all-pervading, present everywhere at all times. Whatever is the material cause of something, it remains within that thing, like threads in cloth or clay in a pot. Similarly, the Supreme Soul is the material cause of elements like space. This proves that the Supreme Soul’s form is subtler than even the subtlest space. Despite being so subtle, He is the foundation of the entire universe. He sustains, protects, and nourishes everything. Though all-pervading and the source of all, He is beyond the reach of the mind and senses. The power that enables the mind and intellect to think comes from Him, the ultimate source. The Supreme Soul gives existence and energy to everything. Residing in the heart of living beings, He empowers them to know themselves and others, but remains hidden by His divine illusion. This is the greatest wonder—His inconceivable form. Being attributeless and formless, how can He be an object of meditation? Even if the entire world is considered His form, its infinity makes it impossible to meditate upon. The root cause of visible material objects appears different in each case. Therefore, the scriptures describe the attributeless, formless Supreme Being as “not this, not this,” defining Him indirectly. The effort to firmly establish in the heart that the pure, infinite conscious Supreme Soul is not an object of meditation is the contemplation of the inconceivable Supreme Soul. He is self-luminous and constantly illuminates everything. Just as the sun is self-luminous and lights the world, the Supreme Lord illuminates everything with His divine, indivisible knowledge-light. Just as the sun cannot see darkness, the Supreme Being’s form is always free from the ignorance of darkness. Even the ignorance of a worldly person is destroyed by receiving His illuminating light of knowledge. Thus, He is far above ignorance. Constantly remembering this pure, blissful Supreme Being is the easiest path to liberation. It is true that God’s true form can never be fully grasped by the mind or intellect. Lord Krishna says that by attributing all these qualities to the manifest Brahman and meditating on an imagined form, one can realize God’s true nature. A devoted person, at the time of the mind’s dissolution, uses yoga power to fix the life force in the middle of the eyebrows. By remaining steady, unaffected by the three qualities (sattva, rajas, tamas), and focusing on the divine form without distraction, they attain the Supreme Divine Being. Love for God is spiritual devotion. Love or devotion is never a matter of knowledge but always a matter of one’s nature. Therefore, in contemplating the attributeless, formless Brahman, devotion as a relationship between the worshiper

and the worshiped is more important than knowledge-based yoga. The ability to control and regulate the life force, developed through the practice of Ashtanga Yoga, is called “yoga power.” In yoga scriptures, the space between the eyebrows is called the “Ajna Chakra.” The Ajna Chakra has two petals and is located in a triangular region with fire, sun, and moon, also called the “triangular womb.” A perfected yogi first directs the life force through the Muladhara, Svadhisthana, and Manipura chakras in the lower part of the Sushumna path. Gradually, they move it upward and place it in the Anahata Chakra in the heart lotus. At the time of death, they raise the life force from the Anahata Chakra through the Sushumna path and stabilize it in the Ajna Chakra. Stabilizing the life force in the Ajna Chakra requires disciplined practice. Practicing this without guidance from a perfected Kriya Yogi can be harmful. The seven layers connected to the Ajna Chakra are Indu, Bodhini, Nada, Ardha Chandrika, Mahanada, Kala, and Unmani. When the life force enters the Unmani layer, the soul attains the Supreme Being. This ends the cycle of rebirth under the influence of nature. Even if reborn, such a soul controls nature and takes birth only by their own or God’s will for the welfare of the world. Without remembering the Supreme Soul during yoga practice, this divine state cannot be attained at the time of the mind’s dissolution. The scriptures say, “He is attained only by those whom He chooses.” Goswami Tulsidas wrote, “Only he knows whom You make known; knowing You, one becomes You.” Thus, for a devoted soul, the Supreme Lord Himself opens the path to liberation. For a soul that has realized this truth, no duties remain. A steady mind, devotion, and yoga power play the main role in attaining the Supreme Soul. These three are interconnected. Yoga practice is possible only with a focused mind, and without yoga practice, yoga power cannot be attained. This yoga power removes attachment and aversion from the heart, fostering spiritual consciousness. Through yoga power, the soul becomes free from identification with the body, remains established in its true nature, and develops an eagerness to know the Supreme Soul. With this yoga power, the practitioner easily overcomes all material obstacles in the world. Fear of death no longer exists, and distinctions between birth and death cease at the mental level.

yad akṣaram veda-vido vadanti

viśanti yad yatayo vīta-rāgāḥ

yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti

tat te padam saṅgrahaṇa pravakṣye (8-11)

Comm. In this verse, the topic of the four stages of life (Chaturāshrama) is mentioned in a secondary sense. The word ‘Vedavido’ refers to the householder stage (Gṛhastha āśrama), the word ‘Vītarāgāḥ’ refers to the renunciate (Sannyāsa) and forest-dwelling (Vānaprastha) stages, and the phrase ‘brahmacarya caranti’ refers to the celibate student stage (Brahmacarya āśrama). In all social orders and stages of life, there are paths available for attaining liberation. Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna! The wise people who understand the principles explained in the Vedas, and those great

sages and seers who are free from attachment and hatred and have entered into the essence of the imperishable (Akṣara), and the yogis who intensely desire this state and follow strict vows of celibacy—I will now briefly explain to you the path to reach that Supreme State; please listen. Householders and forest-dwellers recite the Vedic mantras and understand the eternal truth of the Supreme Being (Sat-Chid-Ānanda Brahman) who is the foundation and life of the Vedas. In the householder stage, husband and wife together perform fire rituals (Agnihotra). The couple sits together and performs sacrificial duties—this is called Agnihotra. The life and foundation of the Vedas is the eternal, indestructible Supreme Soul (Parabrahman). Those Vedic scholars who truly understand this meaning of the Vedas, they continuously practice spiritual discipline to attain the Supreme and also achieve that realization inwardly. That which never perishes under any condition and never undergoes decay, that which remains of the same essence and form—That eternal principle is called “Akṣara Puruṣa” by the great souls. Renunciate sages who are free from attachment and hatred enter into the essence of the Supreme Soul. A “Vītarāgi” is someone whose attraction to worldly pleasures is completely destroyed. For such a dispassionate person, the attainment of the formless and attributeless Brahman is easy. To know the Supreme, one must put effort into hearing, reflecting, and contemplating—but this requires inner purity. For that reason, sages purify themselves by eliminating all good and bad impressions before attaining the Supreme. Those who have intense dispassion, at the final stage of spiritual practice, enter into that Akṣara Brahman with a sense of oneness. The Supreme is always attained due to His inherent nature. The mistaken idea that He is unattainable is due to ignorance, and when that ignorance is destroyed, one enters the truth of the Supreme. Those seekers who wish to reach that Supreme State follow strict vows of celibacy. Those who do not adopt renunciation in the formal stages of life, but take up life-long celibacy (naiṣṭhika brahmacarya) right from childhood as their path of discipline, even they attain the Supreme Person. Brahmacarya (celibacy) means giving up sexual activity through mind, speech, and action, in all places and conditions. Brahmacarya is the first of the four stages of life. Lord Krishna says that those seeking Brahman practice brahmacarya. Celibacy does not just mean control of reproductive organs—It means giving up all external contact mentally and constantly thinking and remembering Brahman. A true knower of Brahman remains calm, with all qualities like Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas balanced. In such a person, not just one sense, but all senses naturally come under control. A great yogi who follows this kind of celibacy, who is learned in the Vedas, and always detached—such sages are worthy of holding that Supreme State in their hearts, and they attain it. Even though Arjuna was a householder, through yoga practice, he too could attain the realization and contemplation of the formless, attributeless Akṣara Brahman like the renunciates. So, Lord Krishna has briefly presented the method of how a householder can reach that state.

**sarva-dvārāṇi samyamya mano hr̥di nirudhya ca
mūrdhny ādhāyātmanāḥ prāṇam āsthito yoga-dhāraṇām (8-12)**

**om ity ekākṣaram brahma vyāharan mām anusmaran
yaḥ prayāti tyajan dehaṁ sa yāti paramām gatim (8-13)**

Comm. A person who keeps all senses away from desires, fixes the mind steadily in the Supreme Inner Self (God), and controls the vital force by placing it at the top of the head (Brahmarandhra), stays established in meditation. If such a person chants the syllable ‘Om’ while leaving the body, he reaches the Supreme Person (God). At the beginning of yoga practice, turning both mind and senses away from external pleasures is called ‘pratyahara’ (withdrawal). Through pratyahara, all senses turn inward and help the mind stay fixed at the lotus feet of the Lord in the heart. Even when the senses are controlled, the mind still gets distracted due to good and bad impressions from past and present lives. The mind represents all feelings and thoughts. To restrain the mind in the heart means to shut all sensory doors from worldly pleasures and let the mind absorb positive feelings like charity, love, faith, kindness, devotion, and surrender. When divine qualities fill all thoughts and actions, the mind becomes pure, and the restless nature (rajas) becomes calm. Surrounded by divine qualities, the mind naturally settles in its true Self. Lord Krishna says that ‘Om’ is the symbol of the imperishable Brahman, which indicates the nature of the One, eternal Supreme God. He tells Arjuna to remember His divine form while chanting ‘Om’, and at the time of death, the body and mind will dissolve and the soul will merge into the syllable ‘Om’. The sound of ‘Om’ awakens the feeling of the Supreme Truth within the inner being. Though God has countless names and forms, ‘Om’ is short and can be easily remembered with the breath. Here, it is not instructed to chant ‘Om’ aloud, but to repeat it mentally while meditating on the form of God. Mentally uttering the name helps to keep the thought of God alive in the mind. According to Patanjali’s Yoga philosophy, during the early stage of meditation (savitaraka samadhi), the sound, its meaning, and related knowledge exist in the mind. So, it is natural that when something is meditated upon, its name also remains in the mind. As ‘Om’ is the short name of the Supreme Lord, it can be chanted mentally. Meditation is guided by a true spiritual teacher (Sadguru). By meditating with faith on Lord Ram, Krishna, or a great saint as the form of God, one realizes their true form through spiritual experience. Or, through sincere practice, the way to have the vision of a living Sadguru also opens. To realize the formless and qualityless Brahman, one must take refuge in an experienced Sadguru with full surrender. Lord Krishna is the master of yoga and the perfect guru, established in the Supreme Truth. To attain the formless Supreme Brahman, chanting the syllable ‘Om’ is the path shown here. The heart lotus, located between the navel and the throat, is the seat of the mind and the vital force (prana). The restless mind must be withdrawn from thoughts and doubts and fixed at the lotus feet of the Lord who resides in the heart. The upward movement of prana and apana (vital airs) should be directed through the upward channels (nadis) from

the heart to the Brahmarandhra at the crown of the head. In this way, the mind along with the life force remains stationed at the top of the head. Thus, by controlling the senses and mastering the movement of prana, the mind and life force are directed into the tenth door — the Brahmarandhra — which is the process of yogic concentration. One who leaves the body with remembrance of the formless Supreme Lord in this manner attains the highest goal, or liberation. In this verse, Lord Krishna emphasizes the practice of chanting the syllable ‘Om’ as a means to realize the true nature of Brahman. If the Vedic mantras are removed of the syllable ‘Om’, they lose their importance. On the banks of the Ganges, this sacred syllable ‘Om’ — called the ‘Praish Mantra’ — is whispered into the right ear of the seeker by the Sadguru as part of the renunciation ceremony. At that moment, the seeker takes a vow saying, “I forever give up all enjoyment of earthly, intermediate, and heavenly realms.” After this, the seeker receives the initiation of the ‘Om’ mantra from the Sadguru for guidance in life. After accepting the Praish mantra and putting on saffron robes, returning to household life is condemned by scriptures. ‘Om’ is the supreme and unique mantra of renunciation. Only when all worldly enjoyments are given up does one become eligible to chant the ‘Om’ mantra. Would you like me to continue the translation manually here in the chat, without the tool? I can proceed with the next part of the English translation directly. The Katha Upanishad says that ‘Om’ is the short and complete name of the formless Brahman who has divine qualities. The secret behind this is that creation is made of five elements, among which space (akasha) is the subtlest. The sound of ‘Om’ arises from space due to the movement of air, and its real physical existence is as vibration or sound waves. This vibration comes from sound itself, and it is a completely physical phenomenon. Therefore, the entire universe, which is made of five elements, is represented in the subtle form by the sound of ‘Om’. The vibration of ‘Om’ coming from every person’s throat differs, depending on their body, five vital forces, and the five layers (koshas) of subtle and gross existence. Just as the body experiences waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, in the same way, the three syllables A – U – M of ‘Om’ represent creation, preservation, and destruction. Beyond these three states, there is a fourth state which is without syllable or sound, called the Turiya state. Therefore, if we take the entire creation of Brahma and the smallest form of the human body, it is symbolized by the syllable ‘Om’, known as Akshara Brahman.

**ananya-cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyaāhaṁ sulabhāḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ (8-14)**

Comm. One whose mind does not take shelter in anything other than God is called *ananyachetāḥ* (one with undivided mind). Lord Krishna says—O son of Pritha! The yogi whose mind is always and constantly focused on Me and who remembers My divine form without distraction, for him, “I” am easily attainable. That seeker who always holds the unbreakable thought—“I belong to God and God belongs to me”—is called *nitya-yukta* (always connected with God). In the two words *ananyachetāḥ* (undivided mind) and

nitya-yukta (always united), Lord Krishna expresses the intense, exclusive devotion of a devotee who is at the peak of bhakti yoga. The one who is undivided in mind and always united with God is a pure and one-pointed devotee of the Lord. A pure devotee has no desire for any material enjoyment—not even for liberation (moksha). Just to taste a little bit of divine love for God, he tries in every way to connect with the Lord. Whether in the mood of peace, service, friendship, parental affection, or romantic love, such a devotee enjoys the nectar of the Lord’s divine pastimes. That exclusive devotee keeps his mind with the Lord, his actions for the Lord, his words for the Lord, his soul with the Lord, and even his body dedicated to the Lord. He becomes absorbed in singing the glories and greatness of the Lord, hearing His divine pastimes, and seeing His beautiful form, forgetting his own existence. This is called complete absorption in the form of God, with full forgetfulness of body and mind. Lord Krishna acknowledges this and says, “The gopis are such devotees of Mine.” The Lord says, “I am easily attainable for such devotees.” Because those devotees see Me within their hearts, outside themselves, at all times, in all places, in everything, in every action, and in all forms. To attain Me, My devotee does not need Vedic or scriptural knowledge. He does not need to live in a holy place or pay a price like acquiring some material object. The devotee’s heart is so expanded that he is capable of keeping the Universal Soul (Vishvatma) within himself. That’s why the Lord becomes naturally accessible to such exclusive devotees. Once the devotee accepts the Lord as his protector, doer, and creator, worldly obstacles can no longer disturb his mind. Such a devotee is not concerned with place, time, or environment—he always remains immersed in thoughts of God. Not even for a moment does he consider himself separate from God. Therefore, the Lord is always present for him. This path of devotion is very simple, pure, and easily practiced. But for one who lacks faith and trust, who does not show eagerness to understand the divine qualities and glory of the Lord, and who has not had the good fortune of associating with the great souls, constant remembrance of God becomes difficult. As long as a person maintains the false belief that “I am the body and the body is mine,” he remains bound in the cycle of birth and death. When this mistaken idea is removed, God becomes easily attainable. In this world, God is not rare; what is rare is a devotee who understands the truth of God and takes His refuge. Actually, for one who is eternally present, the question of being easy or difficult to attain does not apply.

**mām upetya punar janma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ (8-15)**

Comm. Realizing God directly leads to liberation, known as nirvana. God has confirmed this eternal rule in these two verses. One who fully understands the mystery of divine truth and lives accordingly attains supreme perfection. Great souls who achieve this perfection are freed forever from the material world and do not take rebirth. This means they are never separated from God again. The essence of all topics described in the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads is that attaining this supreme perfection, called moksha, is the

ultimate goal of human life. Until one realizes God, the cycle of leaving one body and taking another continues. Due to karma, one takes birth as a god, human, animal, bird, or other being, which is called rebirth. No birth is free from suffering or impermanence. This world, always moving toward destruction, is full of pain and suffering like birth, death, old age, and disease. Among all things, people, and situations obtained in life, nothing remains constant or unchanging. Death is strong proof of the body's impermanence and life's fleeting nature. What seems pleasurable today may change or become painful tomorrow. Obtained things will either be destroyed one day or left behind at death, both of which are certain. Thus, attachment to or desire for pleasurable things always causes suffering. Due to attachment and the pursuit of material things, one engages in sinful actions, leading to various sufferings and torments. From birth to death, only suffering exists, which is why God calls this world a house of misery. No birth's pleasures are eternal, so they are also perishable. Great souls who attain perfection through constant devotion, meditation, and practice do not take rebirth. Once such wise devotees realize God—the infinite ocean of joy, the supreme refuge, and the ultimate truth—they are never separated from Him under any circumstances. When the Creator Himself says the world is a place of suffering and impermanent, hoping for happiness here is mere delusion. Sage Patanjali says that to a discerning person, the entire world appears full of suffering. No matter how much wealth, fame, or respect one gains, it will all turn to dust one day. There is no doubt about this. A person seeking his welfare always remembers two things: their own death and the name of Lord Narayana. Thinking the body is permanent, one pursues happiness and engages in harmful actions. If one remembers that death can make the body lifeless at any moment, attachment to the world and harmful tendencies will not arise. For those who seek happiness from worldly things, people, or actions, the world is extremely painful. But for those who serve others through things and actions, the world is a reflection of God. In a creation that is the form of the blissful God, where He resides in every being's heart as truth, consciousness, and bliss, how can a soul's birth be a house of suffering? The answer is that a soul's birth under nature's force and influence causes suffering. Just as God takes incarnation to control nature, destroy the wicked, protect the righteous, and restore dharma, great souls take birth to benefit the world, guide humanity, and uphold dharma. The birth of such devotees is neither painful nor impermanent. Their birth is not caused by karma but by God's will. The soul is a part of God. Without accepting its source, supreme love and ever-growing joy cannot be attained. Great souls who achieve this supreme perfection attain that ever-growing joy and love.

**ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate (8-16)**

Comm. O Arjuna! From this mortal world up to Brahma Loka, in every place, the cycle of birth and death keeps continuing for all beings including gods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, and humans. But O Kaunteya! The one who reaches My Supreme Abode,

meaning one who fully realizes My true divine nature, does not have to take birth again. Because I am beyond time. Even reaching Brahma Loka does not ensure final liberation for the soul. Brahma Loka, also called Satya Loka, is the residence of four-headed Brahma. In the evening prayers (Sandhya Upasana), the seven upper worlds are described as: Bhūḥ – the world of mortals (Earth). Bhuvaḥ – the space between Earth and Sun. Svaḥ – the Sun region. Mahaḥ – the space above the Sun. Janaḥ – the realm above the Sun, called Parameshthi Mandal. Tapaḥ – the space above the Jana Loka. Satyaḥ – the topmost realm, where Brahma lives; also called Swayambhu Mandal. In Satya Loka, Brahma and some souls who reached there reside. Those who perform rituals like Yajnas may go to higher worlds from Earth to Brahma Loka, but if they don't realize the truth of God, they are born again. All these worlds where birth and death happen again and again are called “Punaravṛtti” – meaning places of return. Even if one reaches Brahma Loka through the Panchagni Vidya mentioned in the Katha Upanishad, after enjoying the result of good deeds, one takes birth again. Even a seeker who practices yoga and attains self-realization, but lacks deep devotion and surrender, does not reach the Supreme Abode. They go to Brahma Loka. After reaching Brahma Loka, such souls must wait until Brahma's life ends. Then during the cosmic dissolution, they merge into the Supreme Brahman along with Brahma. This type of liberation is called Kramamukti (liberation in stages). In the mortal world, living a healthy, wealthy life with wife, children, and family is considered material happiness, but it is not eternal and not guaranteed. Because there is no gross body in heaven, the pleasure there is a hundred times more than on Earth. Similarly, in Indraloka, the happiness is a hundred times more than heaven. In Brahma Loka or Satya Loka, the joy is even a hundred times more than in Indraloka. But all these pleasures in different worlds are limited and controlled by time. The happiness of a self-realized sage who has attained the knowledge of God is infinite and eternal. So, from Earth to Brahma Loka, whatever we get is due to karma (actions), and all pleasures there are limited and perishable. Since the soul is a part of the Supreme Soul, no matter how high a world the soul goes to, until it reaches God through complete control of the mind, it has to return again. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says: when all desires in the heart are destroyed from the root, then the mortal human becomes able to directly realize the Supreme. The happiness of realizing God is infinite, immeasurable, and deep. Even if infinite Brahmas and infinite universes are destroyed, this happiness never ends, and such a great soul is never born again. In the book Yathartha Gita, Swami Adgadanandji says: The ideas of many different worlds mentioned in scriptures are symbolic, to help us understand God's greatness through internal experience. There is no real place in the sky called hell where people suffer, nor is there any palace called heaven filled with pleasures. Beings like gods, Gandharvas, humans, animals, birds, insects – all are forms of different worlds or experiences. According to Lord Krishna, based on past actions and tendencies, the soul takes a new body with the mind and five senses. The kind of world the soul experiences depends on how the mind is shaped by

the three gunas – Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance). A person with divine qualities is called a god; one with demonic traits is called a demon. Ordinary people's intellect is not Brahma. When the intellect starts focusing on the Supreme, then the understanding of Brahman begins. Scholars have mentioned four levels of this realization: Brahmaid – one who has knowledge of Brahman. Brahmaidvara – one who excels in this knowledge. Brahmaidvariyaan – one who not only excels but also controls and applies this knowledge. Brahmaidvarishtha – the highest level where one becomes completely filled with the Divine. Up to this level, the intellect still exists and functions within nature. Such a realized person is called a Mahapurusha (great soul), whose mind and intellect have become tools in the hands of God. Though their speech appears like their own, actually, they are speaking through the divine. They exist beyond mind and intellect, in a subtle state. Such souls do not take birth again. Until they reach this subtle state, they remain within the level of Brahma or Brahmahood and are bound in the birth-death cycle. In the book Devata Nibitta by Shri Vidyavachaspati, eight kinds of paths for souls are described. Those who attain Paramukti (highest liberation) do not go to any other world. They merge here itself. This Paramukti is called Kshinodarka and Bhumodarka. Kshinodarka means: when the soul is completely separated from body, mind, and intellect, and remains in pure consciousness, becoming one with Brahman. Bhumodarka means: when the soul expands beyond the body and merges into the Cosmic Soul (Vishvatma). They see the whole universe as their own soul and become one with the universe. Besides this, those who worship God in personal forms attain four kinds of lower liberations: Salokya – going to God's world. Samipya – being near God. Sarupya – attaining a form similar to God. Sayujya – merging into God's form. These four are called Apra Mukti (lower liberation). In Para Mukti, the soul does not go anywhere. It merges here itself and is also called Kaivalya Mukti. In Apra Mukti, one goes to the world of the personal God (Ishta Loka).

**sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātriṁ yuga-sahasrāntām te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ (8-17)**

Comm. A year is part of a yuga, and a yuga is part of a kalpa. Spiritual scriptures describe four yugas: Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali. Each yuga has its own duration. In the human world, day, night, fortnight, month, and year are calculated based on the positions of the moon and sun. Kali Yuga lasts 432,000 human years, where sin spreads widely, causing conflict, ignorance, and unrighteousness. So far, only 5,088 years of Kali Yuga have passed. The current Kali Yuga is the 28th one. Dvapara Yuga lasts twice as long as Kali Yuga, which is 864,000 years, when good qualities and righteousness begin to decline. Treta Yuga lasts three times as long as Kali Yuga, which is 1,296,000 years, when sin starts to enter. Satya Yuga lasts four times as long as Kali Yuga, which is 1,728,000 years, and is the era of goodness, knowledge, and righteousness. The total duration of the four yugas is 4,320,000 years. These four yugas together form one

divine yuga. After 1,000 divine yugas, one day of Brahma passes. Similarly, one night of Brahma also equals 1,000 divine yugas. Brahma's lifespan lasts 100 years, made up of such days and nights. The current Brahma is in the second half of his life, past 50 years. A parardha is the highest number, and Brahma's lifespan is two parardhas. In one day of Brahma, 14 Indras and 14 Manus change. One manvantara is 71 cycles of the four yugas, and in each manvantara, a new Manu rules. Currently, the Vaivasvata Manvantara is ongoing. Six manvantaras have ended before this one. The seventh Manu's rule is currently active. Manus create the constitution of human dharma. Deities like Indra enforce the rules set by Manus in the world. In one day of Brahma, one kalpa occurs. One kalpa has 14 manvantaras, and in each manvantara, the four yugas—Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali—repeat 71 times. When 14 manvantaras end, a kalpa ends, and a dissolution (pralaya) happens. Every day of Brahma's 100-year lifespan sees the creation of the three worlds, and every night sees their dissolution. Brahma and his creation are part of the material universe and are always in flux. Those wise people who understand the mystery of Brahma's day and night understand the concept of time. The gross creation is Brahma's work, while God creates the subtle body. To overcome the faults of karma from past lives and develop detachment, God explains that the cycle of creation and dissolution continues endlessly, and even the longest lifespans, including Brahma's, are temporary and subject to time. Being attached to pleasures in this world or the next, striving for them, and wasting human life in negligence is great foolishness. Success in human life comes from constantly thinking of God with love and realizing the divine truth. In "Yathartha Gita," Swami Adgadanand explains Brahma's day and night as knowledge (vidya) and ignorance (avidya). Intelligence connected with knowledge is Brahma's day. When knowledge is active, a yogi is drawn toward the divine self. Divine light flows through the thousands of tendencies of the mind. When the night of ignorance comes, illusion and duality flow through the mind's tendencies. Thus, the day of knowledge and the night of ignorance in the mind's tendencies are Brahma's day and night. In the night of the world, everyone is in an unconscious state. At that time, intelligence caught in qualities and nature cannot see the divine light. But a yogi remains awake and moves toward the divine self. Intelligence with knowledge turns into ignorance due to bad company, but with good company, knowledge flows again. This cycle of light and illusion continues in the mind's tendencies until liberation. After liberation, there is no intelligence, no Brahma, no night, and no day. The sense of light and darkness exists only within the limits of intelligence. Beyond intelligence, only the unchanging divine truth exists. This is the symbolic meaning of Brahma's Day and night. There is no night lasting thousands of years, nor a day of thousands of yugas. The four progressive states of knowing Brahma- Brahavid, Brahavidvar, Brahavidvariyan, and Brahavidvarishtha are Brahma's four faces. The four main tendencies of the mind—manas, buddhi, chitta, and ahankara—are Brahma's four yugas.

**avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanty ahar-āgame
rātry-āgame praliyante tatraivāvyakta-samjñake (8-18)**

**bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate
rātry-āgame 'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavaty ahar-āgame (8-19)**

Comm. In the state of deep sleep, the senses and mind do not remain active. As soon as one wakes up from sleep, all the senses and the mind start working again. During the night, in the state of sleep, the living being becomes unaware of the world. Then again during the day, in the waking state, he remembers the world. This daily cycle of sleep and waking is called “daily dissolution” or “naitthika pralaya” in the scriptures. When Brahma’s night begins, the gross bodies of all living beings in the 84 lakh species merge into the unmanifest original cause. Again, when Brahma’s day begins, all the living beings emerge from the unmanifest source. Before the five great elements are created, the subtle state of nature is called the subtle form of Brahma. During Brahma’s night, all creation merges into the unmanifest, and again comes into being when day begins. Between Brahma’s day and night, the continuous cycle of birth and death of living beings goes on. The dissolution that happens at the beginning of Brahma’s night is called “daily dissolution” because it happens regularly. When Brahma’s lifespan of 100 divine years ends, all the worlds and all living beings merge into nature. This is called the “natural dissolution” or “prākṛta pralaya.” Even though all beings merge into the unmanifest at the beginning of Brahma’s night, until they attain the Supreme Being, their cycle of rebirth does not end. The “ultimate dissolution” or “ātyantika pralaya” happens when the soul gains complete knowledge and ignorance is fully destroyed, and does not appear again. In this verse, God explains about daily dissolution, where when Brahma’s night begins, the sun disappears, and the three worlds are dissolved. Just as a tree remains in the seed in an unmanifest form, the actions (like body etc.) of beings remain hidden in their original nature. When Brahma’s day starts, like a tree sprouting from a seed, the beings come into visible form. At the beginning of Brahma’s night, the beings merge into the subtle unmanifest state. Lord Krishna says – O Arjuna! Those who were in unmanifest form during the previous cycle, again get bodies according to their past actions when Brahma’s day and night changes. Here, by the word “unmanifest”, Lord Krishna refers to Brahma, the cosmic being identified with collective consciousness. Even if the body is moving towards destruction, the soul does not want to leave it. So, the soul has to keep taking bodies again and again. Accepting the relation of “I” and “mine” with objects, people, and actions born of nature binds the person. The true nature of the soul is a conscious part of the Supreme. Due to attachment with matter, the soul forgets its conscious identity. When freed from material bondage, the soul attains liberation by remaining in its own true form. According to the explanation of knowledge and ignorance, when Brahma’s day begins, all beings awaken in the unmanifest intellect due to divine qualities. When night begins, the subtle knowledge in the unmanifest intellect becomes inactive. During the night of

ignorance, the soul cannot clearly see its true nature, but its existence remains. In both waking and unconscious states, the unmanifest intellect acts as the medium. O Arjuna! In this way, all beings become conscious during the day, and again become unconscious under the power of nature when ignorance (night) comes. The soul (Jivatmaa) cannot recognize its goal. When day begins, it again becomes conscious. As long as the intellect exists, the cycle of knowledge and ignorance continues within. Till then, the person remains a seeker, not a realized great soul (mahapurusha).

**paras tasmāt tu bhāvo ’nyo ’vyakto ’vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati (8-20)**

Comm. That unique, eternal, unmanifest Supreme Brahman always exists. He is the Lord, controller, and sustainer of the entire universe. He is even greater than that of the subtle form of Brahman, called Hiranyagarbha, even though all beings and elements, including Brahmā, remain in an unmanifest state, still, the material, perishable, and manifest world continues to exist. But that pure, conscious Brahman is full of awareness, is imperishable, and remains unmanifest. That eternal, unmanifest Supreme Brahman does not get destroyed even when all beings perish. At the time of the great cosmic dissolution, even subtle worlds along with Brahmā dissolve. At that time, the Supreme Lord—who is the ruler of the primordial nature—withdraws all moving and non-moving beings into Himself and remains in His own glory. Both the primordial nature (Mula Prakriti) and the Supreme Self (Paramatma) are above even Brahmā’s subtle body. Whether the form of the Supreme Self is manifest or unmanifest, it always exists as a feeling or essence—it can never be absent or lost. The primordial nature is greater than Brahmā, and the Supreme Self is greater than the primordial nature. That Supreme Brahman is the final cause in the chain of cause and effect of all beings and is beyond the reach of the senses. Just like clay is the cause behind all products like pots and pans, the name and shape are always visible in the product, while the cause remains hidden within it. The entire creation exists within this chain of cause and effect. Wherever this chain of cause and effect finally ends—that is the ultimate cause of all beings, which is the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Brahman. He is the original and final cause of creation and is the eternal essence present at all times. That changeless root principle exists throughout the whole universe as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence, Consciousness, Bliss). These three aspects are not separate, but they remain as one, in an unmanifest form. According to logic and philosophy, the existence of a thing is directly accepted through perception. In the same way, knowledge of an object is also perceived. When a desired object is obtained, the joy that appears in the mind is called happiness, and this too is directly experienced. In this line of thought, the Supreme Self’s form of Sat-Chit-Ananda is manifest and directly perceivable. But why does the Lord call it unmanifest? The answer is: behind the name and form of every object, there is an eternal essence. The existence of the object, the knowledge about the object, and the joy or happiness felt in the mind—these three are all based on perishable objects and the mind.

They are neither the root cause nor eternal. Their disappearance is directly experienced. But in a broader view, the existence or essential nature of the object and the feeling of bliss are eternal and imperishable. Just as fire becomes visible by touching wood, the unmanifest essence of knowledge and bliss becomes visible through the object and the mind—this is what the Lord calls unmanifest. Similarly, the bliss present in the soul of a living being is not the result of the mind expanding due to enjoyment of objects. Rather, it is the experience of the blissful peace that pervades the entire universe.

**avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas tam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim
yam prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama (8-21)**

Comm. God speaks about the indestructible nature of the unmanifested Supreme Being in this verse. “I” am the ultimate goal. The scriptures also state: “That is the supreme abode of Vishnu,” meaning attaining Brahman is the soul’s final aim and destination. There is no entity beyond that Supreme Being. In the Brahma Samhita, Lord Krishna’s supreme abode is described as the Chintamani Dham, full of blissful rasa (divine essence). Once a soul reaches this abode, it does not return to the material world, meaning it is free from rebirth. This is a realm where all the soul’s desires are fulfilled, and it remains in a state of complete satisfaction. The journey up to Brahmaloaka involves repetition and is not the ultimate destination. Some commentators describe the word “Dham” as the radiant form. Among nature, the soul, and the Supreme Soul, nature is always inert. The soul is more radiant than nature but becomes subject to place, time, and objects due to bodily attachment. After attaining the radiant form beyond nature, the soul no longer takes on a body influenced by material qualities. God’s eternal, indestructible, supreme divine form is described as unmanifested and imperishable in this verse. Lord Krishna calls it the supreme abode, meaning His highest form. The formless, attributeless Supreme Soul, known as Parabrahman and Aksharbrahman, is also the supreme abode. Thus, by referring to the supreme abode, God indicates His eternal divine form. According to Lokmanya Tilak’s explanation, the unmanifested is not only nature as accepted by the Sankhya philosophy; there exists a supreme unmanifested Being beyond nature. One who is unmanifested may not be imperishable, but one who is imperishable is definitely unmanifested. According to Vallabhacharya, the all-pervading form, Vaikuntha, is called Akshar and is considered the abode of the Supreme Lord. The Vrindavan Dham in the northern realm is regarded as a reflection of Lord Krishna’s supreme abode, Goloka Vrindavan.

**puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyaḥ tv ananyayā
yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṁ tatam is (8-22)**

Comm. In this verse, Lord Krishna confirms that single-minded devotion is the only path to attain the Supreme Person, the Supreme Soul (Paramatma). All living beings, born through 8.4 million species, along with countless universes, exist within Him. All moving and non-moving beings are created from the Supreme and remain sustained by Him. He is

the light of all beings and, through His spiritual and material powers, He controls the entire universe. The entire visible world is pervaded by His indestructible presence. Just like space exists within air, fire, water, and earth, in the same way, the entire creation is pervaded by the formless Supreme Lord. The differences seen among all beings are actually the spiritual expansions of the Lord Himself. His presence is everywhere. Recognizing Him as the foundation of all, the inner ruler of everything, and all-powerful, one should remain always content in His guidance. One should always lovingly remember Him in every form and offer everything to Him with exclusive devotion. Just like a devoted wife can win over her noble husband through pure love, in the same way, the Supreme Lord becomes controlled by His single-minded devotee. In the practice of Karma Yoga also, when actions are done solely to please the Supreme Lord, there is exclusiveness in that too. Even if the actions done by different yogis are different, if the aim is one, the attitude is one, and the state of balance is the same, then that becomes a form of single-minded devotion. According to the explanation in Sri Aurobindo's "Essays on the Gita," single-minded devotion means not seeing oneself as separate from others. The knowledge that the soul (Atma) is inseparably connected with the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) is single-minded devotion. Just like the waves seen in the ocean are not separate from ocean water, in the same way, the individual soul (Jivatma) is not separate from the Supreme Soul (Paramatma).

**yatra kāle tv anāvṛttim āvṛttim caiva yoginaḥ
prayātā yānti taṁ kālāṁ vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha (8-23)**

Comm. The Lord says, "O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas! I am telling you about the path taken by yogis who have attained knowledge of Brahman and by those who perform rituals like vows and worship, leading to either liberation or rebirth." In this verse, the word "time" refers to day, night, the northern solstice, and other times, indicating the presiding deities of these times and the paths they guide. The Upanishads describe many forms of worship, through which people attain different realms of enjoyment. Among them, the "Panchagni" knowledge is one such practice, through which one attains the realm of Brahma. Yogis who have realized Brahman can choose the place, time, and path to leave their body and go to the Brahma realm. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma, who was one of the eight Vasus named 'Dyau' in a previous birth, came to the mortal world due to a curse. Although his body passed away during the southern solstice, he stayed on a bed of arrows for 58 days, waiting for the northern solstice to go to the divine realm, as the gates to the divine realm remain closed during the southern solstice. A yogi who has fully surrendered to God with unwavering devotion and love becomes free from bondage even while alive, attaining instant liberation. Practitioners of knowledge or karma yoga, including those who have strayed from yoga, reach the Brahma realm due to subtle desires and merge with the Supreme Brahman during the time of cosmic dissolution. This path of gradual liberation is called non-returning. People driven by desires attain realms like the moon for enjoyment, but when their merits are exhausted, they return to the mortal

world. This path of returning is called cyclic. The Supreme Brahman, in its conscious form, pervades everything in the universe, both living and non-living. The all-pervading entity in a specific realm is called the presiding deity of that realm. Words like day, night, waxing moon, waning moon, northern solstice, and southern solstice refer to the deities that carry the subtle body of a soul along their respective paths. If these words are taken literally as time, it would mean that a knowledgeable person dying at night goes to another realm, while a desire-driven person dying during the day reaches the Brahma realm, which would diminish the value of knowledge. Therefore, the Vedanta Sutra concludes that terms like fire, day, waxing moon, and northern solstice are symbolic of the presiding deities. In this verse, the word ‘yogi’ refers to both karma yogis and jnana yogis. The Lord in the Gita never says to abandon action for liberation. The world is full of action, but people are divided into two groups: those who perform rituals with the desire for results (ritualists) and those who act selflessly with knowledge, doing their duty without attachment. According to the Gita, ritualists attain temporary results like heaven, while those who act selflessly with knowledge attain eternal liberation. Based on these eternal or temporary results, each person follows a different path to different realms after death. The Upanishads describe the path of the knowledgeable as the divine path or the path of light, and the path of ritualists as the ancestral path or the path of smoke. In the Gita, the Lord uses the terms “bright” and “dark” to describe these two paths.

**agnir jyotir ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇ-māsā uttarāyaṇam
tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahma-vido janāḥ (8-24)**

**dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇ-māsā dakṣiṇāyaṇam
tatra cāndramasāṁ jyotir yogī prāpya nivartate (8-25)**

Comm. The Lord describes in these two verses the paths taken by practitioners of jnana yoga and karma yoga after leaving their bodies, leading to either liberation or rebirth based on their spiritual practice. Those whose knowledge is unobstructed, meaning their wisdom is free from any veil, attain the Brahma realm through the non-returning path. The path they take is guided by deities associated with light, signifying the prominence of knowledge. Those whose wisdom is veiled by attachment, desire, and possessiveness reach desired realms of enjoyment but return to the cycle of birth and death. Their path is dominated by darkness, meaning ignorance and lack of wisdom. In Aryan culture, the tradition of cremating the dead body has existed since ancient times. The subtle body of one eligible for the bright path merges with the flame of fire and travels through the illuminated path of day, waxing moon, and northern solstice to enter the Brahma realm. The subtle body of one eligible for the dark path travels through the dark path of smoke, night, waning moon, and southern solstice to reach the lunar realm and attain the nectar-like moonlight. After the period of enjoyment ends there, they return to the mortal world. Both the bright and dark upward paths are attained only by yogic practitioners or those

who perform virtuous deeds. The subtle body that does not attain an upward path but a downward one merges with the ashes from the fire. Such a subtle body does not reach any other realm and, in this mortal world, takes birth in lower species according to its karma, repeatedly undergoing birth and death. The Chandogya Upanishad refers to this as the third path. The bright and dark paths are described as the divine path (Devayana) and the ancestral path (Pitriyana), respectively. According to this description, the northern solstice is associated with the Dhruva star, where sunlight lasts for six months, followed by realms like the year, sun, moon, and lightning. The subtle body traveling the bright path first comes under the influence of the fire deity, which pervades the earth and oceans as radiant light. The fire deity hands over the subtle body to the deity presiding over the day within its realm. The subtle body travels with the help of radiant carrier deities and enters the realm of lightning. The moon in the bright path is the supreme realm above the sun, from where nectar-like essence reaches the earthly moon. Due to the prominence of this nectar, scriptures refer to both as the moon. After reaching the lightning realm, a non-human (mental being) takes the subtle body to the Brahma realm. In the Brahma realm, the subtle body resides until Brahma's lifespan ends and merges with Brahman during cosmic dissolution. The term "Brahma-knowers" refers to those who have not fully realized jnana yoga and are imperfect knowers of Brahman, who travel the bright path to attain gradual liberation in the Brahma realm. Scriptures clearly state that those who have fully realized the unity of Brahman and the self through divine awakening do not need to go to any other realm for liberation. For such Brahma-knowers, Brahman is all-pervading, and liberation is complete in life or after death from all directions. "Brahman is all-pervading liberation" (Gita 5/26) – this state of liberation is already attained by such Brahma-knowers in life, and after leaving the body, their soul merges into the all-pervading form here itself. Excluding the light of the fire, the smoke deity in the dark path takes the subtle body beyond its realm to the deity presiding over the night. The subtle body then passes through the realms of the waning moon, southern solstice, ancestral realm, and space, reaching the lunar light. After enjoying unfulfilled desires there, when their merits are exhausted, they return to the mortal world. Among all paths of birth and death in the world, the dark path is the best due to its upward movement. When returning from the dark path, the subtle body first reaches the space between the lunar realm and the ancestral realm. There, under the influence of air, it enters clouds, reaches the earth through rain, and enters food. According to its karma, that food enters the male body of the destined species, reaches the womb of a female, and is born as a living being. In this way, the soul revolves in the cycle of birth and death.

**śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hy ete jagataḥ śāśvate mate
ekayā yāty anāvṛttim anyayāvartate punaḥ (8-26)**

Comm. There are two paths — one is the bright path (Shukla Marga) and the other is the dark path (Krishna Marga). These two paths are eternal, meaning they have existed

in the world since a very long time. Every living being in the world has the right to follow one of these two paths. For each person, the time comes when they must go on one of these paths. This is because spiritual practice never goes in vain. The person who goes through the bright path filled with light does not return and attains the supreme goal (liberation). The one who practices Karma Yoga but has not yet reached balance follows the other path called Pitriyāna (the path of the ancestors). They reach the moon world (Chandraloka) and then return to Earth again. Swami Adgadanandji, in Yatharth Gita, explains: During the time when the fire is bright, divine light is shining, the sun is glowing, the moon is in the brighter half (Shukla Paksha), and the sky during Uttarayana (sun's northward journey) is clear, A yogi who dies at that time, who knows the truth of Brahman, attains Brahman. Fire represents Brahman, light, and energy. Daytime shows spiritual knowledge. The bright fortnight of the moon (Shukla Paksha) indicates purity. The six qualities — discrimination (viveka), detachment (vairagya), calmness (shama), self-control (dama), brightness (teja), and wisdom (prajna) — are symbolized as the six months (Shanmāsa). The upward direction of the subtle body is called Uttarayana. Yogis who die during this high spiritual state, which is higher than nature, attain Brahman and do not take birth again. On the other hand, during the time when the sacred fire is covered in smoke, the night is filled with ignorance, The moon is in the dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) and is becoming smaller and darker, A yogi who dies at that time, with six negative qualities like desire, anger, greed, pride, attachment, and jealousy, takes the Dakshinayana path (sun's southward journey) and reaches the moon world. But because their spiritual practice was incomplete, they take birth again and return to the mortal world (Earth).

**naite sṛtī pārtha jānan yogī muhyati kaścana
tasmāt sarveṣu kālēṣu yoga-yukto bhavārjuna (8-27)**

Comm. In the previous verse, God explained the principles of the bright and dark paths clearly. A seeker desiring liberation does not get attached to worldly or otherworldly pleasures and wealth. Such a yogi renounces actions, worship, and the sense of doership, and through dedicated yoga practice, follows the bright path to attain the supreme abode. A seeker who fails to understand the true essence of these two paths naturally gets attached to pleasures and wealth, deviating from the path of spiritual practice. Therefore, Arjuna, always remain devoted to yoga, meaning engage in selfless action with faith to please God. The phrase “at all times” means human life is fleeting. Thus, God advises never to stray from remembering Him and to strive for the Supreme Soul with unwavering focus. If one dies without practicing spiritual discipline, they fall from yoga and must be reborn. According to Mahatma Gandhi, a true yogi understands the principles of the bright and dark paths and does not desire to follow the dark path. They realize that selfless devotion is the highest form of devotion. A heart filled with faith in God and selfless love has no desires left to ask from God. They consider even survival as God's grace and surrender everything to Him. They accept that “all that appears to be mine belongs to You.” This selfless, unattached

devotion is described as light, radiance, the bright path, and the northern course. According to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, just as a ship's compass always points north, a true yogi's aim remains fixed on God in all situations and times. Some commentators interpret the word "deluded" in the verse to mean that a seeker who understands the essence of these two paths does not desire to follow either path. A perfected yogi, without attachment to personal liberation, remains immersed in self-awareness and constantly worships the Supreme Soul without interruption. A person established in Brahman, having realized the Supreme Soul, attains liberation while alive and lives in a state of freedom.

**vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva
dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṁ pradiṣṭam
atyeti tat sarvam idaṁ viditvā
yogī paraṁ sthānam upaiti cādyam (8-28)**

Comm: At the beginning of this chapter, Arjuna asked Lord Krishna seven questions. He asked: "O Lord! What is that Brahman which You speak about? What is Adhyatma (the Self)? What is full or complete Karma? What are Adhidaiva, Adhibhuta, and Adhiyajna? And at the time of death, how do yogis remember You, the Supreme Lord, and never forget You?" To explain all these clearly, Lord Krishna says: That which can never be destroyed is called Parabrahman. The realization of one's true divine nature is called Adhyatma. In other words, when the soul becomes free from maya (illusion) and stays in its true self, it is called Adhyatma. The thoughts that create good or bad tendencies in the mind — when those thoughts end, that end is called Visarga, or the completion of karma. At that point, no more karma is needed. So karma is that which brings an end to the cycle of impressions (samskara). That which is perishable is Adhibhuta — the elements from which beings are formed and into which they dissolve. The Supreme Person (Purusha) is Adhidaiva, in whom all divine qualities are dissolved. "I Myself," says God, "am Adhiyajna in this body — where all bodily activities and yajnas (sacrifices) are centered." As the controller of yajnas, God resides in the body. For the last question, Lord Krishna says: The one who always stays free from material desires and always remembers Me and never forgets Me even at the time of death — that person attains My true form. If the mind always remembers Me and merges into My form at the time of death, then rebirth stops. At that moment, the soul enters the Supreme state and never returns to be born again. In the final verse of the chapter, Lord Krishna describes the glory of Yoga. So, this chapter is a summary of what is said about God's full form in both Chapter 7 and 8 — and is very meaningful. The Vedas say that if one studies scriptures, performs yajnas, does intense austerities with difficulty, or performs all these together, then the result is enjoyment in heaven and other higher worlds. But the yogi, understanding this true wisdom told by God, goes beyond all such results of karma. He is not attracted to worldly enjoyments and does not take repeated births. By remaining dedicated to yoga and completing spiritual practice, he attains the eternal, highest, and ultimate cause of all beings — the Supreme Brahman. In Aryan culture, scriptures say a person should pass

through the four stages: Brahmacharya (student), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (retired), and finally Sannyasa (renunciate) to attain life's completeness. In the path of Karma Yoga, a person in youth becomes a disciple under a teacher, practices celibacy, studies the Vedas and scriptures, and engages in spiritual practice. Later, with the teacher's permission, he marries and enters the householder stage. In that stage, he must follow duties, serve others, donate, and perform different yajnas. After completing household life, he enters Vanaprastha, giving up worldly surroundings and doing physical austerities. Then, by taking Sannyasa (renunciation), he worships the Supreme Lord and tries to attain equanimity, which means liberation (moksha). From Brahmacharya to Sannyasa, he goes beyond the fruits of all Vedic studies, penance, giving, and yajnas and reaches the state of union with God. The word "Atiyeti" means "to go beyond," and various commentators have given different meanings for it. The Vedas are the path shown to know the unknown truth of God. But once one realizes the full truth of God and becomes one with Him, there is no more need for the Vedas. Similarly, when the knowledge of God is attained, there is no more need for fixed rituals like yajnas. Controlling the senses and mind under strict rules to reach God is called Tapas (austerity). Offering everything — thoughts, words, and actions — to God is called Dana (donation or surrender). For a seeker who desires liberation, the fruits of these practices are nothing but realization of God. Once God-realization happens, there is no longer any need for rituals, vows, yajnas, austerities, or donations. In this chapter, Lord Krishna gives one more special teaching: "O Arjuna! Always remember Me and fight." Remembering God with full concentration during meditation is so subtle that one cannot physically fight and remember God's form at the same time. The real meaning of this teaching is that — when a seeker stays always in remembrance of God, then real inner battles appear in front of him. At that time, negative forces try to enter the heart as obstacles. Lust, anger, likes, and dislikes — these powerful enemies do not let the seeker remember God continuously. The seeker's effort to defeat these enemies is called inner battle (yuddha). Only after these enemies are destroyed can the seeker attain the Supreme goal. The words "Akshara" and "Brahman" refer to God's formless-without-quality, formless-with-qualities, and with-form states. By meditating on any of these forms, one connects with the Supreme. That is why this chapter is called "Akshara Brahma Yoga" — the Yoga of the Imperishable Supreme.

Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade 'Akshara Brahma Yoga ' Naama Astama Adhyaayah ||8||

"Om Tat Sat" — In this way, with this holy name of God, the eight chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, called "Akshara Brahma Yoga," which is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, is completed.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 9 (Rajavidya-Rajaguhya Yoga)

Sri-bhagavan Uvacha

**idam tu te guhyatamam pravakshyamy anasuyave
jnanam vijnana-sahitam yaj jnatva mokshyase'shubhat (9-1)**

Comm : Lord Shri Krishna says: O Arjuna! You are not one who finds faults. Therefore, I will now tell you about the very secret knowledge related to the divine nature of God, and also the wisdom born from experience. After deeply understanding this supreme knowledge filled with realization, you will be freed from the impure and sinful worldly life. The Vedas and scriptures describe God as the ultimate cause of the entire universe. Firmly accepting this truth is called knowledge. “Other than the existence of God, there is no separate action or cause” — realizing this truth through experience is called direct knowledge or wisdom. According to Swami Ramsukhdas’s commentary, knowing one’s own true nature is called ‘Jnana’ (knowledge), and knowing the complete form of God, especially His qualities, is called ‘Vijnana’ (special knowledge). In this mortal world, those who cannot understand the mystery behind the Lord’s divine birth and actions, and who raise doubts about God’s existence and divinity with disbelief and pride, they are the ones who look at God with a fault-finding attitude. Therefore, the word ‘Anasuyave’ means one who is not opposed to the Supreme Lord. When Lord Krishna calls Arjuna “one who is free from fault-finding,” He means that Arjuna has listened to all of Lord

Krishna’s descriptions about His divine glory so far with utmost faith and devotion, and instead of doubting or criticizing, Arjuna has shown even more eagerness to know deeper truths. The root essence of everything is subtle and hidden within the unmanifest cause. The existence of the soul within the body is more mysterious. But even more mysterious is the presence of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) as the Inner Controller within the body. One who experiences this Supreme Soul and later realizes that God is present everywhere, that realization is the most secret of all. That is why God calls this knowledge extremely confidential. The truth of the Supreme Soul is always covered by the veil of ignorance. When one attains equanimity through karma yoga, and realizes the non-difference between soul and God, then devotion naturally arises in the heart of such a yogi. Only through such exclusive, inner devotion — even if not outwardly expressed — can one understand the complete divine mystery of God’s form. Just as the scenes on a movie screen are not real, our relationship with the world is only imaginary and never truly real. Therefore, due to illusion, we see unreal relationships as if they are real. But once this supreme secret knowledge filled with wisdom is understood, one is freed from the impurity of worldly life — that means, the illusion disappears and all worldly connections are cut off.

**raja-vidya raja-guhyam pavitram idam uttamam
pratyakshavagamam dharmyam su-sukham kartum avyayam (9-2)**

Comm: God has promised to impart the knowledge of spiritual science, and towards this, He has instilled faith, love, eagerness to listen, and enthusiasm for practice in this verse. This knowledge, combined with science, is the king among all forms of knowledge and confidential truths, meaning there is no knowledge or philosophy in the world that is more beneficial or more secret than this. This spiritual science knowledge is purifying, righteous, in accordance with dharma, yields immediate results, and its path of attainment is very simple, making it suitable for easy practice. It is called imperishable because even a slight realization of it remains undestroyed and aids the seeker of liberation until they attain moksha. In the Bhagavad Gita, the essence of God’s advice to Arjuna about the path of knowledge combined with selfless action is that renouncing the fruits of action and maintaining equanimity, along with knowledge integrated with science, fulfills the meaning of devotion. The balance of knowledge and action awakens the feeling of devotion in the heart of the seeker. Although Lokmanya Tilak considered the paths of knowledge and action as separate disciplines, according to his view, the path of action itself is called the path of devotion or Bhagavata Dharma. This view establishes that selfless action and devotion to God coexist together. Once the true essence of this knowledge is understood, nothing remains to be known, and it enables the seeker to be established on the path to Brahman, helping them attain the ultimate goal, the supreme state. God has called this knowledge the royal science and royal secret, as there is no more mysterious principle in the world than the knowledge of Brahman. This secret knowledge is obtained

only by a worthy disciple through a realized master. Except for God's devoted lover, no one else can understand the mystery of the embodied, saguna (with attributes) Supreme Brahman, who manifests in human form and performs divine pastimes. Some interpreters explain that the tradition of imparting Brahma Vidya or spiritual knowledge to kings by sages and seers, as mentioned by God in the fourth chapter, is known as royal science and royal secret. The effect of this knowledge destroys the sins accumulated over many births. A devoted follower accepts everything related to God—His name, form, pastimes, abode, chanting, meditation, and knowledge—with utmost purity of heart. No worldly object is equivalent to the practice of devotion to God. Therefore, God says that a devotee who accepts this knowledge as supreme becomes the best in His view. This path of yoga integrates knowledge and science, meaning practical material life and spiritual knowledge, and is highly purifying because it removes impurities from the material realm caused by nature and fills it with purity. Due to the realization of the universal self, attachment and aversion are eliminated from the heart. Brahma Vidya is not based on blind faith, and the results of its practice are perceptible in this very life. In this verse, the word “idam” (this) refers to the path of devotion, which, unlike the path of knowledge, is not abstract. When one surrenders, qualities like fearlessness, equanimity, and peace are directly observed in a devoted follower. With a heart filled with devotion, faith, love, and trust become firm, and by considering all beings as God's form, one attains Him. The sweetness, love, and essence found in the Gita are the result of the path of devotion it propounds. The joy obtained in the path of devotion is direct and tangible. For this direct experience of joy, even an ordinary person engages in simple practices like listening to God's name, chanting, qualities, glories, and pastimes. Faith is absolutely essential for this practice. Since this knowledge is connected with the Supreme Being, it is righteous and full of dharma. All practices for attaining God are righteous. What we uphold is called dharma; “Dharma protects those who protect it.” Protecting dharma within oneself ensures that dharma protects the individual. Realizing the truth of the Supreme Being safeguards dharma within the heart. The practice of the path of devotion for attaining God is very simple because it is naturally attainable. Accepting everything as God requires no wealth, effort, or qualification—it is merely a matter of acceptance at the level of body, mind, and intellect. In the second chapter, Lord Krishna says, “O Arjuna! The seed of yoga practice is never destroyed.” Even a little practice towards attaining God is not lost upon leaving the body; it continues through many births, leading to the ultimate goal of liberation from the great fear of birth and death. Just as a lamp lit in a dark room instantly dispels long-standing darkness, the realization of Brahman eliminates ignorance in a moment. The moment a seeker realizes they are the non-dual Brahman, beyond the doer, enjoyer, worldly being, or limited soul, the essence of truth-consciousness-bliss shines in their heart like a radiant light. Without the cessation of ignorance, Brahma Vidya has neither purpose nor proof. Once this knowledge is attained, it never becomes unattainable and remains the ultimate, imperishable truth.

**ashraddadhanah purusha dharmasyasya parantapa
aprapya mam nivartante mrityu-samsara-vartmani (9-3)**

Comm: In the previous two verses, Lord Krishna described the knowledge mixed with realization (Vijnana) using words like rajavidya (king of knowledge), rajaguhyam (king of secrets), pure, easy to practice, righteous, and eternal. In this verse, He refers to it again using the word “dharmasya asya” (this dharma). This knowledge and realization is related to the soul’s own true nature, so it is a part of one’s swadharma (own duty). The activities of nature and its effects are all called paradharma (other’s duty). A person who lacks faith and belief cannot withdraw from worldly pleasures, cannot fix the mind on one chosen goal, and so is not able to know My spiritual knowledge. Until a person turns away from worldly pleasures, the desire to know spiritual truths or God does not awaken in them. Therefore, faith is very necessary. The main obstacle in attaining knowledge of Brahman is lack of faith. Faith is such a feeling that, without it, even ordinary life becomes difficult. Unless a person truly wants their own good, they will not develop faith in religion, saints, gurus, or scriptures. According to Vedanta, faith is the support of seekers, yogis, sages, and great souls. The Upanishads say: gather faith and look within your heart to observe God and truth. When a person has patience, faith, and peace in the mind, only then is he fit to search for God. Only through faith can one attain success. Because of faith and love in God, the feelings of renunciation and detachment arise. Through experience, a knower attains God, and through faith, he becomes a great soul. Becoming a mahatma (great soul) is an inner matter — it is a subtle feeling in the heart. Faith cannot be seen with the senses, but with strong belief it settles in the heart. If we see the world with faith, we begin to understand the hidden truth behind God’s form. Even if someone has deep knowledge through study and discussion of scriptures, unless he becomes fully devoted and awakens loving feelings for God, he will not truly desire liberation. That seeker remains only at the level of worship and keeps moving in the cycle of birth and death. Until full knowledge of God is gained and liberation is attained, even if a person reaches heavenly worlds, after the enjoyment ends, he will have to be born again on Earth.

**maya tatam idam sarvam jagad avyakta-murtina
mat-sthani sarva-bhutani na chaham teshv avasthitah (9-4)**

**na cha mat-sthani bhutani pashya me yogam aishvaram
bhuta-bhrin na cha bhuta-stho mamatma bhuta-bhavanah(9-5)**

Comm. The one undivided Supreme Soul is present everywhere, like water becoming ice. In truth, this changing world has no independent existence at all. Whatever existence we feel in the world is actually only due to the presence of the Supreme Soul. How can we say “he”, “I”, “you”, “this”, “that” — all these differences — in the one non-dual Supreme Soul? So, apart from the one pure consciousness, there is no real existence of matter. God says, this entire universe is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest, formless

form. All living beings are in Me — meaning, I am the root cause and base of this entire world of higher and lower nature. When we understand the Lord as the Lord of Yoga, we find that although all beings exist in Him, He is not in them, and they are also not truly in Him. If living beings truly existed in Him, then just as He remains unchanged, the world would also remain unchanged. All beings would then have the nature of changelessness, eternity, and vastness. But there is no object in the world that can be the cause of its own creation. This entire world is both the manifest and unmanifest form of the Lord. Whether manifest or unmanifest, the Supreme Soul is one. Saying “I am not in them” means — even though I exist fully in them, and even though I am the cause of their birth, change, and destruction — I am not dependent on them. As the Lord of Yoga, I exist in My own divine glory. Because of the existence of the Supreme Soul, the existence of the world and the beings in it is visible. The scriptures also say, “It is in His radiance alone that this entire world shines in many forms.” Just as sunlight spreads throughout the universe, similarly God’s presence is spread everywhere. Everything depends on the Lord’s power, but the Lord is beyond the world, detached and unchanged. The Ishavasya Upanishad says, “This entire world, whatever moves or doesn’t move, is pervaded by the Lord.” In these two verses, God explains the nature of knowledge and realization about Brahman. In the manifest form, the Supreme Soul is in the world, and the world is in the Supreme Soul. This is the knowledge about the nature of Brahman. If one meditates on the formless, attribute-less Supreme, they reach the idea that the Lord is not in the world, and the world is not in the Lord — meaning, there is no existence apart from the one Supreme. Just like how all pots made from clay are nothing but clay, this is the true knowledge of the nature of Brahman. Even though God is present in every atom of the world, He is always beyond the world. Even if the entire world is destroyed, God remains as He is — unchanged. In fact, all created beings rest in Me, because they are all mortal. Though I appear in different forms in the world, I always remain attribute-less, one-form, and of one essence. This whole world is essentially the form of God, and all changes happening in it are just His play. Since these two verses describe the nature of God, different spiritual teachers have expressed different views based on their own realization. According to Shri Shankaracharya, all beings — from Brahma to the smallest — exist in Me. That means, I alone exist as the Self in all beings, which cannot be known by the senses. Just like the soul is the base of the body and senses, in the same way the Supreme Soul is the base of all living beings. But from the highest spiritual view, there is no relationship like base and supported between Me and the beings. “I” am always unattached — that means I do not mix with anyone or anything. From this view, the entire world is just illusion (Maya), and I alone exist everywhere in My eternal form — that is the truth. According to Shri Ramanujacharya, all living beings are under My control, but I am not under their control. That means, the beings are of no use to Me, but without Me, they cannot exist. Just as when water is filled in a clay pot, the moisture spreads throughout the pot, in the same way, My presence is everywhere. But the nature of beings does not enter Me. That

is why no being can be said to be in Me. An unformed thing can never be dependent on something else. A flying bird can never become the base of the sky, nor can the unformed sky become the support of a formed bird. I am the base and everything is based in Me. From the view of the ignorant, God is the base of the whole world. But from the view of the realized soul, there is nothing apart from God. In God, there is no world in the form of base and supported, nor is there any relationship like seer-seen, enjoyer-enjoyed, or doer-deed. As long as one does not gain knowledge of the base, they feel that changes are happening in the supported. As long as the knowledge of the rope is not gained, the illusion of a snake continues. Because ignorance has not been removed, we feel changes due to delusion. From the perspective of a realized person, apart from God, no other thing truly exists. The relationship between the soul and God is clearly explained in verse 12 of Chapter 7 (“matta eveti tñ viddhi na tvaham teṣu te mayi”). In that explanation, different spiritual masters of different traditions have presented their own interpretations.

**yathakasha-sthito nityam vayuh sarvatra-go mahan
tatha sarvani bhutani mat-sthanity upadharaya (9-6)**

Comm: The wind originates in the sky, exists in the sky, and merges back into the sky. Similarly, all living and non-living beings arise from God’s will, exist in God, and merge back into God. Just as the wind moves everywhere, the soul wanders through various forms of life. Like the wind that spreads widely in the sky, all beings are widespread in the world. The sky is the foundation of the wind in all conditions and at all times, just as God is the foundation and root cause of all souls. In this verse, God compares the relationship between the soul and Himself to the relationship between the sky and the wind. The subtlest essence of God is like the sky, which is the fundamental element of all great elements. The sky is the field of action for all great elements. Except for the conscious element, the nature of God aligns with the sky. The sky is the place where God’s manifestation occurs. The literal meaning of the word “sky” is a slight manifestation, derived from “a” meaning slight and “kash” meaning radiance. In God’s creation, the sky is the foundation where all substances are expressed through sound, form, taste, smell, and touch. Thus, the sky is the basis for God to manifest in a tangible form. Just as seeing a flying bird makes one feel the existence of the sky, the soul is a symbol of God’s existence. Although the sky is the field of action for all great elements, its manifesting power remains unaffected. Similarly, all beings exist within the nature of Lord Krishna, yet He remains detached like the sky. The good and bad, sorrow and happiness, creation and destruction of the world do not affect God. Just as the soul remains detached from the sinful and virtuous actions of the body, the universal soul remains separate from all. As long as one perceives the wind as having an independent existence, the wind exists in the sky, and the sky exists in the wind. However, from a philosophical perspective, there is neither wind in the sky nor sky in the wind; only the sky exists. Similarly, from a philosophical perspective, there are neither beings in God nor God in beings; only God exists.

**sarva-bhutani kaunteya prakritim yanti mamikam
kalpa-kshaye punas tani kalpadau visrijamy aham (9-7)**

Comm: O Arjuna, during the great dissolution, all material and conscious beings merge into My three-fold primal nature. At the start of a new cycle, when Brahma's Day begins, I manifest all beings again in various forms. The entire universe is just the expansion of God's energy in gross and subtle forms. One day of Brahma is one cycle, equal to a thousand sets of four ages in the human world. Brahma's night is also the same length of time. Brahma's lifespan is one hundred years, which equals 430 crore human years. When Brahma's life ends, a destruction process happens. All of God's manifestations enter His primal nature and become unmanifest. The lower nature, including the five elements like the sky, is directly connected to God's primal nature. Lord Krishna calls this primal nature "Mahat-Brahman" in chapter fourteen. Words like "My nature," "end of cycle," "beginning of cycle," and "I create again" have different meanings according to various scholars. According to Swami Ramsukhdas, all beings are part of Me. Due to attachment and ego with nature and the body, beings merge into God's gross nature during the great dissolution, along with their qualities, actions, and forms. When actions mature and are ready to bear fruit, God resolves, "Let Me become many." God's resolve is the start of the great creation to manifest beings' existence. Beings take bodies in different forms based on their past actions and impressions. Cycle after cycle, beings purify their actions and merge with God. Due to desire, attachment, and clinging to the perishable body and world, beings keep taking birth. God's resolve starts a cycle, where creation appears. When God calms His resolve, all beings merge into His primal nature, ending the cycle. According to Advaita, "My nature" is God's divine energy, which creates and dissolves the universe. Energy is never separate from the powerful one. Since this primal nature is God's energy, God is the source and end of the universe. Creation, existence, and dissolution are all God's illusion. Vedanta accepts the world's existence but not the process of nature's creation. God is complete and free from desire, attachment, or purpose. Resolve only happens in the incomplete. Thus, the manifest creation is like a dream under God's illusion. In a dream, many forms and states appear, but they have no reality for the seer. At creation's start, God's illusion-like lower nature expands into many names and forms. Consciousness, God's higher energy, gives life to the names and forms of the lower nature. Then, this illusion makes the world seem real. When the dream breaks, or sleep ends, the dream vanishes. Similarly, with knowledge of God, the world created by illusion disappears. Though creation and dissolution are driven by God's divine energy, His pure essence remains unaffected. According to Swami Shivananda, waves and bubbles in the ocean arise and vanish, but only the water element remains. Similarly, in God's essence, the creation and dissolution of beings happen, but only God's essence remains. The relationship between God and nature is like that of the seer and the seen. The entire creation in manifest form is God's essence. Being the seer is God's

nature. The essence perceived as the seer is knowledge. God remains detached, acting as the seer, the seen in nature's actions, and the knower in appearance. In Yatharth Gita, Swami Adgadananda explains "cycle" as an upward change. When God's primal nature is balanced in its three qualities, it is formless and changeless. When the balance of the three qualities—goodness, passion, and ignorance—disrupts, nature transforms, creating movement and various names and forms, starting a cycle. Adjusting nature's unbalanced state back to balance is the end of a cycle. The process of creation and dissolution has no beginning or end. During a cycle's dissolution, all beings attain My nature, meaning My essence. At the cycle's start, I create them again in special forms. They already existed but were transformed. I shape and awaken them. I inspire the unconscious for the cycle, moving them from imbalance to balance. The soul, freed from attachment and aversion in various forms, rests in its eternal essence. Lord Krishna says here that beings attain My nature. Enlightened sages, always in the eternal essence, work for the welfare of liberation-seeking people.

**prakritim svam avashtabhya visrijami punah punah
bhuta-gramam imam kritnam avasham prakriter vashat (9-8)**

Comm. During the time of great creation (Mahasarga), I become established in my own lower nature, Prakriti. Then, I cause all living beings to be born again and again in different wombs according to their past actions. The souls who had merged into Prakriti at the time of destruction (Pralaya) along with their stored karma impressions take bodies again. Revered Swami Sivananda has explained this verse as follows: "To create and destroy the universe, God takes the help of Prakriti." But when creation or destruction is not needed, He remains separate from Prakriti in His own divine glory. At the time of great creation, He awakens the unconscious Prakriti and causes the beings to appear in various forms. Along with the souls, He is present throughout the universe, but remains untouched. Ignorance, ego, attachment, hatred, and desire—these five tendencies of individual nature bind the soul. Every soul gets its subtle body at the beginning of creation and merges back into Prakriti during the great destruction. Between each great creation and destruction, the soul takes different physical bodies many times depending on its qualities and actions. The subtle body, created by God's divine power, remains from the beginning of creation until the final destruction. All the inert and conscious beings are controlled by the three qualities of Prakriti, so they become helpless or dependent. In the process of taking and leaving bodies, the soul has no independence. This visible world is the expression of God's higher and lower powers. His lower power spreads as the great element called Mahat-tattva. Inside the ever-changing Prakriti, the Supreme Power of God gives life and makes nature active. The Prakriti that stays in God's form is the total cosmic nature. The soul's personal nature, based on its qualities and actions, is a part of this whole nature and is called individual nature. Being caught in individual nature is the soul's dependence or bondage. When one surrenders to God, the bondage of nature gets destroyed. Then the

soul crosses over nature and attains the true form of God. As long as the soul remains under the control of its personal nature, it keeps taking birth again and again in different wombs and goes through happiness and sorrow. At the time of final destruction, all living beings merge into their individual nature. Individual nature merges into total nature. And total nature remains unmanifest in a dormant state within the form of the Supreme God. Even though God takes the support of nature for creation, He remains the master over nature and stays untouched by it.

**na cha mam tani karmani nibadhnanti dhananjaya
udasina-vad asinam asaktam teshu karmasu (9-9)**

Comm. Bhagavan says: “O Dhananjaya!” (Dhananjaya is another name for Arjuna as well as a name of Agni.) You are like a blazing fire of knowledge. Therefore, you can destroy faults like attachment, possessiveness, and ego that exist in karma (actions). And you become eligible to understand My pure and detached essence. Even though I am the basis of creation and destruction in this universe, I remain detached from these actions, like a neutral observer. Bhagavan says, “I remain like a neutral person”—He does not say He is indifferent, but He remains like one. The word ‘udasina’ means “Tatastha”(neutral), that is, one who stands on the riverbank without participating in the act of crossing the river. Bhagavan says, “In the activities of creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world, I take part but remain completely detached, like a neutral observer.” I have no attachment to it, and therefore I am not affected by its outcomes. I only inspire nature (Prakriti) to perform all actions, and I remain just a witness. According to Advaita philosophy, just as the mirage of water seen on hot sand has no reality, the world appearing in the form of God is also unreal. It is only that hot sand which causes the illusion of water. The world is merely an expansion of Bhagavan’s Yogamaya (divine power). Like in a movie, when there is a scene of bloodshed, the screen doesn’t get stained, nor does a scene of a cyclone disturb the screen’s condition. The pure screen remains untouched and intact. Similarly, in the form of God, even though nature performs creation, sustenance, and destruction in the universe, He remains completely unaffected. “Attachment is the cause of bondage—not karma itself.” Bhagavan explains this essence of karma in this verse and shows a simple path of liberation from bondage. God is neither happy when beings are born, nor is He sad when they dissolve. If humans follow this example in their lives, they can surely become free from bondage. They can separate themselves from the happiness and sorrow, good and bad outcomes of the world. Bhagavan is complete in Himself. He is beyond attachment, possessiveness, and ego. But the individual soul, being under the influence of its own limited nature (vyashti prakriti), becomes bound by attachment, possessiveness, and ego toward its actions and their outcomes. Due to false pride, man thinks that everything is achieved only by his own strength, intelligence, and knowledge. He ignores the presence of the soul’s power behind all actions. Ignorant people do not believe that everything is already predetermined and happens only according to the will

of God. Because being controlled by individual nature, the ignorant person turns away from his true soul-nature and develops false pride. The practical meaning of the word *anasakta* (non-attached) is to be free from pride. One who performs actions and accepts results without pride is not entangled in karma. When one is entangled in karma, one develops false pride for good deeds and must endure criticism, insult, and shame for bad or sinful actions. Being attached, both good and bad actions cause suffering. “*Hari Kartta na Aham kartaa*”-”(God is the doer—I am not the doer—He is doing everything.)” Acting with this attitude is true non-attachment and freedom from individual nature. In that, the result of karma does not cause bondage but leads to supreme bliss. In this context, Sri Ramakrishna said: “When ego is destroyed, all sorrows vanish. Everything happens by the will of God, and man is only an instrument. A seeker who accepts this principle is sure to attain liberation.” According to the teachings of revered Swami Sivananda, all actions that happen in the body—the soul is not the doer in them. Similarly, Bhagavan, as the universal Self (*Vishwatma*), is not the doer in the processes of creation and destruction. Therefore, all these actions do not cause any bondage to Him. For humans too, if they live like God without pride in doership and without desire for results, they are freed from dualities like virtue and sin, right and wrong. Because of false pride, one believes, “I am doing all actions,” and becomes attached to their results, thus binding himself to karma. Just as a silkworm continuously spins its own cocoon and traps itself inside, a man becomes bound by his own karmas due to attachment. But if one remains detached in karma, like a referee in a game who remains neutral and does not care who wins or loses, he performs his duty according to the rules and completes the game perfectly. Similarly, one who performs action without attachment reaches perfection in karma.

**mayadhyakshena prakritih suyate sa-characharam
hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivartate (9-10)**

Comm. In the previous verse, it was said that God remains indifferent in the process of the world’s activities. But in this verse, God clearly explains how the world functions. God says: It is by My existence that Nature gives birth to all living beings. The world, made up of matter and consciousness, continuously flows due to God’s existence and energy. Receiving existence and inspiration from Me, Nature, composed of the three *gunas* (qualities), creates and performs all actions like formation of living and non-living things. When God says He is the Creator of the world, it means that unless Nature receives inspiration and power from Him, it cannot perform any action on its own. The functioning of Nature and God’s guidance—through this combination, the entire universe undergoes creation, preservation, and destruction. In his commentary, Adi Shankaracharya says God is unchanging. Yet, because He inspires Nature, the three-guna-based ignorant Nature gives birth to this moving world. He Himself remains as a witness, full of consciousness, without qualities, steady and established. God remains the supreme guide. The creation, maintenance, destruction of crores of universes, experiences of sins and virtues, and

unusual situations like the COVID-19 pandemic are all due to His will and direction. All physical changes in individual beings (vyashti prakriti) and in the universe (samashti prakriti) are not directly connected to God. All change is opposite to God's constant, one-form nature. Therefore, this changing world is a creation of Nature, not of God's true essence. Though many forms, names, and shapes change in the world, the Supreme Self and the soul remain unchanged. Nature is God's highest creation of will. When He wills, creation happens; when He withdraws His will, creation changes; when He becomes still, the world is dissolved. So, since God inspires Nature, all acts of creation and destruction are attributed to Him. Just as ministers run the kingdom but credit goes to the king, similarly, Nature works, but God is accepted as the doer. In reality, God and Nature are not separate. God (the powerful) and Nature (the power) are inseparable truths. Nature or actions do not have their own independent existence because they are dependent on the Supreme Self. If one sees God as the source of action through His limbs or deeds, it is Nature. If one sees Him as the source through His true form, it is Brahman. When material nature dominates, He is called Nature; when consciousness dominates, He is called Brahman. Thus, there is no real difference between Brahman and Nature; it is only a matter of perspective. To show God's detachment and neutrality, the idea is given that all actions happen through Nature. According to the Upanishads, God's divine power is called Nature. It is called Maya because, like a magician, it hides the truth and shows the false. In everything in the world, though both matter and consciousness are present, consciousness—the truth—remains hidden, and matter appears as real. In Adhyatma Ramayana, there is a beautiful teaching called "Rama Hridayam," where Shankar tells Parvati about the essence of Rama. In Rama's court, along with his brothers, Sita, and Hanuman are present. Seeing Hanuman constantly looking at Rama's feet and face, Rama signals Sita that Hanuman wants to ask something and she should answer it. Sita says, "Hanuman, do you want to ask something? Please ask." Hanuman humbly asks, "I want to know—what is 'Rama'?" Sita is surprised that even after serving Rama for so long, Hanuman does not know who God truly is. Just like the Upanishads describe the truth of Brahman, Sita explains the truth of Rama, called "Rama Hridayam." Sita says: Rama is known through Vedanta, He is pure bliss, indifferent, unattached, immovable, unchanging, and constant. How will Hanuman be satisfied with this answer? He knows Rama was born in Ayodhya, studied in Gurukul, killed demons, broke Shiva's bow, married Sita, built a bridge on the sea, defeated Lanka, and now rules Ayodhya. How can such a Rama be indifferent, unmovable, and constant? That seems impossible. To clear Hanuman's doubt, Sita explains: All these actions—killing Tataka, breaking Shiva's bow, marrying Sita, going to the forest, befriending Sugriva, killing Bali, building the bridge, and conquering Lanka—are said to be done by Rama born in Ayodhya. But in truth, all these actions are done by Me—Sita, Nature. I—Sita—broke Shiva's bow and married Rama. All actions are only projected onto Rama, but in reality, I—Sita, Nature—performed them. Like a shining shell appearing as silver on the shore, or water flowing in a desert mirage, the whole world is only imagined on Rama. It is Sita,

through God's inspiration, who performs all the actions of the world. Sometimes, a seeker wonders: What is God's purpose in creating this world? One who is complete, free from desire and hatred, unattached and indifferent, cannot have any motive to create the world for His enjoyment. Then why this creation? The answer is: God is pure consciousness. The world that appears is not separate from His own essence. This entire conscious universe is established in His own glory as a witness. There is no second conscious being who can be a seer of God's worldly form. Therefore, God alone sees His own world-form as the seer and the seen. He is self-seeing and the witness at the same time. Thus, the world has no separate existence of its own. The doubt about its creation comes only from the power of Maya. Then what is the birth and death seen in the world? The answer: Just as the five great elements emerge from primal Nature due to God's will, similarly, the soul (jivatma), under the force of impressions (samskaras), takes birth with a body. Like a dream, the entire world changes and finally merges back into its original Nature. Similarly, the body made of the five elements passes through many stages—childhood, youth, old age—and finally merges into those five elements. But within the world and body, the conscious Supreme Self and soul remain unchanged.

**avajananti mam mudha manushim tanum ashritam
param bhavam ajananto mama bhuta-maheshvaram (9-11)**

Comm. People caught in ignorance and delusion lack the wisdom to recognize me as the creator and supreme lord of all beings. They see my divine actions and human form during my incarnation and think I am an ordinary person, mocking or disrespecting me. I am the supreme lord of all beings, all-knowing, and fully self-realized. Even when I take a human form on earth, my unique divine essence is always present, never absent at any time or place. Out of infinite compassion, I appear in human form on earth to protect and fulfill the desires of devotees seeking liberation. Though I take a human body, I have no attachment to it or distinction between body and soul. Just as one pot or a thousand pots made of clay are essentially clay, only the essence of clay exists in them. Similarly, in my true nature, this body and this world are mere appearances; only my divine essence is the true reality. Ignorant people mistake me for a human, thinking I am a doer, enjoyer, sinner, or saint. Seeing my physical body with hands and feet, they fail to understand my divine nature, omnipotence, and supreme glory. Deluded and unwise people, focused on falsehood and material desires, consider me insignificant. For example, when Lord Krishna went as a messenger to propose peace in the Kuru court, Duryodhana insulted him, calling him a magician. Foolish and arrogant people like Duryodhana see Lord Krishna as an ordinary human because they are unaware of the supreme lord's mysterious nature and power. In the Mahabharata's Bhishma Parva (66/23), Bhishma shares a conversation between Brahma and the gods with Duryodhana, hoping to change his mind. Brahma tells the gods: Lord Vasudeva, the great God of all worlds, is worthy of worship by all. Do not disrespect the heroic Vasudeva, who holds the conch, discus, and mace, by thinking he is a

mere human. He is the ultimate mystery, the supreme state, the supreme Brahman, and the embodiment of supreme glory. He is eternal, unmanifest, everlasting, the supreme light, supreme joy, and supreme truth. Neither gods, Indra, nor humans should disrespect the infinitely powerful Lord Vasudeva by treating him as a human. Those who call Hrishiksha (Krishna) a human are the lowest of people. Those who disrespect this great Yogeshwara, thinking he is merely a human, or fail to recognize the radiant Lord Padmanabha, marked with the Srivatsa, as the soul of the universe, are steeped in ignorance. Those who insult the Lord, who wears the Kaustubha gem and crown and grants fearlessness to friends, fall into a terrible hell. O great gods, knowing the divine nature of Shri Krishna in his human form, everyone should bow to Lord Vasudeva, the supreme lord of all. The Lord is the inner soul of all beings, eternally pure, inherently free, and present as the soul in all creatures. Thus, all beings are part of the supreme soul's essence. People driven by passion worship various deities in temples as forms of God to fulfill their desires. However, they do not treat beings as part of the supreme soul or show proper respect. In the seventh chapter, the Lord calls such people ignorant, swayed by illusion. It should be accepted that every soul is a part of the supreme soul and a symbol of the Lord. The body a soul inhabits is like a temple of the Lord. One should not disregard any object, substance, or person based only on name, form, or title. Ignorant people, driven by passion or ignorance, fail to see the supreme divine essence in beings with a physical body. They even mock scriptures, Upanishads, saints, teachers, and realized souls who have experienced the Lord's true nature. How can such foolish people understand the incarnation and divine actions of the mysterious Lord who takes a human form to uplift the world? Under his guidance, nature creates and dissolves infinite universes. His power drives everything in the world. By his grace, souls receive a human body. To see this eternal divine essence in an incarnation, sages perform penance for ages. Seeing an incarnated being is like seeing the supreme Lord himself. Worshipping the Lord's incarnation is the same as worshipping his personal form. In Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati's Holy Gita, an example is given: When the tricolor flag is raised, one sees the sacred land of Bharat and bows in reverence. Similarly, the divine essence of the Lord's incarnation is present in his form. The Brahma Samhita says, "Ishvara Paramah Krishna" – Shri Krishna is the supreme controller of all divine powers. He is the supreme overseer. Even his physical body or a metal statue is not material but true, eternal, blissful, and full of knowledge.

**moghasha mogha-karmano mogha-jnana vichetasah
rakshasim asurim chaiva prakritim mohinim shrutih (9-12)**

Comm. Those who have futile desires, failed actions, and useless knowledge have confused minds always trapped in a web of delusion. These people, prone to violence, demonic, indulgent in pleasures, and with deluded intellects, disrespect the divine incarnations in human form. With evil intentions, they worship deities for quick material gains without considering their qualifications, needs, or abilities, which is a futile hope.

Humans unaware of God’s influence, driven by pride, harbor such meaningless hopes that are never fulfilled. Those with futile hopes neither attain material happiness nor turn their minds toward the spiritual path. Due to their aversion to God, their actions, instead of benefiting themselves or the world, become binding. Because of disbelief and disrespect toward God’s incarnations and divine play, even sacred acts like sacrifices, penance, and charity do not yield results for them. Displaying scriptural knowledge based on flawed reasoning is actually ignorance. Even if skilled in Vedas and scriptures, they remain devoid of true knowledge and consider worldly pleasures as happiness. Knowledge that does not open the path to self-realization or awaken the desire for liberation is useless. Filled with vain hopes and failing in all actions, such people, lacking discernment, adopt demonic, violent, and deluded natures. Desire-driven nature is demonic, anger-driven nature is violent, and delusion or ignorance is the deluded nature. The root of demonic tendencies lies in these traits. People controlled by desire, anger, and delusion lose their intellect and discernment. The demonic nature, filled with pride and arrogance, believes the human body is meant for abundant pleasure and wealth. Fulfilling desires by harming others or taking their rights is a demonic trait. Harboring hatred without reason, committing violence, causing pain to others, or harming them is a violent trait. Causing suffering to other beings due to negligence or delusion is a deluded nature. People with this nature feel joy in harming sleeping animals or killing flying birds. The state of great souls is the exact opposite of this.

**mahatmanas tu mam partha daivim prakritim ashritah
bhajanty ananya-manaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam (9-13)**

Comm. But, O Arjuna, son of Kunti! Those great souls who possess divine qualities and a pure sattvic nature remain free from desires. With unwavering minds, they constantly worship Me, knowing Me as the eternal Supreme Person and the original cause of all beings. They remove all thoughts of perishable and imperishable worldly elements from their minds and remember only the blissful and imperishable form of the Supreme Person. Surrendering completely to Lord Krishna and becoming free from worldly nature while staying under the control of spiritual power is called divine nature. Great souls are those who adopt divine nature to attain the supreme goal, the Supreme Soul, and remain connected with Me in every way. Those who are free from ignorance and whose minds are not bound by any attachment are called “mahatmas” (great souls). These mahatmas see all of humanity with equal vision, rising above divisions of region, race, religion, and even nationality. Therefore, one whose soul embraces the entire universe is truly a mahatma. Attaining such a state is the true success of human birth. One whose mind does not get attracted to anything other than God and becomes restless even for a moment in His separation—that feeling is indicated by the word “ananyamanasah” (single-minded devotion). All good qualities and righteous conduct, and everything that appears in the divine play of God (avatars), are considered His own divine nature. In Chapter 16, at the

beginning, Lord Krishna describes qualities like “fearlessness” and “purity of mind” as part of the divine nature. The seeker who adopts these qualities becomes engaged in spiritual practice with the desire to attain the Supreme Soul. Taking shelter in divine nature is equal to taking shelter in God Himself. If one thinks, “I have acquired good qualities and good conduct through my own effort,” then it leads to ego, which becomes a major obstacle in spiritual practice. Since God resides in the heart as the inner witness, these good qualities and conduct should be accepted as His nature, not our own. This destroys pride and helps one attain realization of the Supreme Soul. When the attainment of the Supreme becomes the only goal of the seeker, then divine qualities naturally appear. Taking refuge in divine nature and due to the influence of merits gathered over many births, the mahatma becomes fully qualified for liberation. For such a mahatma, realization of the Supreme Soul in this life itself becomes their final birth.

**satatam kirtayanto mam yatantas cha dridha-vratah
namasyantas cha mam bhaktya nitya-yukta upasate (9-14)**

Comm. Devotees who love God try to attain the Supreme Soul in many ways. They do this by singing God’s name, qualities, and divine actions. They worship Him with strong faith and constant bowing down, while doing His service. Others, keeping their mind concentrated, meditate on God’s form all the time and worship Him. According to Acharya Shankar, those who never break their vows, regularly chant the glories of Brahman, control their senses, follow rules, show kindness and non-violence—are called determined seekers. Such determined people bow down to Me, seeing Me as the soul present in all beings, and stay engaged in yoga and always worship Me. The word “kirtan” means to glorify someone and mentally absorb their qualities and influence. Great souls, by singing the divine name, eternal form, and amazing actions of God, develop divine qualities like truth, non-violence, peace, and detachment. Through this, they aim to reach the Supreme Soul. Followers of Vedanta sing about God’s form. Devotees who have surrendered sing about God’s nature. Meditative yogis sing about God’s divine qualities. The faith, thinking ability, strong will, and celibacy of God-loving devotees are extremely firm. Even in difficult and painful situations, they do not leave their chosen path of vows and reasoning. This is a sign of a noble and strong person. When one tolerates physical and mental troubles by the power of discipline and vows, their inner strength grows. This inner strength is needed for doing any big work in life. Some people are born with strong willpower and sincerity. When a person begins their spiritual journey with firm determination, the past impressions of many lives get purified. That person then turns fully toward God. To achieve their goal, they offer their body, mind, and speech completely to God, filled with love and devotion. Seeing God’s presence in every being and in idols, they offer prostrations again and again. They consider the scriptures and teachings that describe God’s life and message as God Himself. God never says that one must do physically painful practices to reach Him. Instead, He asks people to give up pride, think

of themselves as smaller than others, and respect everyone. This is a difficult but important practice. Swami Sivananda explains that in the beginning of the spiritual path, people cannot easily understand or experience God through scriptures. So, they are first taught to worship the Guru as God Himself. From that, good conduct and virtues grow, which help them realize God. To keep the mind awake and watchful, the seeker should keep bowing to God again and again. By thinking of the whole world as God's form and doing repeated salutations, surrender grows. This surrender awakens love in the heart. This love and faith are called devotion (bhakti). Once someone accepts an eternal relationship with God, they never forget it. This constant awareness of relationship is called "always connected" or ever united with God. Even if great souls seem to do worldly activities, their one and only goal is to realize God. All their actions—worldly or spiritual—are done for God and for His happiness.

**jnana-yajnena chapy anye yajanto mam upasate
ekatvena prithaktvena bahudha vishvato-mukham (9-15)**

Comm. Due to differences in interest, ability, faith, and belief, spiritual seekers worship God in different ways. Some seekers, through the knowledge sacrifice (jñānayajña)—that is, through the vision of the Universal Self—worship the formless and attributeless aspect of God. Others, considering the moon, sun, fire, Indra, Varuna, and various other deities, as well as all living beings, as forms of the Supreme Soul, worship God in various ways through their actions, with appropriate selfless devotion, in the attitude of worshipper and the worshipped, or servant and the served. The idea "This Self is Brahman" means realizing that the Supreme Soul is none other than one's own inner self—this is called the thought of unity (ekatva), and is known as the philosophy of Advaita (non-dualism). All actions done through the body, mind, senses, etc., are influenced by māyā (illusion), where only qualities act upon other qualities. Knowing the truth of God is more about contemplation and understanding, not about rituals or outward activities, and does not require any external materials. The four main ideas in knowledge-sacrifice (jñānayajña) are: There is only one Supreme Soul present in all that is seen. He alone is the creator and cause of all rules, regulations, and situations. In every thought, He is the only object worth thinking about. Forgetting God even for a moment is being under the control of illusion (māyā). In this understanding, all things seen are considered like a dream—temporary and unreal—and this is knowledge. Other than the Supreme Soul, who is pure existence, consciousness, and bliss, formless and attributeless, there is no other true existence. Remaining firmly in this thought and constantly listening, reflecting, and meditating on this truth is the practice of knowledge-sacrifice. Worship of the attributeless Brahman is done by rejecting imposed qualities and by becoming eligible through divine nature and self-effort. The entire universe comes from God and is pervaded by Him. A karma yogi (one who follows the path of action) considers himself a servant and dedicates all actions for the welfare of the world, remaining free from the sense of doership and

enjoyership, and worships the Supreme Lord. In the path of devotion (bhakti yoga), believing the individual soul and Supreme Soul to be separate, the devotee accepts any one form of God—an incarnation—as their chosen deity and worships Him. A devoted follower (ananya bhakta) becomes united with their chosen deity in various relationships like that of a friend or servant, and experiences great divine joy (bhūmānanda). Some seekers worship the vast cosmic form (Virat Vishwarupa) of God, where both matter and consciousness appear in many forms across the universe. This is the philosophy of Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism). In all the above ways, according to one's own interest, faith, and belief, the firm spiritual effort for attaining the one Supreme Soul is worship of the form of God.

**aham kratur aham yajnah svadhaham aham aushadham
mantrō'ham aham evajyam aham agnir aham hutam (9-16)**

Comm. Lord Krishna explains in four verses how worshipping the entire visible world and its activities is actually worshipping God Himself. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: The Vedic rituals like Jyotistoma, performed with sacred mantras, are Me. When a deity is meditated upon with determination, God Himself appears in the form of that ritual. In the five great sacrifices and other Smarta rituals, I am the one who accepts the offerings in the form of various deities. The word “Yajna” means performing one's duties with devotion, like the sun, moon, air, fire, earth, and water, which have been sustaining creation through sacrifice since the beginning. God resides in the heart of every being as the inner controller. The subtle and gross parts of the body are present in the form of various deities. Therefore, humans are meant to always engage in sacrificial acts for the welfare of the world, just like deities. The rituals like Shraddha and Tarpana for ancestors are also Me. The materials used in rituals like Kratu, Yajna, and Swadha, such as herbs, food, and medicinal roots, sesame, barley, etc., are Me. The words or praises that create a mental image of God are called mantras. Invoking, worshipping, and special adoration of the deity are performed through chanting mantras. Deities are pleased when mantras are chanted with devotion. The power of the deities can be utilized through perfected mantras. I am the one who grants the results of all these mantras. From the perspective of purification, there are three types of fire: Garhapatya, Ahavaniya, and Dakshinagni. The fire that always burns in the sacrificial altar is called Garhapatya fire. In the sacrifice, I am the Ahavaniya fire, and the materials like ghee and offerings are also Me. The act of offering by the sacrificer is also Me. God is all-pervading, meaning everything needed in scriptural auspicious acts like Yajna and Shraddha, the related mantras, and the efforts of mind, speech, and body are all forms of God. The meaning of “many forms, facing everywhere” from the previous verse is that whatever is offered or done for any purpose reaches God. Even the small offerings given to ants, dogs, or during Bali Vaishvadeva rituals are accepted by God. In the “Yathartha Gita,” Swami Adgadanandji Maharaj explains this verse differently. In essence, I am the inspirer behind every doer, always

guiding their actions. Whatever is achieved by the doer is My grace. The special method of worship is Yajna. The nectar produced during the completion of Yajna allows a person to enter eternal Brahman. Swadha, meaning the offering that erases past impressions, is My blessing. I am the medicine that frees one from the disease of worldly existence. By attaining Me, a person is liberated from the sorrows of this world. I am the chanting of mantras that controls the mind through the process of Prana-Apana. The substances like ghee used to intensify this process are also Me. In My light, all tendencies of the mind dissolve. The act of offering, or Havan, is also Me. Until the chosen deity takes control of the mind and stills the consciousness, the worship of God's form does not begin. Until the Supreme Soul descends to the level of the devotee and becomes one with their soul, the true essence of worship is not understood. Therefore, Lord Krishna, the Master of Yoga, says, "Accept Me as everything, take refuge in Me, and by understanding My form, you will attain all worldly happiness from Me."

**pitaham asya jagato mata dhata pitamahah
vedyam pavitram omkara rik sama yajur eva cha (9-17)**

Comm: Lord Krishna says: I am not just the instrumental cause but also the cause behind all actions. In that sense, I am the father, mother, and grandfather of all. There may be differences between cause and effect, but in the collective purpose, there is no difference. The consciousness behind fatherhood and motherhood is none other than Me. In the form of the mother, I give each soul an appropriate body according to its past actions and nature. When it is said that God is everyone's grandfather, it means that behind every gross object, there is a subtle, invisible cause. God is the ultimate cause of all that is seen and unseen, manifest and unmanifest, of all beings and objects. All creatures receive their bodies from Brahma and other creators, but Brahma himself is born from God. Therefore, God is the original ancestor and the root source of everything. The entire universe originates from God and is sustained by a part of His own nature. He alone assigns suitable results to all beings according to their actions. Thus, He calls Himself the "Dhātā" – the supporter of the whole world. Only the divine existence can be known through the Vedas as the supreme truth. The final conclusion of the Vedas is that sound (śabda) is the seed from which the universe is created. The sound "Om" is the eternal sound and is known as Nāda Brahman. God eternally exists in the form of "Om". The combination of the three letters – A, U, M – makes up "Om", representing creation, preservation, and destruction. "Om" is the name of God. Here, to establish the non-difference between the name and the named, God has called Himself "Om". A spiritual seeker who concentrates on chanting the Om mantra is led to the gateway of the Supreme Soul. One who is pure and destroys the sins of others, and purifies them, is called holy. The one whose very sight and remembrance purifies the heart is the ever-pure, supremely pure Supreme Soul. Apart from this, all sacred acts like japa (chanting), tapas (austerity), vows, and holy places like rivers and mountains are all forms of God Himself. The revelation of the Vedas has come from God. The R̥gveda,

which contains prayers, emphasizes consciousness (chit); The Yajurveda, which contains rituals, emphasizes existence (sat); And the Sāmaveda, which includes musical chants and joy, emphasizes bliss (ānanda). These three Vedas represent God’s Sat-Chit-Ānanda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) nature. R̥g, Sāma, and Yajur Vedas describe God’s form, origin, functioning, and dissolution of the universe. Shri Vallabhacharya has given a view about the relationship between the soul and the Lord, distinguishing between “world” (jagat) and “samsāra” (worldly attachment). He said: Earth, water, fire, air, women, men, animals, birds, humans—all these are the “world” (jagat). The feeling of “I” and “mine” is “samsāra” (worldly ties). The difference between jagat and samsāra can be understood like this: A woman’s body is the “world”, But when she is related as wife, sister, mother, aunt, or grandmother, those relationships are samsāra. Likewise, a man can be a son, husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, etc.—these are all samsāra. When a person establishes an eternal relationship with God, the samsāra disappears and only the world remains. Women and men will still exist, but the painful attachment of “I” and “mine” will vanish. Samsāra is the cause of sorrow, not the world. No person or object brings sorrow; it is the dear or unpleasant relationship with them that brings sorrow. Once a relationship is built with God, the connection with samsāra automatically breaks, and one becomes free from worldly ties. Samsāra means relationship, and relationships cause suffering. Therefore, relationship itself is sorrow. The “world” was created by God, but “relationship” is created by human beings. According to Shri Shankaracharya, sorrow is not created by nature but by the individual soul. All relationships formed by the soul are the cause of sorrow.

**gatir bharta prabhuh sakshi nivasah sharanam suhrit
prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam bijam avyayam (9-18)**

Comm. O Arjuna, I am the ultimate goal to be attained. I am the sustainer of all beings. I am the master of all. I am the witness who knows everything by observing. I am the dwelling place of all beings. I am worthy of surrender. I am a friend who loves without reason. I am the cause of creation and destruction, the eternal source of the world. All these qualities are Me alone. At the time of death, the soul enters Me. All divine qualities are also Me. I am the supreme goal of the soul that wanders through eighty-four lakh species. Attaining Me is the highest achievement. I am the protector and sustainer of the entire universe. I am the supreme God, the Lord of all gods, the master of all worlds, and the most worshipful supreme deity. The sun, fire, Indra, wind, death, and all others are under My control and exist within their limits. God Himself controls the past, present, and future births and the results of actions of all beings. He is the limit of all knowledge. From birth to death, all beings reside in God. There is no one else like Him who lovingly accepts surrender and removes the sorrows of those who surrender. God is the selfless benefactor and supreme friend who loves all beings. The creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the entire universe happen by God’s will. The place where all beings reside during the

great creation is called the dwelling. During the great dissolution, all beings' subtle nature merges into God's unmanifested nature and remains in a dormant state. Thus, He is the dwelling and place of all beings. God calls Himself the treasure or storehouse. God is the eternal cause of all living and non-living beings. The infinite universes originate from Him. He exists as is at the beginning and end of creation. Therefore, He also exists in the present. Thus, He is the eternal storehouse of the indestructible seed.

**tapamy aham aham varsham nigrihnamy utsrijami cha
amritam chaiva mrityush cha sad asac chaham arjuna (9-19)**

Comm. O Arjuna! I am the Sun who gives heat and light to the entire world. I am the heat of summer that, through evaporation, purifies all impurities and filth from the world. I draw water from the earth and release it back as rain. I also hold back the rain for some time. That means the seasons like summer and monsoon are all created and controlled by Me. In the heavenly worlds, I am the immortality of the gods. In the mortal world, I am time in the form of death that destroys all. For creation to continue smoothly, both creation and destruction are essential. That is why, at the right time, I appear as war or as great calamities to bring destruction. I am also that nectar which, when consumed, makes a person immortal and free from death. The Supreme Nectar is none other than the Supreme Soul—attaining Him frees one forever from the noose of death. I am both the cause of bondage and the cause of liberation. I am eternal, indestructible, subtle consciousness. I am also the perishable, visible, and gross world. The Supreme Person, the Supreme Soul, is both life and death. He is both the visible and the invisible, the gross and the subtle. God is both material (non-conscious) and conscious energy. So He is both the action and the doer of all actions. He is the vast cosmic form seen in all matter. He is the eternal soul, the form of truth. Things that perish and are temporary are called “Asat” (unreal). Both “Sat” (real) and “Asat” (unreal) are aspects of God's higher and lower nature, which are inseparable from Him. The world is Asat, and the Supreme Soul present in it is Sat. The body is Asat, and the soul living in it is Sat. The body and the world are perishable, but the soul and the Supreme Soul are eternal. Beyond Sat and Asat, everything else is also Me. Everything inside and outside creation is Me. Even what remains after the destruction of creation is still Me. One who realizes this Supreme Soul sees Me as both nectar (immortality) and death. For such a person, both Sat and Asat are Me. In this verse, the Lord describes Himself as the doer, the act, and the action—terms that seem contradictory. Just like “I am heat,” “I am rain,” “I absorb,” “I release,” “I am real,” “I am unreal,” “I am nectar,” “I am death.” The meaning behind this is that God is not limited to any one specific thing. He is everything, yet also beyond everything. He is the visible cosmic form, and also the subtle, invisible, all-pervading, formless truth. That means He is Rama and He is also Ravana; He is Kansa and also Krishna. He is light, and He is also darkness. He is perishable and also imperishable. He is above all dualities of doer and action. He is the One beyond form and words—He can only be experienced in

silence and symbolism. To clear all doubts from the mind about His nature, the Lord uses contradictory words to describe His divine glories. Mahatma Gandhi gives a beautiful example while explaining this verse: Water is a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen, But in the nature of water, the original qualities of hydrogen and oxygen are not present. Likewise, God is the perishable form of the world and also the imperishable form of the Supreme Soul—both at once. Yet God is not limited to either perishable or imperishable qualities. The conclusion is this: However one imagines or visualizes God, He appears in that very form. Every person has full freedom to imagine and connect with God in their own way. He alone is the doer, the act, and the action. Whoever worships Vasudeva with this understanding attains the true form of Vasudeva.

**“traividya māṁ soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā
yajñair iṣṭvā svargatīm prārthayante
te puṇyam āsādyā surendra-lokam
aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān (9-20)**

Comm. Those who study the Vedanta and aim to attain the supreme knowledge and realization of the One Highest Self — the Supreme Soul — are said to have entered into the essence of the Vedas. Those who study the three Vedas — Rig, Sama, and Yajur — but cannot properly understand the Supreme Soul, and instead focus on the ritualistic actions aiming at worldly rewards, are described here as Traividya (knowers of the three Vedas). They regularly chant the Vedas and follow the prescribed rituals and knowledge mentioned in them, and such people are usually respected in society. Among them, some strongly believe in the reality of the material world and the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. These people turn away from the main goal of the Vedas, which is to attain God. With the aim of enjoying heavenly pleasures, they worship various gods like Indra, Chandra, Rudra, and Aditya through yajnas (sacrifices). In reality, even while worshipping these other gods, they are actually worshipping God alone, though unknowingly. Because of their deep attachment to earning merit (punya), they cannot realize this truth. By performing yajnas like Agnishtoma and Jyotishtoma, they desire to attain enjoyment in Indraloka (heaven). Even if they perform these yajnas and earn merit, they cannot reach heaven as long as sin remains in their hearts. The scriptures say that when a yajamana (ritual performer) drinks the soma rasa (sacred juice) sanctified by Vedic mantras at the end of the yajna, the sins that act as obstacles to heaven are destroyed. For this reason, such people are called Pūtapāpāḥ (those who are purified from sins). The soma rasa is a juice extracted on the full moon day from a rare creeper called Somapallava, found in the northern Meru region. This creeper sheds one leaf daily during the dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha), and grows one leaf daily during the bright fortnight (Shukla Paksha). The scriptures mention that drinking soma rasa can even bring a person back from the jaws of death. By performing all the prescribed Vedic rituals perfectly, the sacrificer becomes free from lower nature and attains divine regions like Indraloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, and Tapoloka for enjoying

heavenly pleasures. The physical body of humans on earth is not capable or sufficient to enjoy the fruits of such merit. Therefore, to enjoy the pleasures of heaven, they receive a divine subtle body. In Indraloka, they enjoy the company of heavenly nymphs (apsaras), can travel in the divine Nandanvana garden, drink amrita (nectar), and receive all their desired objects through the Parijata tree. These and many other enjoyable and useful items are available in the heavens for the gods. The gods, by showing such tempting pleasures, encourage humans to worship and serve them.

**te tam bhuktva svarga-lokam vishalam
kshine punye martya-lokam vishanti
evam trayi-dharmam anuprapanna
gatagatam kama-kama labhante (9-21)**

Comm. People who perform Vedic rituals like sacrifices and drink soma juice become sinless and enjoy heavenly pleasures for a long time as a result of their virtuous deeds. Just as wealthy people are honored in the mortal world, those who perform virtuous deeds are praised in heaven. Heaven is vast, with a long lifespan and an abundance of enjoyable things, which is why the word “vast” is used to describe it. The human body in the mortal world lacks the capacity to enjoy heavenly pleasures. Therefore, to enjoy these pleasures, one must take on a subtle divine body in heaven. When the stock of virtuous deeds is exhausted, the duration of heavenly pleasures also ends. After enjoying heavenly pleasures, one must be reborn in the mortal world. Desire-driven people who perform Vedic rituals like sacrifices repeatedly go back and forth between heaven and the mortal world. They can neither stay permanently in heaven nor in the mortal world. Their cycle of coming and going continues endlessly. Those who do not deeply understand the principle of the Supreme Soul described in the Vedanta Sutras also fail to know the true nature of the Supreme Lord, the cause of all causes. As a result, they fail to attain the ultimate goal of human life. Those who desire heaven rely solely on the desire-driven rituals described in the three Vedas. Therefore, they are called followers of the “Trayi Dharma” (the religion of the three Vedas). The path of devotion to God and spiritual knowledge is the path to the fulfillment of human life. The path taken to fulfill desires for enjoyment leads to spiritual poverty, as the desire for enjoyment in the mind is a sign of being spiritually poor. A person who abandons the path of this religion that grants heavenly pleasures and surrenders solely to God attains God directly and becomes free from all bondage.

**ananyash chintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate
tesham nityabhiyuktanam yoga-kshemam vahamy aham(9-22)**

Comm. A person who focuses only on his goal without thinking of anything else, and uses all his time and energy with steady effort on the path shown by the scriptures, receives both success and protection from God. God personally takes responsibility for such a devotee’s goal and safety. In this world, humans suffer for two main reasons: first,

due to not having what they need, and second, the fear of losing what they already have. So, one should never stop trying in the right way, even for a moment, for what is good for oneself and the world. Success and protection come naturally to those who keep trying with focus. Not only do they succeed, but by using that success in the right way, they gain fame and respect and make their life meaningful. In the middle part of the Gita, God's promise gives hope to those who feel they have failed or gone astray, and encourages them to return to the right path. God promises that those loving devotees who think of Him alone, worship Him sincerely, and constantly meditate on Him, He takes responsibility for what they need and protects what they already have. The word used is not "give" but "carry," which means God actively removes all obstacles Himself. God does not let any other thought enter the minds of such devoted people. The meaning of "I carry" could be like how a mother knows and fulfills her child's needs without the child asking. For such one-pointed and constant devotees, God becomes like a mother, taking care of their needs and safety. The feeling of being one with God is called yoga, and its highest state, or liberation, is called kṣema. The first word in the verse is "exclusive devotion" – which means, except for God, there is no other reality. One God alone appears in all forms, is the support, the inner controller, the foundation, and the light of all. The devotee feels that God is everything for them—like Meera said, "Only Giridhar Gopal is mine, no one else." Everything we see is God's form, and all changes and actions are His play. A devotee who lives absorbed in such thoughts, doing all actions to please God, is truly devoted. Turning away from the world is one-pointedness; focusing on God is contemplation; and serving Him in all situations is worship. A devotee with these three qualities is "constantly united" with God. One who deeply understands God's qualities, powers, and secrets, and considers all their efforts as God's command and worship, is "ever united." One who sees God as their highest shelter, final destination, and most lovable, is the truly one-pointed devotee. Prahlada's life is a strong example of God fulfilling yoga-kṣema. Even when his father Hiranyakashipu tried to harm him, God Himself appeared to protect Prahlada and show the power of his devotion. "Ananya" means no other thing; "upasate" means no other place; "nityayuktā" means no other time. So, when God says He carries yoga-kṣema, it means He is always ready for His devotee, in all places, at all times, and in all ways. A question may arise—God provides everything for the survival of all beings, whether they worship Him or not. so, what is special about His help to one-pointed devotees? The answer is: ordinary people do not accept that what they get is from God. They think they earned it by their own strength and intelligence, so they fear losing it every moment. For those who desire things, the experience of gaining and losing is natural. But one-pointed devotees don't desire anything other than God, nor are they attached to what God gives them. So they have no fear of losing anything. The necessary means and situations for their devotion are silently arranged by God at the right time. Whether favorable or unfavorable circumstances arise due to past actions, the devotee accepts them happily as God's will. Whatever God does is good, even what He does not do is also good, because

everything is for the devotee’s well-being. Based on this feeling, in Chapter 2, Verse 45 of the Gita, God tells Arjuna to become free from worries of gain and safety. A person who tries to take care of their own gain and safety doesn’t leave any such duty for God to do. Sometimes God temporarily lets the devotee rely on their own strength to test them. Like Gajendra, who tried to escape danger with his own effort until God finally came to save him. Draupadi too, tried to hold on to her clothes in the royal court, but God appeared only when she surrendered fully. When Gajendra and Draupadi gave up their self-effort and depended only on God, He immediately came to protect them. When God appeared before Dhruva, Dhruva wanted to praise Him but didn’t know how. God touched Dhruva’s forehead with His conch, and Dhruva’s divine knowledge awakened. That was God granting the “yoga”—what Dhruva lacked in his practice, God gave Him because He knew Dhruva’s heart. God can do anything for His devotee. But how He does it is a divine experience that each devotee uniquely understands. In the Bhagavatam, God says, “I follow behind my devotee, hoping that the dust of their feet will fall on Me and purify Me.” God says He becomes pure by the dust of His devotee’s feet. A great sage once asked, “Lord, are You impure that You need to be purified by a devotee’s dust?” God replied, “The kind of love my devotee has for Me—I don’t have that kind of love for them.” Everyone, whether a devotee or not, is My child, so I treat all equally. This is My fault—My ungratefulness. The devotee surrenders to Me completely, but I don’t give them the same love in return. So, what I give them looks small compared to what they give Me. That is impurity in Me. To remove this impurity, I wish to place the devotee’s dust on My head and follow behind them. God says He becomes indebted to His devotees. In the Bhagavatam, God tells the Gopis: “Your love is pure and selfless—I am in debt to you.” “You left your homes, your duties, your worldly ties—for My love alone. How can I repay you?” This promise of God remains true for all time. In this way, the relationship between a true devotee and God is beyond description.

**ye’py anya-devata-bhakta yajante shraddhayanvitaḥ
te’pi mam eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-purvakam (9-23)**

Comm. Lord Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, does not approve of worship or devotion directed toward other gods and goddesses with desires, at the beginning of the Gita. In this verse, Lord Krishna talks about the difference in worship between the “Traividya” (those learned in the three Vedas) and the devotees of God, who have exclusive devotion. Even though the various gods and goddesses are parts of the Lord, when people worship them with desires, Lord Krishna calls such worship “improper” in multiple places. In the relationship between the Supreme Soul and individual souls, Lord Krishna does not accept the presence of any second entity—object, person, or power—apart from God. This statement of the Lord has practical importance in daily life. Just like in a government system, if someone tries to get favors through a helpless lower official by disobeying the policies of the sovereign government, that is considered an improper method. In the same

way, the gods can be compared to those helpless lower officials. Similarly, when worship is done in an improper way—not according to the path that leads to liberation—Lord Vasudeva does not accept it. In Chapter 7, verse 22, Lord Krishna says that even when a person with desires performs rituals like yajnas, the result they get through the gods still comes from Him alone. “I Myself,” says Krishna, “give the results of worship and prayers to all spiritual seekers through various forms like gods.” The absence of faults in one’s thoughts is called “Shraddhavanvita,” meaning “endowed with faith.” Those who have firm belief in the gods described in the Vedas, their worship, and the rewards like heaven, worship these gods with faith through Vedic rituals to fulfill their desires. All gods and goddesses are parts of the Lord, and He is their inner soul. In fact, it is Lord Krishna Himself who appears in the form of various gods. Just like watering the root of a tree helps nourish all its branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits—but watering only the branches or leaves does not help the tree grow. The Supreme Lord is the root cause of the entire universe. Not understanding this deep truth and worshipping gods and goddesses as separate from God with desires is ignorant worship. Such devotees are not lacking in faith, but since they are attached to results, they indirectly worship the Lord Himself. As a result, they may get the desired result, but they remain stuck in the repeated cycle of birth and death. Worship or devotion aimed selflessly at realizing the Supreme Controller is what the Lord considers proper worship in this verse. Seeing the gods, gurus, Brahmins, parents, guests, and all beings as forms of God, and serving them for God’s pleasure is considered rightful service to the Lord. Such service is accepted by the Lord. When a person keeps a divine attitude towards all beings and worships without desire, that becomes pure and faultless devotion. And such devotion is directly accepted by the Lord Himself.

**aham hi sarva-yajnanam bhokta cha prabhur eva cha
na tu mam abhijananti tattvenatash chyavanti te (9-24)**

Comm. The Lord explains why worshipping other deities is improper, as mentioned in the previous verse. The Lord says: I am the enjoyer and master of all Vedic and scriptural rituals, meaning I grant their results. In reality, all rituals described in the Vedas are meant to please the Supreme Lord. The term “yajna” means Vishnu. Lord Vishnu sustains the universe. All worship and rituals performed for various deities, from obligatory duties to fulfilling desires, are forms of yajna and reach Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the world. This is because the Lord is the beginning, end, and provider of results for all rituals. The Supreme Lord is the essence of all deities. Since the entire universe is the Lord’s cosmic form, all deities worshipped as enjoyers of rituals are parts of the Lord. Thus, the Lord is the enjoyer of all rituals in the form of these deities. With His divine power, the Supreme Lord creates, sustains, and dissolves the universe according to His will. Under His guidance and rules, nature governs the entire cosmos. All deities, including Indra, Varuna, Yama, and Prajapati, are created and controlled by the Lord. Therefore, the Lord is the supreme God of all deities and beings. Due to ignorance of this profound

truth, people with limited understanding chase temporary rewards like heaven, remaining trapped in the cycle of birth and death. They miss the ultimate goal of realizing the Lord and remain entangled in desires, leading to their downfall. In the fifth chapter (verse 29), the Lord says: A devotee who knows Me as the enjoyer of all rituals, the supreme Lord of all worlds, and the friend of all beings attains supreme peace, meaning liberation. The conclusion of the Lord's teaching in this verse is that two main obstacles prevent a seeker from progressing toward the Supreme: First, identifying with material objects, considering oneself their owner, and becoming enslaved by the desire to enjoy them. Second, being attached to the results of actions and considering oneself the enjoyer. As long as one does not realize that the Lord is the sole master of all material and conscious entities and the enjoyer of all actions, one remains disconnected from the Supreme. Sometimes, doubts arise in a seeker's mind: How can the formless, attributeless, and detached Lord be the enjoyer of human actions? The answer is that, in the view of great souls, everything is the Lord. The Supreme Lord resides within all beings as the inner controller. When someone serves the poor, needy, or helpless with body, mind, or wealth, it is considered service to the Lord. The Lord being the enjoyer means He accepts everything in various forms. A worldly person thinks donating food or clothes earns merit. But a saint believes that when given the chance to donate, it is the Lord's property returning to Him in another form. This is the difference in perspective between a saint and a worldly person. In this verse, the Lord teaches that rituals should be performed with the understanding of His all-pervading nature. Actions without this knowledge cannot lead to liberation. This also clarifies that the Bhagavad Gita integrates action, knowledge, and devotion. Lokmanya Tilak writes that the Gita's main teaching is action rooted in knowledge and devotion. The Gita appropriately emphasizes the application of knowledge, action, and devotion, where the prominence of one does not oppose the others. Depending on their capacity, people can follow these in different ways.

**yanti deva-vrata devan pitrin yanti pitri-vratah
bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti mad-yajino'pi mam (9-25)**

Comm. In the ritual section of the Vedas, detailed descriptions are given about the worship methods of various gods living in the heavenly worlds. People who desire enjoyment worship specific gods through yajnas (sacrifices), chanting mantras, charity, and other rituals to please those gods. As a result, the gods grant them entry to heaven and provide all enjoyable materials and comforts. Some devotees also attain the form of the gods they worship. When people reach heaven through desire-based worship, they stay there until their merits (punya) are exhausted or until the lifespan of the deity ends. After that, they return again to the earthly world (martya-loka). Performing rituals like shraddha, tarpan, feeding Brahmins, and sacred offerings to please one's ancestors is known as Pitru-vrata (ancestral duties). Living by the values, traditions, and ideals of one's ancestors while maintaining the family honor is also a form of ancestral worship.

With the blessings of the ancestors, after death one reaches Pitru-loka (the world of ancestors) and prays for the well-being of the family. From Pitru-loka too, one definitely returns to earth again. Worship of gods and ancestors must be done properly according to one's duties based on caste and life stage (varna and ashrama). But if one performs these duties considering them as worship of the Supreme Lord, it increases divine qualities and helps one attain God. Beings like bhutas (spirits), pretas (ghosts), yakshas, pishachas (demons), etc., are subtle beings who are lower than gods but more powerful than humans. Through proper worship, chanting, and rituals, devotees can fulfill worldly desires with their help. However, worship of bhutas and pretas is tamasic (ignorant) and gives harmful results. The birth of bhutas, pretas, and pishachas is impure, and the rituals and materials used for their worship are also very impure. Therefore, worship of such beings should be completely abandoned. But performing shraddha, tarpan, and giving offerings like rice balls and water for their upliftment is not considered sinful. Saints and holy people can help bhutas and pretas attain liberation. Some commentators say that "bhutejyah" refers to worship of natural beings like yakshas, nagas, trees, rivers, etc., as forms of God. A pure devotee who constantly worships the Lord—whether in a formless or a divine form—without any desire, surely reaches Vaikuntha or Goloka, the supreme spiritual abode. The Lord has said: "Those who are devoted to Me and worship Me (mad-yaji) attain Me, the eternal source of bliss." According to scholar Pandit Giridhari Sharma Chaturvedi, in the Chandogya Upanishad, three types of spiritual paths are described, which Lord Krishna refers to in this verse. Those who worship gods attain Brahma-loka through the deva-yana (path of gods). Those who worship ancestors go to Pitru-loka via the pitri-yana (path of ancestors), and after enjoying their rewards, they return again. People whose minds are always attached to things like wealth, property, and cattle, attain only those things. That means they don't go to any higher world but take birth again in this earthly world. But those who give up all desires and mental plans and meditate only on Me, they attain Me, the Supreme Lord.

**patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahritam ashnamī prayatatmanah (9-26)**

Comm. When a devotee offers Me easily available items like tulsi, bilva leaves, flowers, fruits, or water with devotion and love, I lovingly accept their offering. The Lord means that if one cannot surrender their mind, heart, intellect, and ego to Me, offering simple items like leaves, flowers, fruits, or water with love becomes My responsibility to draw their mind, heart, and intellect toward Me. To gain the privilege of divine service, if one offers their mind as leaves, resolutions as flowers, actions as fruits, and life as a stream of water with love, the Lord accepts it and makes the devotee one with Him. Acharya Shankara says in his commentary: My devotees not only attain the eternal result of liberation, but My worship is also very simple and easy. Whatever a devotee offers Me with devotion, I accept it with a pure heart, assuming a form with

attributes. During the Lord's divine pastimes, He lovingly accepted devotees' offerings of leaves, flowers, fruits, and water. When the Pandavas were living in distress in the forest, Sage Durvasa arrived at their camp with thousands of disciples. Yudhishtir, the eldest Pandava, welcomed the sage and requested him to dine. But Draupadi had already cleaned the divine vessel, which was empty after serving food. To save them from the sage's wrathful curse, Draupadi prayed to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna arrived, and to satisfy His hunger, He took a tiny piece of vegetable stuck in the vessel, meditated on the universal enjoyer, and ate it. This satisfied Sage Durvasa and all his disciples, making them feel fully fed. At Trikuta Mountain, Gajendra, the king of elephants, reached a beautiful lake in Varuna's garden, drank its nectar-like water, and played with female elephants. A powerful crocodile in the lake grabbed Gajendra's leg, pulling him into a deadly situation. After fighting for a long time, Gajendra, desperate to save his life, surrendered to the Lord. Gajendra began praying to the Lord in his heart. Hearing his urgent prayer, the Lord arrived on Garuda. Seeing the Lord on Garuda in the sky, Gajendra lifted a lotus flower with his trunk and, in great pain, cried, "O Narayana! O Guru of all, O Savior! I bow to You." The Lord accepted the flower offered with love, used His Sudarshan Chakra to behead the crocodile, and saved Gajendra from great danger. Shabari, a devotee born in a low caste, spent much of her life secretly serving sages in Dandakaranya. Before departing for Brahmaloaka, Sage Matanga blessed Shabari, saying Lord Rama would visit her hut and grant her fulfillment through His darshan. He advised her to stay there and worship the Lord until then. Shabari's life became devoted to chanting the Lord's name, waiting for Lord Rama. Every day, Shabari cleaned the path for Rama's arrival, prepared her hut, and gathered fruits from the forest to offer Him. Days passed, and finally, Lord Ramachandra arrived at Shabari's hut. Shabari, overwhelmed with joy, was immersed in a sea of bliss. Choked with emotion, she repeatedly bowed at the Lord's lotus feet. She worshipped the Lord and offered the fruits she had saved. Seeing Shabari's devotion and love, the Lord was deeply moved and accepted her worship. He relished the fruits she offered, fulfilling her. Saint Tulsidas writes that the taste of Shabari's fruits was so divine that it surpassed any sweetness experienced elsewhere. Similarly, Lord Shiva lovingly accepted water offered by a hunter named Kannappa from his mouth. The compassionate King Rantideva, despite being nearly dead from thirst, offered water to Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh, who appeared as an outcast. Seeing the king's patience and devotion, the three Lords were pleased, revealed their true forms, and granted him darshan. The Lord is bound by the faith and love of His devotees. At Vidura's house, the Lord joyfully accepted food offered with great love. When Sudama's wife sent a small bundle of flattened rice as a gift, the Lord eagerly ate the scattered grains, picking them up one by one. This is a unique example of the Lord accepting offerings given with love. The Lord is pleased only by firm faith, devotion, and love. No golden temple is needed for the Lord's worship. The Lord resides in the temple of a devotee's heart, seeking their loving devotion. The Lord does not care

about the quantity or quality of offerings but accepts even mental worship offered with a pure heart, feeling satisfied. The Lord hungers for devotion, not expensive offerings. Performing grand rituals requires many materials and efforts. But the ritual of devotion is complete even with a single tulsi leaf. No other quality is needed except the devotee's sincerity. What purity did the hunter have, what ease did Dhruva have, what knowledge did Gajendra possess, what beauty did Kubja have, what wealth did Sudama have to offer, what high caste was Vidura from, or what merit did King Ugrasena of the Yadavas have? Yet, due to their peak of devotion, all these devotees gained eternal fame.

**yat karoshi yad ashnasi yaj juhoshi dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva mad-arpanam (9-27)**

Comm. In the previous verse, Lord Krishna said that if one offers even a leaf, flower, fruit, or water with devotion, He personally accepts it. Similarly, a devotee does not need to take up any new effort or special activity for worship. Every action of a human being should be considered an act of worship done to please God. Among all worldly relationships, the one who never forgets the soul within or God in the universe attains the divinity of life. Lord Krishna says – O Kaunteya! Whatever natural or scripturally prescribed duties you do, offer them to Me considering Me to be the sole enjoyer. To offer all actions to God means to break the bond of 'I and mine' and to deeply feel that all actions are done as per God's will. When this strong feeling is nurtured in the heart, the action becomes complete and perfect. Based on one's caste and life stage (varnashrama), people act for Artha (wealth), desires (Kama), duty (Dharma), and Moksha (liberation) – these are called 'purusharthas'. These actions arise from destiny, and in all such actions, one should believe – "I am the inspirer, I am the doer, I am the enjoyer." Then, offer the result of those actions to Me and leave the outcome to Me. Even the daily meals taken for bodily survival should be thought of as offerings to Me in the form of sacrifice. Whether it is a Vedic or Smarta fire ritual (homa), think of it as done for My pleasure and avoid expecting any results. Whatever gold, food, ghee, etc. you donate to a Brahmin, consider it as an offering to Me. That means – both the person who gives the donation and the person who receives it should be seen as Me. If you serve or help someone physically, consider that service as being done to Me in that very form. Accept favorable or unfavorable situations with joy and think that pilgrimages, vows, bhajans, meditation, chanting, and kirtan are all done to attain Me. This thinking brings inner satisfaction to the soul. The individual soul (jiva) is a reflection of God. God Himself is the original image – eternal and real. What is offered to God, or the original image, also reaches the reflected image in the soul. The way you look at the world is how life will appear to you – this is the rule of the world. If you smile, the world smiles with you. If you feel unsuccessful in life, the failures of the world will seem to surround you. God has given human beings the freedom to act. But when a devotee offers that freedom back to God, then God also returns His own infinite freedom to the devotee.

That means, God becomes dependent on the devotee. Renouncing “I and mine” and accepting “You and Yours” with faith and offering one’s possessions is true surrender. There may be pride in renunciation, but there is no pride in surrender. Actions done with the intellect focused on God do not produce sin or virtue in the heart. Instead of asking from God, when one lives by giving everything to Him, all lower tendencies leave the heart and life becomes divine. Just as a mother is pleased with whatever her child does, in the same way, when a devotee has deep love for God, every action of the devotee pleases Him. Swami Sivananda said: “Don’t waste time. From this moment, surrender yourself to God.” Once you surrender, all your actions, results, and outcomes go to God. God then has no separate existence apart from you. Just as a river, upon merging with the ocean, loses its name and identity, similarly, when the soul fully surrenders, it loses name, form, and shape and becomes one with God. Sri Ramakrishna said: “O Mother! I am just a machine; You are the operator.” “I am the house; You are the one living inside.” “I am the chariot; You are the charioteer.” “I move as You make me move. I speak as You make me speak.” “Everything that happens through me is actually done by You. I am nothing – You alone exist.” At the beginning of any action, remember God and say in your mind: “O Lord, neither am I the doer, nor is this mine.” And at the end of the action, silently remember the name of God and say – “Śrī Kṛṣṇārpaṇam Astu” (May this be offered to Lord Krishna). By doing this, the action becomes an offering to God.

**shubhashubha-phalair evam mokshyase karma-bandhanaih
sannyasa-yoga-yuktatma vimukto mam upaishyasi (9-28)**

Comm. In the above three verses, Lord Krishna, the master of yoga, has described the systematic practice of integrating Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga and its outcomes. First, offering leaves, flowers, fruits, and water with full devotion; second, performing actions with dedication; and third, complete self-surrender along with renunciation of everything. By offering all physical, practical, and spiritual actions to Me, a person becomes free from the bondage of actions and their auspicious or inauspicious results. In the yoga of renunciation, which is the offering of all actions, the inner self becomes purified, leading to liberation from the bondage of actions and attaining Me. As long as the material body exists, it is impossible to refrain from action. However, by performing actions with the mindset of offering them to God rather than for personal enjoyment, the results of actions—whether happiness or sorrow, favorable or unfavorable—do not affect the mind or intellect even slightly. This is because actions offered to God are free from attachment and desire for enjoyment, being rooted in a sense of duty. Through the yoga of surrender, the conflict between action and inaction is resolved. Offering actions to God is an intimate process. Without the inspiration of the inner self or the indwelling Lord, no action can take place. In the yoga of renunciation, a devotee accepts favorable and unfavorable situations as God’s mercy and grace, receiving them with faith. Through such mercy and grace, God makes the devotee strong and

tolerant. The devotee remains content in both happiness and sorrow. As long as the soul's identification with the body persists, a connection with the body remains, and the notion of acting for oneself does not leave the mind. Renouncing personal interest in actions by following the Lord's command is called offering actions or 'Karma Nyasa.' Striving to perform actions sincerely for the pleasure of the Lord is called 'Yoga.' The term 'Sannyasa Yoga' as mentioned by God does not refer to the renunciation doctrine of the Sankhya philosophers. Here, Sannyasa Yoga means 'the yoga of surrender.' In the yoga of surrender, the devotee remains detached from objects, persons, and the results of actions, maintaining intimacy only with the Lord. Actions performed in accordance with God's command are always auspicious. The auspicious and inauspicious results of actions, as mentioned by God, should be understood as accumulated karma from countless past lives. The results of actions from previous lives that have not been experienced remain in the inner self as accumulated karma, becoming an obstacle to liberation. Through the yoga of surrender, the inner self is freed from the bondage of auspicious and inauspicious results of actions across lifetimes, opening the path to attaining God. Commentators on the Gita have explained the liberation achieved by devotees through offering actions to God in various ways. Reaching God is liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and not returning to the material world is attaining God. Here, liberation and attainment complement each other. In Sri Aurobindo's 'Essays on the Gita,' it is said: "Through complete self-surrender, all desires, attachments, and ego are destroyed in the inner self." The identification of the soul with the body is eradicated, and a state of oneness with the Supreme Soul is experienced. The dissolution of the soul's sense of separateness from the mind is liberation. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, wrote: "Through the yoga of surrender, all desires, actions, and their results belong to God." One who selflessly performs actions for the welfare of the world with a mind dedicated to God until the last moment of life goes to God after death, meaning they are not reborn. In the Sri Gopal Tapani Upanishad, it is said that devotion to Sri Krishna is true devotion. In devotion, by refraining from worldly and otherworldly desires for results and remembering Sri Krishna's name, actions are directly offered, which is Sannyasa Yoga. One whose mind is engaged in this yoga is called a Yuktaatma (a soul united with God). At the time of leaving the body, such a Yuktaatma enters God's supreme abode as a distinguished devotee. In other words, they gain precedence among liberated souls and attain proximity to serve Me directly. Alternatively, by directly attaining God's presence in this life and serving for the welfare of the world as a liberated soul, one becomes free from the bondage of actions and attains God. Such great devotees remain liberated in life while in the body and attain liberation after death upon leaving the body. Attaining the loving service of God is superior even to liberation. The Srimad Bhagavatam states that among liberated and perfected beings, a devotee who is fully surrendered to Narayana and has a tranquil soul is extremely rare.

**samo’ham sarva-bhuteshu na me dveshyo’sti na priyah
ye bhajanti tu mam bhaktya mayi te teshu chapy aham (9-29)**

Comm. As the Father of the universe, I treat all equally. I am not biased based on birth, name, or form of gods, demons, humans, animals, or any other creature. No one is hateful or unlovable to Me, and no one is especially dear or beloved to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion, they live in Me. Because of this, I also live especially in them. If I have any connection, it is only with the devotee. In the devotee’s heart, I exist fully—as the foundation, the illuminator, and the indwelling spirit. The devotee too sees Me as father, mother, friend, son, or at least as their very soul, and holds Me in their heart. In short, the relationship between Me and My devotee is unique. In the first part of the verse, Lord speaks about His impartial and equal vision. In the second part, He says He appears specially before the loving devotee. Is this a contradiction to His impartial nature? Another question arises—if God stays only in a devotee’s heart, then who supports the non-devotees? The answer is—God resides in the entire world, and the world also resides in Him. God lives in the heart of everyone; all are His children and depend on Him. This is God’s real nature. One who has faith in God realizes this truth and feels attached to Him. God too becomes lovingly attached to such a devotee. But a worldly-minded person doesn’t believe in God, even if God is within him. If in times of trouble he starts believing, after the trouble ends, he forgets God again. Though nourishment, protection, and guidance are done by God, a materialistic person does not accept it. He thinks he is the sole doer and controller. In the commentary by Acharya Shankar, it is said: “My nature is like fire.” Just like fire cannot warm someone who is far, but can heat one who is close, Similarly, only a devotee can feel My grace. One who doesn’t accept Me cannot realize My presence or influence. Every being depends on God, and all needs of the soul are fulfilled by God generously. The difference is—the devotee understands this and feels divine joy. The ignorant person thinks he is the doer, enjoyer, and giver, and suffers in the cycle of birth and death. Just as the sun reflects only in clean mirrors and not on wood or stone, that does not mean the sun is partial. Likewise, God’s presence reflects in the pure heart of a devotee, and that’s where He is realized. This is not God’s partiality, but the glory of devotion. God never discriminates; the soul itself creates this difference. Bondage and liberation are for the soul, not for God. God always remains unchanged and true to His nature. The pure-hearted devotee and God—both are conscious beings, like part and whole of the same truth. Hence, their relationship is mutual and dynamic. Earlier in Chapter 4, Lord said: “However people approach Me, I respond accordingly.” That means—as much as one surrenders to Me, I respond in the same way. To protect His devotees, the Lord appears in a special form. The devotee holds God in his heart with full devotion, and God too resides in the devotee’s heart. This happens due to the devotee’s exclusive love. Just as water is everywhere underground but appears clearly only in a well, God too is everywhere, but manifests specially in a devotee. God’s presence, love,

mercy, and intimacy are equal for all creatures. But due to the devotee's special love, God's special grace manifests in him—that is also God's own gift. One who considers My devotee as his enemy becomes My enemy too. Because there is no difference between Me and My devotee. Lord's love for His devotee is clearly seen in the lives of Prahlad, Gajendra, and Draupadi. One who follows the nine forms of devotion like listening and singing God's name becomes fully devoted and united with Me. I, the Lord of all lords, also lovingly remain close to such a devotee. This is the uniqueness of love between God and devotee. One should not consider this loving relationship as just the result of karma (action). Because the relationship between God and devotee is beyond karma—it's on a divine level. In that divine state, only divine love is the medium. God never forgets the devotee, and the devotee never forgets God. Even for a non-devotee, God never forgets them—just like a father cares even more for his disobedient son. Even if the non-devotee doesn't realize it, God still prepares a path for his final good. Silently, He guides that person toward His shelter.

**api chet suduracharo bhajati mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah (9-30)**

Comm. Even a sinful person who sincerely worships me with complete devotion is considered righteous. God highlights the supreme importance and glory of devotion. Every devotee has unique experiences before starting on the path of devotion. A great saint said that devotion to God is like a philosopher's stone. This stone transforms anything it touches into something valuable. Similarly, divine devotion transforms a person's life. Through past good deeds, a divine atmosphere, or the company of holy people, even a very sinful person can learn about God's qualities, influence, divine play, and true nature. This leads them to realize that God is everything, and nothing exists beyond Him. This firm understanding creates faith in God. Even a highly sinful person who tries to worship me with single-minded devotion eventually reaches my presence as a true devotee. They engage in service and experience supreme bliss. God says that people who hold divine thoughts in their minds should not be judged harshly for their past sinful tendencies. Instead, they should be regarded as saints—this is God's command. God's statement suggests three possible scenarios. First, someone who has committed serious sins like violence, theft, or harming others in this life may turn to devotion for a specific reason. Examples include ancient figures like Valmiki and modern devotees like Tulsi Das and Surdas. With a slight hint, their mindset changes, and they become ardent devotees of God. Second, even a sinful person who develops faith in God for some reason resolves to abandon sinful tendencies from that moment. Though they try to give up evil, past habits or nature may prevent complete success. Third, even a perfected devotee with complete faith in God may occasionally fall into sinful behavior due to past actions or worldly illusions. The essence of God's words is that in all these scenarios, a devotee's heart holds the belief that God is the only purifier of the fallen, the supreme controller, the

ultimate refuge, and the most merciful. They believe that realizing God destroys all sins, and attaining Him is the ultimate goal of life. These saintly thoughts remain intact in their heart. Just as polluted water retains its inherent purity and can be purified through filtration, a temporary fall does not disqualify a sincere devotee. With their firm resolve, they quickly return to the right path. However, God's words should not be interpreted to mean that a devotee who expresses faith in God can commit heinous or antisocial acts without fault. Sometimes, ignorant people misjudge the actions of great devotees due to their own lack of understanding and label them as sinful. When someone is fully engaged in God's divine service with all their heart, the God in their heart forgives all faults. Mocking or ridiculing a devotee for an accidental fall is not right. The path of devotion is influenced by worldly illusions. Compared to the path of knowledge, devotees quickly become aware of their faults. On the path of knowledge, faults are subtly covered by pride. If a true devotee has even a slight non-devotional thought, they strive to return to single-minded devotion. God provides the right opportunity for this. During holy company or self-study, one may resolve to worship and remember only God and not waste time on worldly things. But after such moments, this resolve often weakens. A resolve made at the soul's level, like a bride dedicating herself to her husband's home after marriage, becomes unwavering. It does not need constant reminding. Similarly, if a person resolves at the soul's level that God is everything and they must only do His work, this resolve remains firm throughout life. The journey from the soul's creation to merging with God's essence is long. Only after the effects of both sinful and virtuous actions are exhausted is the ultimate truth attained. A religion that does not embrace sinners, lift the fallen, or guide the lost is not true religion. For those with no virtues, scriptural knowledge, rituals, noble lineage, or wealth—only sins—God is the great purifier of the fallen. He extends His hand to uplift the sinner. The sinner only needs to seek that hand with love. Devotion is not about resolve or actions alone but is driven by the ultimate goal. God loves firm resolve, not the labels of saint or sinner.

**kshipram bhavati dharmatma shashvac-chantim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranashyati (9-31)**

Comm. Even a very sinful person becomes righteous quickly if they start worshipping Me. That person attains constant peace and firm devotion to God. People who argue and doubt will not accept this idea of Mine. So, O Arjuna! You should boldly declare that anyone who becomes My exclusive devotee never falls or is ruined. In this very life, after leaving unrighteous behavior and repenting, when a person begins worshipping the Supreme Lord, the process of purifying their heart begins. As the devotee stays constantly before Me, even if their mind was once attached to bad behavior, it gradually becomes uplifted and turns toward the soul. Such a person never again falls to a low level. Once a person completely surrenders their soul, the effects of all past sinful actions are naturally washed away. He may cry out in repentance, saying, “Alas! I have shamed the name of

devotion. There is no one more fallen than me in this world. I deserve condemnation.” By sincerely repenting like this, the person attains eternal peace. If they don’t achieve Me in this life, they will continue their practice in the next life and quickly attain supreme peace. There was a Brahmin named Bilwamangala who was extremely immoral. On the sacred day of his father’s Shraddha (ritual), during a dark, stormy night, he risked his life and crossed a river with the help of a corpse and a snake to reach the house of the courtesan Chintamani. Seeing him, Chintamani said, “Oh wicked Brahmin! Today is your father’s Shraddha day. Yet you are so attached to my fleshly body.” “If only you had the same attraction toward that beautiful Shyamasundara (Krishna), you would surely have attained Him.” Hearing this rebuke from Chintamani, something divine stirred the strings of Bilwamangala’s heart. The fire of wisdom was lit, and all sin in his heart was burned away. A flood of divine love for God surged in his heart. Bilwamangala held Chintamani’s feet and said, “O Mother! You have opened my eyes of wisdom and made me blessed.” In his heart, he accepted Chintamani as his guru and offered her respect. That night, Chintamani sang and recited Lord Krishna’s divine pastimes all night. Then Bilwamangala went to the banks of the Krishna river and received the sacred Gopala mantra from the saint Somagiri. He became a pure and devoted servant of the Lord. Though he later faced situations where he could have fallen again, Lord protected him and filled his heart with supreme bliss. Every soul is a part of God and is therefore pure by nature. If even once a person feels disgust for sin and develops deep love for God, all desires and attachments are destroyed. That person attains God in this very life without delay. In this verse, Lord Krishna gives a fearless message. He says—whatever path of spiritual practice you follow, as long as your faith and love for God remain strong, you will not fall. God Himself will help such a seeker in all situations—there is no doubt about it. If any sinful tendencies still remain in the seeker, after receiving God’s grace, they will also disappear. When the Lord asks Arjuna to make this declaration, it means that the devotee’s heart is really God’s own heart. The learned know that God is beyond all actions. God Himself does not perform any action. He resides in the devotee’s heart and acts according to the devotee’s desires. Lord says—“Arjuna, if I make the promise, there is a chance it might be doubted or broken.” “But if you, My devotee, say it with your mouth, it will never be false.” “I will never let the promise spoken by My devotee be untrue.” So, you declare, “Once someone accepts Me, My devotee will never fall again and will surely attain eternal peace.”

**mam hi partha vyapashritya ye’pi syuh papa-yonayah
striyo vaishyas tatha shudras te’pi yanti param gatim (9-32)**

Comm. Here, God explains the importance of devotion through surrender and instructs Arjuna to constantly think of Him. Devotion not only purifies sinners but also allows women, Shudras, Vaishyas, and those denied Vedic study to attain the supreme goal by serving God. In worldly life, people differ due to birth, caste, color, lineage, education, occupation, and status. However, in God’s eyes, all devotees are equal. Anyone

can follow the path of devotion. Devotion requires emotional sincerity, not distinctions of high or low birth. Those who prioritize caste or physical differences cannot follow the path of devotion. God firmly states that even a person born in a low caste, like a Chandala, becomes worthy of worship like a Brahmin if they are His devotee. Anyone who surrenders to God and worships Him attains the supreme goal. The Narada Bhakti Sutra says there is no distinction of caste, education, appearance, lineage, wealth, or actions among devotees. The Srimad Bhagavatam states, “O Uddhava, the supreme beloved soul, ‘I,’ is won over only by faith and devotion.” Sincere devotion purifies even a Chandala born in a low caste. A person who constantly chants God’s name with love is worthy of worship, regardless of who they are. Chanting God’s name makes one forget their material condition. Such a person’s spiritual practices, like penance, sacrifice, pilgrimage, or Vedic study, are considered complete. To attain God, one must surrender to Him. The three main practices of devotion are: Having firm faith and being content with God’s every command. Constantly hearing, chanting, and meditating on God’s name, form, qualities, and divine play. Performing all duties with faith and love, considering them God’s command. Anyone who surrenders to God, whether man, woman, or any caste, will surely attain Him. Even gopis, cows, trees, animals, snakes, or the most ignorant beings have attained God through pure devotion. Many women, like Devahuti, Shabari, Kunti, the gopis of Vraja, and modern figures like Meera, Karamaiti, and Karamabai, became devoted to God. Vaishyas like Tuladhar and Samadhi, and Shudras like Vidura, Sanjay, and Guhaka, the Nishada king, became God’s devotees. Society often views women as weak and dependent, both externally and mentally. Women face many social restrictions in their actions and behavior. Therefore, God uses the term “women” to show their spiritual importance is equal to men. In spiritual practice, men and women have equal access. Regarding Vaishyas, they focus on profit and loss in their profession. Yet, as devotees, they consider surrendering everything to God as the highest gain. Shudras are considered servants of all castes. A Shudra who sees God in serving others unknowingly becomes His devotee. In this verse, God gives great assurance to humanity. He says birth, caste, gender, occupation, or lineage do not hinder attaining God.

**kim punar brahmanah punya bhakta rajarshayas tatha
anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam (9-33)**

Comm. When even sinful people, people born in lower castes like Chandala, and women, Vaishyas, and Shudras become blessed through My devotion, then there is no doubt that righteous and virtuous Brahmins and royal sages (Rajarshis) who surrender to Me will surely attain the highest goal. This body is temporary and perishable. This world is full of suffering. Therefore, O Arjuna, you are born in the noble line of royal sages. So, be dedicated to Me with enthusiasm and worship Me as a Kshatriya with divine feelings. Keep only the goal of attaining Me in your heart. Offer everything to Me, because this is the path of royal knowledge and supreme secret (raja-vidya raja-

guhya yoga). The word “Brahmin” indicates a special inner state. It means a person who is calm, simple, experienced, aware, meditative, and able to control the mind according to the instructions of the Lord. A Kshatriya king who behaves like a sage and follows pure conduct is called a Rajarshi (royal sage). Such Rajarshis are full of power, spiritual accomplishments, bravery, leadership, and firmness. Since the Brahmins and Rajarshis perform their duties as spiritual practice, it is certain they will attain the highest state through devotion to Me. In this verse, though addressed to Arjuna, Lord Krishna is teaching all humanity. He is saying that while living in this temporary and painful world, one must surely worship His eternal and blissful nature. The purpose of human birth is to attain liberation while living, and after death, to be free from the cycle of birth and death. This body is perishable. We do not know when it will dissolve into the five great elements. That’s why God warns us to begin constant devotion from this very moment. Because of illusion (maya), the soul fails to recognize its true nature. It becomes attached to the perishable body and suffers pain and sorrow. People think that enjoyment of things like wife, wealth, children, home, status, and fame is happiness. But actually, these are the causes of sorrow and suffering. Real happiness, which is eternal and full of bliss, lies in devotion to God and in being steady in one’s true nature. Getting a human body in this mortal world is very rare. It is due to God’s infinite grace and great merit that one is born in a good family like that of a Brahmin or Rajarshi. Only by being always connected to the Supreme Lord can one attain everlasting joy. In this very life, by surrendering to the Lord with undivided devotion, one can attain the divine abode of the Lord, which is the origin place of all souls. The path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga) is the only path by which people of all backgrounds can attain the Lord.

**man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaishyasi yuktvaivam atmanam mat-parayanah (9-34)**

Comm. In this chapter, Lord Shri Krishna has explained the most secret and highest knowledge, called “Raja Vidya” and “Raja Guhya”. The essence of that knowledge is contained in this verse. To establish one in Self-realization, He tells the best method. He says — O Arjuna! Always fix your mind on Me like an unbroken stream of oil. Become My exclusive devotee. Consider all your duties as offerings to Me and worship Me. Bow to Me again and again. In this way, with body and mind engaged in Me, surrender yourself and attain Me, the Supreme Lord. This is the best means to attain the blissful Lord. One should not fix their mind on anything else other than God. While doing every action, keep the thought: “I am doing this as God’s command and to please Him.” By thinking like this, the mind automatically remains in God. Even though Kansa constantly thought about Lord Krishna, it was with a feeling of enmity. Yet the Lord appeared before him in that form and granted him liberation through his destruction. Therefore, in whichever way one thinks deeply of God, God appears to them in that form. If one remembers God with love, faith, and surrender, He appears in their heart and takes the devotee into His refuge. If one

receives true knowledge about God from a suitable Guru and follows the Guru's words with dedication, then intense love for God arises. When one gains proper knowledge of God's qualities, power, truth, and secrets, they become certain that "God alone is the most beloved." After that, the seeker finds no pleasure in anything else in the world. That loving remembrance of God becomes the very basis of the devotee's life. The devotee cannot bear even a moment of forgetfulness of God. This is called "mad-gata-manah" — the state where the mind always stays fixed in God. The Srimad Bhagavatam (11.2.42) says — in a true devotee's heart, love for God, knowledge, and detachment from body and world arise together. Just as hunger is removed, satisfaction is felt, and strength is gained simultaneously upon eating food. When a devotee realizes the truth of the oneness of Self and Supreme, all doubts about Self and not-Self disappear. The devotee sees the One Supreme Soul in all beings. That's why Lord Krishna says: "I am present everywhere, and all beings are My forms." Holding this feeling in the heart, one should keep bowing to God. Saints, sages, and gurus are moving temples of God. One should bow down at their feet during darshan. When a devotee realizes their inherent unity with God, they no longer feel separate from Him. The body naturally performs actions as per God's will. This state is called total surrender to God. Lord Krishna says — when a devotee becomes devoted to Me, they are united with Me. They do not need to go to any other realm. They receive My presence and attain supreme bliss. Revered Swami Sivananda has said in the explanation of this verse: "If one gives up the idea of 'I' and 'mine' related to name, title, knowledge, and body, and completely surrenders to God, their whole life will undergo a miraculous transformation. They will see God everywhere. All pain and suffering will end. The mind will merge with divine consciousness. One will feel everything in life as belonging to God. Just like the empty space inside a pot merges with infinite space when the pot is broken. When self-realization happens, all impurities and ignorance are removed. The unique yogi-devotee becomes one with the Supreme Brahman." The reason this chapter is called "Raja Vidya-Raja Guhya Yoga" is because the knowledge about the true nature of God is most secret and supreme. Lord Krishna has said that this Yoga is extremely pure, full of dharma, clearly understood, and easy to practice. A person who lacks faith in God cannot understand its greatness. Such a person remains trapped in this impure world, taking repeated births. Lord has also declared: "This whole universe is pervaded by My subtle form." Even though I create and sustain all beings, I am not dependent on them — they are dependent on Me. All beings depend on nature, and nature depends on Me. Therefore, although creation and destruction happen under My supervision, I remain untouched by them. All these actions are performed by nature, which depends on Me. Self-centered people think this temporary body and world are everything. They become attached to pleasure, and live with pride, arrogance, violence, and delusion, adopting demonic nature. On the other hand, great souls who are devoted to Me know Me as the eternal and origin of all beings. They constantly worship Me. Worshipping Me in different divine forms of gods and goddesses is also My worship. Through that, the mind becomes

pure. By the blessings of those gods, the path becomes easier, and finally, one attains My darshan. Believing that “God is the supreme shelter and protector,” If one depends only on Him, surrenders all actions to Him, and remains satisfied with His will, and connects to Him by listening to His stories, singing His names and glories — Then that is the highest form of devotion to God. A seeker should practice the nine forms of devotion, starting with listening to His divine names and stories. Those exclusive devotees who meditate on Me and worship Me properly, I Myself take care of their needs and protect what they have. God personally takes care of His pure devotees. Offering everything to Me and accepting Me as the Supreme Goal, Supreme Shelter — this is surrender. I see all beings equally. But whoever is My exclusive devotee, always remembering Me in their heart, I too remain connected with them and give them My nearness. Even if someone has committed serious sins, if they worship Me with firm determination, then that person should also be considered a saint. Because their determination is right, they quickly become righteous and attain peace. O son of Kunti! Declare boldly — My devotee never perishes. Even those born in sinful wombs — women, Vaishyas, and Shudras — can attain the highest state if they take refuge in Me. So, O Arjuna, constantly meditate on Me. Stay connected to Me always. Become My exclusive devotee, and I will pull you toward Myself. Just desire to attain Me — don’t resist. Just like a river loses its name, shape, and individuality upon merging into the ocean, Similarly, when you are united with Me, your name, form, and identity will become one with Me. That alone is your Supreme Goal.

**Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga
Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade ‘Raj Vidya-Raj Guhya Yoga’ Naama
navam Adhyaayah ||9||**

“Om Tat Sat” — In this way, with this holy name of God, the ninth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, called “Raj Vidya-Raj Guhya,” which is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, is completed.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita – Chapter 10
(Vibhuti Yoga)

Sri Bhagavan Uvacha

**bhūya eva mahābāho śṛṇu me paramam vacaḥ
yat te 'haṁ prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hita-kāmyayā(10-1)**

Comm: God says, “O mighty-armed one, you listen to my words with faith and joy, treating them as nectar because of your great love for me.” “Therefore, I speak beneficial words for your welfare.” “Listen again to my supreme, spiritual words.” Addressing Arjuna as “mighty-armed” means, “O Arjuna, you are a powerful man.” “The strength of your great arms will not let you be defeated.” “Show enthusiasm.” “Enthusiasm is the dwelling place of prosperity.” “Prosperity comes to the best, most diligent person.” When a listener feels faith and love toward the speaker, the speaker kindly offers beneficial advice without hesitation. This advice becomes firmly rooted in the listener’s heart. In practical life, wishing for others’ welfare becomes a form of sacrifice for oneself. This destroys personal desires. By wishing for others’ welfare and behaving appropriately, a seeker becomes worthy of God’s love and receives His grace. In the seventh and ninth chapters, God briefly describes His divine glories while explaining His true nature. Everything visible in the world is a manifestation of God’s divine glories in an unmanifest form. Once a person realizes the visible world is God’s glory and majesty, they can stay connected to God in any situation. Forgetting God becomes impossible. As long as fire remains hidden in a piece of wood, it is the essence of fire. When the wood is ignited by contact with fire,

it is called the fire’s majesty. Similarly, God is present everywhere in His unmanifest form and visible in His divine glories. The sun, moon, trees, mountains, rivers, stationary and moving beings—all visible things are God’s glories. To establish devotion with firm faith and vision of God everywhere, God elaborates on these glories. All words related to God are supreme because they help attain Him. According to Sage Parashara, the one who possesses complete strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty, and renunciation is the Supreme. Only God is that Supreme Being. All words about God’s divine play, opulence, and glories are supreme. Overwhelmed by a devotee’s love, God repeatedly reveals the secrets of His qualities, influence, and essence to them. He even shows His majestic universal form out of kindness to the devotee. Though Mother Yashoda saw Lord Krishna’s universal form many times, she called Him “my little Kanhaiya” and worshipped Him with motherly love throughout her life. Through His divine power, God hides Himself and shares joy with His devotees, friends, and family during His incarnations. This is the result of a devotee’s love for God. Only a devotee is worthy of hearing the secret matters of God’s heart; no one else in the world is. Even without Arjuna asking, God, moved by kindness, begins the tenth chapter on divine glories.

**na me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ prabhavaṁ na maharṣayaḥ
aham ādīr hi devānāṁ maharṣīnāṁ ca sarvaśaḥ(10-2)**

Comm: In what form I appear, when I appear, and why I appear — even gods and sages have tried for a long time to understand the divine secret of My birth and actions, but they have not been able to gain true knowledge about it.” “Prajapati Brahma, the eleven Rudras, the eight Vasus, the twelve Adityas, the forty-nine Maruts, the Ashwini Kumars, Indra, and all such intelligent and powerful deities and the seven great sages — all of them have originated from Me and received their power, energy, and strength from Me.” “Just as a son cannot fully understand the history of his father’s birth, in the same way, because I am the cause and source of all gods and sages, they are not able to comprehend the secret of My divine appearance on Earth.” “Even great gods and sages sometimes reach the mistaken conclusion that God is formless, without qualities, and does not manifest through the three qualities of nature — this wrong belief arises due to their delusion caused by Maya (illusion).” “Because of this illusion, they describe My appearance as merely a philosophical concept and call it ‘Ishwara Tattwa’ (the principle of God).” “But only those devotees who have completely surrendered themselves at the lotus feet of the Lord are able to know, by the immense grace of God, that Lord Rama is a dignified incarnation (Maryada Purusha), and Lord Krishna is none other than the Supreme Vasudeva Himself.” “God, with His unmatched yogic power, appears according to His will — to destroy the wicked, to give darshan to devotees, and to uplift living beings through His divine play and various manifestations.” “Even great Brahmavadis like Brahma, Shiva, the Sanaka sages, Bhṛigu, and Vasishtha — through penance, knowledge, and meditation — try to see My formless, attributeless form (Nirguna Parabrahma), but

they are unable to succeed.” “What appears as ‘Ishwara’ is actually the reflected form of Me through My lower energy (Apara Shakti).” “This Apara Shakti, which binds the soul, is an indescribable and unmanifest form of Mine known as ‘Brahman’.” “Therefore, ‘Ishwara’ (Supreme Soul) and ‘Brahman’ are two expressions of Myself — perceived as Saguna (with qualities) and Nirguna (without qualities) in this created world.” “Electric power exists in a wire in a non-expressive (Nirguna) way, but when it lights up a bulb, it is seen in an expressive (Saguna) form as light.” “Sages, seers, and gods, through penance, knowledge, and detachment, consider the dry, impersonal Brahman as supreme and try to merge their self into it.” “But My devotees, considering the unknowable and unmanifest principle difficult to reach by their limited understanding, choose instead to practice devotion toward Me.” “Seeing this devotion, I become compassionate and grant them the experience of My true form through simple and direct knowledge.”

**yo mām ajam anādiṁ ca veti loka-maheśvaram
asammūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate(10-3)**

Comm: Those who firmly accept me as unborn, without beginning or end, and the great Lord of all worlds, the supreme God, become free from all sinful reactions in this human world. God is unborn and eternally exists in one form and essence. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, Uddhava said: “Lord, though you are desireless, you perform actions; though unborn, you take birth; though you are the form of time, you hide in Dvaraka out of fear of enemies—this wondrous character confuses even the wise.” The resolution is that when Lord Sri Krishna appeared before Devaki and Vasudeva, he manifested in his four-armed form. Then, he transformed into an ordinary child. Similarly, when God incarnates in the mortal world, he comes in his unborn form. Though all-powerful, he performs all actions impartially for the sake of teaching humanity. He is distinct from all beings and objects in the mortal world. Bound souls take birth under the influence of nature and qualities, experiencing the results of their past actions and facing bodily destruction through death. However, when God incarnates, even though he assumes a human body, it is solely for the purpose of his divine play. During his childhood pastimes, he could not be bound by Mother Yashoda’s long rope, he killed demons like Putana, and he performed the rasa dance with the gopis—these acts are incomprehensible. Similarly, being unborn yet taking birth and hiding from enemies are beyond logical reasoning. God is beginningless and eternal. He is beyond time, and even time has a beginning and end in relation to him. Yet, he remains as he is. God has said two things to note: first, he existed at the beginning of creation, exists during its maintenance, and will remain during its dissolution. Second, the unborn Supreme Soul is the root of all. He is the foundation of everything and the controller of the entire universe. When these two principles about the Supreme Soul are truly realized, one naturally becomes determined to dedicate their precious human life to constant devotion to God. By doing so, one becomes free from all sins of this and previous births and easily attains the Supreme Soul. Recognizing God as unborn, beginningless,

and all-powerful leads to the realization of the soul's eternal and indestructible nature, as it is a part of the Supreme Soul. As long as one identifies with the body, they cannot be free from sin. Body identification is the root of all sins and an obstacle to liberation. The moment body identification is destroyed, the inner self becomes pure, and the soul is realized. This is the state of being free from delusion. Due to abundant virtuous deeds, one may attain higher realms, but freedom from the reactions of sinful actions is not achieved. Through devotion and love, constant worship of God's true nature removes doubts and delusion. Only by God's boundless grace can one become sinless and experience his true nature. Removing the veil of ignorance is yoga, and liberation from sin is divine glory. The undeluded one perceives God's grandeur everywhere, experiencing it as the vision of the Supreme Lord.

**buddhiḥ jñānam asammohaḥ kṣamā satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavaṁ abhāvaṁ bhayaṁ ca abhayaṁ eva ca(10-4)**

**ahimsā samatā tuṣṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśo 'yaśaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ(10-5)**

Comm: Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna! Pay attention to this – intelligence, knowledge, freedom from confusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, self-control, calmness, happiness, sorrow, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, non-violence, equality, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, and infamy – all these subtle qualities are born from the divine energy of God and arise in the minds of living beings. These qualities are also represented through various gods and sages. The external world – living beings, animals, birds, trees, rivers, mountains, oceans, planets, and stars – all physical creation is revealed through the threefold nature of the inner mind (sattva, rajas, tamas). But the one root cause behind all these qualities is the Supreme Soul. “They are born from Me alone” – means, the self-luminous Supreme Soul, the consciousness called Paramatma, from whom all these qualities emerge. He is the witness, inspirer, and illuminator of all feelings in living beings. Though these twenty qualities are different from one another, they are all divine manifestations and signs of spiritual thought. The Supreme Soul is the foundation of all divine qualities. All actions based on these qualities are divine plays (leelas) of God. The performer of these plays is God Himself. When this understanding becomes strong, the devotee's vision always stays fixed on God. Now, each quality is explained simply: Buddhi (Intelligence): The ability to analyze things properly and understand their real nature is called intelligence. It helps us decide what is right or wrong, what to accept or reject, and distinguish between good and bad. Jnana (Knowledge): The awareness reflected in the mind which allows an object (like a pot) to be known is called knowledge. With knowledge, one can understand the difference between the soul and non-soul, eternal and temporary, physical and divine. Asammoha (Non-delusion): Even after knowing that body and worldly things are temporary, if

one remains attached to them, that is delusion. Realizing that the soul and God are eternal and removing the sense of “I” and “mine” from the body and world is non-delusion. Knowledge removes confusion from the mind and helps attain a state free from delusion. Kshama (Forgiveness): To tolerate others’ faults without revenge and wish them well is forgiveness. It is a sign of strength, not weakness. Not getting angry at small faults shows great inner power. Satya (Truthfulness): To speak or present facts properly without distorting them and with others’ benefit in mind is truth. Even if the truth is unpleasant, it should be expressed with humility. Dama (Control of senses): Controlling the enjoyment of the senses is called Dama. Shama (Control of mind): Withdrawing the mind from unnecessary thoughts and keeping it peaceful with the goal of attaining God is Shama. Sukha (Happiness): A cheerful state of mind due to gaining desired things or avoiding unpleasant things is happiness. What helps one move towards God is true happiness. Dukha (Sorrow): A troubled state of mind due to losing something pleasant or coming into contact with unpleasant things is sorrow. All pain caused by the body, mind, or environment is sorrow and should be avoided if it hinders God-realization. Bhava (Becoming or birth): The creation of body and material things is called Bhava. Spiritually, the awakening of God in the heart is also Bhava. Abhava (Non-existence): When all things merge into their source, that is Abhava. During great destruction (Mahapralaya), everything dissolves into primal nature. Bhaya (Fear): The anxiety that arises when one sees the possibility of harm or death is fear. Identifying with the body creates constant fear of the future. Abhaya (Fearlessness): When one considers himself as the eternal soul and a part of God, fear disappears. Trusting in the Almighty Lord gives fearlessness. Ahimsa (Non-violence): Not causing pain to others through thought, word, or deed is non-violence. It leads to spiritual and divine happiness. One who follows non-violence feels love for all beings and has no hatred. Sama (Equality): Being free from likes and dislikes, accepting the ways of the world, and performing duties without attachment is equality. Keeping God in mind in every situation is a sign of equal-mindedness. Tusti (Contentment): Accepting both gain and loss as God’s will and feeling inner satisfaction is contentment. Whatever one gets after sincere effort should be accepted as God’s grace. Tapa (Austerity): Willingly enduring hardships for spiritual upliftment or heaven through scriptural practices is austerity. True austerity, guided by virtue and balance, helps progress on the spiritual path. Dana (Charity): Giving one’s rightful wealth for the benefit of others is charity. Offering knowledge, guidance, or necessities like food, clothes, and shelter to those in need is also charity. Swami Sivananda says every householder should donate one-tenth of their income for noble causes. Yasha (Fame): When one lives with devotion and spiritual practice, their efforts become known and they earn good fame. Ayasha (Infamy): A person who turns away from God and lives selfishly becomes a source of harm to the world and earns blame and dishonor. These positive and negative qualities arise due to past actions and are tools in human life. Though power and its source (God) are actually one, in practical

life they are experienced separately. Likewise, though God and everything born of His power are eternally one, we see and experience them as different in daily life.

**maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavas tathā
mad-bhāvā mānasā jātā yeṣāṁ loka imāḥ prajāḥ(10-6)**

Comm: The seven sages like Bhrigu, the four Brahma-rishis like Sanaka before them, and the fourteen Manus like Svayambhuva originated from the will of the Supreme Being, Parabrahman. Empowered by me, Brahma, along with the seven sages, Brahma-rishis, and Manus, gave rise to all stationary and moving beings in all worlds. These beings manage the universe with faith and love toward me. God briefly describes the origin of the cosmic tradition of the universe here. Brahma, known as Hiranyagarbha, the first living being, performed penance for a thousand divine years, gained Parabrahman's grace, and became capable of creating the universe. With the desire to create many universes, Brahma's uninterrupted penance led God to manifest as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanatkumara, the four "Sana" forms. Though these four appeared first as divine forms, they remained as eternal youths, wandering the three worlds to spread knowledge, devotion, and detachment about God's qualities, influence, and majesty. Among them, one speaks while the other three listen, discussing divine stories. Their words always chant "Hari Sharanam." They revived the knowledge of the soul lost during the previous cosmic dissolution through teachings to sages, making them proponents of the path of liberation. All disciples who received knowledge from them are called "Nadaja" beings. In one day of Brahma, there are fourteen Manus. The reign of each Manu is called a Manvantara. One Manvantara spans seventy-one sets of four yugas, or 30,67,20,000 human years. In each Manvantara, different seven sages manage dharma and protect beings. Sages with long life, mantra creation, divine vision, wisdom, righteousness, and lineage establishment are called Saptarishis due to their seven qualities. From them, populations expand, and dharma is maintained. The Mahabharata's Shanti Parva lists the current Saptarishis as Marichi, Angira, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishtha. These seven great sages, as Vedic authorities and chief preceptors, guide the path of action-based dharma. At the end of a Manvantara, the Manu, Saptarishis, gods, Indra, and Manu's descendants change. The Manus of the current cycle are Svayambhuva, Svarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusha, Vaivasvata, Savarni, Daksha-savarni, Brahma-savarni, Dharma-savarni, Rudra-savarni, Deva-savarni, and Indra-savarni. After one cycle of fourteen Manus, all Manus change. Svayambhuva is the first Manu of this cycle, and after six Manus, the current Vaivasvata Manvantara is ongoing. All these Manus and great sages maintain faith and love toward God. God himself, taking Brahma's form, created the great sages, Brahma-rishis, and Manus through his will for world creation. These twenty-five divine beings are uniquely influential and the cause of the universe's creation. They are the producers and promoters of creation under Brahma's command. Countless universes are filled

with various beings. These twenty-five great sages are known as the patriarchs of the entire universe. The phrase “Maharshaya sapta purve chatvaro manavah” is interpreted differently by some scholars. Some explain that the first four Manus—Svayambhuva, Svarochisha, Raivata, and Uttama—as Brahma’s mind-born sons, created all lineages as “Binduja” beings. Beings born from the union of male and female are called “Binduja.” Some commentators describe the seven great sages as the five sense organs, intellect, and ego within human consciousness, through which the world appears in various forms to beings. In Gita Rahasya, Tilak mentions that, per Bhagavat Dharma, the four forms—Vasudeva (soul), Sankarshana (being), Pradyumna (mind), and Aniruddha (ego)—arose before the seven sages. These four forms, called “Chaturvyuha,” are aspects of the all-pervading Vasudeva, originating before the Saptarishis. The universe is governed through this Chaturvyuha.

**etām vibhūtiṁ yogam ca mama yo veti tattvataḥ
so ’vikalpena yogena yujyate nātra saṁśayaḥ (10-7)**

Comm: O Arjuna! The person who can truly realize My yogic power and divine majesty becomes equal-minded and remains constantly united with Me in exclusive devotion. There is not the slightest doubt in this. Firm and doubt-free knowledge about God’s greatness and divine opulence is the highest goal in the spiritual path. Because of God’s extraordinary power, creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe take place. Based on this power, God takes many forms according to His will in different ages for different purposes, remaining untouched by worldly defects like birth and change, and performs divine plays (leelas). The state where one doesn’t consider even the slightest power other than God as independent is called “unshakable yoga” (avikampana yoga). Whatever special qualities we observe in the world are all God’s manifestations and must be understood as His divine glories. The person who understands the truth of this yoga and these divine glories attains this unshakable connection with God. To know something “in truth” means to realize that the Supreme Soul is the creator and destroyer of all, all-powerful, the Lord of everything, the source of all, most compassionate, friend of all, and the indwelling soul within all beings. Just like a person wearing ornaments may be interested in their designs, a goldsmith focuses only on the gold. In the same way, behind all these divine glories and powers lies the one essence – the Supreme Soul. Therefore, to keep one’s focus always on the Supreme Soul is the real meaning of knowing the truth. The one who knows this truth understands that everything known is actually a result of the Supreme Lord’s infinite power and divine manifestation. A true devotee of the Lord has unwavering faith and belief in Him. “Unwavering” means never shaken, disturbed, or moved. Once someone understands God properly, they naturally become dedicated to serving Him with steadfast devotion. That person serves the Lord wholeheartedly and completely surrenders to Him. Just as a lamp cannot stay lit without oil, a soul cannot survive even for a moment without God’s power. This whole universe

is created by God and exists within a part of Him. The soul may appear to be separated from the earth, but it can never be separated from the Supreme Lord.

**aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ(10-8)**

Comm: I am the source of the creation of the infinite universes and the cause of all causes. The existence, destruction, intelligence, and knowledge of this world have all come from Me. I alone am the material and instrumental cause of everything. As the Supreme Father and Supreme Lord, I alone exist at the root of the creation of all living beings. Brahma, the Prajapatis, Indra, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, and the twelve Adityas — all of them appeared from My creative will. Gaining My power and energy, all the gods and goddesses and the entire universe are actively functioning. The actions of all moving and non-moving beings in the world also originate from Me. As the indwelling controller, I control every living being from within. The word ‘pravartate’ means that it is the Lord who, by His Yogic power, keeps this cycle of creation running. According to His will, the sun, moon, stars, and the earth move in a fixed and orderly manner. He is the controller of everything, and under His control, beings receive higher or lower births and enjoy the results of their actions. In this way, all the activities and movements in the universe happen only due to the inspiration of the Lord. The wise person who clearly understands this universal and all-pervading truth of Mine remains always devoted to Me with love and faith. The word ‘matva’ means: the devotee who never forgets, even for a moment, the truth and reality that the Supreme Lord is at the root of everything. That firm acceptance transforms into true knowledge, and the devotee becomes one with divine wisdom. First, the devotee deeply thinks about this knowledge, and then, with devotion, he starts worshipping Me. Real worship is keeping one’s mind always fixed on the Lord — by chanting His name, singing His glories, thinking about His form, and listening to His divine plays — and being completely absorbed in them. Just as a tree can only grow when it is connected to the soil, in the same way, the divine presence of God is the root support for both the gross and subtle development of the soul.

**mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca(10-9)**

Comm: The devotee who fully concentrates his mind on Me, and offers his life in My service and worship, speaks and explains My knowledge, power, and glory to others. They chant My name, praise My divine qualities and greatness, and feel joy and satisfaction in doing so. The one whose mind, breath, actions, and all efforts are focused on Me, sees serving the world as their duty received through My grace. Listening to the Lord’s words in holy company, through spiritual discussions and knowledge-sacrifices, is also a form of devotion. When one hears about the divine pastimes of God and develops attachment, what greater devotion can there be than that? “Bodhayantah parasparam”

means that in order to clear doubts about the nature of the Supreme, one asks questions and the other replies based on personal experience — this is called holy company and noble reflection. Just as delicious food gives satisfaction, even more lasting satisfaction is gained by speaking, hearing, and sharing the Lord’s glories. Devotees experience supreme joy by singing, hearing, and sharing the Lord’s virtues, powers, and greatness. Once they experience this divine joy, they become united with the Lord and become worthy of divine qualities. “Enjoying with God” means — they always feel God’s presence close to them in their mind and with love, they feel as if seeing, touching, and talking with Him in solitude. Just like men and women feel joy when united, realized souls joyfully sing, recite, glorify, and explain the Lord’s divine form and pastimes with reverence and faith. Words like ‘mad-gata-citta’ and ‘mad-gata-prana’ show the exclusive nature and deep devotion of a true devotee. The union of mind and intellect is called chitta. When love resides in the mind and faith in the intellect, and one remains attracted to God’s name, form, qualities, pastimes, and sweetness — this is ‘machchitta’. ‘Mad-gata-prana’ means one cannot live without Me — like how life can go on without food. Before reaching this state, a seeker first takes a firm vow to attain God alone. The intimacy that seeker has with God is more than they have even with their own life. In the Mahabharata, it is said — while lying on the bed of arrows, Bhishma remembers the Gopis’ deep love for Krishna. In that moment, Bhishma becomes like Krishna, and also like the Gopis. The mind is everything. “Man eva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh” — meaning, the mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation. One becomes what the mind is full of. Outer appearance doesn’t matter much; all importance lies in the mind. The mind holds both love and hatred. The mind can be joyful or sorrowful. Spiritual knowledge is that which purifies the heart. When one sees a peepal tree and feels it is Lord Vasudeva Himself, the heart takes the form of Vasudeva through constant reflection. Only through the feeling in the mind can one see God in the heart. The reflection seen in a mirror is not the real form. The one whose memory brings total absorption in the mind, whose name melts the heart with love, is the soul’s true nature. Shukadeva Ji has described the Gopis’ love for Krishna — Krishna in their minds, Krishna in their breath, Krishna in their clothes. Losing everything meant Krishna, gaining everything meant Krishna — only Krishna, everywhere Krishna. To the Gopis, everything appeared as Krishna. Their mind, speech, and actions had become Krishna. In their hearts, they came close to Krishna, and felt His nearness as the Supreme Self. Shukadeva Ji called them Gopis — those who enjoy the sweetness of Krishna through their senses. That is a Gopi who hears the sweet sound of Krishna’s flute, touches His divine body, sees only Krishna with her eyes... ..smells the fragrance of sandalwood on His body, tastes the sweet nectar of His name, and feels His embrace in the heart. Like this, all senses and the mind of the Gopis were absorbed in Krishna’s divine form. This loving feeling is created in the heart of a devotee. This has no connection to wealth, possessions, or personal pride. It is the happiness of one’s own inner feeling. This joy arises on its own. There was nothing the Gopis could see that did not lead

their mind back to Krishna. In this way, meditating on Krishna’s or Rama’s pastimes and keeping the mind immersed in them is ‘mat-gata-chitta’. True devotees like the Gopis, through singing and praising Krishna’s sweet form, qualities, and divine plays, attain the ultimate sweetness of divine love. In this devotional practice, by listening and singing, they experience devotional joy, and in the final stage of love, they taste unbroken bliss in the heart. The heart of a devotee gets coated with selfless pure devotion, in which the form of God is imprinted. At that time, the devotee becomes like God, and God becomes like the devotee. The words ‘bodhayantah’, ‘kathayantah’, and ‘parasparam’ in this verse are very significant. When devotees discuss God among themselves, different divine realizations arise in their hearts. When feelings are shared, new sentiments awaken and many doubts disappear. Just as a lustful man feels excitement in the discussion of women, devotees feel constant freshness in God’s pastimes and stories. To find peace and happiness, one should keep their practice within their control. This is the definition of happiness. People want happiness. Why? Because they need money for happiness, they desire family happiness, home, lineage, reputation — all for happiness. But for what, happiness is desired? It’s not for wealth, or prestige, or things. People desire happiness for peace — which is the nature of the soul. Real happiness does not depend on external things, but on the desire for happiness itself. The root of this desire lies in the soul’s blissful nature. Searching for this root in wealth, gold, or fame will never yield it. The Lord is the eternal source of happiness and the cause and means of all bliss. When one reaches ‘mat-gata-chitta’ and ‘mat-gata-prana’, the voice chokes with emotion. The mind becomes satisfied while singing the Lord’s name and glories, the body gets goosebumps, and waves of joy rise in the heart. The mind rejoices in devotion, eyes shed tears of love, and the heart becomes overwhelmed with divine feeling. This joy and divine madness of life is called devotion. This joy of life is called knowledge. It is that bliss which is not dependent on anything, which needs no time, place, thing, or favor. It is direct experience of bliss — full of contentment, divine union, and enjoyment. The Narada Bhakti Sutra says — “With choked voice, goosebump-filled bodies, and tearful eyes, these exclusive devotees speak among themselves, purifying their families and the entire world.”

**teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te(10-10)**

Comm: Devotees offer their mind and soul to God. They sing about God’s qualities and divine play, feeling satisfied and joyful. The verse uses the term “satata-yuktanam” to guide these devotees. God explains how devoted followers realize His presence. A true devotee always focuses their mind with love and faith, constantly worshipping God. Out of grace, God grants them the ability to understand His divine influence, greatness, and mysteries. This understanding includes both the formless and manifested aspects of God. With this power, devotees can come closer to God. “Buddhi Yoga” frees devotees from the results of good and bad actions. The ultimate goal of Buddhi

Yoga is to turn toward God. A devotee offers all actions and their results to God with a mature and balanced mind. They perform all worldly duties with equality. Free from attachment and aversion, they stay immersed in worshipping God. When conflicts like attachment and aversion are removed, devotees achieve equality. They feel everything is God. Shri Nilakanthji explains “Buddhi Yoga” as the state of knowledge-based meditation. Here, Buddhi Yoga means a clear and positive intellect. God describes it as a combination of knowledge, devotion, and action yoga. The Gita is unique in valuing human intellect highly. Intellect is needed for actions, spiritual practice, overcoming delusion, devotion, and realizing God. No other religious text emphasizes intellect as much as the Gita. Knowledge is another term for intellect. Knowledge leads to liberation, freedom from bondage, and realization of truth. No other scripture removes ignorance, sorrow, fear of birth and death, or grants eternal peace like the Gita. The phrase “bhajatam priti-purvakam” means devotees worship God with love, naturally absorbed in Him. The Shrimad Bhagavata says devotees who surrender to God do not desire worldly positions, yogic powers, or even liberation. Mahatma Gandhi said in his Gita commentary that true devotees naturally gain knowledge. Knowledge is not gained by studying scriptures or big texts for God’s realization. Thinking knowledge makes one a devotee is a false idea. Such thinking is just ego, not devotion or knowledge. With a pure heart, love, faith, and steady intellect, devotees gain knowledge by worshipping God’s qualities and glory. A sincere person sees the world as God’s form and engages in self-discipline. By God’s grace, this yoga awakens in their heart. The word “dadami” means devotees see Buddhi Yoga as God-given, not a result of their efforts. Swami Totapuri searched for Swami Ramakrishna and said he had been looking for him for a long time. Though they had never met, Totapuri felt a deep connection. On the Mother’s command, Ramakrishna accepted Vedanta teachings from Totapuri. After three days of deep meditation, Ramakrishna realized the truth. Totapuri said what took him 36 years to achieve, Ramakrishna gained easily. The Shrimad Bhagavata says God, as a guru, lights the lamp of pure knowledge in a devotee’s heart. Only by God’s grace can one truly see God.

**teṣāṃ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā(10-11)**

Comm: O Arjuna! Because of My special grace on that unique devotee, I stay in his intellect and light the bright lamp of knowledge by revealing the truth of the soul. Through that light of knowledge, the darkness of illusion and attachment, which comes from ignorance, is destroyed. By one’s own thinking power alone, intellect cannot gain even the smallest pure knowledge of the infinite truth. From beginningless time, due to many births, the mind and intellect remain covered in darkness and defects. Because of this, a person stays attached to children, spouse, and wealth, and cannot gain true knowledge of God’s qualities, power, and nature. But when I shower My grace, by the power of My

inconceivable energy, true knowledge is attained very easily. By constant devotion to Me, divine intelligence awakens in the heart, and firm faith is formed in My yoga and power. By always experiencing My presence, one becomes free from all worldly conflicts, defects, and doubts caused by material contact. When one offers himself completely at the feet of the Lord with faith and love, the Lord Himself takes the responsibility to save him from the ocean of worldly suffering. In his commentary, Shri Baladeva Vidyabhushan writes: “For the one I bless completely, I also illuminate his intellect with the qualities of yoga and protection. All responsibilities of his life rest upon Me. He does not have to make any effort for anything.” Seeing the devotee’s deep absorption, a stream of compassion flows in the Lord’s heart. He who is usually still and unmoving becomes active and responsive for the devotee. Shankaracharya gives a beautiful example: “The devotee’s pure mind — free from attachment to sense objects and untouched by likes and dislikes — is the lamp of knowledge. The grace of Lord Krishna, gained through the wisdom of the Gita, is like the oil that keeps that lamp burning. The wisdom shaped by practices like celibacy is like the wick of the lamp. The devotee’s focus on the Lord is like the wind that helps keep the lamp of knowledge always burning. In this light of knowledge, the devotee meditates on the Lord with full concentration and realizes the oneness of the soul and the Supreme Soul.” The Lord’s dwelling in the devotee’s heart is called “yoga,” and the destruction of ignorance in the light of knowledge is called “power.” The one who is a true devotee does not ask anything from the Lord — neither material pleasures, nor spiritual knowledge, nor liberation. He simply worships with love and remains in the state of divine bliss. From the Lord’s infinite grace, equality and true understanding arise naturally in the devotee. His bodily pride disappears, and he serves for the welfare of the world. The paths of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga are worldly means, but the path of Bhakti is a divine means that contains both knowledge and action. A knowledgeable person may lack devotion, but a devotee can never be without knowledge. The Gopis did not study the Vedas, nor perform vows and austerities, nor meet great spiritual teachers, yet from their pure love for Krishna, they had extraordinary knowledge of the Lord’s nature. In truth, until the chosen deity or true Guru awakens within the seeker’s soul and moves him every moment, freeing him from the dualities of nature and advancing his devotion, real worship has not begun. When the Lord or Guru’s grace awakens in the seeker’s soul, four kinds of experiences are received by their guidance. First, while the seeker tries to keep the form of the Lord in his mind with steady focus, the mind sometimes wanders toward worldly objects. At such times, through a movement in the body, certain signs are felt in different parts of the body from the Lord or Guru. This is the “Sthula-sura” experience. Second, due to attachment to enjoyment, ordinary people dream. A yogic seeker generally does not dream, but instructions for the future path may come in dreams from the Lord or Guru. This is the “Swapna-sura” experience. These two subtle experiences are usually felt during good company, meeting saints, or deep contemplation. The next two experiences come actively to seekers at the higher stages of yoga practice. Third, when absorbed in thinking

of the Lord or Supreme Soul, the mind becomes completely steady in meditation, the body remains awake, but the mind merges into a deep-sleep state. This is the “Sushupti-sura” experience. In this state, a vision appears according to the level of meditation, showing the right path and giving knowledge of past and future. Fourth, and final, is the “Sama-sura” experience, where the meditator becomes one with the Supreme. After that, in all actions — standing, sitting, walking, moving — he experiences only the presence of the Lord everywhere. These four verses (8–11) are known as the “Chaturshloki Gita,” the essence of the Gita, which removes the suffering of all beings and brings the highest welfare. Here, Lord Krishna has explained to Arjuna the nature of exclusive devotion. When one takes shelter of this devotion, Lord Krishna, by His grace, easily takes him across the ocean of worldly life and brings him into the sweet devotion of Braj Dhama.

Arjuna Uvācha

**param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam ādi-devam ajaṁ vibhum(10-12)**

**āhus tvāṁ ṛṣayaḥ sarve devaṛṣir nāradaś tathā
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me(10-13)**

Comm: Knowing God’s ‘Vibhuti’ (divine powers) and ‘Yoga’ (divine connection) greatly helps in attaining Him. In the previous chapters, God’s divine powers were briefly mentioned. To hear about them in detail from Lord Krishna Himself, Arjuna praises and questions Him in these seven verses (12 to 18). At the beginning, Arjuna praises Lord Krishna, saying: O Lord, You are the attributeless, eternal truth, the Supreme Brahman, and the Supreme Soul. You are the supreme divine shelter, purifying even the air, fire, and other elements with Your ultimate purity. All sages like Bhṛigu, divine sage Nārada, and great sages like Asita, Devala, and Vyasa call You imperishable, divine, self-manifested, the original God, birthless, and all-pervading. You Yourself are now telling me the same. The attributeless Supreme Soul, called ‘Parabrahman,’ is Your very form. The infinite universes originate from You, the Vedas manifest from You, and nature depends on You. That Parabrahman form is the highest realm and the ultimate shelter for all beings. Your eternal abode is divine, full of truth, consciousness, and bliss, and is inseparable from You, thus it is also Your form. Listening to, contemplating, and chanting Your names, qualities, glories, and pastimes always purifies the soul of a being. Swami Shivananda says: Holy rivers and pilgrimage sites only destroy sins, but remembering the supremely pure Supreme Soul destroys not only the sins of countless births but also the root cause of sin, ignorance. Therefore, He is supremely pure. You are the eternal, imperishable, timeless, unchanging Supreme Person, who playfully manifests as the universe, without any cause for Your origin, being the cause of all causes. You are the divine Person, self-luminous, radiant with knowledge. Among all the gods, You are their source. You are

unborn, all-pervading, and limitless. Even when You appear limited during Your divine pastimes, Your all-pervading nature remains unaffected. All sages like Bhrigu, divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala, Vyasa, and others call You the Supreme Brahman, imperishable divine Person, supremely pure, and the foundation of all creation. You Yourself repeatedly say the same. Sages Asita and Devala say: Lord Krishna is the creator of all beings and the maker of all worlds. Sage Vyasa says: You are Vasudeva among the Vasus, the granter of Indra's power, and the supreme God among all gods. Sage Bhrigu says: He is the God of gods and the eternal Lord Vishnu. Divine sage Narada says: Lord Krishna is the creator of all worlds, the knower of all thoughts, and the Lord of all achievable beings and gods. In the Mahabharata, the truthful grandsire Bhishma, explaining Lord Krishna's glory to Duryodhana, says: Lord Vasudeva is the God of all gods and superior to all. He is righteousness, the knower of righteousness, the granter of boons, the fulfiller of all desires, the doer, the action, and the supreme Lord Himself. The rules of past, future, present, twilight, day, directions, and sky are created by this Janardana. This great soul, the imperishable Lord, created the sages, penance, and the creator Prajapati. He is the creator of Sankarshana, the eldest of all beings. Known as Ananta, He holds the entire earth, including Mount Meru. Even Sheshnaga (the divine serpent) originates from Him. He took the forms of Varaha, Narasimha, and Vamana incarnations. He is the mother and father of all, and there is no one superior to Him. He is Keshava, the form of supreme radiance, and the grandsire of all worlds. The sages call Him Hrishikesha, the teacher, father, and guru. Those with whom Lord Krishna is pleased attain the eternal realm. Those who, in fear, take refuge in Lord Keshava and recite His praises attain supreme happiness. The devotee who takes shelter in Lord Krishna never falls into delusion. Lord Janardana always protects those who are immersed in great distress.

**sarvam etad ṛtaṁ manye yan māṁ vadasi keśava
na hi te bhagavan vyaktiṁ vidur devā na dānavāḥ(10-14)**

Comm: O Keshava! Whatever You have said earlier, I accept all those words as truth. But, O Lord! Whether they are gods or demons, no one can know Your playful human form, nor can they understand the reason and purpose behind it. In the Shrimad Bhagavatam, sage Narada told King Yudhishtira: “O King! Among humans, you are very fortunate because the sages who purify the people have entered your palace, and the Supreme Brahman Himself, disguised in a human form, is staying here. That Krishna, whom the great souls seek in order to experience the bliss of liberation, is the Supreme Brahman. He is your beloved, friend, relative, worshipable one, guide, and Guru as well. So tell me — who else can be as fortunate as you?” At present, by the grace of the Lord, Arjuna has understood that Shri Krishna is the Supreme Truth and He is complete in Himself. To know the true nature of the Lord, the Guru-disciple tradition is necessary. Lord of Yoga, Shri Krishna, chose His close friend and devotee Arjuna to revive that Guru-disciple tradition which was about to disappear. Just as Arjuna has accepted Shri Krishna

as the Supreme Soul for his own spiritual welfare, all lovers of God must also firmly accept that Shri Krishna is the Supreme Person and the Lord. In the path of devotion, this faith has special importance. Here, by addressing Him as “Keshava,” Arjuna expresses the feeling that You are the Supreme Lord who has the power to create, maintain, and destroy the entire universe. You are the producer and controller of all moving and non-moving beings, and You are the root of everything — there is no doubt in this. The meaning of addressing You as “Bhagavan” is that You possess six divine opulences — lordship, fame, wealth, knowledge, detachment, and omniscience — and You are beyond time, existing in all ages. Even the demons, who can take many forms through their strength and illusion, and the gods, who can perceive things beyond the senses through their wisdom, cannot recognize Your divine human-like incarnation. The gods who work in creation by Your inspiration, and the demons whom You have killed and liberated, still cannot know Your power, strength, and purpose. Other sages may know You as the Supreme Brahman and unborn, yet they cannot understand how the unborn can at the same time appear in a physical body — this mystery is beyond them. God is beyond nature and all the powers of nature. How can the infinite, eternal truth be known through limited, material, and perishable things? By renunciation, detachment, austerity, self-study, and similar practices, the inner mind is purified — but even through these alone, the true nature of God cannot be recognized. In truth, God has no origin or birth. He is always of one form and one essence. How can anyone know something that has no origin? When a living being takes birth, there are causes — past life impressions, father and mother as seeds, the five elements as material cause, and karma as the reason. But the manifestation of the personal, divine form of God and its cause is truly a mystery. Therefore, the Lord has already said in reply — “I am unborn and eternal in nature. Though I am the Lord of all beings, I make My own nature subject to Me and, with the help of My Yogamaya power, I take form and appear according to My will.”

**svayam evātmanātmānam vettha tvam puruṣottama
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa deva-deva jagat-pate (10-15)**

Comm: O Purushottama! O Creator of all beings! O Controller of the world! O God of gods! O Lord of the universe! Only You Yourself, through Your own conscious power, can know the greatness and full glory of Your inconceivable nature. Only You know the form of Your manifested incarnations, the time, and the purpose for them — or the one in whose heart You awaken directly becomes able to know. A liberated person or a yogi may be able to experience the formless Brahman or the Supreme Soul in the heart, but to directly accept Yogeshwar Shri Krishna, who calls Himself “Bhagavan” full of six divine opulences, is not easy. Therefore, in this verse, Arjuna addresses Shri Krishna in five ways to express that You are the creator of the whole universe, the controller of all beings, the worshipable one for everyone, the nourisher and sustainer of all, and the Supreme Person who is higher than the perishable and imperishable beings called “apara” and “para.” Some

commentators explain the titles “Bhutabhavana,” “Bhutesha,” “Devadeva,” “Jagatpati,” and “Purushottama” as symbolic of five deities — Surya, Shiva, Ganesha, Shakti, and Vishnu, respectively. As the supreme father of all beings, You are Purushottama; as the one who nourishes and sustains all beings, You are Bhutabhavana; as the controller of creation, You are Bhutesha; as the worshipable and illuminator of all gods, You are Devadeva; and as the supreme ruler, disciplinarian, and protector of every soul, You are Jagatpati. No one else can fully know Your qualities, power, divine acts, greatness, mysteries, or true nature. You Yourself are the embodiment of knowledge. Therefore, You alone can know the secrets of Your own acts and powers. When, during meditation, the yogi experiences no difference between knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower, then the seen, the sight, and the seer become one — meaning, the chosen deity being meditated upon is the knowledge, is also the object to be known, and is the knower himself. The truth of the Supreme Soul is beyond thought and extremely mysterious. According to how much and in what way one enters into the realization of the Supreme Soul, in that same measure one understands the mystery. On this point, Shri Ramakrishna gives a beautiful example: A common man once found a diamond and, wishing to sell it to meet his needs, went to the market. First, he showed it to an eggplant seller, who said that in exchange he could give only five loads of eggplants. Next, a rice merchant sitting nearby examined it and said he could give two sacks of rice in exchange. Then, a cloth merchant sitting next to him said that in exchange he could give one bundle of silk cloth. Finally, the man went to a diamond dealer and showed the stone. The diamond merchant paid him two lakh rupees and kept the stone. In this same way, the different paths and practices of yoga to know the Supreme Soul are like recognizing the value of the diamond — the understanding depends on the knower’s capacity.

**vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa divyā hy ātma-vibhūṭayaḥ
yābhir vibhūtibhir lokān imāṃs tvaṃ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi(10-16)**

Comm: Certainly, only You are capable and worthy of fully describing those supernatural and divine glories through which You have pervaded the entire world. Even though Arjuna had no doubt in his mind that Shri Krishna is the Supreme Person, the Lord Himself, still, to understand His all-pervading power more clearly, he prayed to Him to explain it in detail. The earth is an element made of soil. The gold, silver, copper, and other metals that come out from that earth are the glories of the earth. All the beauty, sweetness, and grandeur of God, which appear in many forms and attract people, are called the glories or divine manifestations of God. Just as it is not possible to create another sun, another moon, or another Ganga river, in the same way, all these glories of God are unique and divine. Similarly, all the objects in heaven and other worlds, full of brilliance, strength, knowledge, grandeur, qualities, and power, are creations of God and are His divine glories. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, this glory is described by the name “Sambhuti.” In God’s creation, every object or living being has some special

quality. In the world, seeing the special qualities of the Supreme Soul in many forms is called “Vibhuti” (divine glory), and experiencing the presence and energy of the Supreme Soul within them is called “Yoga.” When a person truly understands God’s glories and His yoga, the mind naturally becomes attracted towards God.

**kathaṁ vidyām ahaṁ yogiṁ tvāṁ sadā paricintayan
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo ’si bhagavan mayā (10-17)**

Comm: O Lord, master of yoga and divine power, how can I constantly meditate on your glories to understand your greatness? O Lord, in which objects, beings, times, places, or situations can I contemplate you as the essence of my meditation? Please tell me how I can focus on you in those forms. Arjuna, representing all humanity, wants to know how an ordinary person or spiritual seeker can understand the all-pervading nature of God manifested in many forms. Arjuna has two main questions. First, tell me the method by which I can contemplate your qualities, influence, and true nature with faith and love. Second, in this world full of living and non-living things, which objects, beings, places, times, or events can I contemplate as your divine manifestations? Here, meditation is a practice and a means to truly know God. If every object, being, or situation is seen as a specialty of the world, it becomes worldly thinking. But if they are seen as God’s specialties, it transforms into divine contemplation. The ultimate goal of every spiritual seeker is to realize the truth through their own experience. Arjuna uses the term “Yogin” to address Krishna, recognizing him as a great practitioner of karma yoga, understanding the path of duty in the Gita. The teachings of the Gita given by the Lord on the battlefield are not meant for abandoning worldly life and meditating in a Himalayan cave. The Lord’s words aim to awaken inner strength, face the call of duty in the world, confront truth with resolve, and experience the indescribable divine essence to attain liberation in life. The term “Yogin” also points to Lord Krishna as the master of divine power (yogamaya). Because the Lord is veiled by yogamaya, he does not appear directly to all but manifests in various divine forms. In a yogi’s meditation, God himself appears in the form of these divine manifestations. This proves that these manifestations are not secondary but primary, as they are a means to attain God. The distinction between secondary and primary exists only until one truly knows the essence of God. In reality, the idea of secondary or primary exists only in the perspective of the spiritual seeker, not in the view of God or realized saints.

**vistareṇātmano yogaṁ vibhūtiṁ ca janārdana
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi śṛṇvato nāsti me ’mṛtam (10-18)**

Comm: Arjuna, addressing Lord Shri Krishna by the name “Janardana,” expressed this feeling — in the three worlds, you fulfil everyone’s desires, meaning You have the power to give everything to everyone. Therefore, whatever I wish to know from You now, please, out of compassion, fulfil that desire. When one listens to the various divine

incarnations and pastimes of the Lord, one experiences divine bliss in the heart at every step. The descriptions of Shri Krishna’s divine pastimes are as sweet as nectar, and this nectar is obtained through real experience. No matter how much one hears about the Lord’s influence, qualities, and pastimes, one never feels tired. In this verse, Arjuna prays to the Lord, saying — O Janardana! Please tell me again, in detail, about Your immeasurable yogic power and grandeur, because by drinking the nectar of Your divine words, I am still not satisfied. What You have already told me briefly about Your glories does not feel complete to me; instead, my eagerness to hear more is increasing more and more. The divine power by which the Lord Himself has taken the form of the universe and appeared in many forms is called “Yoga.” The forms in which He appears are called “Vibhuti” (divine manifestations). When one truly understands “Vibhuti” and “Yoga,” devotion to the Lord naturally becomes firm. For this reason, Arjuna felt it was easy to understand that he should know the Lord’s glories. Arjuna prays with the wish to listen again and again from Lord Shri Krishna’s mouth about the secrets of “Vibhuti” and “Yoga” and understand them properly. The glories of the Lord have no end, and Arjuna’s desire to hear them also has no end. In worldly pleasures, there is a temporary satisfaction, but it is limited and short-lived. When, in a state of steady mind, the soul turns towards the search for the Supreme Soul, the joyful thrill experienced in the heart is unique and has neither a beginning nor an end. Until one reaches that state, there remains within the heart a thirst to know the immortal truth about the Supreme Soul, and whenever there is an opportunity for satsang (holy company) or hearing from the scriptures or the guru, the desire to drink that nectar increases more and more. If, during spiritual practice, the thought arises — “I now have complete knowledge of the truth” — then it should be understood that, due to ego, the path to receiving knowledge is becoming blocked. Therefore, the seeker should remain closely connected to the instructions of the chosen deity or spiritual guide with great care until completion, and continue to try to bring those teachings into practice. Until the end of life, the desire to drink the nectar of this knowledge is itself the measure of the completion of spiritual practice — and this is what we see in Arjuna.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayah
prādhānyataḥ kuru-śreṣṭha nāsty anto vistarasya me (10-19)**

Comm: Understanding Arjuna’s intent, Lord Krishna said, “O best of the Kuru dynasty, I will surely tell you about my divine glories and yoga as you have requested.” The word “hanta” used here shows acceptance and indicates the Lord’s compassion and Arjuna’s worthiness to receive it. I will tell you about my main divine glories, as there is no end to the expanse of my glories in various forms. I will describe those divine glories through which you can understand the greatness of all natural and supernatural things.

Describing my infinite glories fully at this moment and place is not possible. Everything in this world that has glory or qualities arises from my divine energy. My power is expressed in every form in both the material and spiritual worlds, which even ordinary people can directly perceive. My glories are infinite, and no one can fully count them. In this verse, Lord Krishna intends to describe the main divine glories related to objects and beings where his brilliance, strength, knowledge, opulence, radiance, and power are specially manifested. The word “vibhuti” specifically refers to the Lord’s divine opulence, through which he controls the entire universe. The glories described in this chapter align with those mentioned in the Vayu Purana. At the end of the chapter, concluding the description of his glories, Lord Krishna himself says, “I pervade this entire animate and inanimate world only through a fraction of myself, not in my complete form.” This statement of the Lord clearly shows that his true nature exists beyond these glories in a distinct form. That distinct form is the incarnation known as Brajendranath Shri Krishna.

**aham ātmā guḍākeśa sarva-bhūtāśaya-sthitah
aham ādiś ca madhyaṁ ca bhūtānām anta eva ca (10-20)**

Comm: O Arjuna, conqueror of sleep! I am present in the heart of all beings as the Inner Controller. I am the source, the place of existence, and the end of all living beings — in other words, I am the cause of creation, preservation, and dissolution. The word “Gudakesha” means one who has conquered the darkness of ignorance in the form of sleep. By addressing Arjuna as “Gudakesha,” Shri Krishna points out both his ability to concentrate on the teaching and that he is above the darkness of ignorance. The essence of all scriptures and Upanishads is: “The soul is of the nature of Brahman.” In this verse, Lord Shri Krishna presents this truth. In reality, “Vasudevah Sarvam” — everything is the Supreme Soul. The many forms of living beings are described as the manifestations (Vibhuti) of the Supreme Soul, and the Lord advises to think of them as His own form. From Brahma down to a blade of grass, God exists as the soul in all beings. Without God, no moving or unmoving creature exists or can exist. “Aham Atma,” “Aham Brahmasmi,” “Ayam Atma Brahma” — in these statements, “Aham” means Brahman, and “Atma” means the Supreme Power — the Imperishable Person. God says: I am the Self, the soul of the entire cosmic principle (Mahat Tattva), and I am the great Creator — the Supreme Soul. The phrase “Sarva-bhuta-ashaya-sthita” means that the one, undivided soul-Supreme Soul is present in every being’s heart as the individual Cosmic Controller, and within the universe as the universal Cosmic Controller. O Arjuna, I am the resting place (Ashaya) of all beings. The place where the soul remains in both deep sleep and waking is called “Ashaya.” In that resting place, which is present in deep sleep, dream, waking, and other states, I alone am the one unique Self. With the help of My first great expansion, I exist throughout the visible world as the collective consciousness. And I am also present in the inner being of each creature as the individual consciousness, controlling them through qualities like omniscience. I am the birth, the death, and the life of all beings. The Lord

says: What is “I” is you, and what is “I” is creation. In reality, the Creator-seer and creation-seen are both the same unchanging nature of the Supreme Soul. One who understands the oneness of the all-pervading Supreme Soul and the embodied individual soul, and sees that the Supreme Soul is the root source of all higher and lower powers, is truly a great spiritual aspirant. When Maha Vishnu, also known as Karanodakashayi Vishnu, enters the manifested universes, He again appears within each living being as the Supreme Soul. Therefore, the entire visible universe is only the manifestation (Vibhuti) of the Supreme Soul. The Supreme Person, Shri Krishna, is the origin of this universe, the maintainer of this visible world, and the end of all powers. When all beings (both conscious and inert) did not exist, I existed. When no one will remain, I alone will remain. At the beginning, in the end, and in between, I alone exist. Apart from Me, nothing exists at all. This means: before all creatures were born, the Supreme Soul existed; after dissolution, the Supreme Soul will still remain; and in between, even though names, forms, shapes, actions, and natures may appear different, in truth it is always the Supreme Soul. When the heart is emptied, the Supreme Soul reveals Himself naturally. This “emptiness” is the connecting path to the realization of the Supreme Soul. Just as when one gives up the pride of one’s beauty, the beauty of the Lord appears in oneself, similarly, when one gives up the pride of intelligence, the wisdom of the Lord appears. When one abandons the pride of material pleasure attached to “me” and “mine,” one attains the discovery of unbroken bliss. As long as one’s own ideas, ways, tendencies, and desires remain in the inner mind, the experience of the Self does not arise. Whenever the inner mind is purified, when all desires become quiet and the mind and intellect become still, the inner light appears in life without obstruction. At that time, the voice of God is heard from within, and the inspiration of God is felt.

**ādityānām ahaṁ viṣṇur jyotiṣām ravir amṣumān
marīcir marutām asmi nakṣatrāṇām ahaṁ śaśi(10-21)**

Comm: Among the twelve sons of Aditi, I am Vishnu, the Aditya. Among the shining bodies, I am the radiant Sun. Among the forty-nine Maruts, I am Marichi. Among the twenty-seven constellations in the sky, I am the Moon, which gives cool rays. Among the many wives of Sage Kashyapa, the daughters of Daksha — Diti and Aditi — are important. The twelve sons of Aditi are Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Rudra, Surya, Bhaga, Vivasvan, Pushya, Savita, Tvasta, and Vishnu. From their very birth, they became known as Adityas and obtained divinity. Among the sons of Aditi, Vishnu is the greatest. He Himself took birth as Vamana and tricked the demon king Bali by asking for three steps of land. Lord Vishnu then expanded into a vast form, pressed one foot on Bali’s head, and pushed him into the underworld. He took away the wealth of the demons as a gift and gave it to the gods. Among the twelve Adityas of the twelve months, the Aditya of the month of Kartika is named Vishnu. In the Brahma Samhita it is said that the Sun is the bright eye of the Supreme Lord and is the source of all power and radiance in the

universe. Among all shining objects, the light of the Sun is the best, and Lord Krishna has said that this Sun is His own form. From the womb of Aditi's sister Diti, the Maruts were born. Among them, Marichi is the greatest. When Indra cut Diti's womb into seven parts, and again divided each part into seven, forty-nine Maruts were born. At first, there were seven Maruts — Avaha, Pravaha, Vivaha, Paravaha, Udbaha, Samvaha, and Parivaha. Later, they were transformed into forty-nine Maruts. Because Diti Devi was observing a vow with meditation on God, the power of that penance prevented the destruction of the fetus. From that reason, Marichi took birth in the womb in the form of air, as the deity controlling the sky. And Lord said that this brilliance of Marichi is His own form. Among the constellations like Rohini, Kritika, Ashwini, Bharani, and others, which are twenty-seven in number, the Moon is the ruler. The Moon is extremely bright and is considered one of the main divine manifestations of the Lord.

**vedānām sāmavedo 'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ
indriyāṇām manaś cāsmi bhūtānām asmi cetanā(10-22)**

Comm: Among the Vedas, I am the Sama Veda. Among the gods, I am Indra. Among the senses, I am the mind. Among all living beings, I am the conscious energy. The essence of every material and conscious object is called “Rik.” The sphere where its influence exists is called “Sama.” The region between this “Rik” and “Sama,” filled with the fire of life, is called “Yajur.” In this understanding, both “Rik” and “Yajur” are included in the Sama Veda. The Lord says, “O Narada, I do not reside in Vaikuntha, nor in the hearts of yogis.” “I stay where my devoted followers sing my praises.” In the middle section of the Gita, devotion is the main focus. In the Ramcharitmanas, Goswami describes an incident. At Sita's swayamvar, after Lord Ram broke Shiva's bow, pride entered his heart. Due to this pride, Lord Ram could not bow his head. As a result, Mother Sita could not place the garland around his neck. Later, when the pride was removed through the singing of the Sama Veda by friends, Lord Ram bowed his head. Mother Sita then placed the garland around his neck. Though small in scope, the Sama Veda is given importance because of its musical nature. The Lord calls the Sama Veda, filled with beautiful praises of his divine and formless nature, his own essence. Indra is the chief among all gods, like the sun, moon, fire, and wind, as their ruler and king. Therefore, the Lord calls Indra his own essence. The human mind arises from material nature, making it similar to matter. The mind and matter share the same substance, differing only in the degree of vibration. Low-frequency vibrations are considered matter, while rapid vibrations are considered the mind. Without the mind, all senses are inactive and ineffective. With the mind's help, the senses in the body can perform their functions. Controlling the mind leads to the realization of the soul. Dissolving the mind leads to attaining the Supreme Soul. The mind is the master, motivator, most subtle, and supreme among all senses. Therefore, the Lord calls the mind his own essence. Consciousness in a living being is the reflection of the soul. The combination of body, senses, mind, and intellect forms a conscious being. A

being is alive as long as consciousness remains, and the absence of consciousness is death. The subtle body of a being is its inner mechanism. The reflection of the Supreme Soul in this subtle body manifests as supreme energy or knowledge. This knowledge, expressed through the intellect, is called “consciousness.” The Lord calls this consciousness his divine manifestation. It is not logical to equate consciousness with the soul. The soul is never absent and exists even in a dead body. The Lord has already called the soul his own essence. Pure consciousness is the very essence of the Supreme Soul.

**rudrāṇām śaṅkaraś cāsmi vitteso yakṣa-rakṣasām
vasūnām pāvakaś cāsmi meruḥ śikhariṇām aham(10-23)**

Comm: Among the eleven Rudras, I am Shankara (Lord Shiva). Among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, I am Kubera, the lord of wealth. Among the eight Vasus, I am the purifying fire. And among the mountains with high peaks, I am Mount Sumeru. Among the Rudras, Lord Shankara is Me. Lord Krishna is in the form of Vishnu. Lord Shankara and Lord Vishnu are one and the same form. In this statement, the eleven Rudra gods of the sky are mentioned. The celestial eleven Rudras reside in the constellation of stars. Their names are found in different ways: Aja-Ekapada, Ahirbudhnya, Virupaksha, Twashta-Ayonija or Garbha, Raivata-Bhairava-Kapardi-Veerabhadra, Hara-Nakulisha-Pingala-Sthanu, Bahurupa, Senani-Girisha, Trayambaka-Bhubaneshwar- Vishweshwar-Sureshwar, Savitra-Bhutesha-Kapali, Jayanta-Shambhu-Sandhya, Pinaki-Mrugavyadha-Labdhaka-Sharva. These constellations are identified by knowledgeable scholars. Among the Rudras, God says His form is the auspicious form of Shiva. When the whole universe becomes still, that peaceful, calm form is the form of Shiva. This state is beyond waking, dreaming, and deep sleep – it is the fourth state. When that Supreme form is seen in a limited way through Maya, that soul, that Purusha, is called the form of Shiva – “Shivoham” (I am Shiva). In the scriptures, the Supreme Brahman and the Supreme Soul are accepted as one. That unborn, eternal Person appears in different forms – As Brahma, with Rajo-guna (quality of activity), He creates the world. As Vishnu, with Sattva-guna (quality of purity), He sustains the world. As Rudra, with Tamo-guna (quality of destruction), He destroys the world. That one Mahadeva exists in three forms, but in the end, He alone remains. Lord Krishna, the imperishable Purusha, in the Gita says both Vishnu and Shankara are His divine manifestations. This shows that both are equal and of the same essence. Therefore, “Hari” (Vishnu) and “Hara” (Shiva) have the same meaning. Without creation, there is no sustenance or destruction. Without destruction, there is no creation. Lord Shiva is the Supreme God, who controls Prakriti (nature) or Maya. Controlling Sattva-guna is easier than controlling the impure Tamo-guna. This shows the greatness of the Shiva form. Just as there are human beings, Yakshas and Rakshasas are another type of beings, lower than the gods. They are usually cruel in nature, and they become powerful through their life-force and magical powers. Kubera, grandson of Sage Pulastya, and son of Sage Vishrava and Devavarnini (daughter of Sage Bharadwaja), is the lord of Yakshas and Rakshasas.

By his severe austerities, Brahma was pleased and appointed Kubera as the guardian of the world's wealth, and one of the four Lokapalas (world protectors) along with Indra, Varuna, and Yama. From Brahma, Kubera received the Pushpaka Vimana (aerial chariot). From then, he became the treasurer of wealth. From his stepmother Kaikesi, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and others were born. Among the eight Vasus – Apa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha, and Prabhasa – God says His form is the purifying Fire. Fire is considered the mouth of the gods. When offerings are given into the mouth of Fire, they reach the gods. Mount Sumeru is considered the central point of stars and islands. Covered with gold and precious gems, Mount Sumeru with its shining peaks is declared by God as His divine manifestation.

**purodhasām ca mukhyaṁ mām viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim
senānīnām ahaṁ skandaḥ sarasām asmi sāgaraḥ(10-24)**

Comm: Brihaspati, the radiant son of Sage Angira, is considered the greatest in intellect and knowledge. During the Vamana incarnation, he received complete teachings from the Lord, including the Vedas, six scriptures, Smṛiti, and Agama. He is the chief priest of the gods and the guru of Indra, the king of gods. From time to time, his advice to Indra benefits humanity through contemplation. Among priests, Brihaspati is regarded as the best, acting as a well-wisher for his patrons. He is also considered the greatest guru for the welfare of his disciples. The Lord says, “O Partha, among priests, know me as the chief, Brihaspati.” Among commanders, I am Kartikeya, the god of war. Among bodies of water, I am the ocean. Kartikeya, the six-faced son of Lord Shiva, is the chief commander of the gods. Some say Kartikeya was born from the fire of Swaha, the daughter of Daksha. Due to his excellence as a commander in battle, the Lord calls him his own essence. Similarly, the ocean is always steady and profound, so the Lord calls it his divine manifestation.

**mahr̥ṣīṇām bhr̥gu ahaṁ girām asmy ekam akṣaram
yajñānām japa-yajño 'smi sthāvarāṇām himālayaḥ(10-25)**

Comm: At the time of creation, many mind-born sons were produced from Brahma for the management of the universe. Among them, Bhrigu was a great devotee of God, a wise sage, a composer of mantras, and a very powerful saint. He married Khyati, the daughter of Daksha. He had two sons named Dhata and Vidhata, and a daughter named Shri, who became the wife of Narayana. Once, Sage Bhrigu tested Lord Vishnu's supreme quality of forgiveness by striking His chest with his foot. Even today, Lord Vishnu bears that footprint on His chest, known as “Bhrigu-lata.” Therefore, God says that Bhrigu is His own form. Among all sound vibrations, the divine single syllable “Om,” which represents Brahman, stands for God Himself. When the word “Om” is pronounced at the beginning of a mantra, the mantra becomes pure. Through chanting the “Om” mantra, one realizes the Self. The one-syllable mantra “Om” has a very deep meaning. Its detailed explanation is given in the 8th chapter of the Gita, in the verse “Om-ityekaksharam Brahma” (8/13).

When the soul is absorbed in the Supreme Soul through chanting, meditation, and action, that is called Yajna (sacrifice). Among all Yajnas, the simplest, easiest, and most fruitful is Japa-Yajna (sacrifice of chanting). For this Japa-Yajna, there is no need for materials, external help, or rituals. There is also no fault or violence involved in it. Constant remembrance of God’s name, or the mantra given by a true Guru, even while engaged in physical activities, but mentally chanting – this is Japa-Yajna. In the chanting of God’s name or chosen mantra, God Himself manifests in a subtle form. In the path of devotion, Japa-Yajna is considered greater than other sacrificial offerings. Therefore, God declares Japa-Yajna as His own form. The great mantra – “Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare” – is the very form of Lord Krishna. Through uninterrupted chanting of this great mantra, divine energy spreads into the body, producing great illumination and generating divine qualities in the heart. Thus, Japa-Yajna has special importance for gaining strength, attaining spiritual powers, and developing life. Among immovable objects, the mighty Himalayas, the largest mountain range on earth, represent the vastness of God. The Himalayas are regarded as “Devabhūmī” – the land of the gods. Holding sacred rivers like Ganga and Yamuna in its embrace, this holy land has always been helpful for granting liberation to people in every age. Even now, the sages Nara and Narayana are engaged in penance in the Himalayas for the welfare of the world. The Himalayas are also the in-law’s home of Lord Shiva, and Mount Kailash, situated there, is His dwelling place. Therefore, God declares the Himalayas as His divine manifestation.

**aśvatthaḥ sarva-vṛkṣāṇāṃ devarṣīṇāṃ ca nāradaḥ
gandharvāṇāṃ citrarathaḥ siddhāṇāṃ kapilo munih(10-26)**

Comm: Among trees, I am the sacred Ashwattha tree. Among divine sages, I am Narada. Among the Gandharvas (celestial musicians) of the divine realm, I am Chitraratha. Among perfected beings, I am the sage Kapila. The Ashwattha tree, vast in size, lives long and is worshipped as a divine form in the morning. Ayurveda states that the Ashwattha tree has many healing powers. The Peepal tree is considered the embodiment of Lord Vishnu. Those who have attained supreme knowledge and connect with the world by their own will are called divine sages. They are mantra-seers and can travel all worlds through their spiritual powers. Narada, a great devotee of the Lord, a wise sage, and a skilled mantra-seer, is revered in the three worlds as both a divine being and a great sage. In devotion, Narada is considered a reflection of Lord Krishna. Narada is regarded as the mind of the Lord. In a previous birth, Narada was the son of a maidservant. At the end of a cosmic cycle, he merged into the Lord’s essence and, in another cycle, reappeared as a divine form, a mental son of Brahma. Since then, Narada has upheld the vow of unbroken celibacy, playing the veena and singing the Lord’s glories while traveling all worlds. He inspired great devotees like Prahlada, Dhruva, and Ambarisha to follow the path of devotion. Two great texts, Srimad Bhagavatam and Valmiki’s Ramayana, were received

by the world through his grace. Narada also gave teachings to the great sage Shukadeva. Gandharvas are a special divine race who perform music, dance, and drama in the divine realm. Sage Kashyapa's two wives, Muni and Pradha, gave birth to many Apsaras and Gandharvas. From Muni, sixteen divine Gandharvas (Mauneya) were born, and from Pradha, fourteen Gandharvas (Pradheya) were born. Among them, Chitraratha is the most beautiful, charming, and highly skilled in divine music. As the leader of the Gandharvas, the Lord calls Chitraratha his own essence. At Chitraratha's invitation, Arjuna visited heaven in his physical form and learned music from him, which helped during his time in disguise. Sage Kapila is one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Lord Kapila, fully endowed with virtues like righteousness, knowledge, and detachment, is the embodiment of the Supreme Lord. Born to Devahuti, the wife of the great yogi Kardama Muni, Kapila taught his mother the Sankhya philosophy. As a born-perfected being, Kapila is called the original Siddha. In the "True Gita," Swami Adgadanandji offers a different interpretation of this verse. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the world is called "Ashwa." The world is a tree with the Supreme Soul as its root above and nature as its branches below, with no certainty of its duration until time ends; this is called the Peepal tree. "Nadasya Randhrah Sa Narada" means: I am Narada, whose sound awakens subtle divine qualities and spreads the knowledge of Nara-Narayana. Regarding Chitraratha among Gandharvas, it means: when the act of singing and contemplation begins to reflect the true essence, that special state is "I." Regarding Kapila among Siddhas, it means: the body that accompanies a being from birth is Kapila, and the state where the mind dissolves, leading to divine realization, is "I."

**uccaiḥśravasam aśvānām viddhi mām amṛtodbhavam
airāvataṁ gajendrāṇām narāṇām ca narādhipam(10-27).**

Comm: Among horses, know me as Uchchaishrava, the king of horses born with nectar from the churning of the ocean. Among great elephants, I am Airavata, the mount of Indra. Among humans, I am the king. During the churning of the milky ocean by gods and demons, fourteen gems emerged along with nectar. Among them, Uchchaishrava, the horse, and Airavata, the white elephant, were prominent. Due to their special qualities, Uchchaishrava and Airavata, born from nectar, are divine manifestations of the Lord. They were given to the gods as the mounts of Indra, the king of gods. A king is the greatest among humans because he is the protector, guardian, and ruler of his people. As all gods manifest in the king's body, he possesses divine qualities and acts as God's representative in nurturing his people. For this era, Prajapati Brahma appointed Vaivasvata Manu as the lord of humans. Thus, Vaivasvata Manu is currently the ruler of mankind. While the Lord is the sustainer of the entire universe, a king is His representative in his own domain. Righteous and virtuous kings like Maharaja Yudhishtira, Maharaja Parikshit, Janaka, and Lord Ramachandra are celebrated in scriptures and epics. Whether a family head, community leader, or national leader, they should selflessly follow the path of such

benevolent kings for the welfare of their members or citizens. In another interpretation, a horse symbolizes movement. All worldly things are perishable, but the soul is eternal, immortal, and nectar-like. When the mind, inspired by the nectar-like soul, becomes dynamic like a horse, that movement is “I.” An elephant symbolizes strength. When the mind and intellect turn toward God, a strength like Airavata awakens to face worldly challenges, and that strength is “I.” Among humans, the true king is the great soul who lacks nothing and has no unfulfilled desires. One who is always established in the state of the soul is ever content. That person is the true lord of humanity.

**āyudhānām ahaṁ vajraṁ dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk
prajānaś cāsmi kandarpaḥ sarpāṇām asmi vāsukiḥ(10-28)**

Comm: I am the thunderbolt among all weapons. Among cows, I am Kamadhenu. Among the power of reproduction, I am Kamadeva. And among the serpents, I am Vasuki, the king of snakes. The thunderbolt made from the bones of Sage Dadhichi is known as the unfailing weapon of Indra. For the welfare of the world, when the gods prayed to him for the killing of Vritrasura, Sage Dadhichi gave up his body and offered his bones to Indra, the king of gods. Since this thunderbolt contains the power of Dadhichi’s penance, it is extremely powerful. Therefore, God has declared it as His divine manifestation. The Kamadhenu, which appeared during the churning of the ocean, fulfills the desires of all gods and human beings. Hence, it is also God’s manifestation. Kamadhenu was given to Sage Vashishtha so that he could obtain the necessary materials for yajnas and other rituals. In the third chapter, verse ten, God has said that in this world, through the performance of yajnas, the people will prosper and receive Kamadhenu, who provides all essential resources. In the seventh chapter, verse eleven, God had said — “I am the desire which is not against dharma, present in all beings.” Here, that same truth is repeated. Kamadeva’s other name is Kandarpa. The power of desire which arises in men for union with women is meant only for the expansion of creation. When desire is used according to dharma, giving up selfish enjoyment, and only for the purpose of producing children, then such desire is considered God’s divine manifestation. During the churning of the ocean, Mount Meru was used as the churning rod, and the body of Vasuki was used as the rope by both gods and demons. Vasuki is the lord of serpents and a great devotee of God. Therefore, he is also considered as a form of God.

**anantaś cāsmi nāgānām varuṇo yādasām aham
pitṛṇām aryamā cāsmi yamaḥ saṁyamātām aham(10-29)**

Comm: Among aquatic beings, I am Varuna, the water god. Among divine serpents, I am Ananta, the king of serpents. Among ancestors, I am Aryama. Among regulators, I am Yama, the king of death. Sheshanaga is the king of all serpents. With a thousand hoods, Sheshanaga serves as a devoted follower, forming a bed for the Lord in the ocean of milk. Sheshanaga has taken incarnations with the Lord many times and participated in His divine

pastimes. Since Sheshanaga originates from the Lord, he is considered a form of the Lord. Varuna, imagined as half-fish and half-human, is the lord of all aquatic beings and oceans. Among the seven ancestors—Kavyavaha, Anala, Soma, Yama, Aryama, Agnishvatta, and Barhishad—Aryama is the chief and most exalted. Therefore, Aryama is considered a form of the Lord. As the lord of the ancestral realm, Aryama is offered water and sesame seeds during ancestral rituals. Among the guardians of the ten directions, such as Indra, Agni, Varuna, Vayu, and Kubera, Yama, the son of Vivasvan, the teacher of divine knowledge, is prominent. Among all lawmakers, Yama is the greatest, a profound sage, and a supreme devotee of the Lord. Under Yama’s rules, birth, death, and justice are enforced without any deviation. All rules are true, impartial, just, and righteous, maintaining the distinction between sin and virtue in the world. The knowledge of the self given by Yama to Nachiketa is known as the Kathopanishad. In the science of yoga, the five disciplines of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possessiveness are also called Yama. Violating these disciplines leads to suffering and pain in the world. The Srimad Bhagavatam describes Ananta, or Sheshanaga, as follows: thirty thousand yojanas from the Earth’s surface, the divine Vaishnavi energy exists. This divine energy, like a coiled serpent, surrounds all planets, stars, and satellites in space, holding them together with great gravitational force. This is Ananta, in which the Earth floats weightlessly like a mustard seed.

**prahlādaś cāsmi daityānām kālāḥ kalayatām aham
mṛgāṇām ca mṛgendro ’haṁ vainateyaś ca pakṣiṇām(10-30)**

Comm : The sons and descendants of Diti are known as Daityas. Pride, arrogance, ego, and ignorance are the natural qualities of the Daityas. Prahlada was born as the son of Hiranyakashipu in the Daitya family. Yet, from his childhood, he became a supreme devotee of God by chanting the name of Shri Hari with single-minded love. Because of his firm faith and divine qualities, the Lord Himself appeared from a pillar in the form of Narasimha at Prahlada’s prayer. That deep, undivided love of Prahlada itself is the true form of God. For astrologers, the movement of planets and stars is calculated based on Time. In the material world, Time is the destroyer of all things. Even Time, which is always engaged in the constant thought of God, is “Me.” In the Vishnu Purana, it is described that God has four forms. Among them, the aspect of Time used for calculations in different fields is one of His forms. Among animals, the lion is the king. The word “lion” represents strength, brilliance, heroism, and courage. In this temporary and sorrowful world, the yogi symbolizes My divine power in the form of the strong lion. Garuda, the son of Vinata, is the lord of all birds and the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. When Garuda carries Lord Vishnu on his back and flies, the chants of the Sama Veda naturally resound from his wings. The mind itself is like Garuda. When the realization of God begins to arise, the mind becomes the carrier of its chosen deity. The divine power that pervades every atom of the universe is carried by the knowledge-filled mind, which is like Garuda. Thus, the mind becomes the bearer of that divine truth. Lord Shri Krishna says: “The mind that carries the chosen deity is Me.”

**pavanaḥ pavatām asmi rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtām aham
jhaṣāṇām makaraś cāsmi srotasām asmi jāhnavī(10-31)**

Comm: Among purifying elements, I am the wind. Among weapon-bearers, I am the virtuous Lord Ramachandra or the empowered being Parashurama. Among aquatic creatures, I am the crocodile. Among rivers, I am the holy Ganga. Among purifying elements like earth, water, fire, and wind, the wind is the greatest. The wind is all-pervading and purifies earth, water, and fire. Kshatriyas and strong men carry weapons or possess them to uphold their duty. Lord Ramachandra, of the solar dynasty (Surya Banshi), always carried weapons but used his bow and arrow only for the welfare of the world. Lord Rama’s infallible arrows were never used for selfish purposes, only for the world’s benefit. Therefore, individuals or nations possessing powerful weapons or knowledge should follow Lord Ramachandra’s ideals and virtues. For a Kshatriya, weapons are like ornaments; for a yogi, spiritual practice and divine knowledge are like a bow and arrow, which, when used properly, open the door to liberation. “Yogis delight in Him, who is Rama.” When God, as the divine guide, gives instructions, the yogi applies them. This awakening is called “Rama,” and that awakening is “I.” In the Yathartha Gita, Swami Adgadanandji Maharaj says that Lord Janardana, endowed with intense knowledge and divine qualities, is present in great beings as an empowered incarnation. Parashurama, son of Jamadagni, is an empowered incarnation filled with divine energy and is thus a manifestation of God. Among aquatic creatures, the powerful crocodile is “I.” The crocodile is the vehicle of Varuna, the water god, and is thus considered a manifestation of God. The Ganga is the sacred water from the Lord’s feet. Seeing or touching the Ganga frees a soul from sins. Once, Lord Vishnu Himself entered Brahma’s water pot in liquid form and took the form of the Ganga. From Brahma’s pot, after washing the Lord’s feet, the Ganga became holy and flowed as the celestial Ganga (Mandakini) in the divine realm. Through Bhagiratha’s penance, the Ganga, embodying the Lord’s pure glory, descended from the heavens, first resting on Shiva’s head, then flowing on Earth as the purifying Ganga. On Earth, when the Ganga flooded Sage Jahnu’s sacrificial site, he angrily absorbed her into his body, drying her up. Later, at Bhagiratha’s request, the Ganga emerged from Jahnu’s ear and was named Jahnavi.

**sargāṇām ādir antaś ca madhyaṁ caivāham arjuna
adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām vādaḥ pravadatām aham (10-32)**

Comm: O Arjuna! I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all created things like the sky and others. That means, I am the cause of creation, preservation, and destruction. Among all sciences, I am the science of the Self. And in logic, I am the final conclusion or truth in debates. In the twentieth verse of this chapter, God had said: “I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings.” There, the word “bhuta” referred to living beings. But here, by using the word “sarga,” God has said that He is the beginning, the end, and the existence of the entire creation, both living and non-living. Its meaning

is: when nothing existed, still I was present as the original cause. And when nothing will remain in the future, still I will remain as the final essence of everything. When a new object is made, the form and nature of the old object does not remain— just as when a pot is made, the lump of clay no longer remains as it was. In the same way, when the world is created from Brahman, then arises the doubt— what happens to the existence of Brahman afterwards? To remove this doubt, God has said: “I am also the middle.” That means, during the existence of the world, I remain unchanged as Brahman and enter into all objects of the world. My presence alone pervades all things. The knowledge of the Self, the Supreme Soul, and the creation of the universe— the pure, formless, supreme truth— is obtained through the science called Adhyatma Vidya (spiritual knowledge). Among all sciences, the science of the Self is the highest. Worldly knowledge helps man to earn his living and also shows the path of dharma. But the knowledge by which a man attains the immortal truth, becomes free from bondage, and gains complete knowledge of the Supreme Brahman, and realizes the imperishable truth— that spiritual knowledge is greater than all other knowledge. It is God’s divine manifestation. The Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, the Shrimad Bhagavatam, and the Bhagavad Gita are the basis of this knowledge. They free the soul from the control of illusion and establish it in its true nature. In the science of logic, there are different types of arguments between one who states a thesis and one who opposes it. When arguments are made only to decorate one’s own side and defeat the opponent, it is called Jalpa. When arguments are made only to refute the opponent’s reasoning and prove him wrong, it is called Vitanda. But when the aim of argument is to establish the final truth or principle, it is called Vada. Since Jalpa and Vitanda are born of attachment and hatred, they should always be avoided. But the discussion of truth, such as in the Upanishads or in the dialogue between teacher and disciple, is Vada. This Vada is the true form of Lord Shri Krishna.

**akṣarāṇām akāro ’smi dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca
aham evākṣayaḥ kālo dhātāhaṁ viśvato-mukhaḥ (10-33)**

Comm: The letter ‘A’ (ॐ) itself is the basis of all speech, because it appears as touch and heat, shining forth in many forms and varieties. Among compound types like Dvandva, Bahuvrihi, Tatpurusha, and Avyayibhava, the Dvandva compound is supreme, because in it both words are equally important (such as Rama–Lakshmana, Radha–Krishna). In another sense, at higher levels of spiritual practice, the struggle between the movements of the mind and unity with the chosen deity is called Dvandva Samasa, which is God’s manifestation. In this verse, the word Kala (Time) refers to every moment or instant. It represents the eternal, infinite, indestructible, and ever-existing form of the Supreme Brahman. I Myself am that eternal, undecaying Time – every moment. The measure of creation and dissolution is done with the help of the Sun, who indicates time in terms of months, years, and so on. When at the great dissolution the Sun itself disappears, the period when Prakriti (Nature) remains in equilibrium is called Prakriti-rupa Kala (time in the form of Prakriti). The very subtle, space- and time-less form of the Supreme Self is the

Akshaya Kala (imperishable Time). By His existence and energy, the transformations of Nature and the world have been going on endlessly since eternity. After the dissolution of everything else, the Supreme Self alone remains as imperishable Time. He who supports and nourishes all beings, gives the results of actions, and pervades the universe in His cosmic form – that is Myself. The statement “Dhataham Sarvatomukhah” is explained by some commentators to mean that Lord Brahma, the creator of all beings, also called Hiranyagarbha, is a manifestation of God’s power.

**mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham udbhavaś ca bhaviṣyatām
kīrtiḥ śrīr vāk ca nārīṇāṁ smṛtiḥ medhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā(10-34)**

Comm: The all-devouring death is Myself. During life, death takes away all memories of a being, especially of a human, along with the gross body. Kings and subjects, rich and poor, happy and unhappy, weak and strong—all become equal in the grasp of death. In the Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is said: “Death is extreme forgetfulness.” Among the future welfare of living beings, I am the origin or the rise. Among the six changes (birth, growth, existence, change, decline, and destruction), birth is the beginning. Birth frees a living being from the suffering of the womb and again leads him towards prosperity and the path of self-welfare. In this ocean of birth-death and creation-destruction, one is the cause of the other, like waves. Among women, qualities like fame, beauty (Śrī), speech, memory, intelligence, patience, and forgiveness are divine virtues and glories of God. Great women like Sītā, Umā, Rukmiṇī, and Draupadī are considered forms of God, possessing these virtues, and are highly regarded in the Purāṇas and scriptures. The prestige or recognition that comes from good qualities is called “fame.” The possessor of beauty, charm, and wealth is “Śrī.” That speech which brings honor and respect as a wise or learned person is “speech.” Sharp remembering power is “memory.” The power to hold firmly and decisive understanding is “intelligence.” Remaining steady without being shaken in principles and beliefs is “patience.” Enduring others’ faults and forgiving them with tolerance is “forgiveness.” Out of the twenty-four daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa, Fame, Intelligence, and Patience were married to Dharma, and thus became known as his wives. Memory and Forgiveness were married to the sages Aṅgirā and Pulaha, respectively. Śrī, the daughter of Bhr̥gu and Khyāti, was accepted by Lord Viṣṇu as His wife. Speech, as the daughter of Brahmā, resides in the speech of God. These seven women are the presiding goddesses of their respective qualities. Because of their greatness, God declares them as His own forms. Here, a question may arise—are these virtues meant only for women and not necessary for men? In the second chapter, God tells Arjuna that if you do not fight this righteous war, then you will lose your own fame along with your duty. In the last verse of the Gītā, it is said: “Where there is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of yoga, and Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, there exist fortune, victory, glory, and steadfast morality.” The solution is this: actually, the tendencies of the human mind are “woman.” The body is only like clothing. Female, male, or neuter are only forms of the body, not the true self. Inside the body, the tendencies

of the mind flow naturally towards Prakṛti (nature). In these tendencies, divine qualities like memory, intelligence, patience, and forgiveness spread from God Himself. Through these qualities, the path of prosperity and supreme attainment opens up for human beings. To practice these qualities is useful for both men and women. By not claiming these qualities as one's own but accepting them as coming from God, pride does not arise.

**br̥hat-sāma tathā sām̐nām gāyatrī chandasām aham
māsānām mār̥ga-śīr̥ṣo 'ham ṛtūnām kusumākaraḥ (10-35)**

Comm: The Lord has said that among the Samaveda suitable for singing, I am the Brihat-Sama. In the Upanishads, especially the Chandogya Upanishad, there are various types of songs like the five-part and seven-part hymns. These hymns please deities like Vishnu and Shiva when sung. Among them, Brihat-Sama is a sweet, musical hymn that praises the Supreme Lord in the form of Indra. It is sung as a Prishtha Stotra at midnight during the Atiratra ritual. The Lord has called Brihat-Sama His own form because it leads to liberation. Among metrical verses, the Gayatri Mantra is the most important. The Gayatri Mantra is a devotional prayer in poetic form. After being swayed from his devotion three times, Sage Vishwamitra prayed with this mantra, surrendering to the divine. The mantra says, “Om, we meditate on the adorable glory of the divine that pervades the three worlds—earth, heaven, and beyond.” It means, “O Lord, who exists as the essence in the three worlds, grant us wisdom and inspire us to achieve our goals.” The Vedas mention different Gayatri Mantras for praying to various deities like Devi Gayatri, Rudra Gayatri, Brahma Gayatri, and Paramahansa Gayatri. The Gayatri Mantra is considered the mother of all Vedas. For atonement, no Vedic mantra is more significant than the Gayatri. The Gayatri Mantra is regarded as the sound incarnation of Brahma. By perfecting the Gayatri Mantra, a seeker can enter the divine level of the spiritual path. Among the twelve months, Margashirsha is considered the best. During Margashirsha, crops are harvested, and homes are filled with food for the year. In Margashirsha, special worship of Goddess Lakshmi is performed on Thursdays. During the Mahabharata era, Margashirsha was considered the first month of the year. Lord Krishna called Margashirsha His glory because the Mahabharata war, which began in this month, freed the earth from the burden of sin by destroying unrighteousness and establishing righteousness. Among seasons, spring, known as the king of seasons, is the most celebrated. Spring is neither too cold nor too hot, making its climate pleasant for the body. During this time, trees and plants bloom, bearing flowers and fruits. Lord Krishna called spring His glory because it brings new life to both living and non-living things.

**dyūtām chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham
jayo 'smi vyavasāyo 'smi sattvaṁ sattvavatām aham(10-36)**

Comm: False information, false hope, and false promises are many kinds of deceitful acts. Among them, gambling is one such act of deceit. In gambling, even when a person

loses everything and becomes completely ruined, still the hope of gaining something is shown to him. Among cheating and fraud, gambling is the foremost. The meaning of God calling it His glory is that the present war itself has gambling as its seed cause. The eldest Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira fell into the deceit of the dice game played by King Śakuni of Gandhāra. Because of that, he lost his kingdom, brothers, and wife, and finally had to suffer the misery of exile in the forest. In the philosophical sense, faults and virtues, good and bad, truth and untruth—all arise from the Supreme Soul. Through actions influenced by the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—different qualities, faults, or weaknesses arise in beings and objects. These results bring either happiness or sorrow and suffering. But within all of them, God’s presence, power, and purpose are hidden. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, during His divine play, also used many kinds of tricks and deceptions. But behind them was always the hidden aim of the welfare of the world. In a way useful for a seeker, the deluding power of nature is like gambling. It deceives wisdom and steals it away. Like Jaḍa Bharata, the seeker should act blind, deaf, and dumb—seeing everything, hearing everything, knowing everything, but secretly worshipping God. Only then can he conquer the deceit of Māyā, the illusion of nature. The divine wealth of great souls is their brilliance (tejas). The brilliance or influence of radiant persons is a glory of God. Among the victorious, He is the victory. Among the resolute, the firm determination and dedicated effort of hardworking people come only from God’s inspiration. The strength or sattvic quality present in strong or virtuous persons must be accepted as God’s glory.

**vṛṣṇīnām vāsudevo ’smi pāṇḍavānām dhanañjayaḥ
munīnām apy ahaṁ vyāsaḥ kavīnām uśanā kaviḥ(10-37)**

Comm: In the Vrishni dynasty, I am Vasudeva, meaning the God who resides everywhere. Lord Shri Krishna does not call Himself an incarnation here but refers to Himself as Vasudeva of the Vrishni dynasty. This means He is unborn, indestructible, the supreme controller of all beings, all-powerful, the complete Absolute Truth, and the Supreme Person, manifesting in this mortal world as the son of Vasudeva for divine play. I am Shri Krishna, the best of the Yadava clan, Arjuna the middle Pandava, Vyasa the author of all Vedic scriptures, and Shukracharya the teacher of the demons. Among all these, I am manifested as divine glory. As the Nara-Narayana incarnation, Arjuna, in the form of Nara, is Lord Shri Krishna’s most beloved friend and devoted follower. According to the Vishnu Purana, twenty-eight Vyasas have taken birth one after another under the name Adi Vyasa. Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa, born from the great sage Parashara and mother Satyawati, is renowned as a partial incarnation of the Lord. He was born with a dark complexion in Jambudvipa, and thus, as a great ascetic, he is called Krishna Dwaipayana. Right after birth, he went to the forest to perform penance. Vyasa’s heart and words are the source of knowledge and support for the entire world. He is a knower of divine truth, a seer of past, present, and future, and an unparalleled great poet. The Brahma Sutras, the extraordinary Mahabharata, and other texts were composed by Lord Vyasa. He properly

divided the Vedas, composed the eighteen Puranas, and many sub-Puranas. The history of the sacred land of India bears witness to this. Today, the whole world seeks its path of duty through Vyasa’s gift of knowledge. A person who thinks deeply, is wise, and has foresight is called a poet. Among the seven sons of Maharishi Bhrigu, including Chyavana, Shukracharya, the teacher of the demons, is skilled in yoga and highly thoughtful. By worshipping Lord Shankar, he attained the Sanjivani knowledge and a strong, immortal body like a thunderbolt. His Shukra Niti is very famous. Due to possessing many such qualities, the Lord calls him His divine glory.

**daṇḍo damayatām asmi nītiḥ asmi jigīṣatām
maunaṁ caivāsmi guhyānāṁ jñānaṁ jñānavatām aham(10-38)**

Comm: It is the duty of the head of the state and administrators to protect the citizens of society within their own dignity. For this purpose, scriptures mention four methods—Sāma, Dāma, Daṇḍa, and Bheda—to control enemies, the unrighteous, and troublemakers. ‘Sāma’ means persuasion or diplomacy through wisdom. ‘Dāma’ means control through use of force. ‘Bheda’ means dividing or creating separation. ‘Daṇḍa’ means punishing wrongdoers by showing the fear of physical, mental, or financial suffering. Among these, punishment (Daṇḍa-nīti) is the most effective. Because by considering the fear of punishment and loss, people can be restrained from injustice, violence, and other wrong acts. God also says that due to this law of punishment, the sun, moon, planets, stars, ocean, gods, Yakṣas, Asuras, and all living beings remain within their proper limits. For one who desires victory, practicing righteousness, justice, and morality is My form and the sure path to success. Any person, king, or head of state who abandons ethics and supports injustice, unrighteousness, or corruption is certain to face downfall. Among secrets, thoughtful silence is “Me.” That means, if something is to be kept confidential, then restraint in speech is most important. Therefore, God says silence is the best in secret matters. In the spiritual path also, silence is very useful in hidden practices like hearing (śravaṇa), reflection (manana), and meditation (nididhyāsana). Because through silence, the mind becomes peaceful and the heart enters a still state. That is why keeping spiritual practices like chanting mantras secret without showing them outwardly leads to success. The true knowledge (tattva-jñāna) of a great soul who has realized the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Self, is also “Me.” Therefore, God has already said in Chapter 7 that among the distressed, the curious, the wealth-seekers, and the wise, the wise one—who is the loving devotee—is My very form. Because such a devotee is united with Me and remains firmly established in Me.

**yat ca api sarva-bhūtānāṁ bījaṁ tad aham arjuna
na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtaṁ carācaram(10-39)**

Comm: O Arjuna, I am the soul of all beings, both living and non-living. There is no creature or object in the universe that can exist without Me. In the mortal world, apart from the 8.4 million species, there are many other beings like gods, gandharvas, yakshas,

ghosts, and spirits. The Supreme Soul is the seed or root cause of all these species. As the great Brahman, the Supreme Soul is the only seed of the infinite species in the entire universe. In this world, He is both the efficient cause and the material cause. As the Creator and the creation, the Supreme Soul alone exists everywhere. In everything visible or audible—objects, people, events, or situations—Lord Narayana is present. To Arjuna’s question, “In what forms can I meditate on You?” the Lord answers, “Whatever you think of, everything is Me.” In practical life, one must firmly believe that the Lord Himself is expressed as the world. Instead of thinking that the qualities or uniqueness of people or objects belong to them, consider them as the divine essence of the Lord. By doing so, feelings like pride, jealousy, attachment, or hatred will not arise in the mind. It is false to think that anything in the universe exists or has qualities apart from the Lord’s essence. The Supreme Soul is present everywhere.

**nānto ’sti mama divyānām vibhūtīnām parantapa
eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto vibhūter vistaro mayā(10-40)**

Comm: O Arjuna, conqueror of enemies! My divine glories have no end. Whatever expansion of My glories I have told you so far is only a small glimpse. For your understanding, these are only examples. God Himself is infinite. His divine glories, qualities, and divine plays are also infinite. That is why it is said, “Hari is infinite, and His stories are also infinite.” Therefore, while concluding the description of His divine glories, God says: Whatever I told you appears vast from the worldly point of view, but in My opinion, it is only in name. The relations, importance, specialties, and shortcomings of the world are what bind a human being in bondage. But if one accepts with divine understanding that all these are forms of God and happen by His will, then he experiences “Vāsudeva is everything.”

**yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṁ mama tejo-’mśa-sambhavam(10-41)**

Comm : O Arjuna, all beings or objects in the world that are wealthy, beautiful, or powerful are born from My divine energy or power. The Lord uses the phrase “yad yad” to indicate His glories across all three times—past, present, and future. The Lord explains in this verse the signs to recognize His glories collectively. Whatever attractive talents or objects exist in the world, My energy is present in them, and they are all a part of Me, reflecting My influence. Know that anything endowed with wealth, splendor, or special power is just a small expression of My energy. All glories arise from a fraction of My divine radiance. This entire universe is a partial manifestation of the Lord. Hearing the sweet song of a courtesan, a saint said, “Oh, what a beautiful voice the Lord has given!” The saint’s attention went toward the Lord, not the courtesan. The saint realized that the charm and elegance in her voice belonged to the Lord. The ability of a teacher to teach excellently is not their own but a part of the Lord’s divine power. Though people’s

attractions vary due to differences in faith and taste, the Supreme Soul’s energy is present in everything. The Supreme Soul is the wondrous storehouse of all powers, arts, and knowledge. Liberation, knowledge, and everything else are gifts from the Supreme Soul. Just as a seed’s essence appears as leaves, flowers, and fruits when a tree grows, the essence of the Supreme Soul is expressed in the full development of a being. Even after giving everything to a being, the Lord does not reveal Himself. This is the Lord’s unique characteristic and nature.

**athavā bahunaitena kiṃ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat(10-42)**

Comm: In this verse, God proves His complete fullness by explaining that apart from Brahman there is no second thing. God says: O Arjuna! What is the need for you to know all My glories in detail? With only one part of Myself, this entire universe is pervaded. The remaining three parts are unmanifest, which represent My formless and attributeless Brahman nature. The meaning is that compared to Brahman, this whole universe is very small. Countless universes, during creation and dissolution, exist only within a small portion of My body. By the statement “ekāṁśena sthito jagat” (the world exists in only one part of Me), it must be understood that Brahman alone is present everywhere. Brahman is never divided at any time. Brahman is complete in the manifest, the unmanifest, in the part, and in the whole. Once this truth is understood, nothing more remains to be known. At the very beginning of this chapter of Vibhūti Yoga, Lord Himself had said: Even the gods do not know My real nature. Because I am their original cause. Even the gods have arisen from Me alone. Therefore, out of compassion, addressing Arjuna but for the benefit of all beings, God shows the way to attain Him: “Those who are always united with Me and lovingly devoted to My worship—to such devotees I give the wisdom by which they reach Me.” Understanding the greatness of these divine glories of God, Arjuna became very pleased. He expressed gratitude to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Now, with all his doubts about God’s glories removed, Arjuna developed the desire to see these divine glories directly with his own eyes. In the next chapter, the Eleventh, out of great mercy, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa grants Arjuna the direct vision of these divine glories.

**Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam
Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade ‘Vibhūti Yoga ‘ Naama dashama
Adhyaayah ||10||**

“Om Tat Sat” — In this way, with this holy name of God, the tenth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, called “Vibhūti Yoga” which is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, is completed.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAḤ
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 11 (Viswarupa Darshana Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

**mad-anugrahāya paramaṁ guhyam adhyātma-saṁjñitam
yat tvayoktaṁ vacas tena moho 'yaṁ vigato mama (11-1)**

Comm: Most of this chapter is about the vision of the Universal Form (Vishwarupa Darshana) and the praise of that form. That is why the name of this chapter is “Vishwarupa Darshana Yoga” (The Yoga of Seeing the Universal Form). In the first four verses, Arjuna praises the teachings given by the Lord and prays to see the Universal Form. At the end of the previous chapter, the Lord had said that the entire universe is contained within just one part of Him. Hearing this, Arjuna became happy and developed a desire to see the Universal Form of God within the body of Shri Krishna. Feeling the grace of the Lord, Arjuna became emotional and said: “O Lord! Just to show Your kindness towards me, You explained to me the very secret knowledge about Your divine glories (vibhuti). After hearing that, I feel that my ignorance and confusion have been removed.” After listening to the complete explanation about the divine glories of God, Arjuna no longer thinks of Shri Krishna as just an ordinary human being, a friend, or merely his charioteer. In different places, the Lord has described His qualities, powers, and truths. By doing this, He has encouraged Arjuna to take shelter in Him. He has also clearly said that He alone is the Creator and Destroyer of the whole world. He is beyond all

qualities (nirguna) as well as with qualities (saguna), formless (nirakara) as well as with form (sakara). He is beyond illusion (maya), all-powerful, the support of everything, and the Supreme God. That same Supreme God is now present before Arjuna in the form of Shri Krishna. All these topics are His highest and most secret truths. Arjuna has understood a little of this secret truth. He has realized that his ignorance has been removed. He now accepts Shri Krishna as the cause of all causes. The confusion in Arjuna's mind — that “all my relatives will die in this war, and I will have to kill them myself” — has now disappeared. Arjuna has accepted that whatever is happening is happening only because of the inspiration of that Supreme Self who lives in the heart of every being. As long as a spiritual seeker keeps thinking about his own effort, personal striving, and qualifications, he remains deprived of God's grace. Here, Arjuna speaks with a heart full of gratitude. He says: “Till now, you have explained to me the greatness, power, and extremely secret truths of Yoga, but I am not worthy of them.” “I am not qualified or entitled in any way to attain this divine knowledge.” “Whatever is happening to me is only your grace and divine play.” In reality, even though God's grace is fully present in all actions, human beings are unable to recognize it. Once a person understands God's grace, the realization of divine truth becomes very easy and quick. God does not show favoritism toward anyone. When someone touches God's feet with pure devotion, God holds that person's hand and lovingly embraces him. When someone looks toward Him with an anxious and longing heart, God places that person within His own loving gaze. When someone surrenders helplessly before Him with a bowed head, God pulls that person close and holds him to His chest. If a devotee takes even one step toward God, God comes forward a hundred steps and lifts the devotee up. This is the nature of God's grace.

**bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānām śrutau vistaraśo mayā
tvattaḥ kamala-patrākṣa mähātmyam api cāvyayam (11-2)**

Comm: Arjuna, filled with great joy, addressed Shri Krishna as “Padmalochana” (one with lotus-like eyes). I have heard in detail from you about the origin and destruction of beings, as well as the imperishable glory of your divine attributes, both with form and formless. You are the fundamental cause of the creation and dissolution of all beings in the material world. Your special glory is that you are the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Lord, God Himself. Though you are the source of all divine attributes, you remain distinct from all beings and stand before me in your beautiful two-armed, dark-complexioned form. All beings originate from you, exist in you, and merge back into you; you are everything. Though you are the creator and destroyer of all, you remain a non-doer. Though you are the controller of all, you remain detached. Though you sustain all beings and grant the fruits of their actions, you remain balanced. Though you are all-pervading, you are unchanging and formless. This is your imperishable glory, which I have heard from you, and it has greatly dispelled my doubts. Addressing Shri

Krishna as “Kamalapatraksha” (one with lotus-petal eyes) means that the Lord’s eyes are unattached, flawless, and unaffected, like water that does not cling to a lotus leaf, untouched by the inequalities of the world.

**evam etad yathāttha tvam ātmānam parameśvara
draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpam aiśvaram puruṣottama (11-3)**

Comm: O Supreme Lord! Whatever You have said about Your divine glories —“The whole universe is situated in one part of My body. The entire world is pervaded only by Me. I am not in the world, nor is the world in Me. Everything, in the form of truth and untruth, is Myself” —all these statements are true and exactly correct. I have not the slightest doubt about this. But, O Purushottama! I have a deep desire in my heart to see directly that divine form of Yours, which is full of knowledge, power, strength, energy, and brilliance. By addressing Krishna as “Supreme Lord,” Arjuna shows that he has realized something. He feels that the one in whose part the whole universe exists is none other than Shri Krishna. Therefore, Krishna alone is capable of showing him that Universal Form. And for Krishna, this is very easy. Although Arjuna is already seeing Shri Krishna standing in front of him, he still wishes to see, with his own eyes, how the Lord enters the visible world. He also wants to see how, while remaining beyond all material manifestations, the Lord performs the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction of the entire universe. Arjuna had no personal intention to test the truth of God’s form. Nor did he have the spiritual practices, meditation, or yogic powers like those who realize Brahman or enter into deep samadhi. He only had a natural curiosity. As a seeker, his heart was filled with eagerness to see, face to face, that most wonderful divine form of Brahman with qualities. He felt that by such a direct vision he would become blessed and fulfilled. Shri Krishna, the Lord who dwells within all hearts, understood Arjuna’s inner wish. He then fulfilled Arjuna’s desire.

**manyase yadi tac chakyaṁ mayā draṣṭum iti prabho
yogeshvara tato me tvam darśayātmānam avyayam (11-4)**

Comm: O Lord, if you consider me worthy and capable of seeing your divine cosmic form, then, O Yogeshwar, kindly show me that imperishable universal form. Arjuna was not certain if he was qualified or capable of beholding the cosmic universal form. Therefore, he addressed Shri Krishna as “Lord” and “Yogeshwar” and made his request. You are the Supreme Being, full of truth, consciousness, and bliss, the Supreme Brahman, and the master of all worlds. As the creator, you can make the impossible possible and are all-powerful. As Yogeshwar, you are the supreme lord of all yoga paths and spiritual practices. If I have any shortcomings, please consider me worthy of your grace and fulfill them through your divine yogic power to grant me the vision of your majestic form. By saying this, Arjuna expressed his humility and did not wish to overstep his limits. Humility and absence of pride help one attain

even the greatest privileges. Arjuna clearly understood that if the Lord willed it, He could, by His grace, manifest His cosmic form. Arjuna expressed his heartfelt desire to directly witness the imperishable, all-opulent cosmic form, from which infinite universes arise, exist, and merge. He sought Shri Krishna's grace to behold this form in person.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ
nānā-vidhāni divyāni nānā-varṇākṛtīni ca (11-5)**

Comm: O son of Pritha! Now see My divine, that is, supernatural form, which has hundreds and thousands of shapes and colors. By saying this, the Lord clearly ordered Arjuna to see in His vast cosmic form, at one place itself, countless forms of gods, humans, animals, and all other living and non-living beings, in various colors and shapes. By using the words “hundreds and thousands,” the Lord has shown His infinity. The cosmic form that Shri Krishna was about to reveal was not created from this gross material world. That form is supernatural and full of pure consciousness, which cannot be seen with physical eyes. Because it was created by the will of the Lord through His Maya power, it is extraordinary and divine. To see this form, one requires the Lord's boundless grace and special power given directly by Him. From another point of view, this worldly universe, which we are able to see with our physical eyes, is also only a small part of the Lord's vast universal form. According to Shri Krishna, in this cosmic form there are countless varieties of gods, humans, gandharvas, beings, and elements, all with different colors and shapes, visible to the eye. But because the ordinary eye is covered with the veil of Maya, the divinity of the visible world is not realized. However, in reality, for liberated great souls, this world is not separate from the vast universal form of the Lord.

**paśyādityān vasūn rudrān aśvīnau marutas tathā
bahūny adrṣṭa-pūrvāṇi paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata(11-6)**

Comm: O Arjuna, descendant of Bharata! Look at my vast body. See the twelve sons of Aditi called Adityas, the eight Vasus, the eleven forms of Rudra, the two divine physicians Ashwini Kumaras, and the forty-nine Maruts. In the chapter on Vibhuti Yoga, the Adityas, Rudras, Vasus, and Maruts are described. According to Vishnu Purana, the Ashwini Kumaras are two brother gods who serve as physicians to the gods. They are believed to be born from Surya's wife, Sanjna. This means the gods, Yakshas, Rakshasas, and the entire moving and non-moving universe are part of Sri Krishna's vast divine body. No one has ever seen these forms before. So, the Lord is telling Arjuna to behold many such wondrous forms in Him.

**ihaiika-sthañ jagat kṛtsnañ paśyādyā sa-carācaram
mama dehe guḍākeśa yac cānyad draṣṭum icchasi (11-7)**

Comm : O conqueror of sleep, Arjuna! See within one part of My body the entire universe, including all moving and non-moving beings. The meaning of “see in one part” is that wherever you look, you will find endless universes there. Apart from this, whatever else you wish to see, you may also see. Any scene created by extra yogic power, influence, or anything beyond the whole world – whether it is the sight of your own victory or defeat, or that of the enemy, or some events of the past, present, or future – Arjuna will be able to see all of these in that vast form, as Shri Krishna commanded. By asking Arjuna to see everything according to his own wish, the purpose was that Arjuna may remove all doubts about who will win the battle, who will die, and so on, and accept that all these events are already arranged by destiny. Neither Arjuna nor anyone else has the power to change the order fixed by destiny. In this way, although Shri Krishna kept saying, “See this, see that,” Arjuna till then was not actually able to see anything with his physical eyes. Just as the Lord mercifully became the charioteer and placed the chariot between the two armies to reveal the Gita to deluded Arjuna, in the same way, out of His grace, He Himself revealed the cosmic form to Arjuna and thereby proved the truth of His complete divine incarnation.

**na tu māñ śakyase draṣṭum anenaiva sva-cakṣuṣā
divyañ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogam aiśvaram(11-8)**

Comm: Arjuna, you cannot see my universal form with your physical eyes. I am giving you divine vision, a supernatural power. With this vision, you can directly see my universal form, revealed through my yogic power. This clearly shows that no one can see the Lord’s universal form with their own mental strength. Only by the Lord’s grace and will can one gain divine vision to see His vast yogic form. The Gita’s teachings mention three types of vision. Physical eyes, which are natural and inborn, allow us to see material things. Through the guidance of wise, devoted sages, the vision of knowledge or discernment helps realize the spiritual form of Brahman and the soul in the heart. To directly witness the Lord’s divine yogic form during His earthly pastimes, divine vision is needed. This divine vision is granted only by the Lord’s grace. Alternatively, someone like Vyasadeva, a nearly omniscient sage, can grant divine vision through yogic power for the world’s welfare. During Krishna’s childhood pastimes, Mother Yashoda saw His universal form in His mouth when she checked if He ate dirt, based on His friends’ words. The question arises: Krishna didn’t give Yashoda divine vision then, so how could she see it? The answer is that Krishna is the source of all divine power and sweetness. In His sweet pastimes, His divine power manifests naturally at the right moment, even if not intended. Though Yashoda never wished to see Krishna beyond His child form, His devotee’s love overwhelmed Him. For a moment, Krishna forgot His human pastimes and appeared in His universal form. Yashoda’s pure motherly love instantly transformed into divine yogic power, enabling her to see the universal form. However, seeing

this wondrous form, Yashoda became frightened. She feared some evil sorceress had cast a bad spell on Krishna and took steps to counteract it. In His sweet pastimes, Krishna shows some of His supernatural forms and powers to parents, friends, relatives, and even enemies when needed. Krishna is not just claiming to be the Supreme Lord through His teachings. In reality, He is the Supreme Being, the Lord of the universe. Though Arjuna wished to see the Lord's universal form, Krishna also displayed it through Arjuna to confirm the truth of His absolute divine nature. This was to clear doubts for great yogis, sages, devotees, and even the wicked, arrogant, and harmful beings.

Sanjaya Uvācha

**evam uktvā tato rājan mahā-yogeśvaro hariḥ
darśayām āsa pārthāya paramaṁ rūpam aiśvaram(11-9)**

Comm: Sanjaya said to King Dhritarashtra: O King! After saying this, the great Lord of Yoga, Hari Shri Krishna, then began to show Arjuna His vast, glorious, divine form. By using the words “Maha-Yogeshwara” and “Hari,” Sanjaya wanted to make it clear to Dhritarashtra that Shri Krishna is not an ordinary human being. He is the creator of all yoga, the remover of ignorance, sins, and sufferings, and the Supreme Lord Himself. One who is a yogi Himself, and also has the power to give yoga to others, one who is the master of yoga, is called “Yogeshwara.” Union of the individual soul (jiva) with the Supreme (Brahman) is called yoga. Because He is a great master and fully knows yoga, and also because He is the Lord of great sages like Shukadeva, Vamadeva, Yajnavalkya, Janaka, and others, God is called Maha-Yogeshwara. He who takes away everything and establishes one in Truth is “Hari.” If only sorrow is removed and happiness is left behind, then that happiness later appears again as sorrow. Therefore, the one who destroys all sins of the devotee, takes away everything, and gives realization of His true Self – that is Hari. The word “Hari” can also mean – one who, by His wonderful and charming form, steals the hearts of everyone. In these two words, the divinity and supremacy of Shri Krishna are revealed. By addressing Him as Maha-Yogeshwara and Hari, Sanjaya indirectly warned Dhritarashtra that Krishna, who possesses inconceivable power and strength, who is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe, is on the side of the Pandavas, so Arjuna's victory in the battle is certain. Because Sanjaya had received divine vision from Vedavyasa, he too, along with Arjuna, could see the universal form of the Lord. Now Sanjaya is describing that universal form before Dhritarashtra.

**aneka-vaktra-nayanam aneka-dbhuta-darśanam
aneka-divyābharaṇaṁ divyānekodyatāyudham (11-10)**

**divya-malyambara-dharam divya-gandhanulepanam
sarvashcharyamayam devam anantam vishvato-mukham (11-11)**

Comm: The Lord began to show Arjuna His form with many faces and eyes. This form had countless wondrous shapes. It was adorned with many divine ornaments. The Lord held many divine weapons in His hands. His form was anointed with sweet fragrances and full of radiance. It was all-wonderful, infinite, and faced every direction. Here, “many forms” does not mean just a few but countless faces, eyes, and arms. Sanjaya’s description suggests that all parts of the Lord’s body were infinite. These parts spread across the entire universe. The Lord Himself appeared as many garlands, ornaments, and garments. Everything in the Lord’s vast form was divine. His form and its variety had no end. All aspects of this vast form were extremely wondrous. Their identity, actions, and reasons were beyond understanding. The Lord’s neck was adorned with the Kaustubha gem. His chest bore the Srivatsa mark as an ornament. During meditation, the Lord’s ornaments awaken a devotee’s curiosity and calm their restlessness. To destroy the wicked and protect devotees, the Lord holds divine weapons. These weapons include the Kaumodaki mace, Nandaka sword, and Sudarshana chakra. Though the Vedas and Puranas describe the Lord’s universal form, the description in the Bhagavad Gita is especially beautiful and thrilling. This makes it particularly significant for devotees.

**divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsaś tasya mahātmanah (11-12)**

Comm: If in the sky, at one time, a thousand suns were to shine together, then that brilliant radiance could be compared to the light coming out of the Lord’s universal form. In the battlefield, neither Sanjaya nor Dhritarashtra was physically present. The universal form that Sanjaya was seeing through the divine vision given by Vyasa was spread throughout the entire space. To express that immeasurable and indescribable form in a symbolic way, it has been compared with the light of thousands of suns. In reality, the light that is present in the sun is received only from the Supreme Person, the Lord. Therefore, that light of the sun is temporary, material, and limited. But the radiance of the Lord’s vast form is eternal, divine, supernatural, and limitless. The sun, moon, fire, and all the luminous bodies of the world shine only after receiving a part of that Supreme light. The light of the Self is a part of that Supreme light, and it is above all the worldly lights, which even darkness cannot touch.

**tatraika-sthaṁ jagat kṛtsnaṁ pravibhaktam anekadhā
apaśyad deva-devasya śarīre pāṇḍavas tataḥ (11-13)**

Comm: In the last verse of the tenth chapter, the Lord had said that the entire universe is situated in one part of Him. Now Arjuna is directly seeing in the vast body of Shri Krishna – the gods, the ancestors, human beings, and the whole universe, divided in different forms, all existing in one place. Because even Brahma and other gods worship Him, Shri Krishna is called Devadeva (the God of gods). Wherever Arjuna’s eyes fall on the Lord’s body, he sees countless universes there. The universes appear in many forms

– made of clay, of gold, of jewels – and with different shapes and appearances. In the Bhagavata, it is written that Mother Yashoda, when she looked into little Krishna’s mouth, saw the universal form, in which she saw endless universes, the whole earth, inside that the land of Vraja, Nandaraja’s house, and even herself along with Krishna. In the same way, Arjuna, in that vast form, also sees the two-armed Shri Krishna as his charioteer, holding the reins of the horses, while he himself is sitting in the chariot as a warrior. When many things appear united in One, that is the process of true knowledge. As long as diversity is felt, real knowledge is not complete. When there is no difference between the knower and the known, that is pure knowledge. When devotion becomes the foundation, then knowledge turns into direct experience. In this regard, Swami Sivananda Maharaj has said: “Why do you get so confused? The one with form and the formless are not different. The formless is not separate from the one with form. The formless itself appears as the one with form. There is no duality in Him. Both are one and the same.”

**tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hr̥ṣṭa-romā dhanañjayaḥ
praṇamya śirasā devaṁ kṛtāñjaliḥ abhyabhāṣata (11-14)**

Comm: Arjuna saw the entire world existing in one place inside the body of the Supreme Lord Shri Krishna, and in many different forms. He became filled with wonder. The hairs of his whole body stood on end. Arjuna had never seen such a glorious form before, nor had he ever imagined it. Seeing this unbelievable and divine form, Arjuna’s whole body was thrilled with great joy and astonishment. Because a little part of God’s limitless power became imprinted in his mind, Arjuna was overwhelmed with wonderful feelings. After seeing the supreme, radiant, and great form, he was not frightened. Instead, a deep sense of reverence arose in his heart. He bowed down with folded hands, placing his head at the feet of the Lord, and started to offer humble praises. Respected Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj has said in “Ponder These Truths”: “Who is Arjuna? Arjuna is a person – a representative of the entire human society. It is the overflowing love of Lord Krishna towards that Arjuna which has given humanity the extraordinary experience of the eleventh chapter of the Gita.”

Arjuna Uvācha

**paśyāmi devāṁs tava deva dehe
sarvāṁs tathā bhūta-viśeṣa-saṅghān
brahmāṇaṁ īśaṁ kamalāsana-stham
ṛṣīṁś ca sarvān uragāṁś ca divyān (11-15)**

Comm: Arjuna said: O Lord, I see all the gods, many living beings, Brahma seated on a lotus, Shiva, all divine sages, and snakes like Vasuki, Ananta, and Takshaka in your vast form. I can observe all beings, including humans, animals, birds, insects, and others born in the 8.4 million species. Arjuna says he sees Brahma, born from Vishnu’s navel and seated on a lotus, meaning he also sees Vishnu in his form as the

one resting on Shesha, along with Brahma and Lord Shankar. The sages are the seers of Vedic mantras and the first to reveal the light of knowledge and science in the world. Arjuna directly sees these sages like Vashistha. He sees Ananta Naga holding the earth with his thousand hoods and divine snakes like Vasuki in heaven. While in the mortal world, Arjuna can see all realms like the divine world, Brahma's realm, Vaikuntha, Kailasa, and the snake realm in one place.

**aneka-bāhūdara-vaktra-netraṁ
paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato 'nanta-rūpam
nāntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punas tavādiṁ
paśyāmi viśveśvara viśva-rūpa(11-16)**

Comm: Arjuna said: "O Universal Form! I see Your infinite form, with countless arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes, spread in all directions." "O Lord of the universe! I cannot see where this form of Yours, which contains the three worlds, has its end, where its middle is, or from where it begins." He could not see the beginning, the middle, or the end. The meaning is that the form Arjuna was seeing was so vast and so full of variety that it was impossible to imagine or describe its exact shape. The Supreme Self is infinite, eternal, beyond destruction, and beyond time and space. So how could the form that was seen through divine vision be measurable or limited? Just as in the sunlight coming through a window, countless tiny particles of dust are seen flying, in the same way, Arjuna saw innumerable universes revolving within every single pore of the Lord's body.

**kirīṭiṇaṁ gadinaṁ cakriṇaṁ ca
tejo-rāśiṁ sarvato dīptimantam
paśyāmi tvāṁ durnirikṣyaṁ samantād
dīptānalārka-dyutim aprameyam(11-17)**

Comm: Arjuna, after seeing the Universal Form, said: "O Lord of the universe! I see Your shining form everywhere, with crowns on Your heads, maces and discs in Your hands." Your unlimited form is glowing with the brilliance of blazing fire and the radiance of the sun, making it very difficult to see. In this Universal Form, countless heads and arms are seen, all adorned with shining crowns and decorated with various weapons. Your vast form appears to me as a living mass of light, spreading brightness in all directions. The shining radiance coming out of this form is as dazzling as blazing fire and like the brilliance of thousands of suns together. Because of the intense brightness, it is very difficult to look steadily at Your form. Although Arjuna was able to see by the divine eyes granted by the Lord, still he could not fully see or determine the beginning and the end of the vast form of God. This is because God is infinite and immeasurable, beyond the limits of any standard measure. No living being can completely see or fully imagine His qualities, His power, and His true form in a definite and complete way.

**tvam akṣaram paramaṁ veditavyam
tvam asya viśvasya paraṁ nidhānam
tvam avyayaḥ śāśvata-dharma-goptā
sanātanas tvam puruṣo mato me (11-18)**

Comm: Seeing your inconceivable and majestic form, Arjuna confidently says that you are the supreme, imperishable Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul. In other words, the ultimate reality that pervades everything is the imperishable Supreme Essence. You are the formless, attributeless Supreme Essence, known through the Vedas, scriptures, Puranas, realized souls, and liberated beings. You are the refuge and the ultimate foundation of this universe. The entire world, in the form of cause and effect, exists within you. During the great creation, the universe manifests from you, and during the great dissolution, it merges back into you. You are the eternal protector of the imperishable Vedic Sanatan Dharma. As an incarnation, you descend to earth, destroy unrighteousness, and protect this eternal Dharma. You are the creator, sustainer, all-powerful, eternal, and supreme divine being of the entire universe—this is my firm belief, says Arjuna. According to Arjuna, your “Akshar Brahma” is the formless, attributeless form; “Param Nidhanam” is the attributeless form with shape; and “Shashwat Dharma Gopta” is the form with attributes and shape. The combination of these three forms constitutes your complete divine nature.

**anādi-madhyāntaṁ ananta-vīryam
ananta-bāhuṁ śāśi-sūrya-netram
paśyāmi tvāṁ dīpta-hutāśa-vaktraṁ
sva-tejasā viśvam idaṁ tapantam(11-19)**

Comm : O Lord! You have no beginning, no middle, and no end. That means You have neither birth nor destruction. Since You have no origin or end, You are always free from all changes like existence, growth, decay, and transformation. Your power, strength, capacity, and brilliance have no limit. Wherever I look at Your vast form, I see countless arms and innumerable faces. In the main face, the eyes shine like the Sun and the Moon. The meaning of Sun-like and Moon-like eyes is this: in Your face we can see the quality of giving light like the Sun and also the quality of giving coolness like the Moon. All the faces in Your vast form are shining and glowing like blazing fire. Like the sacrificial fire accepts the offerings poured into it, so also Your mouths are consuming everything. By Your fierce brilliance, I feel that the whole world is burning and suffering. This means: because of different people, things, and situations, many troubles are created, and all beings feel pain. The Lord is infinite in every way. The world which suffers by His brilliance is not separate from Him. Therefore, both the one who suffers and the one who causes suffering are nothing but the Lord Himself.

**dyāv ā-pr̥thivyor idam antaraṁ hi
vyāptaṁ tvayaikena diśaś ca sarvāḥ
dr̥ṣṭvā 'dbhutaṁ rūpamugram tvedaṁ
loka-trayaṁ pravyathitaṁ mahātman (11-20)**

Comm: Arjuna, seeing this fierce form of the Lord, says, “O Great Soul! Your vast form fills the earth, the sky, the space between, and all directions.” You alone are present throughout the three worlds. Seeing your extraordinary and terrifying form, all the beings in the three worlds are filled with fear and distress. I see no empty space where your presence is not felt. Your astonishing and fierce form is so terrifying that the beings in heaven, earth, and the intermediate space are extremely frightened and tormented. According to Arjuna, heaven, earth, and the netherworld are not seen separately but appear as one in your form. It is not only Arjuna who, like a person in a dream, sees this universal form of the Lord through divine vision granted by God. On earth, Vyasa, Sanjaya, and Bhishma Pitamaha, and in heaven, deities like Brahma, through the Lord’s grace, have been granted divine vision and are witnessing this universal form. Besides this, many demons, ancestors, gandharvas, yakshas, kinnaras, and humans are also seeing Lord Krishna on the battlefield. They see Him according to their own perspectives—some as a friend, some as an enemy, and others with indifference—and are disturbed by it.

**amī hi tvāṁ sura-saṅghā viśanti
kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo gr̥ṇanti
svastīty uktvā mahar̥ṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ
stuvanti tvāṁ stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ(11-21)**

Comm: Seeing the fierce universal form, Arjuna became frightened and started speaking. O Lord! I see all the gods, whom I had seen earlier in heaven, now entering into Your vast form. To free the earth from the weight of sins, the gods had taken human form and appeared on earth as kings and others. Those humans, after dying in the battlefield, are entering into You so that they may again attain their divine state. Among them, some gods who have longer life spans, seeing Your terrible form, are praying with folded hands in fear, saying, “O Lord, protect me.” The sages like Sanaka and others, the great sages like Bhrigu, and the perfected beings like Kapila—after seeing the dreadful result of war—are uttering words of blessing such as “May the world be well.” To please You, they are also reciting very beautiful hymns of praise.

**rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā
viśve 'śvinau marutaś coṣmapāś ca
gandharva-yakṣāsura-siddha-saṅghā
vīkṣante tvāṁ vismitāś caiva sarve(11-22)**

Comm: The eleven Ādityas, the eight Vasus, the two Ashwini Kumaras, the forty-nine Maruts, and the twelve Sādhyas (Mind, Anumanta, Prāṇa, Nara, Yāna, Chitti, Haya,

Naya, Haṁsa, Nārāyaṇa, Prabhava, and Vibhu – as described in the Vāyu Purāṇa). The ten Vishwadevas (Kratu, Daksha, Shrava, Satya, Kāla, Kāma, Dhuni, Kuruvān, Prabhavān, and Rochamān). The seven Pitṛs (Kāvyaavāh, Anala, Soma, Yama, Aryamā, Agniṣvāta, and Barhiṣat – as described in the Shiva Purāṇa). The Gandharvas like Chitraratha, who were born from Kashyapa’s wives Muni, Pradhā, and Arishta. The Yakshas like Kubera, born from Kashyapa’s wife Khasā. The Siddhas like Kapila. The Daityas like Virochana, who were the enemies of the gods, and also the Asuras and Rākṣasas. All these gods, Pitṛs, Gandharvas, Yakshas, and others are looking at You with wonder. Even after seeing Your form, none of them can understand what it really is.

**rūpaṁ mahat te bahu-vaktra-netraṁ
mahā-bāho bahu-bāhūru-pādam
bahūdaram bahu-daṁṣṭrā-karālaṁ
dr̥ṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitās tathāham(11-23)**

Comm: Arjuna is on Earth and sees the Lord’s vast form. In that form, new and amazing wonders and divine qualities appear every moment. Seeing this universal form, Arjuna feels both great fear and joy. Because of this, Arjuna repeats many words and phrases while speaking. Arjuna says, “O Mighty-Armed One! I see your vast form with many shapes, countless eyes, arms, thighs, feet, stomachs, and terrifying rows of teeth.” Seeing this great form, all the people of the world are extremely frightened. I, too, am shaken and disturbed by seeing this fearsome form. The term “Mighty-Armed” is used by both Lord Krishna and Arjuna to address each other. The meaning of “Mighty-Armed” is a great being whose field of action is beyond nature. Lord Krishna is the ultimate limit of greatness in this field. Arjuna has entered the path of this greatness and has reached its gateway. From this perspective, both Krishna and Arjuna are “Mighty-Armed.”

**nabhaḥ-spr̥śaṁ dīptam aneka-varṇaṁ
vyāttānanaṁ dīpta-viśāla-netram
dr̥ṣṭvā hi tvāṁ pravyathitāntar-ātmā
dhṛtiṁ na vindāmi śamaṁ ca viṣṇo(11-24)**

Comm: Because, O Vishnu! As far as the sky can be seen high above, Your long body appears as if it is touching it. Seeing Your shining and expanded mouth, which has many different colors, my inner mind trembles with fear. In the face spread in all directions, I see the vast eyes glowing like the disc of the sun, and I am unable to keep my mental balance. Even divine vision becomes limited before Your vast and infinite form. You are truly the all-pervading Vishnu. Among those who saw this great form, Bhishma, Vidura, Kunti, and Sanjaya were especially knowledgeable about the truth of Lord Krishna. But even till now, Arjuna has not been able to fully know the truth of the Lord, and his confusion (delusion) has

not been completely removed. Therefore, at the sight of the Universal Form, he has become filled with fear. For the one who is the recipient of divine grace, his delusion will surely be destroyed in the end.

**daṁṣṭrā-karālāni ca te mukhāni
dṛṣṭvaiva kālānala-sannibhāni
diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma
praśīda devesha jagan-nivāsa(11-25)**

Comm: O Lord of the gods! Seeing your terrifying rows of teeth and your blazing face like the fire of destruction, I feel confused and disoriented. I cannot find any direction or path to escape. Seeing this fearsome form of yours, I cannot feel happiness in my heart or stay calm. Experiencing your destructive power directly, my happiness, peace, and patience are slipping away. O Foundation of creation! Please become pleased and take on a peaceful form. The world depends on you, and you exist in every atom of the universe. Therefore, you are called the “Abode of the Universe.” Seeing this vast form, my belief grows stronger that you are the master of all gods, all-pervading, and the ultimate foundation of the entire universe.

**amī ca tvām dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ
sarvaṁ sahaivāvanipāla-saṅghaiḥ
bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūta-putras tathāsau
sahāsmadīyair api yodha-mukhyaiḥ(11-26)
vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti
daṁṣṭrā-karālāni bhayānakāni
kecid vilagnā daśanāntareṣu
sandṛśyante cūrṇitair uttamāṅgaiḥ(11-27)**

Comm: Along with the other kings who are on the Kaurava side, grandsire Bhishma, teacher Dronacharya, Karna the son of a charioteer, and the chief warriors of our side are all rushing quickly towards You. I see all of them entering into Your fearful mouths filled with terrible teeth. Some of their heads are getting crushed and stuck between Your teeth. Arjuna shows his anger towards his great enemy Karna by calling him “the son of a charioteer.” When the divine eye was given, Lord Krishna had already said that according to Arjuna’s wish, he would be able to see past, future, and present events. Accordingly, Arjuna is now able to see many future events in the vast form of the Lord. By seeing the death of great warriors like Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, who played decisive roles in the war, Arjuna’s doubt about victory for his own side has been removed. The special feature of these three unconquerable warriors was that they decided to fight on Duryodhana’s side out of their sense of duty. Bhishma was bound to the safety of the Hastinapura throne because of his firm vow. Guru Dronacharya was dependent on Duryodhana for his livelihood. Karna, because of his friendship, joined

Duryodhana's side even though he knew it was unrighteous. Even Bhishma, lying on the bed of arrows, admitted before Draupadi that by accepting Duryodhana's food, his intelligence had become corrupted. Because the Lord Himself had incarnated on earth to destroy unrighteousness, the destruction of all the unrighteous kings who were present on the battlefield as parts of the Asuras was already certain in this upcoming war.

**yathā nadīnām bahavo 'mbu-vegāḥ
 samudram evābhimukhāḥ dravanti
 tathā tavāmī nara-loka-vīrāḥ
 viśanti vaktrāṇy abhivijvalanti (11-28)
 yathā pradīptam jvalanam pataṅgā
 viśanti nāśāya samṛddha-vegāḥ
 tathāiva nāśāya viśanti lokās
 tavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddha-vegāḥ(11-29)**

Comm: Just as the flowing waters of rivers naturally move toward the ocean, great warriors like Bhishma and Drona in the human world rush toward the supreme light of your divine face. Entering that radiant light, their bodies merge and become one with you. On the other hand, I see that just as moths, unaware of the fire's destructive power, rush quickly into it and meet their death, arrogant people like Duryodhana rush with great speed toward your terrifying mouth for their destruction. Arjuna sees your form as the great destroyer, Mahakala, from whose womb this entire creation has emerged. You hold and sustain the infinite universe and ultimately consume everything for dissolution. Just as rivers with different names and forms enter the ocean, losing their distinct identity and becoming one with it, wise and brave warriors like Bhishma and Drona move toward the great light seen in your face. For their own salvation, they shed their external forms and become radiant with knowledge, merging with you. Like rivers flowing toward the ocean, individual souls always move toward the Supreme Soul to reach their origin. Those people who turn away from material pleasures and strive on the spiritual path are the true brave warriors of this mortal world. As long as their destined momentum remains, wise and righteous souls retain their individuality. The moment this destined momentum ends, they merge with the Supreme Soul. In the state of liberation, they no longer have a separate existence from the Supreme. Arjuna respectfully addresses these great souls as "heroes of the human world." However, he describes the condition of unrighteous and sinful people like Duryodhana differently. Just as moths, attracted to light, fly swiftly into fire and perish, Duryodhana and other kings, driven by ego and desire for pleasure, enter your destructive mouth. This means they fall into the cycle of countless births or hellish destinations. Living life with the desire to gain is materialistic (non-spiritual), while living to give is spiritual (soulful). The desire to take leads to bondage, while the attitude of giving leads to liberation.

**lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāl
lokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ
tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagraṁ
bhāsas tavaugrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo(11-30)**

Comm: I see that You, with Your blazing mouths, are swallowing all the worlds, as if tasting and licking them again and again from all directions. Even after devouring the whole universe, it seems as if You are still not satisfied. O all-pervading Lord! By Your intense radiance, the entire universe has been filled. You have appeared in a terrifying form, making all beings distressed. Till now, Arjuna has been praising the greatness, power, and glory of the Lord after seeing the vast universal form. Now, in order to know who this fierce and vast form truly is, and what its purpose is, curiosity has arisen in Arjuna's mind.

**ākhyāhi me ko bhavān ugra-rūpo
namo 'stu te deva-vara prasīda
vijñātum icchāmi bhavantam ādyaṁ
na hi prajānāmi tava pravṛttim(11-31)**

Comm: O greatest God, I bow to you. Please be pleased with me and show me kindness. Tell me, who are you? O original Lord, why have you taken such a fierce form? I cannot understand the purpose behind your actions. I see that all the warriors on both the Kaurava and our side are clearly going to be destroyed. I am unable to understand what will happen next or the mystery behind it. So, please clear my doubts with your kindness. When Arjuna saw your universal form, he realized it was within Lord Krishna's body. But seeing this vast and terrifying form, he wonders who Lord Krishna truly is and why you have taken this form. First, Arjuna prays for you to be pleased and then wishes to hear the truth from your divine mouth.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**kālo 'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho
lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ
rte 'pi tvāṁ na bhaviṣyanti sarve
ye 'vasthitāḥ pratyanīkeṣu yodhāḥ(11-32)**

Comm: When Lord Krishna showed his universal form, he first told Arjuna, "I am the terrifying form of time that destroys everything." I am the supreme God who creates, maintains, and destroys the entire world. Right now, I am engaged in this battlefield to destroy all these people. The warriors like Duryodhana who are present here are certain to die, even without fighting. The Lord's statement means, "O Arjuna, the warriors you are capable of killing will die even if you don't kill them." Without any effort from you

or other warriors like you, they will surely fall into the grasp of time. You don't know the result of my terrifying form. Except for you five Pandavas, no one will return alive from this battlefield. This is because, as time, I have taken away their lifespan. In this situation, O Arjuna, if you refuse to fight for their sake, you will only fail to follow your duty. Those people will not survive anyway. Therefore, it is better for you to follow my command and engage in the battle.

**tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jītvā śātrūn bhuñkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaiṣaite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva
nimitta-mātraṁ bhava savya-sācin(11-33)**

Comm: Therefore, O Arjuna! Be firm in your decision and stand up to fight. That means, take up your weapons. By winning victory over the enemies in battle, you will gain fame and enjoy a prosperous and undisturbed kingdom. All those whom you see here in the battlefield have already been destroyed by Me, according to the divine arrangement. O Savyasachi! In this war, you are only an instrument for killing them. Because you can shoot arrows with both left and right hands, your name is 'Savyasachi'. The meaning of addressing you as Savyasachi is this: Even though you are the greatest archer on earth, still you should know that the creation and destruction of this world are going on only under the supervision of God. Therefore, the war of Kurukshetra was according to the eternal law – “the destruction of evil and the establishment of righteousness.” In this verse, the words ‘only an instrument’ are very meaningful. According to the will of the Supreme Lord, the entire universe is governed. Behind every action, God's will alone is the cause, and the living beings are only instruments. So, God says: O Arjuna! By seeing My universal form, you have understood that all the warriors on both sides have already reached the door of death. For this reason, your personal effort is not required. The feeling in your mind that “I have to kill them” is your ego or ignorance. Therefore, without any doubt in your mind, free from pride and attachment, with enthusiasm you should engage in battle. An arrogant person, who has the desire for enjoyment, does not understand the divine power of God. He thinks of himself as the doer of all actions and the enjoyer of their results. But when a person offers all his actions and their fruits to God, accepting Him as the supreme controller, then the feeling of being only an ‘instrument’ naturally awakens in his mind. Still, while working with the feeling of being only an instrument, one should put in all his inner strength and do his duty with faith, without pride. One should not perform duty in name only or with neglect. By doing one's duty with equal-mindedness in success and failure, liberation becomes assured. When one understands the knowledge and wisdom of God and becomes free from pride, being only an ‘instrument’, then one attains the Supreme Self.

**droṇaṁ ca bhīṣmaṁ ca jayadrathaṁ ca
karṇaṁ tathānyān api yodha-vīrān
mayā hatāns tvaṁ jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā
yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān (11-34)**

Comm: I have already destroyed Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna, and other brave warriors. You should kill them without fear. In battle, you will surely defeat the enemies. They are already as good as dead. These people are like corpses due to their ignorant actions. Their sense of righteousness has already been destroyed by their unrighteous behavior. Though they are alive, they exist mindlessly, like mechanical puppets. Therefore, fight fearlessly and gain victory over them. Act only to gain fame by destroying them. Arjuna doubted whether he could easily defeat mighty warriors like Bhishma, Drona, and Karna. It seemed impossible to behead Jayadratha due to the boon obtained through his father's penance. This made Arjuna uncertain about his victory. Arjuna also did not want to commit the sin of killing his grandfather, teacher, and other relatives and friends in battle. The Lord assured Arjuna that their death is inevitable and victory in the war is certain, removing his fears. Shri Krishna said, "Kill these enemies who have already been killed by me, and fight without fear." The Lord previously stated that the soul and the Supreme Soul are not the doers. Here, all have already met their death through me; you are merely an instrument to fight and kill them. In the eighteenth chapter, the Lord explains that every action, good or bad, is driven by five factors: the foundation, the doer, the means, the effort, and divine will. These statements of the Lord are not contradictory. If all actions happen solely by the Lord's will, why should humans make any effort? Swami Audganandji Maharaj has beautifully explained this in the 'Yatharth Gita.' There is a dividing line between nature and the Supreme Soul. As long as the influence of nature and its qualities dominates the field of action, ignorance (maya) remains the source of inspiration. When a spiritual seeker rises to a higher level, the Supreme Soul awakens in their soul as the chosen deity, true guru, or God. Residing in the heart as the charioteer, God guides the devoted seeker's path. Whatever the seeker experiences afterward is a gift of divine grace. Progressing according to the guidance and command of the chosen deity or true guru leads to the realization granted by them, which is the fruit of spiritual practice. For such a devoted seeker, whatever God shows them, even the act of seeing is performed by God Himself. The seeker's individual vision merges with God's vision. In this way, God graces the devotee by leading them to His own divine form. This is the essence of the phrase "merely an instrument" used by the Lord.

Sañjaya Uvācha

**etac chrutvā vacanaṁ keśavasya
kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ kirītī
namaskṛtvā bhūya evāha kṛṣṇaṁ
sa-gadgadaṁ bhīta-bhītaḥ praṇamya(11-35)**

Comm: Arjuna's vision of the Universal Form was based on the grace of Lord Shri Krishna. Hearing from the Lord's mouth about the certain death of warriors like Bhishma and Drona, his body started trembling with fear. Even though he was frightened, with folded hands and bowed head in devotion, he repeatedly offered obeisance at the holy feet of the Lord, speaking in a choked voice. When Arjuna saw in the vast form the dreadful and terrifying outcome of the war, he became disturbed. Even after hearing the Lord's assuring words about the victory of his own side, his fear was not removed, and he did not find peace. With deep restlessness, he began to submit his words in a trembling and broken voice. On Arjuna's head always shines a divine crown, radiant like the sun, given by the king of gods, Indra. Therefore, another name of Arjuna is Kiriti.

Arjuna Uvācha

**sthāne hr̥ṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā
jagat prahr̥ṣyaty anurajyati ca
rakṣāṁsi bhītāni diśo dravanti
sarve namasyanti ca siddha-saṅghāḥ(11-36)**

Comm: Arjuna said: O Inner Soul! When your name, qualities, and glories are sung, people of the world become joyful and show deep love towards you. This is right, because you are the only shelter of all living and non-living beings. The demons become afraid and run away in all directions to save their lives. The perfected beings bow to you with devotion. That is also proper, because you are the Supreme God Himself. When the praises of God are heard, wicked people cannot tolerate them. But good people hear them and become filled with love. The devotees feel happy when they see the form of God. But to those with demonic nature, it looks like the form of Yamaraj, the Lord of Death. The more a person runs after worldly wealth and pleasures, the more shortage, sorrow, restlessness, burning, and suffering he experiences. The more the soul turns towards God, the more joy it receives, and its sorrow begins to go away. This verse is famous in the scriptures as the "Rakshoghna Mantra," the mantra that removes demons. By chanting this mantra, all kinds of fears are removed. It is used to remove fear of ghosts, spirits, demons, thieves, enemies, and diseases. In the Sanskrit book Mantra Sara Sudhanidhi, the method of using this mantra is described. This mantra is joined with the Narayana Mantra and the Sudarshana weapon Mantra and then chanted. For destroying obstacles, troubles, demons, enemies, and diseases, the practice of this mantra gives good results.

**kasmāc ca te na nameran mahātman
garīyase brahmaṇo 'py ādi-kartre
ananta deveśa jagan-nivāsa
tvam akṣaraṁ sad-asat tat paraṁ yat(11-37)**

Comm: O great soul! O infinite one! O lord of the gods! O supreme support of the universe! You are higher than even Brahmā, and you are the creator of everything. So why should the whole world not bow down to you? That imperishable Brahman which is beyond existence and non-existence is also you. That which is manifest and that which is unmanifest – both are you. You are everything. In space, in time, and in objects, there is no end to you, therefore you are called “Ananta” (endless). There is nothing that is outside your power and influence. You are the master of all gods, and you are the centre and the only supreme support of the whole universe. The entire world is established in you, and you pervade it. You are unique, inconceivable, full of wonderful powers, and the supreme person. Therefore, gods, humans, sages, and gandharvas cannot stop themselves from bowing down to you. You are the teacher of all, and even of Brahmā, the creator of the universe. The self-existent reality of “Sat” (existence) is you. Though “Asat” (non-existence) has no independent reality, it appears real through the support of “Sat” — and that “Asat” is also you. That indescribable truth which cannot be called either Sat or Asat from the point of knowledge — that too is you. You are beyond the perishable and imperishable, the supreme imperishable, the eternal truth, consciousness, and bliss — the Supreme Self. God is higher and greater than the imperishable Brahman, the individual soul, and nature. He is different from them, yet by His inconceivable power all these truths shine forth. Therefore, God is also all-forms. But still, everyone is not God, nor equal to God. All are only the works or results of His power. From this point of view, He alone is everything, because apart from Him there is no second object or truth with an independent reality. For this reason, the scriptures call God the supreme truth without equal, the eternal among eternal, and the supreme conscious among all conscious beings.

**tvam ādi-devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas
tvam asya viśvasya paraṁ nidhānam
vettāsi vedyam ca paraṁ ca dhāma
tvayā tataṁ viśvam ananta-rūpa (11-38)**

Comm: O infinite form! You are the first God and the eternal complete Supreme Person. When these gods did not exist, even at that time You existed in this form and You will always exist. Therefore, You are the most ancient person. You are the ultimate support of all actions of creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world. You alone are the only shelter of the universe, the resting place of everything, and also the place where Brahmā and others finally dissolve. Because You truly and fully know the past, present, and future, and because You are the eternal witness of all, You are omniscient. You are present everywhere in the atoms and particles of the whole universe. If there is any end or limit of knowledge, that is Your own nature. After knowing You, nothing else remains to be known. Because You are all-pervading, You are the one who is to be known in all knowledge. You are the truth to be known, and You are also the form of knowledge itself. You alone are worthy of being seen, worthy of being accepted, worthy of being

reflected upon, and worthy of being meditated upon deeply. You are spread everywhere, pervading the whole universe. O infinite form Lord! This universe is pervaded by You alone. There is nothing where Your presence is not seen. Just as cotton is hidden within cloth, in the same way, in existence, brightness, dearness, power, and glory of the world, Your presence is felt. Because You are the abode of the wealth of supreme power, You are the very form of the Supreme Abode, that is, the Supreme Person of the spiritual world. You are the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Light itself. That Abode, reaching which a soul does not have to return again, You are that very ‘Supreme Abode’.

**vāyur yamo ’gnir varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ
prajāpatis tvaṁ prapitāmahaś ca
namo namas te ’stu sahasra-kṛtvah
punaś ca bhūyo ’pi namo namas te(11-39)**

Comm. You are the life-giving air for all beings. You are Yama, the controller of life. You are the fire that gives energy to everything. You are Varuna, the lord of water. You are the moon, giving cool rays and nectar. You are the creator Prajapati, like Daksha. You are Hiranyagarbha, the father of Brahma. You are the source of Brahma’s creation. Therefore, you are the great-grandfather of all beings. I bow to you a thousand times. I bow to you again and again. Arjuna cannot find satisfaction, bowing to the Supreme Lord with deep devotion and faith. After seeing the universal form, Arjuna’s heart is filled with deep devotion and faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa’s divine power. Out of respect, Arjuna repeatedly bows to the Lord. When a devotee surrenders everything to the Lord, only the act of bowing remains. So, Arjuna praises, saying, “O Lord, you are all the gods like Indra.” You are the infinite form. How can I sing your full glory? I can only bow to you a thousand times.

**namaḥ purastād atha pṛṣṭhatas te
namo ’stu te sarvata eva sarva
ananta-vīryāmita-vikramas tvaṁ
sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato ’si sarvaḥ (11-40)**

Comm: By seeing the divine universal form full of majesty and greatness in one part of Shri Kṛṣṇa’s body, the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa’s glory has arisen in Arjuna. Arjuna has forgotten his natural friendly relation with Shri Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna says: O Lord of all souls! I bow to You from the front, I bow to You from the back, and I bow to You from all directions. O One with infinite power and great strength! You are pervading the entire universe. In this universe, even in the smallest particle, there is no place where You are not present. Therefore, You are the form of everything. Seeing infinite universes existing in just one part of Your body, Arjuna had never imagined that Kṛṣṇa is so great and so wonderful. Arjuna is now convinced that Shri Kṛṣṇa is stronger and more powerful than all the great warriors present on the battlefield. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa is worthy of

worship by everyone, Arjuna feels that even bowing thousands of times is not enough. So, with faith and respect, he moves around in all directions and bows to Krishna again and again from every side.

**sakheti matvā prasabham yad uktam
he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti
ajānatā mahimānaṁ tavedaṁ
mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi(11-41)
yac cāvahāsārtham asat-kṛto 'si
vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu
eko 'tha vāpy acyuta tat-samakṣam
tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam(11-42)**

Comm: I could not truly understand your qualities, mysteries, and greatness. Out of ignorance or love, or thinking of you as my friend, I have said many things improperly. O Krishna, O Yadav, O friend, I have spoken to you disrespectfully. O Achyuta, during times of joking, resting, or eating together, I have shown disrespect to you. This happened either alone or in the presence of friends and family. O one with inconceivable power, I humbly ask for forgiveness for all these offenses. Not knowing your true divine form, I out of ignorance, treated you as an equal and behaved improperly. Arjuna recalls his past inappropriate behaviour toward Krishna, feeling guilty. Despite being supremely glorious and worthy of worship, Lord Krishna acted like an ordinary person with Arjuna. Krishna played, slept, and ate with Arjuna but never disrespected or ignored him. This reflects the loving bond between a devotee and God. Feeling remorse, Arjuna says to Krishna, “O Lord, you are immeasurable.” You cannot be fully understood through direct evidence or scriptures. Scriptures only hint at your greatness with difficulty. Arjuna says, “Who am I compared to you?” In my ignorance, I called you by names and disrespected you, the supreme Lord. Due to my ego and ignorance, I have shown dishonour. I pray for your merciful forgiveness for all these offenses.

**pitāsi lokasya carācarasya
tvam asya pūjyaś ca gurur garīyān
na tvat-samo 'sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto 'nyo
loka-traye 'py aprati mapa-bhāva (11-43)**

Comm: O incomparable power! You are the father of the visible and moving-unmoving universe as its Creator. You are worshipful, the Guru, and the Guru of Gurus – the greatest teacher, more worshipful than any Guru. In the three worlds, there is no one equal to You. Therefore, who can ever be greater than You? In this world, You cannot be measured. O One with infinite influence! You are the father of the entire moving and unmoving world. The whole world has arisen from You. By giving true knowledge, You are the supreme Guru and the most worshipful for the whole world. Because You first gave Vedic knowledge to Brahmā,

You are the original Guru. You are complete by Yourself and immeasurably great. In the three worlds, no one is greater than the Supreme Person, Lord Shri Krishna, nor in the material world is anyone equal to Him. Gods, Gandharvas, Yakshas, and human beings – all movable and immovable beings – are under His control and ruled by Him. Arjuna says: Those gods, sages, and great saints whom the whole world worships – You are greater and more worshipful than them, and always worthy of praise. In the universe, there is no one who can be equal to Your inconceivable, infinite, great qualities, power, and greatness. There is only one Supreme Lord who is complete everywhere. God can only be one. If there were many gods, then disorder would arise in the rule of the world. Therefore, Your equal is only Yourself. In this situation, O Compassionate One! If You do not forgive my faults, then who else can?

**tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṁ
prasādaye tvām aham īśam īdyam
piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ
priyaḥ priyārhasi deva soḍhum(11-44)**

Comm: O worshipful Lord! I am an offender before You. Therefore, bowing down with full prostration, I beg for Your mercy and kindness. You are full of all opulence and the Supreme Lord, worshiped by all. Just as a father does not take the faults of his son, a friend forgives the mistakes of his friend, and a loving husband forgives the faults of his beloved wife, in the same way, please tolerate all my offenses and forgive me. Towards one like me, who is poor and surrendered, kindly be pleased – this I believe is Your very nature. With this faith, I humbly pray to You to be pleased with me. You are the only Supreme Lord who controls the guardians of the world like Indra, Aditya, Varuna, Kubera, and Yamaraj. Your qualities, glories, and greatness are so vast that the whole world is always praising You. I have neither the knowledge nor the strength to please You by myself. Falling flat with my whole body on the ground, I offer full prostrated obeisance to You. By the dust of Your feet alone I wish to attain Your mercy and satisfaction. Please be gracious, forget all my offenses, and be pleased with one like me who is so lowly. In verses 41–42 it is said that offenses are committed by a man due to three causes – ignorance, carelessness, and love. Arjuna shows these three causes and prays to the Lord to tolerate and forgive the offenses committed by him because of them. The meaning is this: just as a father forgives the fault of his son caused by ignorance, a friend forgives the mistake of his friend caused by excessive affection and joking, and a husband forgives the fault of his wife caused by carelessness or boldness, in the same way, Arjuna humbly prays to the Lord to tolerate and forgive all the offenses caused by these reasons.

**adr̥ṣṭa-pūrvam hr̥ṣito 'smi dr̥ṣṭvā
bhayena ca pravayathitaṁ mano me
tad eva me darśaya deva rūpaṁ
prasīda deveśa jagan-nivāsa (11-45)**

Comm: Arjuna says, “O Lord, by your grace, I have seen your majestic universal form, which I had never seen before.” I feel fortunate and greatly delighted to witness this form. However, seeing your terrifying and fierce form, which destroys warriors like Bhishma, my mind is deeply troubled. Therefore, O Lord of lords, please show me your sweet and dear form as Vasudeva’s son, the gentle Vishnu form. O supreme foundation of the world, be pleased with me and show your kindness. At the beginning of the universal form vision, Arjuna saw the four-armed Vishnu form. Arjuna’s gaze first fell on this four-armed Vishnu form. So, he began his praise by describing the God as the crown-wearing one holding a mace and discus. Now, Arjuna wishes to see only Lord Krishna’s gentle form, not the terrifying one. In reality, all of God’s forms—two-armed, four-armed, or thousand-armed—are divine and eternal. In every Vaikuntha realm, Narayana exists in his four-armed form. In this form, He holds a conch, discus, mace, and lotus. The Supreme Lord embodies both existence and non-existence. God possesses knowledge, yet also encompasses ignorance. God contains righteousness, and unrighteousness also resides in him. This is the belief and recognition of eternal dharma. For this reason, a great soul who understands God’s true nature remains undisturbed in any situation.

**kirīṭinaṁ gadināṁ cakra-hastaṁ icchāmi
tvāṁ draṣṭum ahaṁ tathaiva
tenaiva rūpeṇa catur-bhujena
sahasra-bāho bhava viśva-mūrte(11-46)**

Comm: O Lord! I wish to see You once again in that former form with crown on Your head and with mace and discus in Your hands. O thousand-armed One! O Universal Form! Please appear before me in that peaceful four-armed form of Vasudeva. In the Brahma-Samhita it is said that the Lord eternally exists in thousands of forms. Among His countless forms, whichever form He manifests, it is never different from His power and glory. Arjuna says: O Lord! I have clearly understood that Your two-armed, eternal, blissful form is the highest truth. This form attracts all living beings, and within this form itself shines Your sportive four-armed, eternal Narayana form. When the Lord showed His universal form, first He assumed a four-armed form, and from there manifested the thousand-armed universal form. Now Arjuna is eager to see that gentle and peaceful four-armed form. In many scriptures, like the Shrimad Bhagavatam and the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, it is clearly stated that Vishnu has appeared in the form of Shri Krishna. Since Arjuna is praying to see that four-armed form of Shri Krishna, it is proved that Shri Krishna is an incarnation of Vishnu. Even the gods in heaven always desire to have the vision of that Vaikuntha form of Vishnu.

**mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṁ
rūpaṁ paraṁ darśitam ātma-yogāt
tejo-mayaṁ viśvam anantam ādyaṁ
yan māṁ tvam anyena na dr̥ṣṭa-pūrvam(11-47)**

Comm: Lord Krishna said, “O Arjuna, being pleased, I have shown you my universal form through my divine power.” This form shines like millions of suns, is endless, eternal, and full of majesty. No one has ever seen this wondrous and rare form before. Although Mother Kaushalya and Mother Yashoda saw glimpses of the universal form in the Lord’s mouth, it was different. Similarly, during the Kurukshetra assembly, Krishna showed his universal form when Duryodhana tried to imprison him. However, those forms were not shown with divine pleasure, nor were they seen with divine vision. The vast form Arjuna saw included both a terrifying form and a divine, majestic form. Arjuna was able to directly see the past and future as he wished. Therefore, the Lord says, “My vast form is not always visible to everyone.” It can only be seen when I reveal it through my divine power. The term “self-power” means that when I consider myself a body, I take a two-armed form. When I consider myself the entire universe, I take the universal form. Only those who receive divine vision can see this form; no one else can. Thus, witnessing this form is a matter of great fortune. This universal form has no beginning or end in terms of place and time. A devotee thinks God’s grace is limited to what they can perceive. But God’s grace is far greater than what devotees can imagine. God’s grace is boundless and infinite, while a devotee’s ability to receive it is limited. Arjuna was able to see this vast form only because of God’s immense grace.

**na veda-yajñādhyayanair na dānair
na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ
evaṁ-rūpaḥ śakya ahaṁ nṛ-loke
draṣṭuṁ tvad-anyena kuru-pravīra(11-48)**

Comm: O best among the Kurus! Except you, no one in this human world has been able to see this Universal Form of Mine by study of the Vedas, by performance of yajnas, by giving donations, or by severe austerities. The word Agnihotra and other rituals means the performance of meritorious deeds. But no such action has the power to take the seeker to the place where he can attain God. The result of pious works is only for enjoyment, and when that enjoyment ends, the result also finishes. In the same way, bodily austerities, charity, and study of the Vedas can purify the inner heart. But for direct realization of God, His happiness and grace alone are the one and only source of all possibilities. But when and how the Lord becomes pleased and gives His

grace, that depends on spiritual practice. Even when living near Lord Krishna during His divine play, wise and learned people could not truly understand in what way or by which practice Krishna becomes pleased. But the simple-hearted Gopis, with very pure hearts, always enjoyed only the taste of Krishna's sweetness. By doing so, they became so much like Krishna that Krishna Himself came to see His own form in the hearts of those Gopis of Vraja. This is what is called the Lord's pleasure or grace. Therefore, Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna! Always remember in your heart that this most rare form of Mine you have received only by My grace. So remain devoted to this extremely rare form. In the past, My devotees separated illusion from divinity and lived in the truth of consciousness through My Yoga. Even after seeing the Universal Form like, you, they were not satisfied. They longed eagerly for the vision of My eternal, conscious, and spiritual form.

**mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍha-bhāvo
dr̥ṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoram īdṛṇ mamaiva
vyapeta-bhīḥ prīta-manāḥ punas tvaṁ
tad eva me rūpaṁ idaṁ prapaśya (11-49)**

Comm: Arjuna, you do not show fear or distress upon seeing my terrifying form. Be fearless and with a happy mind, clearly behold my four-armed form again. The Lord comforts, saying, I showed you this fierce and dreadful form to make you believe in my divine power and glory. I know this form is not pleasing to you. Because of our friendship, you must assist in my human pastimes. I bless you so that you do not feel pain regarding my universal form. Abandon fear and, with a loving mind, behold my eternal four-armed form as you desire. A devotee is never eager to see the Lord's vast form because it lacks the exchange of affectionate feelings between the devotee and the Lord. A devotee wishes to see Lord Krishna's two-armed or four-armed form because it allows for an exchange of emotions. If someone feels fear, the root cause is the presence of ego and attachment in their heart. A true seeker has no attachment to life. Due to love for the Lord, a devotee feels divine presence everywhere. Even though deities and others were terrified upon seeing the Lord's fearsome Narasimha form, Prahlada was not afraid. This is because Prahlada's love for Hari filled him completely with divine awareness.

Sañjaya Uvācha

**iti arjunaṁ vāsudevas tathoktvā
svakaṁ rūpaṁ darśayām āsa bhūyaḥ
āśvāsayām āsa ca bhītam enaṁ
bhūtvā punaḥ saumya-vapur mahatma(11-50)**

Comm: After that, Sanjaya said— Lord Vasudeva, after speaking in this way,

again showed His four-armed form. Then again, He took the gentle two-armed human form and gave comfort to the frightened Arjuna. In the previous three verses, while ending the vision of the Universal Form seen by Arjuna, the Lord removed the terrible and other forms from His body and remained only in the four-armed form of Vishnu, to please Arjuna. Again, the great Lord Krishna, taking the most sweet human form, began to console the fearful Arjuna. Because Lord Krishna appeared as the son of Vasudeva and also lives in the heart of all beings as the Soul, His name is Vasudeva. Due to the Lord's unlimited grace on Arjuna, first He showed the Universal Form, then the four-armed divine form, and finally the human form. Now, those who read this chapter called "Vision of the Universal Form," they also have received it only by the Lord's causeless grace. The reading and reflection of this chapter is in no way less than Arjuna's actual vision of the Universal Form. Because unless the Lord Himself wishes, unless He Himself becomes pleased, no one gets the opportunity to read, think, or reflect on this Universal Form. Those who have received this grace of the Lord should at this very moment feel blessed. Therefore, for receiving such joy and supreme grace of Lord Krishna every day, one should regularly read the "Vision of the Universal Form Yoga." Just as Lord Krishna, in His calm and beautiful human form, gave courage to the fearful and restless Arjuna, in the same way may He give that same infinite strength of patience to everyone.

Arjuna Uvācha

**dr̥ṣṭvedaṁ mānuṣaṁ rūpaṁ tava saumyaṁ janārdana
idānīm asmi saṁvṛttaḥ sacetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ (11-51)**

Comm: After that, seeing the very sweet form of Shri Krishna, Arjuna was drowned in the ocean of joy and said: "O Janardana! By seeing this gentle human form of Yours, I feel relieved." All my confusion and fear are gone. My mind has become peaceful, and I have returned to my natural state. Arjuna first saw Shri Krishna only in His human form. With this human form of Shri Krishna, he had friendship, and this was the form he was familiar with. Therefore, by seeing this charming human form, Arjuna felt delighted. Shri Krishna, with the Yadavas and Pandavas, sometimes played in His two-armed form and sometimes in His four-armed form. That is why even the four-armed form is called the human form. In the Brahma Vaivarta Purana, it is mentioned that the Lord, who is the origin of all, beyond qualities, and beyond nature, manifested from one half of His body as the two-armed Krishna, and from the other half as the four-armed Vishnu. Two-armed Krishna, the husband of Radhika, resides in Goloka Vrindavan surrounded by cowherd boys and girls. Four-armed Vishnu, the husband of Lakshmi, resides in Vaikuntha along with Lakshmi. Krishna and Vishnu are the same in every way. That means, They are one and the same.

**su-durdaśam idaṁ rūpaṁ dr̥ṣṭavān asi yaṁ mama
devā apy asya rūpasya nityaṁ darśana-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ (11-52)**

Comm: Lord Krishna addressed Arjuna and said; O Arjuna! You have seen this extremely rare four-armed form of mine, which even the gods constantly desire to see but do not get to see. In the Shrimad Bhagavatam, tenth canto, in the Garbha Stotra, it is called a vision that is rare for the gods. Because you are always tasting the great sweetness in human form, you are my eternal devotee. Therefore, this universal form of the Supreme Lord did not appeal to you. You cannot ever abandon the feeling of friendship with me, so my human-like form seems dear to you. But the gods wait for ages to see this universal form of mine as the Supreme Lord. Gods like Brahma and Shiva are actually eager to see that two-armed charming human form during the time of the Lord's incarnations in human form. The Lord himself has said in the Gita; Krishna's body is divine and completely full of existence, consciousness, and bliss. Some critics hold the opinion that the Lord's two-armed form is inferior to the universal form (that is, the adhidaivam), meaning the universal form that he showed to Arjuna is more famous than his personal Purusha form. But according to the Gita's explanation, Krishna is covered by his Yogamaya power. Lord Shri Krishna is two-armed - he is also four-armed and thousand-armed. He does not manifest in everyone. Not everyone can see him. Only those in whom he manifests by his own grace can see him. If a yogi remains constantly in contemplation of Krishna, as an exclusive devotee, the divine eye opens, and in that divine light, he can see Krishna as he wishes. For the gods, like the human body, this kind of divine vision is not possible. The human body is dependent on spiritual practice. The gods are bound by specific powers given by the Lord, and since the divine world is meant for enjoyment, spiritual practice is not possible for the gods. Because the gods do not have the desire for self-welfare (moksha), their constant desire for vision becomes secondary. Just as an exclusive devotee in human form desires to see the Lord's four-armed form with love, the gods do not have that loving feeling. Therefore, the Lord is under the control of the exclusive devotee filled with love, but not under the gods.

**nāhaṁ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭuṁ dr̥ṣṭavān asi mām yathā(11-53)**

Comm: You have seen My supreme gentle eternal human form. This form cannot be seen by Vedic study, by austerities like Chandrayana, by gifts of cows or gold, or by performance of yajna and worship. It can be seen only by the grace of God. Only single-minded devotion is the one path that can make one realize Lord Krishna. Yajna, austerity, charity, and other actions done without desire for result — that is, with the attitude of offering them to God — are helpful for the purification of the inner self. Because of this,

all these works become parts of devotion. Therefore, these actions cannot be rejected as causes that help in attaining God. But yajna, austerity, and charity done with selfish motives cannot give vision of God. God is never an object of exchange. He is an object of feeling and devotion. For attaining the immeasurable Supreme Being, anything fixed or determined is limited, and that becomes a kind of bargain. The Infinite and Eternal can never be attained by measure. The Infinite, unthinkable, and boundless can be realized only by joining pure devotion with that infiniteness. That is the way to attain God. When a person offers his capacity, time, knowledge, power, and possessions completely to God — that means, when he keeps not even a trace of pride in his abilities, and mentally gives up everything, when he accepts himself as unworthy, helpless, and simple-hearted, then he receives the grace of God.

**bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho 'rjuna
jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṁ ca parantapa(11-54)**

Comm: O Arjuna, destroyer of enemies! Only through exclusive devotion can one truly know me in this gentle four-armed form, directly see me, and enter into me, achieving liberation in the form of complete union. Even if there is a desire for liberation, it is only through exclusive devotion that one can become capable of entering the nature of Brahman. There is no other path besides this. Exclusive devotion means having pure love for God, considering one's mind, senses, body, wealth, and everything else as belonging to God and dedicating them to His service. Another meaning of exclusive devotion is non-dual devotion, meaning there is no dividing line between the devotee and God. The devotee fully resides in God's heart, and God fully manifests in the devotee's heart. Knowing me does not mean that I become subject to the devotee's intellect, but rather the devotee's knowing power and my power become one, and the devotee fully experiences my complete manifestation in their heart. Exclusive devotion awakens on its own, not through the mind, intellect, or senses. When intense longing and eagerness awaken on their own, the devotee cannot remain even for a moment without seeing God—this is the hallmark of exclusive devotion. The special meaning is that God is not attained through spiritual practice alone. Through spiritual practice, the heart is purified, and the impressions of good and bad deeds from many births and this birth lose their influence. When the pride in all spiritual practices is destroyed, only then is the state of exclusive devotion attained. Once pride is destroyed, God's pure grace becomes powerful in the practitioner. After completely surrendering to God, all the devotee's desires come to an end. In attaining Brahman, two things are possible: knowing and entering. But through devotion, all three—knowing, entering, and seeing—are attained completely. In simple terms, exclusive devotion means: (1) Not considering oneself separate from God but loving God as a part of Him. (2) Not focusing on any other deity but loving only Krishna in His tangible, personal form. (3) Withdrawing the mind from worldly things like wealth, wife, children, etc., and constantly remaining connected to God with love. (4) Considering

all objects as manifestations of Brahman and fixing the mind on God, who is the form of Brahman, with love. Through this devotion filled with such feelings, my true knowledge and vision can be attained. After this, one enters into God or attains liberation.

**mat-karma-kṛṇ mat-paramo mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitah
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava_(11-55)**

Comm: O son of Pandu, Arjuna! One who does all actions only for My pleasure, one who considers Me as the only supreme beloved and shelter, one who practices hearing, chanting, and other nine forms of devotion and worships Me in every way, one who is free from attachment to worldly objects, that is, free from desires, one who has no hatred towards any being, one who never sees anyone as an enemy and keeps friendship with all through the vision of the Self —such a devotee attains Me. That means, he becomes able to see My gentle four-armed form. This verse is considered the essence verse of the Gita. Here the Lord explains what are the marks of exclusive devotion, and what kind of relation the exclusive devotee has with his feelings, actions, and the world. By teaching this to Arjuna, He brings the vision of the Universal Form to a close. Two main subjects are presented in this verse —how to remain always united with the Lord, and how to cut off worldly ties. “Mat-karma-krit” (he who does actions for Me), “mat-parama” (he who takes Me as supreme), “mat-bhakta” (he who is My devotee) — these three phrases describe how to remain closely connected with the Lord, that is, practice of Yoga. “Nirvairah sarva-bhuteshu” (without hatred towards anyone) and “sanga-varjitah” (free from worldly attachment) — these two phrases describe detachment from the world, that is, Vairagya. Through these two attainments of Yoga and Vairagya, one realizes God. To do actions without the least attachment to their results, to perform duties according to caste, place, time, and circumstance only for My pleasure, is “mat-karma-krit.” Whatever exists — body, mind, intellect, ability, wealth, honor, prestige — all these are given by God. There is no doubt about this. Keeping in view the welfare of the world, God develops abilities in human beings, and through nature creates objects and materials accordingly to meet the needs of the world. Therefore, all creation — living and non-living — is meant only for the welfare of the world. When one works with the attitude that “God has entrusted the responsibility of running the world to man,” then God is pleased. A devotee works only for the pleasure of God, according to God’s command, and with the power given by God, becoming merely an instrument. He who considers Me as his only shelter, highest goal, and dearest beloved is “mat-bhakta.” When the feeling “I belong to God and God belongs to me” becomes firm, then deep love for God arises. Because of attachment to “I and mine” with wife, children, wealth, and so on, they become dear. Even inanimate objects like gold, house, or land also seem equally dear. But when this feeling of “I and mine” is replaced by the truth of “only the Supreme Self and belonging to the Supreme Self,” and this is connected with all beings and objects, then love for God increases naturally and continuously. The devotee always sees his beloved Lord fully present in all

objects, beings, situations, places, times, and within himself. God is all-pervading. He is present inside everything and also inside me. One whose heart constantly remembers this feeling is “mat-bhakta.” When one becomes “mat-karma-krit” and “mat-bhakta,” then attachment, possessiveness, and desires for the world no longer remain. When exclusive love for God arises, then attachment to material objects is completely destroyed. This is the mark of the devotee who is “sanga-varjitah” — free from worldly attachment. Because of seeing God everywhere, even if others behave badly, not even a trace of hatred arises in the devotee’s heart. The seeker who has all these qualities is the exclusive devotee. He attains God and makes human life meaningful. These chapters 10 and 11 are meant to remove aversion and turn the living being towards God. If one accepts that any special quality, greatness, uniqueness, or extraordinariness seen in any object or person does not belong to that object or person, but is God’s manifestation, then it becomes equal to thinking of God. This world is a part of the vast form of God that He has shown. It is filled with many names, forms, and colours. Therefore, the world should be seen as the form of the Supreme Being. This chapter is called the “Yoga of Vision of the Universal Form.” Because Arjuna, eager to see the Universal Form, prayed to Shri Krishna, and Krishna, being pleased, showed this form in a part of His body. The Lord gave Arjuna divine sight, or the eye of vision, through which he saw this divine form. Statements of the scriptures such as — “Brahman is one and without a second,” “All this indeed is Brahman,” “All this is He,” “I am one, let Me become many and create beings” — are harmonized through the revelation of the Universal Form of the Lord. This world is the vast body of Brahman. The Universal Form that Shri Krishna showed to Arjuna was truly wonderful, indescribable, and never seen before. That form was complete, all-pervading, endless, beginningless, centreless, and full of light. In it also was the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the universe. One has to pray to God with deep longing. Then He will give vision. One must beg earnestly before Him. If, while crying out “Show me, show me, show me,” tears flow automatically, then by His grace vision may be possible. In all the teachings of the Gita, another important point must be remembered: the word “devotion” (bhakti) does not mean only chanting God’s name or repeating mantras. Its special importance lies in giving up attachment to family and worldly ties, and in not keeping any hatred for any being, that is, not giving any kind of pain to anyone. This is what is meant by the word devotion.

**Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga
Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade ‘Vishwarupa darshana Yoga ‘ Naama
Ekadash Adhyaayah ||11||**

“Om Tat Sat” — In this way, with this holy name of God, the eleventh chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, called “Vishwarupa Darshana Yoga ” which is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, is completed.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 12 (Bhakti Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

**evam satata-yuktā ye bhaktās tvām paryupāsate
ye cāpy akṣaram avyaktam teṣām ke yoga-vittamāḥ (12-1)**

Comm: The Bhagavad Gita is divided into three sets of six chapters, which explain Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana. Among these, this chapter is the last chapter of the section on Upasana (worship). Except for three verses, all other verses of this chapter explain the philosophy of devotion. That is why this chapter is called “Bhakti Yoga”. At the end of Chapter Eleven, the Lord concluded by saying: “O Arjuna! This universal form which you saw – no one before you has ever seen it, and in the future also, no one will ever see it. ‘I cannot be attained by study of the Vedas, by yajna, austerity, or charity. But to the devotee who has single-minded devotion – who does not keep faith anywhere else other than Me, who constantly meditates on Me like an unbroken flow of oil – for such a devotee, I am very easy to see directly, to realize, and to enter into.’ “O Arjuna! You depend on Me, perform the duties determined by Me only as a tool, and become My exclusive devotee.” For the maintenance of creation, the process of yajna is the only karma determined by Me. You should perform it for My pleasure. Without performing selfless action (nishkama karma), no one becomes a yogi, and no one becomes a man of knowledge (jnani). At the beginning of the third and fifth chapters, and now for the third time here, Arjuna

asks about the greatness of karma, knowledge, and devotion, and wants a clear answer from the Lord. Arjuna respectfully questioned the Lord and said: “O Lord! Among the devotees who follow Your instructions and constantly remain engaged in You with mind fixed on You, doing bhajan, kirtan, service, and worship of Your beautiful form with qualities (saguna sakara) – and those who worship the unmanifest, formless, imperishable Brahman – among these two groups, who is the superior yogi?” Arjuna’s question is natural – between the two paths, of knowledge and devotion, which one gives quicker and more certain results? In Chapter Ten, Vibhuti Yoga, the Lord described His divine glories and powers in detail. Then in Chapter Eleven, within His own body, He revealed His infinite universal form containing countless universes. This showed His majestic universal form and His all-pervading cosmic nature. Apart from this, the imperishable, eternal, blissful, formless, attributeless, supreme Brahman is His transcendental form. This cannot be conceived or grasped by the mind, intellect, or senses. By restraining the mind and continuously meditating on the formless Brahman, by acquiring knowledge of the Truth, and by remaining steady in it, one meditates on the imperishable, attributeless Brahman (the jyoti, or light). Such meditation, reflection, or absorption is the worship of the formless, attributeless aspect of the Lord. Therefore, to decide whether worship of the Lord with form (saguna upasana) or worship of the Lord without form (nirguna upasana) is superior, Arjuna asks this question. Some commentators also mention that Arjuna’s question hints at the importance and specialty of worship through images and forms (pratima puja). In this world, there are many spiritual paths to know the Lord, who is the supreme Truth and relatively easy to realize. But in this chapter, Lord Krishna says: “Among all yogas, the one who takes refuge in Me and is devoted to Me – that devotee is the highest.” Sri Ramakrishna said: “In Kali Yuga, the devotion taught by Narada is the way. In this age, Bhakti Yoga is the best path – through it one can easily reach God compared to other paths.” Because of attachment to the body, it is not easy to fully realize the Lord’s formless aspect. Therefore, throughout the Gita, selfless worship of the Lord with form has been described as the best yoga. Hearing the Lord’s name, singing His glories, remembering Him, serving His feet, worshiping, offering prayers, serving as His servant, being His friend, and complete surrender – these nine practices are called Navadha Bhakti (nine types of devotion). This is called Sadhana Bhakti.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**mayy āveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate
śraddhayaḥ parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ (12-2)**

Comm: The Supreme Lord said: Those who focus their minds on My form with attributes and engage in worship like singing, chanting, and listening to My divine stories with unwavering faith are the best yogis. A person who worships the attribute-filled God

with a focused mind and great faith is the best, according to the Lord’s clear opinion. Such a person achieves complete perfection in yoga. The Srimad Bhagavata says: “Devotion leads to more devotion.” Seeing God emotionally in things like idols, gurus, meditation, sacred stones, holy places, or during special times like Ekadashi—where God isn’t directly visible—is called devotion. The words “fixing the mind” and “constantly united” are very meaningful. Loving the world primarily and only secondarily thinking of God’s form in the mind or intellect is not being “constantly united.” You don’t need to force your mind to focus on something your soul already loves; the mind naturally stays there. When you’re always connected to God, you only see His form in everything, and no other thought comes to mind. Like the gopis of Vraja, while doing all tasks with a heart full of love, tears in their eyes, and a choked voice, they sing God’s stories and get lost in Krishna’s love—this is worship with supreme faith. In the world, whether you think of your wife, son, or wealth or not, there’s no barrier to loving them. The Lord teaches that by keeping God as the primary focus and the world as secondary, you can do worldly tasks with a detached mind, and God’s form will never leave your mind. This is called “yogah karmasu kausalam-Gita-2-50” (“yoga is skill in action.”) Love has the power to draw you toward God. Love for God should be so deep that it stays even when you’re unconscious, in deep sleep, or even during death or the end of the world. This love, which becomes one with the soul, helps you realize the Supreme Soul in all beings. Staying connected to God’s form like a steady flow of oil is being “constantly united.” Like a fish suffering when taken out of water, if your mind drifts from God even for a moment, your heart becomes restless—this is exclusive devotion. When you accept yourself as belonging to God, your mind and intellect become fully absorbed in Him. Only by being drawn to God Himself will you never be separated from the Supreme Soul. No matter which path a seeker follows—like karma yoga or jnana yoga—only the one who has devotion can reach the ultimate goal. In the path of devotion, since only God’s existence is recognized, the devotee becomes one with God from the very start.

**ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktaṁ paryupāsate
sarvatra-gam acintyaṁ ca kūṭa-stham acalaṁ dhruvam(12-3)**

**saṁniyamendriya-grāmaṁ sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ
te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ (12-4)**

Comm: The Lord explains the nature of the formless, attributeless Brahman and the qualities of its worshippers in these two verses. The self-controlled person who conquers all the senses, who sees Brahman in the entire universe, and who is devoted to the welfare of all beings, such a yogi worships the imperishable, indescribable, unmanifest, all-pervading, inconceivable, eternal, attributeless, and everlasting Supreme Brahman. They also attain Me. By worshipping either with form or without form, the Lord can be realized. The destruction of ignorance and Maya happens only through the

knowledge of Brahman. When Maya comes to an end, what remains is the imperishable Truth. That is the Supreme Self, full of existence, knowledge, and bliss. He is also known as the Supreme Imperishable. Like space, that pure consciousness is present everywhere, always full. How can it be understood by language and speech? Therefore, it is called “indescribable” or “imperishable self,” which cannot be pointed out by species, qualities, actions, or relations. It can only be indicated by saying “not this, not this,” and by denying everything else, the remainder is shown as the final Truth. Because it is present in every place, every time, every object, and every person, it is all-pervading. That which cannot be expressed by the senses or through sound, touch, form, taste, or smell is called unmanifest. All material things are revealed by the mind and by the reflection of consciousness (chidabhasa) on the mind. But just as a lamp is not needed to see the sun, in the same way, consciousness does not need chidabhasa to shine. When the tendency of the mind becomes filled with Brahman, the covering of ignorance is destroyed, and the self-luminous Supreme Self shines forth. The Supreme Brahman is beyond nature and the three gunas, so it is unmanifest and inconceivable. It is immovable, without any kind of motion or activity. Motion belongs to Maya, but Brahman is ever still, just as the body is active but the soul remains inactive. It is changeless, steady, and unshaken, like an iron block used by a goldsmith that remains the same even after many blows. In Sanskrit, “kuta” also means unchanging, false witness, or illusion. According to Shankaracharya, the Supreme Self, though appearing to be covered by Maya and associated with the three gunas, is still changeless and beyond Maya. As the support of all changes, it itself remains unchanged. Though inconceivable and unmanifest, it is eternal, certain, and real. For the worship of this formless, attributeless Brahman, Lord Krishna gives three conditions. First, since nirguna upasana has no external support, the worshipper must withdraw his senses from sense objects and bring them under full control. Second, he must see Brahman everywhere, from the smallest insect to the vast Brahman, and remain equal towards all – beyond likes and dislikes, good and bad, self and others. Third, unlike the ignorant who are always absorbed in their own selfish interest, the wise person must always remain devoted to the welfare of the world. Because he clearly sees that “I Myself dwell in all beings.” Thus, the self-controlled yogi, who sees Brahman everywhere and desires the welfare of all, reaches Me through the worship of the formless Brahman. Here, the Lord describes the nature of Brahman with words like inconceivable, changeless, immovable, imperishable, unmanifest, etc. In the second chapter, He has already described the soul (jivatma) with the same qualities. From this, it is clear that Brahman and the individual soul are not different. Because of association with the body in many forms, it is called “jiva,” but in truth it is Brahman itself. When the Lord says that the worshipper of formless Brahman also reaches Him, the meaning is: “Brahman is not different from Me, and I am not different from Brahman.” So, the result of worshipping the formless Brahman is the same as attaining Me. In Chapter Fourteen, verse 27, the Lord says: “I am the foundation of Brahman.” This means that Krishna is the support of the attributeless Truth. Sri Krishna

is the support of all that is to be worshipped, and He Himself is the highest object of worship. Therefore, the devotee must always remember that the Lord with form (saguna) and the Lord without form (nirguna) are never two different realities. The forms, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord described in the scriptures are all beyond nature, transcendental, and made of pure consciousness. Thus, the Lord is both with form and without form at the same time. The fruit of exclusive devotion (bhakti) is knowledge. And the fruit of worshipping the formless Brahman is devotion.

**kleśo 'dhikataras teṣāṁ avyaktāsakta-cetasām
avyaktā hi gatir duḥkhaṁ dehavadbhir avāpyate(12-5)**

Comm: For a person who identifies with the body, it is very difficult to attain the state of Brahman. Until the attachment to the body is removed, it is not possible to keep the mind fixed in the unmanifest, attributeless Brahman. Brahman is never manifest in any way. From beginningless time, the individual soul has been living in the body. To keep alive the thought “I am not this material body” while acting in worldly life is very hard. Controlling the attraction of the senses for their objects is as difficult as stopping the flow of a river. For this reason, the realization of that unmanifest Brahman is also very difficult. In this verse, the Lord explains the difference between the path of Jnana Yoga and the path of Bhakti Yoga, though both lead to the same goal in the end. Influenced by holy company, study of scriptures, the words of the Guru, and the glory of the unmanifest, some seekers choose the attributeless path of worship as the highest. But in the beginning of practice, because of lack of renunciation and strong body-identity, the mind cannot remain absorbed in the attributeless truth. Because of past impressions (yoga-bhrashta), some seekers naturally like spiritual practice and naturally feel dispassion for worldly life, and they can attain success in this path. In Saguna worship, the object of worship is God with form and qualities. For the seeker’s mind and senses, God’s form, name, play, and qualities become supports. In the path of Bhakti Yoga, it is very easy and natural to remain engaged in God’s direct service. The devotee of Saguna Brahman depends on God to remove worldly attachment. In Nirguna worship, there is no support for the mind and senses. The Nirguna seeker tries to remove worldly desires by using his own discrimination. Since he depends on discrimination and his own effort, he gives importance to his own strength in practice, and attainment becomes delayed. Because the Nirguna seeker considers the object of worship to be without qualities, formless, and indifferent, he does not truly experience God’s grace. In the Shrimad Bhagavata, both the practice and the goal of the non-dualists have been called troublesome. On the other hand, the path of devotion has been described as supremely blissful and auspicious in both practice and attainment. If the conscious soul merges into the unmanifest state of the Supreme, then its individual status is destroyed. As long as one thinks of oneself as having form, the idea of the Lord as formless remains only imagination. When the seeker, by discrimination between self

and non-self, realizes himself as beyond the five sheaths and formless, and considers the body as “so aham” (I am not this), then he can realize the Supreme as beyond the five elements and formless. At that time, after giving up the limitations of sheaths and elements, the formless self and the formless Supreme become one, and the soul attains Salokya Mukti (living in the same realm as God). In reality, the soul is of the nature of consciousness and has a body of pure awareness. But because of having a body, during the time of practice and the time of result, the unmanifest truth—which is opposite to natural loving devotion—remains painful for the seeker. If there is no discrimination and intense renunciation in practice, then this becomes very painful for the embodied being who has deep attachments. Therefore, the spiritual practice of worshipping the formless, changeless, all-pervading, and attributeless reality is not the best. For this reason, Saguna Brahman worship, that is, worshipping God with body, mind, and speech, is the superior path. The Saguna devotee attains Salokya Mukti and lives in the Supreme Abode with God. By complete surrender, the devotee enjoys the supreme bliss of God’s presence and lordship—this is called Samipya Mukti (closeness to God). For one who thinks himself to be a body, God also appears as one with a body. For one who sees himself as the witness and seer of the vital-sheath body, and considers himself as non-different from Brahman, for him God is unmanifest and formless.

**ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannyasya mat-parāḥ
ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate (12-06)**

**teṣām ahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt
bhavāmi na-cirāt pārtha mayy āveśita-cetasām (12-7)**

Comm: Those who dedicate all their actions to me, rely on me, and worship me with exclusive devotion, keeping their mind focused only on me, O Arjuna, I quickly deliver them from the ocean of birth and death. Lord Krishna praises the glory of devotion, saying that even without attaining philosophical knowledge, one can easily achieve liberation from the painful cycle of worldly existence through exclusive devotion. Worshipping the personal, manifested form of the divine is much easier than worshipping the unmanifested. Sri Ramakrishna Dev has written that devotion means worshipping God with body, mind, and speech. This includes serving and worshipping God with hands, visiting His sacred places with feet, listening to His divine qualities and glories with ears, seeing His image with eyes, chanting His name and praises with the voice, and remembering His form and divine acts with the mind. All actions of the body are thus dedicated to Him. A devotee, considering the entire world as a manifestation of God, serves all beings to please God and knows nothing else. With the feeling of “My only refuge is Lord Girdhar Gopal, and there is no other,” a devotee establishes a relationship with God, which is called exclusive devotion. By saying “I offer everything to Krishna” and giving up desire for results, performing actions as inspired by God is called dedicating actions to Him. Faithfully

performing duties according to one's caste and stage of life is also equivalent to offering actions to God. Considering God as everything and completely surrendering oneself to Him is called being devoted to Him. "Everything" means accepting God as the supreme lover, the ultimate well-wisher, and the final destination, and accepting all events as His will and grace with faith. If questions arise in the mind about favourable or unfavourable circumstances, it indicates that the desire for results and attachment still exist in the heart, which is not complete surrender. When one is fully surrendered to God, all actions of the devotee become offered to Him. Like an instrument, free from attachment and possessiveness, one must accept all actions as God's command. The purpose of actions becomes solely to attain God. God has clearly stated that He personally delivers such devotees from the material world quickly. A person drowning in the ocean, no matter how skilled, cannot reach the shore by their own efforts. However, if they raise their hand, someone from above extends a hand to rescue them. Similarly, by raising one's hand and taking refuge in God in the ocean of birth and death, God extends His hand and lifts the devotee up. According to the Srimad Bhagavatam, whatever is achieved through actions, penance, knowledge, and detachment, a devotee easily attains through devotion, including heaven, liberation, or God's abode, if desired. Unlike the knowledgeable or yogis, devotees do not need to strive for gradual liberation through worship or other means. God Himself willingly frees them from the illusion of the material world and engages them in loving service in His divine abode. Sri Vallabhacharya has written that focusing the mind on Krishna's form has such power that attaining the Supreme becomes effortless. In the Ras Panchadhyayi of the Srimad Bhagavatam, Shukadeva Ji answers Parikshit's question, stating that Lord Krishna's incarnation is for the welfare of humanity. A soul that focuses its mind on Krishna, whether through love or even hatred, attains liberation.

**mayy eva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya
nivasīṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ (12-8)**

Comm: Therefore, O Arjuna! You should fix your mind only in My form as the Supreme Brahman, the Highest Truth. Remove all desires and worldly attractions from your heart, and keep your mind absorbed only in Me. You must turn your deciding and choosing mind away from all pleasures, and connect it with the Supreme, most lovable Lord. For this, you must offer your intellect to God. In firm determination of the intellect, unlimited power lies hidden. By such determination, after properly understanding the truth of God's play, qualities, and power, the mind, which is under the control of the intellect, becomes steady in God. Until the goal of attaining God is firmly decided at the level of intellect, the mind and intellect cannot remain fixed in God. Because of ignorance-born attachment, the intellect remains fixed in collecting objects and enjoying pleasures. Therefore, the seeker must make a strong decision through intellect: "I must attain God." When pleasures, laziness, and carelessness are left aside, and self-study, association with saints, and following their teachings with eagerness in good conduct are practiced,

ignorance goes away. Then it becomes firmly established in the intellect that the Supreme Soul alone is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. He pervades the whole universe and resides in everyone's heart. With this strong conviction, even a wicked person is accepted by God as a saint. When mind and intellect are fixed in God, the devotee sees only God everywhere. Because from the beginning the devotee holds the belief that God is all-pervading. With such firm faith, worldly thoughts disappear, and only the relationship with the Supreme Soul remains. That means the soul begins to experience its natural state of being with the Supreme Soul. Swami Ramsukhdas has said: "The real truth is that the mind and intellect never by themselves attach to God, because they are part of lower nature, which is inert matter. When, by the power of the Supreme Soul within, the self becomes united with God, then mind and intellect automatically separate from worldly bonds. That means the veil of ignorance, which is maya, gets removed. Apart from God, there is no real existence of anything else. In reality, mind and intellect have no independent existence; they are alive only through the higher power of the Supreme. Therefore, to free the soul from the world, God asks to fix mind and intellect in Him. Lord Krishna, addressing Arjuna, is giving this teaching to the whole of mankind: devotion is the highest means and also the highest goal. Therefore, one's constant duty is to meditate on His eternal Shyamasundar form with full attention, and also to dedicate one's intellect only to Him. At the peak of devotion, the devotee attains the highest fruit—living with God as His associate and experiencing pure, unconditional love. He always remains in the presence of God—there is not the slightest doubt in this. From these words of the Lord, it is proved that the path and the attainment of devotion (bhakti-yoga) are the best of all.

**atha cittam samādhātum na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram
abhyāsa-yogena tato mām icchāptum dhanañjaya (12-9)**

**abhyāse 'py asamartho 'si mat-karma-paramo bhava
mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi (12-10)**

Comm: According to the earlier teaching, a person who is unable to keep his mind steadily absorbed can still try to reach God through the path of practice (Abhyasa Yoga). To make the mind steady, repeatedly thinking of the same one truth is called practice. The Lord says: "O dear Arjuna! If you feel yourself unable to keep your mind firmly fixed in Me, then try to reach Me through Abhyasa Yoga." In the eighth chapter (8/8) the Lord has said "Abhyasa Yoga Yuktena," showing that practice is also a form of yoga. Again, in the sixth chapter (6/35) He has said, "Abhyasena tu Kaunteya" – without practice, it is impossible to control the mind and senses. This Abhyasa Yoga is the root of all yogic disciplines. Ashtanga Yoga practices like remembrance, reflection, deep meditation, concentration, and absorption are all different forms of Abhyasa Yoga. With the inspiration of a true Guru or a skilled teacher, by practicing Abhyasa Yoga the mind slowly becomes attached to God, and exclusive devotion awakens. Acharya Shankara has said: "When the mind is

withdrawn from all other subjects and again and again established on a chosen support, that is called practice. By practicing in this way on the Self, attainment of God is possible. When mind and intellect are offered to God, at that very moment the nearness of God is attained.” According to different nature, interest, capacity, livelihood, and surroundings, people adopt different systems of practice. Commentator Jayadayal Goyandka in his *Tattva Vivechani* has mentioned some methods of Abhyasa Yoga: Realizing that just as fire is all-pervading, God too is all-pervading. Wherever the mind goes, think again and again that its qualities and power are the glory of the Supreme, the most lovable Lord. Withdrawing the mind from everywhere and repeatedly fixing it with faith and love on the chosen deity—whether Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, or Shri Krishna—using a metal image or picture as support. Repeatedly chanting the sound “Om” and meditating on the form of God within that sound. Repeating the name of God continuously with the natural rhythm of breathing, using beads or without beads. Having a strong desire to know the secret of the Supreme Self and repeatedly studying scriptures like the Gita, Bhagavatam, or Ramcharitmanas. Sitting before the rising sun, closing the eyes, and seeing the red glow within the mind. Considering that light as multiplied thousands of times as the radiance of the Supreme Narayana, practice focusing on that luminous form. Practicing pranayama under the guidance of an experienced Guru. If any of these practices are done with faith and devotion, gradually all sins and obstacles are destroyed, and in the end, God is surely attained. But the practice must be continued with enthusiasm and care. One should not give up practice due to laziness or impatience because of delayed results, nor reduce the effort. If the purpose of every practice is only to attain the Supreme, then it becomes Abhyasa Yoga. Through Abhyasa Yoga, the inner mind becomes pure, and the longing for God grows intense. When the heart feels strong eagerness and restlessness for God, the Ocean of Mercy Himself appears before the devotee. In the Gopal Tapani Upanishad there is a question: “What is Bhajana?” The answer is: “Bhajana means repeatedly tasting the nectar of the Divine Name.” One should think: “This mind is not mine, this intellect is not mine. They do not belong to a limited or weak being. They belong to the All-knowing and All-powerful Lord. Everything, including mind and intellect, is His.” By practicing this thought, the attainment of God becomes certain. The Lord also shows another easy way: “O Arjuna! If you are unable to practice in the above manner, then engage yourself in actions performed for My pleasure, and through them you will also reach perfection.” Worship of images, chanting of names, listening to divine pastimes, and direct service to the suffering and the sick—all should be accepted as actions done for Me. If in the mind one holds: “I am doing these works on God’s command, for His pleasure,” then the defects of attachment, hatred, desire, anger, and greed are destroyed from the heart. “Mat-Karmoparamo Bhava” means—be devoted only to My works. To work for the welfare of all beings for the satisfaction of God, without attachment or possessiveness, and offering one’s physical and mental effort according to one’s capacity, is “Mat-Karma Parayana.” When one serves God with patience, love, and devotion, pure love awakens

in the heart, and day by day the attainment of God becomes certain. The nine practices of devotion, which are forms of such divine action, are: Kirtanam – singing the Divine Name. Smaranam – constant remembrance or japa. Shravanam – hearing the glories and pastimes of the Lord. Pada-sevanam – service of His feet or worship of His sandals. Archanam – offering leaves, flowers, fruits, and water. Vandanam – singing praises or prayers. Dasyam – serving in the spirit of a servant. Sakhyam – living as a friend of God. Atma-nivedanam – complete self-surrender. To remain engaged in these ninefold practices of devotion is to be “Mat-Karma Parayana”—fully devoted to God’s work.

**athaitad apy aśakto ’si kartuṁ mad-yogam āśritaḥ
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān (12-11)**

Comm: In the previous verse, it was said, “Do your actions for the pleasure of God.” But if that is not possible due to a lack of strong faith and devotion towards the personal, manifested form of God, Then, in this verse, God advises to follow Karma Yoga — perform your duties with a controlled mind and renounce the desire for the fruits of your actions. This method is suitable for those who have interest in performing practical and socially useful actions. Such people do not consider themselves as instruments of God, Nor do they think that they are doing work to please God. They only have a firm belief that it is a human’s right to act, but not to claim the results. According to Vedantins (the philosophers of Vedanta), action is inert and perishable — it gets destroyed every moment. The Vedanta philosophy states: “Results come only by the will of God.” The results of actions do not depend on the power of the doer but on the divine will. Therefore, one should perform all prescribed duties — sacrifices, charity, austerity, service, and activities for livelihood and body maintenance according to varnashrama dharma — as a duty, without any desire for results. By trying to give up the desire for enjoyment, the mind, intellect, senses, and body come under control. A human being is usually bound to experience the results of his actions. If one performs actions with desire, attachment, or a sense of doership, then from those enjoyments new actions are born, and these again become the cause of bondage. Enjoyment is certainly the result of some previous action, But if that enjoyment does not generate new actions due to the absence of attachment and desire, that is called “renunciation of the fruits of action.” When one renounces the fruits of action with a controlled mind and a noble purpose, attachment to sense objects is destroyed. Then the inner self becomes pure, and the impulse to perform actions becomes calm. When the inner self becomes free from disturbances, one experiences sattvic happiness — that is, deep peace. In that state of sattvic happiness, if one does not get bound by the desire for enjoyment, Then that state leads one to the experience of the Supreme Reality and unites one with it. Gradually, the spiritual seeker follows the path of realizing the Self and the Supreme Self. He attains the state of pure devotion (shuddha bhakti yoga), serving God with love and dedication. Whatever happiness or sorrow a person experience in worldly life according to his past actions (prarabdha), He accepts all of it as God’s grace and

remains always content. Therefore, renunciation of the fruits of action is considered an independent means for attaining God. But one must remember that forbidden actions — such as lying, hypocrisy, adultery, violence, theft, etc. — are not included in “all actions.” These should always be completely avoided. Renunciation of the fruits of action does not mean abandoning the actions themselves outwardly. It means giving up attachment, possessiveness, desires, and cravings connected with the results of action. In the previous three verses, God has explained the different methods of practising devotion-based Karma Yoga according to the temperament and ability of different seekers. They are as follows: (1) Fix your mind firmly on God’s form and, with steady understanding, try to develop unconditional love for Him through hearing, chanting, and remembering His names, forms, qualities, and divine acts. (2) If the mind and intellect cannot be concentrated in this way, then with a desire for attaining God, follow the path of discipline and regular devotional practice (vaidhi bhakti). (3) If one is unable to practise even this regular discipline, then he can still attain perfection by doing all his work for God’s pleasure. In this verse, God gives the simplest path: If you are unable to follow any of the above methods, then perform Vedic actions with a controlled mind and give up the desire for results. By performing actions in this way, the seeker attains the gradual path that leads to Para-bhakti — supreme devotion, and ultimately realizes the unity of the soul (Atman) with the Supreme Soul (Paramatman).

**śreya hi jñānam abhyāsāj jñānād dhyānaṁ viśiṣyate
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas tyāgac chāntir anantaram (12-12)**

Comm: Lord Sri Krishna has explained four methods of spiritual practice—surrender yoga, practice yoga, action in devotion to God, and renunciation of fruits—from verses 8 to 11. Although these four methods of spiritual practice appear distinct from each other in the initial stage, with the progress of practice, the attainment of God is possible only through the collective perfection of these four actions: practice-oriented, contemplation-oriented, remembrance-oriented, and renunciation-oriented. Practicing any spiritual method blindly without knowing its essence and principles leads to delay in achieving yoga success. Contemplative knowledge is superior to practice. By investing intellect in the form of God and contemplating through scriptures related to God, words, and logic, one attains indirect knowledge in the form of self-determination. By contemplating on God’s qualities, influence, opulence, pastimes, and so on, the desire for attaining God awakens in the inner self. Understanding by focusing attention on the soul level is especially superior to hearing and knowing scriptural knowledge and guru’s words. When the mind becomes stable through meditation, the impurities and restlessness of the mind are destroyed, which is not possible merely through indirect or scriptural knowledge. The desired deity resides in meditation. If one renounces the fruits of actions while keeping focus on yoga with surrender to the desired deity, the desired deity himself takes responsibility for one’s welfare and protection. Every favourable

and unfavourable situation—such as health-illness, wealth-poverty, honor-dishonor, criticism-praise—appears as the fruit of karma. Since karma is not eternal, whatever is obtained as the fruit of karma is also not eternal. Therefore, having attachment and possessiveness towards it is merely an illusion. The desire for enjoying fruits is the main cause of breaking the concentration of the mind. Therefore, renunciation of attachment to fruits is the seed of karma yoga. When desires and attachment to fruits are eliminated, all actions become non-actions. Through the power accumulated in the inner self by continuous meditation, scriptures and guru's words become the main helpers in advancing on the spiritual path by making good use of it. As a result, all doubts about the yoga principle of the Supreme Person God are removed. One also understands well the nature of the relationship between soul and Supreme Soul, God's qualities, influence, pastimes, and the impermanence of worldly enjoyment, along with other spiritual principles. After purification of the inner self, the urge to perform new actions calms down, and with the dissolution of mind and intellect, meditation on the Supreme Soul at the soul level, that is, remembrance, is effortlessly achieved. The longing for heavenly pleasures and liberation pleasures is removed, and soon the supreme peace in the form of cessation from the world is attained. In this progressive practice of devotion yoga, there is no need to change ashram, country, etc. rather, whatever the practitioner is doing in whatever situation, without abandoning actions by nature, without renouncing relatives, one can achieve self-welfare in every situation. If one merely fixes the mind and intellect on the manifest or unmanifest form of God with desire, considering Him as the worshipable deity, meditation cannot reach the accomplished level. The connection with inertness is severed as easily through renunciation of fruits of actions as it is not so easily through practices like knowledge, practice, meditation, austerity, etc. Renunciation of fruits of actions without knowledge and meditation is superior to meditation without knowledge and renunciation of fruits of actions. The intention is that for spiritual progress, 'attitude' has more importance than action. Attainment of God occurs only through dispassion in the world and exclusive love for God. Swami Ram Sukhdas has said: "Nothing is mine, nothing is needed for myself, and there is nothing to do for myself—these three thought streams are the root mantra of renouncing desire for fruits." From a philosophical perspective, there is no relation at all between the soul's nature and inert objects including the body. Therefore, whose renunciation to do? Even though something was not one's own, due to illusion, one considers it as one's own, and that has to be renounced. That is, the assumed "I and mine" relationship with the world has to be renounced. There is a specific limit to the relationship with every object in the world. But renunciation is infinite, meaning there is no limit to the severance of relationship. As long as there is attachment to limited objects, the infinite Supreme Soul principle cannot be experienced. If the feeling remains in the mind that one has renounced and is renouncing, that renunciation is limited, and this feeling becomes the cause of increasing ego or pride. When the practitioner does not feel whether there

is attachment to the world or not, in that state, renunciation automatically becomes infinite. Since the Supreme Soul principle is above country, time, object, person, etc., in that moment, attainment of the infinite Supreme Soul principle occurs. ‘Peace’ arises only from renunciation.

**adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣamī (12-13)**

**santuṣṭaḥ satataṃ yogī yatātmā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ (12-14)**

Comm: By the earlier mentioned practice of devotion, one attains supreme peace or the nearness of God. God describes the divine qualities of such devotees, who are filled with divine wealth, in eight verses (13–20). This description is also called the “Amṛtāṣṭaka.” By daily recitation of these verses, one becomes free from worldly sufferings like death, old age, and disease. A true devotee has no hatred towards any living being. He sees all beings as the Self and does not even hate those who cause him harm. He is friendly towards everyone, compassionate, without attachment to wife, children, and family, Free from the sense of “I” and “mine,” without pride, and free from bodily ego. He remains equal-minded in both happiness and sorrow, forgiving, and tolerant. United with devotion, he is always cheerful and ever content. He controls his body, is firm in resolve regarding God, and offers his mind and intellect fully to God. Such a devotee, endowed with these qualities, is very dear to Me. Explanation of qualities: Adveṣṭā (Non-hating): Every living being is truly a part of God. So, even the smallest feeling of hatred towards anyone is actually hatred towards God Himself. Thinking this way, such a devotee always remains free from violence and hatred. Maitraḥ (Friendly): Seeing God present in all beings; he becomes friendly towards everyone. Since the devotee’s nature is similar to God’s, he naturally has friendship and compassion for every being, without selfishness. Karuṇaḥ (Compassionate): On seeing the suffering of others, he tries to remove it. Even if someone behaves like an enemy, he wishes for their welfare and shows compassion. Nirmamaḥ (Without possessiveness): He does not keep attachment towards his body, senses, mind, or intellect, nor to related persons or objects. He completely removes the sense of “I” and “mine” from his heart, and has no attachment even to wife and children. Nirahaṅkāraḥ (Without ego): He is free from body-identification and false pride. When ego is absent, divine qualities naturally shine in the heart. Just as eyes cannot see themselves directly, a person cannot easily see his own ego, but others can notice it. Sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ (Equal in pleasure and pain): He remains calm in both happiness and sorrow. He accepts suffering as God’s compassion for destroying past sins. Thinking, “God’s will is always auspicious, and past karma must be experienced,” he remains peaceful, steady, and patient. He does not become restless with joy or grief in favourable or unfavourable situations. Feeling happiness

or sorrow itself is not wrong, but letting the mind get disturbed by it is the real fault. Kṣamī (Forgiving): He thinks that harm done to him is only the result of his past karma. Therefore, he remains kind, forgiving, and tolerant even towards those who harm him. He does not get angry over small faults of others. Even towards someone who harms him, he has no desire to punish, but rather gives them fearlessness. Satatam tuṣṭaḥ yogī (Always content yogi): Always absorbed in God, he remains cheerful like a perfected yogi. He faithfully follows the spiritual practices taught by his Guru. Knowing that satisfaction from persons and objects is temporary, he finds true and lasting joy only in the experience of the Supreme Self. Yatātmā (Self-controlled): He has mastery over his mind, senses, and body, and thus becomes free from inner disturbances. Dṛḍha-niścayaḥ (Firm resolve): He has unshakable faith in his eternal relationship with God. He is never influenced by false arguments. He firmly believes: “I am the servant of God.” Arpita-mana-buddhiḥ (Mind and intellect offered): Such a devotee has completely surrendered his mind and intellect to God. He loves none other than God. Once he fixes God-realization as his only goal, he belongs fully to God. His mind and intellect naturally remain united with God. He constantly remembers and meditates on God. Whoever has these qualities, and who has causeless, exclusive love for God, never separated from his true nature, That devotee is very dear to Me.

**yasmān nodvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ
harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegair mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ (12-15)**

Comm: My devoted follower does not cause distress to any creature in the world. They themselves are not distressed by any person, object, or situation in the world. A devotee embodies compassion and love, like God. One whose nature is to do good for others never knowingly causes pain, suffering, fear, or distress to others. A devotee does not become overly excited by gaining desired objects, nor do they worry about the loss or potential loss of enjoyable things. They do not develop feelings of envy toward others’ excellence. Even when enduring pain or suffering according to their fate, a devotee remains undisturbed due to the absence of attachment or aversion. Sometimes, a practitioner may feel distressed in their mind due to not achieving the expected results of their spiritual practice. By detaching the mind from worldly matters and constantly engaging in yoga and meditation, it is possible to avoid external suffering or pain through mental strength. However, it is a difficult practice to avoid causing distress or disturbance to others, whether unintentionally or intentionally. If someone becomes distressed due to their own negative mindset, the devotee is not the cause of it; rather, it is due to their own mental flaw. Feeling irritation within oneself due to others’ excellence is called “resentment,” which subtly resides in the inner self. Sometimes, this flaw manifests as envy even toward family or relatives. The world is such that no matter what one does, they will often be criticized by others. Instead of being disturbed by this, a wise devotee, relying on God, endures it with a calm mind. A devotee, always fulfilled,

perceives themselves as the witnessing soul or self. They see their most beloved deity everywhere and in everyone, remaining compassionate and self-realized. No distress ever arises from the witnessing soul or the divine. Due to the divine nature of the saints' thoughts, an atmosphere of peace and stillness surrounds them. Thus, merely being in the presence of saints brings a sense of soul-satisfying contentment.

**anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣa udāsīno gata-vyathaḥ
sarvārambha-parityāgī yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ (12-16)**

Comm: The devotee who has no desire for worldly or heavenly results is dear to Me. He is completely pure both outwardly and inwardly. He is devoted to his prescribed duties and to the meditation and worship of God. He is free from partiality. He is free from so-called worldly sorrows. He gives up starting any new work for worldly gain. Such a devotee is dear to Me. My devotee never depends on others for any effort. He never keeps expectations from anyone. For him, all expectations end only in attaining the Supreme Self. Since he has no need for any object, his body and sense activities go on naturally according to destiny, without desire or craving. His inner mind is always pure because it is free from attachment, hatred, joy, sorrow, lust, anger, and such defects. Keeping his body clean and maintaining his livelihood through just and honest earnings is also part of outer purity. By seeing, touching, talking, or thinking of such a devotee, others also become purified. The attainment of God is the highest aim of human life. Therefore, one who has fulfilled this aim—meaning he has realized God—is truly a capable and wise person in the world. A devotee always remains indifferent, meaning that no situation, event, or condition can disturb him. Because of attachment or hatred, people may become false witnesses, give unjust judgment, or try to bring unfair gain or loss to others. But the devotee remains free from all these kinds of partiality. When the body suffers from disease, or when there is separation from wife and children, or when wealth and home are lost—these must be endured as the results of past actions. But in all this, no inner disturbance arises in the devotee's mind. The devotee understands very well this secret: "Whatever happens in the world is God's play. It is all His power of illusion. Man is only an instrument." Here the word "gatavyathaḥ" means—when someone causes him pain, the devotee accepts it as the fruit of his own past actions, and remains absorbed in joy by gaining God's grace and pleasure. Because of firm faith in the true scriptures and the words of the Guru, he never mistakenly makes effort towards anything that can become an obstacle to the path of devotion. God also follows such an impartial devotee. Because the seeker's only eagerness is to attain the Supreme Self, he never begins any new action with the aim of enjoying pleasures, wealth, comfort, luxury, or honor. Even if in practical life some action starts through him, he has no attraction, attachment, need, or special interest in it.

**yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati
śubhāśubha-parityāgī bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ (12-17)**

Comm: A person who does not become overjoyed or absorbed in worldly pleasures, such as wealth, wife, or children, is dear to me. They do not harbour hatred when receiving undesirable things. They do not grieve over the loss of beloved wealth or people. They do not develop new desires for unattained cherished objects. They renounce from their mind all attachment to good or bad deeds, as well as the fruits of virtuous or sinful actions. Such a devoted person is dear to me. A devotee never grieves over the past or desires anything for the future. They accept whatever good or bad comes in the present as fate and perform their duties with a balanced mind. After developing supreme devotion to God, the devotee considers the all-powerful, all-supporting, and supremely compassionate God as their most beloved. A pure devotee, having attained God, becomes fully satisfied. Established in supreme bliss, their experience of an eternal, perfect relationship with God becomes unshakable. The entire world appears as a manifestation of God's form, and their inner self naturally becomes free from flaws like attachment and aversion. Sacrifices, austerities, charity, and duties prescribed by scriptures for livelihood or bodily sustenance, according to caste and life stage, are offered to God. In doing so, there remains no trace of possessiveness, attachment, or desire for results. Such a wise devotee renounces both sinful and virtuous deeds. Actions do not bind a person; it is the attachment and aversion toward actions that create bondage. All actions of a devotee are free from attachment and aversion, and due to their exclusive love for God, they are dear to God.

**samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoh
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅga-vivarjitaḥ (12-18)**

**tulya-nindā-stutir maunī santuṣṭo yena kenacit
aniketaḥ sthira-matir bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ (12-19)**

Comm: The devotee of God keeps equal feeling towards both enemy and friend, who show enmity or friendship from outside. That means, in any situation, he does not show partiality but sees them both equally. In matters of honour and dishonour, he remains indifferent. He does not feel any inner disturbance. The meaning of “equanimity in cold and heat” is this: When the senses meet or separate from their objects, no disturbance arises in the mind. In favourable or unfavourable conditions of mind and intellect, he keeps balanced wisdom. In blame and praise, he remains equal. He is always thoughtful and controls his speech. For maintaining the body, he remains content with whatever he gets by destiny. He has no attachment or affection towards his body or his place of residence. He is steady in wisdom. Such a virtuous devotee is dear to Me. If someone, out of jealousy or selfish gain, treats another as enemy or friend, still the devotee always sees God everywhere. Therefore, he remains equal towards all. In the eyes of the devotee, there is no difference at all between enemy and friend.

He does not feel attachment towards those who praise him, nor does he feel hatred towards those who blame him. For making the mind impartial and the speech pure and controlled, external silence is also helpful for the seeker. To give up worldly contact only outwardly, but still keep attachment in the mind, is not real renunciation. But if affection and attachment to persons and objects are removed, then worldly contact does no harm. The nourishment of the body happens by destiny. Here, human desire has no role. Without desire, the devotee makes proper and righteous effort to maintain his body according to varnashrama (social order). Whatever he gets according to destiny, he remains satisfied with that. After surrendering body-maintenance to destiny, all his dutiful actions or good deeds are aimed only towards God. The word “Aniketa” means “without a fixed residence”. This shows the life of renunciation. Here, it is said as a special quality of a devotee: “The perfect devotee has no affection or attachment towards his house.” If someone has no ego, no sense of “mine”, and no attachment towards the body, then though the body remains, he is called “disembodied” like a knower. In the same way, one who has no attachment and affection for his house, though he lives in a house, is “Aniketa”—without fixed abode. According to Lokmanya Tilak’s commentary: A devotee has no permanent address. Wherever he stays at a particular time, that is his residence for that time. For the devotee, God Himself is the true home. Because of firm and decisive wisdom about the ultimate truth, the devotee remains steady in his own view and knowledge. The devotee, who always remains steady in supreme devotion, is dear to Me. When a pure devotee lives in this world, what type of inner reactions are seen—To explain this, the Lord has separately used the word “Me Priyah” (dear to Me) and described those forty qualities (from verse 13 to 19) in seven verses under five groups. Because of differences in practice, destiny, caste, stage of life, place, time, qualification, and situation, there are small differences in nature and character among the devotees of God. According to one’s own liking, faith, ability, and nature, the seeker should choose the group that suits him. He should consider that as his ideal and try to shape his life accordingly.

**ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate
śraddadhānā mat-paramā bhaktās te ’tīva me priyāḥ (12-20)**

Comm: At the end of this chapter, Lord Shri Krishna says: “O Arjuna! The devotees who take refuge in Me, who accept ‘I Myself’ as the highest goal, who follow with faith and trust this nectar-like dharma leading to liberation, as explained before—such faithful devotees are very dear to Me.” All the qualities that God described are not just natural tendencies. They are dharmas born from devotion and peace. Therefore, God has called them nectar-like dharma. The fruit of other dharmas may give heaven or nectar, but after drinking that nectar, that dharma slowly fades away. But the meaning of the words “dharmyam ca amrutam ca eva” is this: keep practicing this nectar-like dharma. Here the dharma will not diminish. Instead, dharma will grow, and supreme bliss will be attained.

In the previous seven verses, God described forty qualities of the perfect devotee in five groups. These groups are full of dharma and are like nectar. For a seeker, this nectar-like dharma can be practiced only when wealth, pride, honour, respect, possessions, and pleasures are given up, and God-realization becomes the only aim. Attachment, hatred, and such emotions are not dharmas of the inner mind. They are only defects. When the seeker develops intense longing and restlessness to attain God, then all his faults begin to vanish by themselves. By practicing spiritual effort, the devotee himself can understand how far he has progressed. When love for God and divine joy begin to shine in his heart, then the attainment of God does not remain far away. Even if God-realization has not yet happened, the seeker becomes surrendered to God. Once he is surrendered, he has no second object of love besides God. Until the seeker experiences everything as God, God considers Himself indebted to that seeker. From this view, the perfected devotee is certainly dear to God. But even the ordinary seeker becomes very dear to God, because he sincerely tries to practice this nectar-like dharma with good nature.

Conclusion of the chapter: Pure and exclusive devotion alone is the easy and quick way to attain God without suffering. This is the essence of this chapter. This chapter is especially useful as guidance on the path of devotion. At the beginning of the chapter, Arjuna asked: “Who is the better devotee—the one who worships the formless Brahman, or the one who serves God with form, aiming for His nearness?” In answer, God clearly said: “To reach the Supreme Person, the path of devotion is the best and easiest way. There is not the slightest doubt in this.” As long as body-consciousness remains, attainment of the unmanifest form is full of difficulty. Because the unmanifest can only be reached at the time of mind’s stillness and dissolution. Before that, this body itself becomes the obstacle. The devotee who is surrendered to Me, who offers all his actions to Me, who constantly meditates on My divine form like a steady flow of oil—I Myself quickly lift him from the ocean of worldly existence. Therefore, keep practicing to fix your mind in Me. If you are unable to practice this, then do your duties as work dedicated to Me. Even then, you can attain Me. If you cannot do even this, then take refuge in a realized, wise, and steady saint, and renounce all fruits of action. By such renunciation, you will attain supreme peace. To perform prescribed actions according to scripture, with attachment to God—this is called *vaidhi bhakti* (regulated devotion). The Vaishnava teachers have described sixty-four practices of *vaidhi bhakti*. Among them, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* has given importance to nine types of devotion: listening, chanting, remembering, serving God’s feet, worshipping, offering prayers, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender. Until the seeker enters the circle of pure love and exclusive devotion to God, all these forms of *vaidhi bhakti* are necessary. In this regard, Shri Ramakrishna said: “When love for God becomes like family affection, then no rules remain. When attachment to God arises, then *japa* and other formal practices fall away. The devotee wants only God. Freed from all labels, he becomes absorbed in God’s service alone. When intoxicated with divine

love, who will bother about formal duties?” In the Srimad Bhagavatam, God says: “As long as the feeling of My presence in all beings does not arise, till then, worship Me with your speech, mind, and body.” The one-pointed devotee surrenders body, mind, wealth—everything to God. He becomes absorbed in Him. With faith and trust, he constantly thinks of God for His vision. He tries to practice this nectar-like dharma as spoken by Me. Such a devotee is very dear to Me. Thus, for the lovers of the Gita, who see the Gita as a union of karma, bhakti, and jnana, the section on worship (Upasana Kanda) ends here. In the three divisions of the Gita which reveal the mahavakya “Tat Tvam Asi” (Thou art That), the middle division, which explains the word “Tat” (Brahman-God), is now completed. According to Shri Vidyavachaspati, “Rajavidya”—the supreme knowledge most dear to Lord Krishna—namely devotion—has been completed here.

Om Tat Sat iti Srimad Bhagavad Gitaasu Upanishatsu Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga Shaastre Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvaade ‘Bhakti Yoga’ Naama Dwadash Adhyaayah
||12||

Om Tat Sat — In this way, with this holy name of God, the twelfth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, called ‘Bhakti Yoga’ which is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna came to an end.



JNANA-VIJNANA TATTVA



BACKGROUND

The eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita are divided into three groups of six chapters each, called Shatkas. The first Shatka explains Karma Tattva (the doctrine of action), the second Shatka explains Bhakti Tattva (the doctrine of devotion), and the third Shatka explains Jnana–Vijnana Tattva (the doctrine of knowledge and realization). The Vedic sentence “Tat Tvam Asi” (“That Thou Art”) represents these three Shatkas — ‘Tvam’ (you) corresponds to the first six chapters — Karma section, ‘Tat’ (that) corresponds to the middle six chapters — Devotion or Upasana section, and ‘Asi’ (are) corresponds to the last six chapters — Knowledge section. Each Shatka is named according to the type of Yoga that predominates in it. In the first six chapters, subjects useful for Nishkama Karma Yoga (selfless action), Bhakti mixed with knowledge, and the understanding of Jivatma and Paramatma are described. In the second six chapters, the glory of devotion, the difference between higher and lower devotion, the greatness of the Lord’s divine nature, the greatness of single-minded devotees, the uniqueness of devotion in various modes of worship, and its supreme position are all discussed. In the present third Shatka — that is, the last six chapters — the subjects of Prakriti, Purusha, Kshetra, and Kshetrajna that were briefly explained earlier are now elaborately discussed. According to commentators, the word “Asi” symbolizes the unity of the individual soul with Brahman, which is explained in this final section. From Chapter 13 to Chapter 18 — the six chapters of this Shatka — include: Kshetra–Kshetrajna Yoga, Guna–Traya Vibhaga Yoga, Purushottama Yoga, Daivasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga, Shraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga, and Moksha–Sannyasa Yoga. The conclusion of this Shatka is that only after attaining direct knowledge of the Self and the Supreme does one renounce all worldly duties and take refuge solely in God

as an exclusive devotee. Without complete knowledge of the Supreme Being, worship cannot become perfect. Knowing the truth, glory, and mystery of the Lord's formless and attributeless essence is called Jnana (knowledge). Directly seeing, hearing, or realizing through yogic experience the divine play, greatness, and power of the Lord's manifested and unmanifested forms is called Vijnana (realization). Therefore, in these chapters, Lord Krishna mainly presents the knowledge of the Self and the Supreme. In various contexts, the Lord reveals His divine qualities and powers and urges Arjuna to take refuge in Him. He declares clearly that He is the creator, destroyer, and sustainer of all — both with and without form, beyond Maya, omnipotent, and the supreme foundation of all — present now before Arjuna in the form of Sri Krishna Himself. All these teachings are His supreme and most secret knowledge. Only a true devotee can realize this complete Jnana-Vijnana Tattva (knowledge and realization of His total being). The Supreme Lord, who is the source of the entire universe and the embodiment of all knowledge and wisdom, is the ultimate cause of all causes and the object of all yogic practices. A wise person follows the path of Jnana-Vijnana to realize that divine essence. When the Supreme Cause is known, the knowledge of the mind and intellect becomes transformed into direct realization. The experience of the pure existence of the Supreme Self is Vijnana. After this realization, all doubts about the Lord's formless and formed aspects disappear, and there remains nothing else to know. Lord Krishna did not simply give theoretical advice to Arjuna; He actually guided him toward the highest experience of the Self. Therefore, He first instructed Arjuna to listen with faith and devotion to this doctrine of Jnana-Vijnana. Jnana is external and indirect; Vijnana is internal and direct. Knowledge can be obtained by effort, but realization comes through the Vedantic process — when the ego is destroyed, the light of Self-knowledge shines instantly within. When one understands the distinction between knowledge and realization, complete understanding of Brahman as eternal truth dawns naturally, and at that stage one becomes all-knowing and divine-like. Hence, Jnana-Vijnana Tattva is very fruitful and rare. Great commentators on the Gita have explained this doctrine differently, according to their yogic approach. According to Sri Shankaracharya, the teachings of the Upanishads, scriptures, and the words of the Guru constitute Jnana. The knowledge that is accompanied by direct experience is Vijnana. Through reasoning and meditation on the revealed truth, the aspirant removes all contrary ideas arising from indirect scriptural knowledge, and through deep contemplation attains the direct realization of Brahman — this experience is Vijnana. According to the Dvaita (dualistic) school, the senses, mind, and intellect are all material, and hence they cannot know the transcendental Supreme Self. The Supreme can only be known by the Supreme Himself. According to another view, the divine ability of great souls to perform many actions at the same time is the use of knowledge — that is, Vijnana. Just as the Supreme Lord works simultaneously in all hearts, remaining untouched by the play of nature — that power is called Vijnana. Sri Vidyavachaspati explains that seeing unity in diversity is Jnana, and seeing the One expanding into many forms is Vijnana. In other words, perceiving the cause within the

effect is Jnana, and perceiving many effects arising from one cause is Vijnana. Seeing creation, existence, and dissolution of the threefold world in the one manifested form — that is the process of realization. As all earthen pots of different names and forms are essentially made of clay, when one knows clay, one understands that all such objects are essentially one. Likewise, when one knows the single truth — Sat — that pervades all existence, true knowledge of the universe arises. All names and forms are mere imagination; in practical life they appear different, but in reality, everything is pervaded by the same Sat (Truth). Considering all these views, the essence is that the power, glory, and majesty of God are limitless. Though beyond human intellect, the realization that one Supreme Reality exists in all is Jnana–Vijnana. In the path of devotion, the devotee first accepts and then realizes; in the path of knowledge, one first knows and then accepts. Thus, both paths ultimately lead to the same perfection of Yoga. Only the Lord Himself has the authority and capacity to reveal His full nature. No one else can ever know it completely. The specialty of these last six chapters is that they contain many Vedic ideas. In Chapter 13, the terms Kshetra and Kshetrajna are taken from the Rig Veda. Kshetra means the body, and Kshetrajna means the soul. Knowledge of both is regarded by the Lord as the highest wisdom. The Lord also explains clearly what Purusha and Prakriti are, and the difference between knowledge and ignorance. Here, Kshetra refers to lower nature (Apara Prakriti), while Kshetrajna refers to higher nature (Para Prakriti), the conscious principle. With the help of this conscious nature, the entire world is sustained. Even the individual soul, being related to Prakriti, is part of it. The individual soul is the Lord’s higher, conscious, and changeless power — hence it cannot be considered separate from Him. Though the soul is part of the Supreme, its association with lower nature makes it appear as Jiva. The conscious principle is neither cause nor effect. Until self-knowledge dawns, the ego — “I am the doer” — remains. When consciousness identifies with lower nature, it becomes the living being (Jiva), whom the Lord calls the witness, the permitter, the supporter, the enjoyer, and the great Lord. In Chapter 14, the verse “Tāsām Brahma Mahad Yonirahaṁ Bījapradāḥ Pitā” corresponds to the Rig Vedic idea — “Heaven is the father, and Earth the mother.” The Self-existent Lord is the seed-giving Father, and the great Nature is the womb-bearing Mother. The Self-existent is the subtle unmanifest principle, and the Supreme Mother is the great manifest Nature. By knowing this supreme truth, sages have crossed the ocean of worldly existence and attained perfection. The three Gunas — Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas — born of Nature bind the imperishable soul to the body. He who serves Me with unwavering devotion transcends these Gunas and attains Brahmanhood. In Chapter 15, the Lord describes the world as the Ashvattha tree — the impermanent tree with roots above. “Ashvattha” means “that which does not last till tomorrow.” It is also symbolic of eternal time, for which the Vedas describe the universe as a tree, with Brahman as its totality. This vast universe has many worlds within it, each having life and existence — called Hiranya or Retas in the Vedas. Thus, Hiranyagarbha is another name for the universe. The same is described as the imperishable Ashvattha tree. The root of this tree

is above — that is, the immortal Brahman. It has neither beginning nor end. The world made of material elements is perishable, while the soul or life within it is imperishable. Though both are different, their source is one — the Lord Himself. Therefore, beyond both perishable and imperishable is the Supreme Being — Purushottama. Though the world is the Lord’s manifestation, human beings are divided into two natures — divine (Daivi Sampad) and demonic (Asuri Sampad). Divine nature is truth, immortality, light, and purity; demonic nature is falsehood, darkness, death, and impurity. A person with demonic qualities becomes attached to enjoyment and sees life only as pleasure. Such a person sees the fleshly body as an object of delight, not impurity. Wealth, pride, arrogance, lust, and anger dominate his mind and intellect. In Chapter 17, Arjuna asks Lord Krishna what kind of faith people possess in their food, sacrifice, austerity, and charity — according to the dominance of Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas. In Chapter 18, Lord Krishna reveals the most secret teaching of the entire Gita. He explains the true nature of renunciation and the differences between the Gunas in renouncing action and its fruit. In reality, between the world and the soul, only the soul has true existence. The world appears real only because of the soul’s attachment. The Supreme is eternally present, but due to the soul’s ignorance, He is not realized. In the infinite universe, there is nothing beyond the two natures — higher (Para) and lower (Apara). Even the individual soul is not the real “I.” The true “I” is the Supreme Lord Himself. The apparent difference between part and whole exists only due to limitation and is realized within the purified heart. The real “I” is eternal, pure, conscious, and free — the Brahman. Union with the Supreme means attaining the bliss of divine oneness (Sayujya Sukha). Maya is ignorance; therefore, divine truth can be known only through knowledge (Vidya). According to the Narada Bhakti Sutra, knowledge, renunciation, yoga, austerity, and devotion to Keshava are the five limbs of Vidya. Devotion is the finest expression of that knowledge. When a wise person renounces even the knowledge born of Sattva, gives up all religious duties, and takes refuge in the Lord alone, he attains the bliss of divine union. Finally, the great Yogeshwara Lord Krishna concludes the Gita dialogue by addressing Arjuna — and through him, all humankind: “O My beloved children! Having obtained human birth through My grace, fulfil your duties faithfully, and at the end, renounce all worldly paths and take refuge in Me. I will free you from all sins and bonds of action, and merge you in Myself.” At the end, Sanjaya, addressing Dhritarashtra, declares with confidence: “Wherever there are Lord Krishna, the master of Yoga, and Arjuna, the great archer, there surely exist eternal glory, endless sweetness, nobility, beauty, and divine virtues.”

Om Tat Sat

30 March 2021
Holi Festival



SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH !
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 13 (Kshetra-Kshetrajna Vibhaga Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

**prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva kṣetraṁ kṣetrajñam eva ca
etaḍ veditum icchāmi jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ ca keśava (13-01)**

Comm : In some editions of the Gita, this chapter is also called “Prakriti–Purusha Viveka Yoga.” Self-knowledge is very necessary. It is needed to understand what this body is. It is also needed to understand the characteristics and influence of the Purusha who lives in this body. It is necessary to clearly know the truth about Atma (the soul) and Paramatma (the Supreme Soul). Without this knowledge, ignorance in the heart cannot be removed. Understanding this, Arjuna asks a question at the beginning of this chapter to receive the knowledge of that truth from the Lord. Arjuna says, “O Keshava!” “What are Prakriti and Purusha?” “What are Kshetra and Kshetrajna?” “What are Jnana and Jneya?” “I want to know all this in detail.” In this chapter, Bhagavan explains the body, the individual soul, and the Supreme Soul. He also explains the means to get knowledge. He describes the relationship between the living being and Prakriti. He gives this explanation especially so that Arjuna can properly understand everything. Some commentators do not include this questioning verse as part of the chapter. In this chapter, there is also a detailed discussion about the worship of the unmanifest and imperishable (Avyakta Akshara). The main obstacle for such worship is body-identification — thinking “I am this body.” To remove this fault, Bhagavan gives teachings in the form of Kshetra–Kshetrajna Yoga.

**idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate
etaḍ yo veti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña iti tad-vidaḥ (13-02)**

Comm : Lord Krishna said: O Arjuna! This body, which is the means of enjoyment, is called “Kshetra” (the field). The one who knows that “this body exists” – meaning the one who identifies with the body by saying “I” or “mine” – is called “Kshetrajna” or the individual soul (Jivatma) by the knowers of Truth. In another sense, the one who illumines this field and gives it existence/consciousness is Kshetrajna. Even though we use many objects and still feel “I” am different from the objects we use, in the same way, if we think a little deeply, we realize that someone inside is knowing, and that knower is different from the body – that knower is Kshetrajna or Jivatma. The gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body – all three together with the prana (life-force) and the senses – are called Kshetra. Kshetra is perishable and is the dwelling place of the bound soul. This Kshetra is the sprouting ground (root) of the tree of samsara, that is, it is the cause of the creation of worldly existence. As the enjoyer, the Kshetrajna remains associated with the Kshetra, and as one who desires liberation (mumukshu), the bound soul also uses the Kshetra to attain freedom. The soul itself has no attachment to the body, so its own true state is not Kshetrajna. Because the intellect can know the reality of the body, but the Atma does not know it, and the intellect also cannot enter the reality of the Atma. In the bound state one identifies with the body saying “I” and “mine”, and in the liberated state one is free from body-identification – in both these conditions the individual soul is called Kshetrajna. Therefore, Kshetrajna is a state that is neither conscious (in the usual sense) nor inert. A person who takes this body as “I”, sees it merely as an instrument for enjoyment, and desires sense pleasures – such a person, intoxicated by identification with the inert body, remains bound in samsara. According to his capacity to enjoy pleasures, he obtains a particular body, that is, a field of action (karma-kshetra). In this field-like body, the fruits of the seeds of past actions and impressions also manifest in due course of time. When the Kshetrajna remains associated with the names and designations of the gross and subtle bodies, that is the “prakriti-stha” (nature-bound) state. Although the Jivatma is completely different from the inert body, still in some way it gets connected with this material nature and suffers birth after birth. On the contrary, in the healthy (liberated) state, when the Jivatma becomes free from false identification and no longer remains connected with the Kshetra, then it is no longer called Kshetrajna but is known as Brahman, which is non-different from Paramatma. At that time, the Lord Himself is the Kshetrajna, and in that state the non-difference between Atma and Paramatma is established. Turning toward God, the Jivatma gradually attains the bliss of liberation and then the joy of serving Bhagavan, and thus becomes fulfilled. In Swami Adgadanandji’s “Yatharth Geeta” the explanation of Kshetra-Kshetrajna is given as follows: Inside the body, in the

antahkarana (inner instrument), there are two tendencies. One is the divine (daivi) wealth that is virtuous and capable of leading one into Paramatma, and the other is the demonic (asuri) wealth – formed by a corrupted vision that creates faith in the perishable world. Therefore, this very body is simultaneously Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra. When a person, in the company of a tattvadarshi saint, engages in exclusive devotion and worship, a decisive war starts between these two tendencies. Gradually the divine wealth rises and the demonic wealth is destroyed. After that comes the stage of direct guidance from Paramatma. With Self-realization, the need for even the divine wealth ends – meaning it also automatically merges into the form of Paramatma. After this dissolution, whatever remains of the purusha – that is Kshetrajna. In the worldly state, the separate existence of Kshetra and Kshetrajna is not easily realized. Only when consciousness is clearly seen to be absent in a dead body does it become certain that the conscious Atma is separate from this body. Only the one who can understand the Atma as the knower obtains the knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna as truly separate.

**kṣetrajñam cāpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānam yat taj jñānam mataṁ mama(13-03)**

Comm :O Arjuna! Know that in all bodies, I alone am the knower of the field, that means the soul who knows the body. The body is called the “field” and the soul and God are called the “knower of the field.” The true knowledge, in My opinion, is the knowledge of the body as the field and the soul and God as the knower of the field. God said: Know Me, the Supreme Soul, as the controller existing in all fields. This body and this world are the field of action, which is called Nature. The enjoyer of this Nature is the soul (Jiva). Above both the soul and Nature, the Supreme Controller—God—is present. There is only one God who enters all bodies as the knower of the field. The consciousness that enters each body is God Himself. The soul knows only one particular body and even that also not fully. But the Supreme Lord is present in all bodies as the Supreme Soul. He is the ruler, controller, inner witness and guide of all the countless souls. The Supreme Soul, known as God, is the chief knower of the entire inert universe. So, Lord Krishna says, “I am the Supreme Knower of the field”—that means Krishna Himself is Yogeshwara, the Lord of Yoga. By understanding the relation between the field and the knower of the field, one understands the three principles—God, soul and matter— This knowledge is called true spiritual knowledge. In the previous verse, the knower of the field was understood as the soul only. But in this verse, God declares Himself as the complete knower of the field— the inner ruler, the Supreme Lord and the Supreme Soul. Living in this world, people consider their body as the soul. People think that the body, senses, mind, intellect and ego are the doers and enjoyers. From direct experience, we know that one who thinks body as the self always suffers desire, anger, attachment, hatred, joy and sorrow of birth and death. But one who realizes that the soul is different from the body becomes free from desire, anger, attachment, hatred, joy and sorrow. Just like old age and

death do not belong to the soul, in the same way, pleasure and pain do not belong to the soul. Most people do not know that the body is not the doer or the enjoyer. The real cause of doership and enjoyment is consciousness or reflected awareness (the soul). Due to ignorance, the soul remains covered and takes many births as a living being. But always remember—this covering does not bring any real change to the pure nature of the soul. Just as clouds covering the sun do not change the light of the sun. The natural quality of the soul is to shine. The soul's light appears as existence, consciousness and bliss. When the reflection of the soul falls on ignorance, that ignorance becomes active. When the intellect is positive, the person turns towards the soul, and when negative, he turns away from the soul. When spiritual environment is created, the inner path to self-realization opens. The pure and actionless soul is considered a doer and enjoyer only because of association with Nature. This misunderstanding remains until the ignorance about the relation between body and soul continues. Just as a rope is mistaken as a snake, even though the rope never becomes a snake, fear and illusion appear due to ignorance. To remove this illusion, knowledge of both the rope and the snake is required. Similarly, when the covering of ignorance is removed, all misconceptions about the soul disappear automatically. In this verse, God wants to say: The consciousness (knower of the field) in all bodies is My own part, therefore not separate from Me. I, the Supreme Soul, appear as many different living beings. In devotion (Bhakti), the soul and the Supreme Soul appear as two. In knowledge (Jnana), they are one— One Brahman appears as the field and the knower of the field due to different conditions. Nature is the power of God, and power and its possessor are not different. Mind, intellect, memory and ego form the inner instrument. Among them, the ego that says “I” belongs to the field. The awareness that sees this ego is the knower of the field. This knower of the ego is the form of God. Although the soul is naturally one with God, by thinking itself one with the body, it feels separated from God. The soul is different from the world and one with the Supreme Soul. Soul becomes the knower of the field because of its relation with the field. When completely free from the field, the soul is Brahman. The true knowledge is the knowledge by which one discriminates between the field and the knower of the field and realizes one's own pure, changeless nature.

**tat kṣetram yac ca yādṛk ca yad-vikāri yataś ca yat
sa ca yo yat-prabhāvaś ca tat samāsenā me śṛṇu (13-04)**

Comm : Lord Krishna says: O Arjuna! Listen briefly from Me about: what the Kshetra (field) is, of what nature it is (i.e., endowed with which desires, satisfactions and other qualities), what modifications/vikaras it has, from what causes and in what manner it is produced, and what the Kshetrajna essentially is, and what powers it possesses. Throughout this entire chapter, the Lord explains to Arjuna the following six topics: Four concerning the Kshetra: What the Kshetra is, what its form and structure are like, What modifications it has, How it originates and how it is subject to change. And two concerning the Kshetrajna: What the Kshetrajna essentially is, What powers it possesses. At the

beginning of the chapter Arjuna had asked about Kshetra–Kshetrajna, Purusha–Prakriti, and Jnana–Jneya. To fully answer those questions, the Lord now wishes to speak about these very six aspects of Kshetra and Kshetrajna. The Lord’s statement is described in the chapter as follows: What the Kshetra is: It is inert and visible in nature, formed from the five great elements, subject to change, a combination of the prana-sheath and the senses, subject to birth and destruction. Of what nature the Kshetra is: It is endowed with qualities such as desire, satisfaction, etc. What modifications the Kshetra has: Due to its connection with the Kshetrajna and because of body-identification, it is subject to modifications such as pleasure–pain, love–hatred, etc., and it appears to have the qualities of the senses. How the Kshetra originates and its cause: It arises from the union of Prakriti and Purusha; it appears in diverse forms as immovable and movable beings; it is produced from the lower Prakriti (Apara Prakriti) and the three gunas. What the Kshetrajna essentially is: It is the individual soul (Jivatma) that controls the Kshetra, and (at the highest level) it is the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) who is the master of all sacrifices (Adhiyajna) and all-pervading. What powers the Kshetrajna possesses: As a part (amsha) it is related to Paramatma; it dwells inside the Kshetra yet remains distinct from it; it identifies with the Kshetra and is known as the doer and the enjoyer; and when the difference between Kshetra and Kshetrajna is realised through the eye of knowledge and direct experience, the limited/secondary Kshetrajna (Jivatma) becomes one with the original/root Kshetrajna (Paramatma).

**ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītāṁ chandobhir vividhaiḥ pṛthak
brahma-sūtra-padaīś caiva hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ (13-05)**

Comm: The principle of the “field and the knower of the field” has been described in many different ways by various sages and seers. In the Katha Upanishad, the difference between the soul, the Supreme Soul, and the body is explained. The Rig Veda and the other three Vedas, through their many branches, also explain this principle in different ways. By bringing harmony and agreement among all these different views, Vedavyasa composed the Vedanta philosophy, also known as the Brahmasutra. In the Brahmasutra, this principle is logically established through short, symbolic statements or aphorisms. Another name of the Brahmasutra is Uttara Mimamsa philosophy, and because it contains the enquiry into the knower of the field, this text is also called the “Sharirika Sutra.” Brahman is the subject matter of the Vedas. Therefore, Brahman is not beyond words or indescribable. In sutras like “Ikshater na shabdām” and “Anandamayo’bhyasat,” this conclusion is confirmed: Brahman can be known through the study of the scriptures and can also be experienced directly. There are five levels of gaining the experience of Brahman. Among these five, the levels of annamaya, pranamaya and jnanamaya belong to the field of action of the individual being (the body), and these are expressions of the Lord’s power. Through the food-energy (annashakti), the field is prepared, and because of the entry of life-energy (pranashakti), this energy develops the ability to feel, experience and desire. This level

is called the manomaya or jnanamaya level. Then, between the mind and the life-energy, another independent existence is experienced, which is the experience of Brahman or the experience of the soul. This experience is called the vignanamaya level. This vignanamaya person is the knower of the field called the body, that is, the secondary knower of the field. The highest and most distinct level is the anandamaya level. The Supreme Lord, the inner ruler of all, is naturally full of divine bliss, and to enable the soul to experience this bliss, He extends Himself into the vignanamaya, jnanamaya, pranamaya and annamaya levels. This anandamaya person is the Supreme Lord, the controller, the witness, and the original knower of the field. If the individual soul keeps itself at the anandamaya level and desires the nearness of the Supreme Blissful Lord, then it attains completeness. Through devoted practice towards the Supreme Blissful Brahman, the realization of Brahman can be attained.

**mahā-bhūtāny ahaṅkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca
indriyāṇi daśaikaṁ ca pañca cendriya-gocarāḥ (13-06)**

**icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṅghātaś cetanā dhṛtiḥ
etat kṣetraṁ samāśena sa-vikāram udāhṛtam (13-07)**

Comm. In these two verses, Bhagavan explains the nature of the Kshetra (the field) along with all its changes. In the sixth verse, the entire universe is described, and in the seventh verse, the changes of the individual body are described. Earth, water, fire, air, and space—the five great elements; the cosmic ego; the cosmic intellect or Mahattattva; the root nature (Prakriti); the ten senses; one mind; form, taste, sound, smell, touch—the five sense-objects; desire; hatred; pleasure; pain; the physical body; consciousness (the knowing tendency of the mind); and patience—all these substances and all these changeable things together are called “Kshetra.” Here the word “Mahabhutani” refers to the subtle elements which are not yet combined into gross matter. When each element joins half of itself with one-eighth of the other four, that mixture becomes the five gross elements, which can be perceived by the senses. The desire of God to manifest in many forms is called Ahamkara (ego). From the self-inspiration of God expressed as “I shall become many,” ego arises. From ego, space, air, and the other elements are produced. The five great elements are the gross manifestation of the subtle ego. The cosmic intellect or Mahattattva is the source of ego, and in each individual body it appears as a part of the inner instrument (Antahkarana). The nature of the intellect is “certainty.” Life-force or prana manifests with the help of the intellect. The unmanifest nature with three gunas is called the root Prakriti, and it produces intellect or Mahattattva. The mind is called the internal sense. The mind is the power of thinking within the cosmic inner instrument, and its nature is decision and doubt. According to Sankhya philosophy, the twenty-four principles such as Mahat are modifications of Prakriti and form the gross world including the body. The unmanifest Prakriti is the root cause of the world. The world is created by the

combination of Prakriti and Purusha. Root Prakriti, intellect (Mahattattva), ego, ten senses, one mind, five subtle elements, and the five subtle forms of space etc.—these twenty-four principles are the components of the body. The body is the representative expression of these twenty-four principles. By analysing these twenty-four principles, it becomes clear that there is no difference between the individual body and the universe. Just as waves seen in the ocean are not separate from ocean water, the individual body and the cosmic world are not separate. Desire, hatred, happiness, sorrow, the physical body made of five elements, consciousness or the knowing tendency of the mind, and patience—these are all mental modifications; they are not qualities of the soul. The scriptures also say that desire, doubt, faith, lack of faith, patience, detachment, shame, intelligence, and fear—all belong to the mind. Through the mind, all these qualities of the Kshetra are displayed. Desire is a modification of the inner mind. When an object or situation is believed to bring happiness or remove sorrow, the attachment-filled wish to obtain it is called desire. Desire appears in many forms like craving, thirst, hope, greed, and longing. All sins and sorrows arise only from worldly desires. When an object is believed to be the cause of suffering or a hindrance to happiness, it is called hatred. When desire or ego is obstructed, the subtle form of anger that arises in the mind is called hatred. Enmity, jealousy, disgust, and anger are the gross forms of hatred. When favourable things are obtained or obstacles are removed, the pleasant feeling in the inner mind is called happiness. It pleases the mind. When unfavourable things are obtained or favourable things are lost, the disturbance that arises in the mind is called sorrow. It never pleases the mind. Knowing happiness and sorrow is not wrong; getting excited or disturbed by them is wrong. The collective gross body made of the five elements and senses is called the “aggregate,” which becomes a dead body after death due to absence of the subtle body. Through consciousness and patience, the life-force inside the body becomes active. The life-force moving in the body is called consciousness. The knowing power within the inner mind is consciousness, by which happiness, sorrow, and all experiences are felt. Consciousness does not mean the soul. Consciousness is the reflection of the soul, called Chidabhasa. The body is active only because of this reflected consciousness. The mind or inner organ is capable of reflecting the consciousness of the soul, which does not happen in a dead body. If there is no subtle body, Chidabhasa cannot be reflected. This consciousness, being changeable, belongs to the Kshetra. The pure Self, being energy in its true nature, is different from this reflected consciousness in the inner mind. A piece of iron kept continuously in fire becomes red and hot like fire. In the same way, by the constant association of the Self, the body (Kshetra) appears to have consciousness. Patience is the mental tendency that controls the mind and intellect. Patience is the special strength of the inner mind to hold on. Due to the influence of the three gunas on the inner mind, patience becomes sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic. Because patience and consciousness are not constant or permanent, both are changeable and belong to the Kshetra. When consciousness or life-force is in a sattvic state, it remains calm; but at times of fear, worry, or sorrow, it becomes disturbed. Since the life-force is

always diminishing, it is also a changeable entity. The body is always changing. Birth, growth, sustenance, reproduction, decay, and death—these six changes make the Kshetra perishable. Even though desire, hatred, happiness, sorrow, the body, consciousness, and patience exist, they do not affect the Self. Because of identifying oneself with the body, these changes arise in the mind, but when true knowledge arises, they no longer appear. In the next five verses, Lord Krishna teaches how this true knowledge can be attained.

**amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣāntiḥ ārjavam
ācāryopāsanam śaucam sthairyam ātma-vinigrahaḥ (13-08)**

Comm : In the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita (verses 8–12), Lord Sri Krishna enumerates twenty qualities which together constitute the complete preparation and foundation for the attainment of true spiritual knowledge (tattva-jñāna). These twenty are: (1) Amānitā : humility; total absence of pride –(2) Adambhitvam : freedom from pretence and hypocrisy-(3) Ahimsā : non-violence towards all beings m-(4) Kṣānti : patience and forgiveness- (5) Ārjavam : simplicity and alignment of thought, word, and deed- (6) Ācāryopāsanam : devoted service and surrender to the spiritual teacher-(7) Śaucam – purity, both outer and inner-(8) Sthairyam : steadiness and unwavering determination-(9) Ātmavinigrahaḥ : mastery over the mind and senses-(10) Indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam : dispassion towards sense objects and pleasures –(11) Anahankāraḥ : absence of egoism and false identification-(12) Janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam : constant reflection on the defects of birth, death, old age, disease, and sorrow-(13) Asaktiḥ : non-attachment to spouse, children, home, and worldly relations-(14) Anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ : equanimity in desirable and undesirable situations- (15) Ananya-bhaktiḥ : unswerving, exclusive devotion to the Lord-(16) Vivikta-deśa-sevitvam : love for solitude and secluded places- (17) Aratiḥ jana-saṁsadi : disinclination for the company of worldly-minded people-(18) Tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam : continual contemplation on the nature of the Self-(19) Jñānam – steady study and inquiry into the scriptures and truth- (20) Vijñānam : direct realisation and lived experience of that truth. These twenty qualities, when cultivated sincerely, form the perfect ground upon which the highest knowledge of the Self dawns. The first and most important quality of a seeker is amanita – being completely free from pride. A person who has attained full knowledge knows “I am not this body,” so he considers respect or insult toward the body as meaningless and unnecessary. In the beginning stage of the knowledge path, a seeker still has pride about his own learning. A seeker should always remain humble. Having pride in body, education, intellect, appearance, or beauty and expecting respect from others is a very big obstacle on the spiritual path. Only through pure devotion (bhakti) is this desire for respect destroyed. The body and intellect are praised with different words, but since the Self (Atma) has no qualities or attributes, the Self cannot be praised with any words. Not having the feeling of being superior to others is called amanita. When the feeling of respecting everyone else arises in the heart, the desire to be respected oneself automatically disappears. Showing

off real or imaginary good qualities to receive special worship from others is called “mana” (pride), and its complete absence is amanita. Pretending to have qualities that one does not actually possess is hypocrisy (dambhita); its complete absence is adambhitvam. Performing any action with the motive of becoming famous as a religious, charitable, wise, or great person is hypocrisy. When pride in the body is destroyed, hypocrisy is also destroyed. When one ignores what others think and gives importance only to one’s own spiritual practice with the sole aim of attaining God, hypocrisy ends. Not causing even the slightest pain to any being through mind, speech, or action is the supreme vow of ahimsa (non-violence). When the understanding “everyone is essentially the Self” awakens, the feeling of ahimsa arises naturally in the mind. Helping others for their welfare is also the practice of ahimsa. Hurting someone’s mind with harsh words, unpleasant truth, or bitter speech is violence. No matter what wrong someone does, instead of taking revenge or behaving badly, praying for their good sense is the practice of ahimsa. To attain knowledge, one must become forgiving (kshama). Patiently enduring insult, dishonor, etc., without any hesitation is called kshanti (forbearance). On the path of divine knowledge, one has to calmly accept many obstacles and disturbances. Just as a tree does not protest when it is cut, that is the highest limit of forbearance. A person who has true knowledge naturally becomes forgiving. Straightforwardness (arjavam) is the sign of a true saint. There should be no duplicity in mind, speech, and action; one should be straightforward and free from deceit and crookedness, just like a child. By not identifying with the body and keeping attention on one’s true Self, crookedness and hypocrisy are destroyed, and simplicity and humility naturally arise in the seeker. Worship and service of the Guru (acharyopasanam) is an essential part of this knowledge. The Guru is the representative of God; by taking complete refuge in him, the process of building a divine life begins in the disciple. Staying with the Guru, surrendering mind, speech, and body with faith and devotion, offering full prostration, faithfully following the Guru’s instructions, and asking proper questions to remove doubts – all these actions together are acharyopasanam. By serving the Guru with complete dedication, following spiritual practices becomes easy through the Guru’s grace. Sometimes a seeker desires respect from the Guru or respected persons because of his good actions – this is a subtle defect that is removed only by selfless service and obedience to the Guru. Arguing or reasoning against the Guru’s actions is improper. When one becomes one with the truth of the Guru, devotion is attained. It is the Guru’s duty to do what is best for the disciple’s welfare. Shaucha means external cleanliness and inner purity of heart. Keeping the surroundings clean and the body pure through bathing, etc., is external shaucha. The heart becomes pure through qualities like compassion, forgiveness, and generosity. Sthairyam means steadiness and firmness of mind. To progress on the divine path, one must adopt firmness and determination. One should not repeatedly change the goal of life. The goal of life must be fixed once and for all. People attached to worldly enjoyment cannot keep their intellect steady on any one decision. Faith in the words of saints and scriptures makes the mind and intellect firm and steady. Constantly stopping the

senses (with love and reverence) from running toward their objects is atma-vinigraha (self-restraint or control of the body and senses). All obstacles on the spiritual path that come through sense objects should be renounced. The tongue is a very powerful sense organ; controlling it makes control of other senses easy. Training the eyes to see only the forms of God and Guru, the ears to hear only the Lord's glories and pastimes, and the tongue to chant the Lord's name and qualities – this brings all senses under control. Abhyasa means repeatedly fixing the mind on the object of meditation until all other thoughts disappear. When attachment and importance toward objects, persons, and substances disappear, all desires and resolutions are destroyed. In this way, through constant practice (abhyasa) and detachment (vairagya), the mind becomes completely controlled. All the above qualities and practices form the foundation and background for attaining true knowledge.

**indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṅkāra eva ca
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam (13-09)**

Comm : Detachment (Vairagya) is the absence of attachment towards objects enjoyed by the senses. One should develop detachment from the sense-objects that pull us towards the world. Considering the body as everything is ego (ahankara). The word “I” (Aham) in its pure form refers to the pure Self (Atma). But when this “I” gets mixed with name, title, or any quality, it takes a form and becomes ego. False identifications with the body like “I am beautiful,” “I am rich,” “I am intelligent”—all these are bodily ego or pride. When “I” is not connected with the material world, it is the pure conscious Self (Chidatma). The Vedic declaration is “Aham Brahmasmi”—“I am the pure conscious Self.” Body-identification gives birth to ego, and giving it up is the means to Self-knowledge. When the true understanding of the difference between the inert (jada) and the conscious (chetana) arises, ego disappears. All pride or identification is the cause of bondage and the main obstacle to spiritual success. In this world, except for the conscious Self, there is no object that is free from the four defects: birth, death, old age, and disease. For material objects, the day they are made is their birth. When they get damaged or broken by injury, that is disease. Repairing them is treatment. Becoming old and unusable is old age. Complete breaking or destruction is death. Seeing these four defects very closely in living beings and material things of the world, one should develop detachment towards them. From the embryo stage in the mother's womb, throughout life with worldly sufferings, in old age with the miserable condition of the body, and at the time of death with severe pain—all these stages are full of suffering. If we do not reflect on the pains of birth, death, old age, and disease and cultivate detachment from the temporary pleasures of the world, we cannot get the inspiration to progress on the path of divine life. It is said that when Buddha saw a sick person, an old man, a dead body, and a monk during his city tour, detachment arose in him (inspired by a similar verse from the Bhagavad Gita). Personally experiencing the behavior and cruelty of family members when one lies on a sickbed or in old age, feeling regret for turning away from God throughout life—this is truly seeing the defect in disease

and old age. Wealth earned throughout life, whether by right or wrong means, is of no help when one lies suffering in old age or on a sickbed. When we repeatedly see and reflect upon the sufferings caused by birth, death, old age, and disease, attachment towards perishable things naturally decreases. Discrimination (viveka) awakens, and through discrimination we search for the cause of sorrow and aim to destroy it. In due course, detachment arises even from enjoyment. When body-identification is deliberately given up, one naturally abides in one's true nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda) and experiences peace and joy. Desire for worldly enjoyment is the sole cause of all sorrow. When the desire for pleasure is destroyed, all sorrow comes to an end.

**asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-grhādiṣu
nityaṁ ca sama-cittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu (13-10)**

Comm : The right to gain Gita-knowledge belongs to all—brahmacharis, householders, forest-dwellers and renunciates. Therefore, even while living in the householder stage, a person can attain Self-knowledge. The pleasures that arise from contact with wife, children, wealth and other worldly objects appear like nectar in the beginning. But in the end their result becomes like poison. So, when one thinks about the final result of such contact-born pleasures, attachment to them naturally falls away. Because of the feeling of possessiveness, a close connection remains with wife, children and others. Due to that, their happiness and sorrow, and their gain and loss, are felt by oneself as one's own happiness and sorrow. To keep the feeling of “mine”—that they are “mine,” and in their happiness “I” become happy—this thought becomes the cause of suffering. This does not mean that there should be no loving feeling in the heart for wife and children. At this point, Lord Rama told his brother Lakshmana near the Pampa Lake, during the deep pain of separation from Mother Sita: “In work she is my adviser; in service she is like a maid; in dharma she is my wife; in forgiveness she is like the earth; in affection she is like a mother; in bed she is like Rambha; in play she is my companion — O Lakshmana, such is my beloved Sita.” The meaning is that, in the householder stage, strictly following the vow of one-wife-dedication is equal to following the vow of brahmacharya. But the deep physical attachment to son, wife, land, house and such things is called abhishvanga (over-attachment). To remain free from this feeling of oneness with the body is called anabhishvanga (non-attachment). By performing one's duty as a father, performing one's duty as a husband, serving the living souls who have come as wife, son or daughter, and doing all these with detachment and without attachment—this gives the experience of immortality. Being equal in the fulfillment of desires or in unfavorable situations is a sign of true knowledge. Union with favourable objects, people or situations is liked, and separation from unfavourable things is also liked. In the same way, separation from favourable things and union with unfavourable situations becomes disliked. When one comes in contact with these liked and disliked situations, not allowing joy, sorrow, fear or anger to arise in the mind, and remaining steady in calm equality—this is called

samachittatwam (evenness of mind). We should remain equal in every situation by understanding that the present condition is not permanent. God, out of compassion, gives these unpleasant situations only to free the aspirant from worldly attachment, desire and possessiveness. If one firmly accepts this truth, the mind of the seeker naturally remains steady in equanimity.

**mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī
vivikta-deśa-sevitvam araṭir jana-saṁsadi (13-11)**

Comm : God alone is the highest, and He alone is the Lord, the giver of refuge, the supreme goal, the ultimate shelter, the highest well-wisher, the dearest relative, and everything. Having the firm conviction that “there is no one else except Him” and relating everything only to God is called Ananya Yoga (exclusive devotion or union with God). The practice of Ananya Yoga is to remain fully active while placing complete trust only in God, with the faith that “only by His grace will the Supreme Self be realized.” To have unwavering, completely pure love for God and to constantly worship and meditate on Him alone—this is unswerving, exclusive devotion (avyabhicharani bhakti) through Ananya Yoga. Having not even the slightest connection with anything other than God is the sign of exclusive devotion. Desire for or attachment to any second thing other than the Supreme Self is adulteration (vyabhichara) in devotion. Love for God, thinking of God, and doing everything only for God’s sake—that alone is exclusive devotion. Ananya Yoga and exclusive devotion to Him, aimed at removing body-identification, are the perfect combination of knowledge (jnana) and devotion (bhakti), and they are the sure means to attain God. When the only aim is attainment of God and there is no motive toward nature or its effects, the result of such practice is certain attainment of the Supreme Self. The exclusive devotee has no independent relationship with the world. Whatever relationships appear in practical life, he accepts them all as forms of God Himself. In the exclusive loving service of the Lord, the path of knowledge reaches its fulfillment. During the practice period for attaining divine life, the seeker does not enjoy the company of people who are attached to sense enjoyment. He naturally likes to stay far away from worldly people, in a solitary place. Generally, a sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) shows no interest in unnecessary entertainment, movies, or meaningless social amusements and social gatherings. The reason is that all these are a waste of precious time. Places full of sattvic atmosphere—temples, places of austerity, the banks of holy rivers like the Ganga, mountain caves, and other secluded and pure spots—are called “vivikta desha” (solitary or undisturbed places). Staying in such places for the sake of attaining knowledge is called “sevnam” (resorting to solitude). But special attention must be paid: as long as attachment or relationship with this body (the root of the world) remains, there is no real mental solitude. Resorting to physical solitude is extremely necessary for stopping the modifications of the mind. Yet even while living in solitude, if thoughts of sense objects continue without stop, then such solitude is completely useless. The entire world is connected with the identification of the

body. Therefore, true solitude is that state where there is no gross body, no subtle body, no causal body, no individual body, no collective world—where only the One Reality remains. Having no interest or delight in crowds of people is called “arati jana sansadi” (aversion to the society of men). Here, “jana sansad” refers to crowds of careless, worldly people attached to sense objects. Understanding that the company of such people is an obstacle to all spiritual practice, one should remain detached from it.

**adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvaṁ tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam
etaḥ jñānam iti proktam ajñānam yad ato’nyathā (13-12)**

Comm: Steadfastness in Self-knowledge (Atma-jnana nishtha) means remaining constantly and uninterruptedly established in the knowledge of the Self. All knowledge related to the Atma (Self) is called Atma-jnana (Self-knowledge). To remain ever established in spiritual knowledge means to constantly contemplate that Self which is the witness of the three states—waking, dream, and deep sleep. The Self is eternal, pure consciousness, unchanging, and indestructible. Everything else apart from it—all that is perishable, inert, subject to modification, changing, and visible—is non-Self (anatma). The Self has no connection whatsoever with this non-Self. Through scriptures and the teachings of the Guru, one must thoroughly understand this and constantly reflect in the mind on the truth of the Self. The truth of the Supreme Self (Paramatma-tattva) is the substratum and illuminator of the world—it is eternal, constant, and undiminishing. Apart from that Supreme Self, the world has no independent existence of its own. “Tattva-jnana artha darshanam” (seeing the meaning of knowledge of Reality) means to behold the Supreme Self everywhere with equal vision. When the direct realization of the all-pervading Supreme Self becomes the One without a second becomes the sole aim of the seeker, he remains ever engaged in the study, analysis, and inquiry into Self-knowledge in order to understand the non-difference between Atma and Paramatma—this is what is called “tattva-jnana artha darshanam” in this verse. Through this knowledge of Reality, it becomes possible to meditate constantly and with equanimity everywhere on the Supreme Self who is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss absolute and beyond all attributes. In these five verses, all the qualities described by the Lord to strengthen discrimination (viveka) and detachment (vairagya) are together called the twenty means (sadhanas) for attaining Self-knowledge. Their opposites—such as pride, hypocrisy, violence, etc.—should be known as ignorance (ajnana). Ignorance is always opposed to liberation and is the cause of worldly delusion; therefore it must be completely avoided. Although these groups of knowledge appear as activities and reactions of the mind, in reality they are the direct path and means to attain liberation, that is, to reach God. These twenty means taught by the Lord are collectively called “Jnana” (Knowledge). Through this practice of Knowledge, true understanding of Kshetra (the field—body/matter) and Kshetrajna (the knower—the Self) is gained. When the sole aim becomes attainment of the Supreme Self alone, all bad qualities and evil conduct are automatically destroyed. Once one becomes

firmly established in spiritual practice (sadhana-nishtha), no bad quality or misconduct remains.

**jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtam aśnute
anādimat paraṁ brahma na sat tan nāsad ucyate (13-13)**

Comm: After hearing the description of the means to knowledge called ‘Jnana’ in the previous five verses, a question arises in the mind: What is the object truly worth knowing through this practice? And what is the fruit of knowing it? To answer this, the Lord now describes what the knowable object is and states that the fruit of knowing it is ‘attainment of nectar’ (amrita prapti), while describing the nature of the Supreme Self. The Lord says, O Arjuna! I will explain to you in the best way the principle that is to be known, that is, the knowable truth through knowledge. After knowing and assimilating this principle in the heart, a person becomes free from worldly bondage, that is, attains immortality by partaking of the nectar. That knowable principle or Jneya is the eternal, immutable Brahman, completely distinct from all modifications like the body, which has been dependent on Me since beginningless time, and which cannot be called ‘sat’ (exists) or ‘asat’ (does not exist). It is neither the gross material object in the form of effect nor the unmanifest cause. The two words ‘sat’ and ‘asat’ apply to that which is created and destroyed. Brahman has neither origin nor destruction. Therefore, Brahman cannot be called sat or asat. Just as the sun is above day and night and is mere illumination, similarly that knowable principle is above sat and asat. What is Brahman? – No one has been able to describe it logically through words till today. According to Swami Sivananda’s explanation, Brahman does not belong to any class or category. ‘Brahman’ is colorless, attributeless, and has no second like it. Brahman is non-doer, Brahman is the supreme Turiya, the supreme unmanifest reality. Brahman is the indwelling witness of all things. The Supreme Brahman is called Jneya because its nature cannot be understood by any means other than knowledge. After attaining that knowledge, no other work remains to be done. Due to identifying with the mortal body etc., the Self unnecessarily experiences death. By fully discriminating between Self and non-Self, recognizing one’s own Self-nature, and becoming firmly established in one’s Self-nature, the false fear of death etc. comes to an end. The Supreme Self is the substratum even of time, meaning It exists in all times, so It cannot be said to have an origin. Therefore, It is beginningless (anadi). The words sat and asat are used to indicate the two meanings: the object ‘exists’ or ‘does not exist’. But the conscious principle (Atma Chaitanya) cannot be an object known by senses, mind, or intellect. Similarly, nonexistent things like sky-flower or son of a barren woman are called asat. But Brahman is not a completely nonexistent object. It is the cause of the entire world of names and forms. Therefore, It cannot be called asat. Without Brahman’s presence, the world cannot be established. According to Shri Shankaracharya, since It is devoid of class and attributes, Brahman cannot be called sat, and since It is manifest as consciousness in all bodies, Brahman cannot be called asat either. After knowing It, one

becomes identified with It, and leaving the world on the shore, the knower immerses in the ocean of eternal bliss and remains absorbed in it. That Jneya has no beginning. That Jneya is called Parabrahman merely to indicate It. After knowing the Supreme Self principle, the illusion of being subject to birth and death due to identification with body etc. is removed. When true self-realization occurs, immortality is experienced. When the word Brahman is used for the jiva (individual soul), it should be understood that it is Brahman, but not infinite Brahman. Infinite Brahman is the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Person, God. Though jivatma and Paramatma are two knowable objects, through inquiry into Paramatma, knowledge of the dependent jiva principle is also attained. When the seeker acquires the qualification for knowledge, then the ability to know the Jneya properly arises. The conclusion is that the attributeless, formless, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss absolute Supreme Brahman Paramatma is the knowable principle. In the Taittiriya Shruti, it is said: “Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha”. Its meaning is – That from which words along with mind return without attaining, that is Brahman. Shri Ramakrishna has said – “The Self is known only by the Self. pure mind, pure intellect, pure Self are one.” Further in the Kathamrita book, it is seen – “The sages realized the pure Self through pure intellect – they taught how to abide in one’s true nature – ‘Dissolve the mind in intellect – dissolve intellect in Self – then abide in Self-nature.’ When the mind becomes free from attachment, his vision occurs. Whatever arises in the pure mind is His word. Pure mind is also pure intellect – also pure Self – because apart from Him, no one is pure.”

**sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādaṁ tat sarvato’kṣi-śiro-mukham
sarvataḥ śrutimal loka sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati (13-14)**

Comm: In the previous verse, Lord Krishna said that the conscious principle cannot be called either real or unreal. In this verse, He explains the all-pervading nature of the Supreme Self, who is to be known. God Himself is beyond cause and effect. But because power and the possessor of power are inseparable, the work done by power is also considered the work of the powerful One. Therefore, this visible world and all actions in it are the result of His power, and so they too are divine in nature. Just as space remains present and spreads within air, fire, water, and earth—because it is their cause— In the same way, Brahman pervades everything and everything exists depending on Brahman. From Brahma down to the smallest ant, all living beings exist within this Brahma-principle. This Brahman appears as if having infinite hands, feet, eyes, heads, faces, and ears in all beings everywhere. The Supreme Brahman covers everything in the entire universe and becomes the universe itself. This is the expressed form of the Saguna Brahman (Brahman with qualities). The Supreme Self is the base and support of this world, this body, the mind, the life-force, and all senses. Just as the real rope is never affected by the qualities of the unreal snake imagined upon it, In the same way, the Supreme Self is not affected by the world, body, mind, life-energy, or senses. The body, mind, life-force, and senses are naturally inert. They are not conscious by themselves.

They function only because Brahman operates through them. Whatever gross or subtle actions living beings perform at all times and in all places, that power behind all actions is called the Universal Hand. This is because Brahman, who is all-formed, continuously performs every action everywhere. If someone wants to show emptiness (zero), he must draw a circle or use a symbol. Similarly, to explain the non-dual truth, we must use the language of duality. By using known and visible examples, we can explain the unknown and invisible Brahman. The “Self that gives consciousness” to all beings is one and the same in everyone. Therefore, it is said that Brahman has hands and feet everywhere. In the same way, because of this Self’s presence, all eyes, all heads, and all faces perform their functions. Whatever a devotee offers to God, God can extend His hands infinitely to receive it. The Supreme Self is the motivating power behind all organs of action, all sense organs, and the inner mind (mind, intellect, memory, and ego). His existence and energy shine through all these instruments. That Supreme Self covers all names and forms everywhere. He is always in every name and form, yet He is beyond all of them. Lord Krishna says that everyone’s ears are His ears. Whatever anyone speaks, He hears it. Even if someone thinks, “No one is listening to me,” still God is always hearing. Dust may be thrown into the eyes of the whole world, but never into the eyes of God. He sees and hears everything, in every place, at every time, in every form. Understanding this, one should be careful while speaking alone or with others. God’s hands, feet, eyes, head, face, and ears are present in all directions. Whatever you place in anyone’s mouth reaches God’s mouth. When you apply sandalwood paste on someone’s forehead, it is applied on God’s forehead too. We must keep this faith. The Supreme Brahman is present everywhere with His hands and feet. Wherever anything is offered to Him, He can accept it there. Whenever a devotee bows to His feet anywhere, God accepts it right there. When a devotee offers flowers on someone’s head with devotion to God, the flowers decorate God’s head. There is no place where God’s head is absent. Wherever a devotee lights a lamp or performs arati for God, God’s eyes are present there. Whoever sees God everywhere never loses sight of Him. Wherever a devotee prays, God lends His ears there and listens. For the knower of Truth, there is no second being apart from the Supreme Self. One’s own Self is the Supreme Self. For a seeker, the Supreme is worth inquiring into, though not visible. For the devotee, He is both visible and capable of being directly experienced. For one bound in worldly delusion, He cannot be seen. Therefore, God appears differently to different people depending on their vision. The Supreme Self is everywhere, yet He is untouched and beyond all.

**sarvendriya-guṇābhāsaṁ sarvendriya-vivarjitam
asaktaṁ sarva-bhṛc caiva nirguṇaṁ guṇa-bhokṭṛ ca (13-15)**

Comm: That knowable Truth (the Brahman) is the illuminator of all the qualities and objects of the senses. the scriptures also say, “Tachchakṣuṣaśchakṣuḥ” (Katha Upanishad 1/2), meaning “He is the eye of the eye.” He is free from material senses,

yet He possesses divine, non-material senses. That Supreme Brahman is beyond the three gunas, yet He is still the experiencer of the gunas. Through the subjects like heaven etc., He alone experiences pleasure, pain, or delusion caused by the three gunas. Even without having a tongue, He tastes the offerings given by devotees. Without having a physical voice, He speaks with His devotees. He is unattached to everything, yet due to His connection with Nature (Prakriti), He is the support of all beings, sustaining the entire moving and non-moving world. He has no qualities like sattva etc., yet He is the enjoyer of all qualities. The senses of the jiva are covered by objects and qualities, but the senses of the Supreme are non-material and divine. This is the difference between the bound individual soul and the Supreme Soul. God has no material eyes, yet with His divine eyes He sees the past, present, and future. He knows everything, but no one truly knows Him. “The Supreme Lord is always divine”—this is the conclusion of the Vedas. Because the senses of the jiva are defective, the jiva is unable to see the divine form of God. God has love and affection for all beings, but He has attachment to none. That Supreme Soul is completely free from the qualities of Nature, and remains untouched by the works of Prakriti—yet He is the experiencer of all qualities. The colours seen on a screen are not caused by the screen; and the colours do not stick to the screen. Similarly, the activities produced by Prakriti and the gunas appear only with the help of Brahman. Without the saguna (qualified) aspect, the nirguna (attribute-free) Brahman cannot be thought of. Just as heat cannot be separated from fire, and light cannot be separated from the sun, in the same way saguna Brahman and nirguna Brahman are one and the same. Using apparently opposite terms to describe the indescribable Brahman is a special feature of spiritual scriptures. The meaning is this: when the intellect starts forming a definite idea about Brahman after hearing one statement, the next sentence immediately rejects that idea. In this way, the mind becomes free from imagination and remains in its pure, thought-free state. In reality, the conscious Self that makes the senses active is eternal and changeless. Though cloth is supported by cotton, the cloth itself cannot be called cotton. Similarly, Brahman is the basis of the entire creation, but this creation full of varieties cannot be called Brahman. Brahman is all-pervading. He exists inside everyone and also outside everyone. The illuminating Self is free from the qualities of the objects it reveals, and therefore He is without qualities. But only a mind connected with consciousness can experience these qualities. Therefore, although the Self is nirguna, through the mind’s limiting conditions He becomes the experiencer of qualities. Swami Sivananda Maharaj has said: “Brahman is Turiya and unmanifest, but He expresses Himself through the external and internal instruments of sense, which are only finite symbols.” “Because He has no material senses, He is unattached; yet He is the support of all.” “He is truly beyond the three gunas; yet at the same time He is the experiencer of the gunas.” “Therefore, Brahman is truly mysterious.”

**bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaraṁ caram eva ca
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṁ dūra-sthaṁ cāntike ca tat(13-16)**

Comm: That Supreme Reality, which is to be known, exists fully inside and outside all beings, just like space exists inside and outside a body. All moving and non-moving beings are created from that Supreme God. The Supreme Self lives in the heart of every being as the Inner Controller, and He also exists everywhere outside in an all-pervading form. This entire world of moving and non-moving beings is the work of His power, so everything is truly Him alone. That Brahman is extremely subtle, so it is difficult to know and cannot be grasped easily. He is very far and also very near at the same time. This means He exists everywhere—He is present in everything. One single Consciousness works through many separate living beings, so this Consciousness is all-pervading and always remains in an unmanifest state. This Consciousness remains unmanifest inside beings, and outside It exists everywhere as pure existence. The Conscious Self is the foundation of all creation—both moving and non-moving. Whatever we see as moving or non-moving is the work of Māyā. Māyā itself cannot do anything independently. Because of the presence of Brahman, or because Brahman’s reflection falls on Māyā, the world appears to be created. Without the existence of Brahman, the world would not appear at all. Therefore, whatever we see as moving or non-moving is truly the existence of God. For example, if a bowl made of ice is filled with water and placed in the ocean, then outside the bowl is water, inside the bowl is water, and even the bowl itself is only water. In the same way, this whole universe is the form of the Supreme Self and not separate from Him. Therefore, for the ignorant person, He seems extremely far away. But for the wise person, He is extremely near because God resides inside the body as the Inner Self, just like a person staying inside his own house. He is farther than the farthest and nearer than the nearest. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3/1/7) says: “He is far away, yet He is also very near; He is seen inside the cave of the heart by those who can truly see.” Though the scriptures say “Everything is Brahman,” His real form is still different from everything else. Only He is equal to Himself; there is no second one like Him. Only the single-minded, exclusive devotees understand Him through their pure devotion. For the person who is busy collecting material things and seeking pleasure from them, God remains far away, even though He is actually very near. The moment a strong desire for God awakens in the heart, God becomes attained. Those who know the truth of God see everything as filled with God. God is knowable only by God Himself, but He cannot be known through the senses, so He is also unknowable. This conscious principle is so subtle that it is beyond the imagination of the intellect. Even the idea of space—the subtlest of the five elements—cannot be fully imagined by the mind. The basis that creates space is Brahman, the Pure Consciousness. This Consciousness is even subtler than space. The Conscious Self pervades and covers even space. When something is all-pervading, concepts like “near” or “far” do not actually apply. But for the individual seeker, based on his experience of

knowledge, Brahman seems near or far. Swami Sivananda writes: “A knower of Truth is a divine seer. For him, Brahman is very near because Brahman is his own Self. But for an ignorant person, even after thousands of years of effort, Brahman remains unattainable.” For uneducated and ignorant people, God seems far away, so He appears unknowable. But for the wise person who understands the essence of the scriptures, Brahman is his own Self and therefore very close. Because of ignorance, even a thing that is extremely close appears as unreachable, like something thousands of miles away. But when that thing becomes known, nothing can be closer than it. In this Kali Yuga, the one who practices devotion to Krishna and purifies his mind and senses can attain God. Devotion makes the Lord near, and lack of devotion makes Him appear far away.

**avibhaktaṁ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktaṁ iva ca sthitam
bhūta-bhartr ca taj jñeyaṁ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca (13-17)**

Comm: This verse teaches the oneness of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma). The Supreme Soul is the original root of everything and is completely undivided. He is fully present everywhere at all times. That one Supreme Soul creates the universe as Brahma, protects it as Vishnu, and destroys it as Rudra. Even when He takes many different bodies, He remains undivided. In reality, space is present everywhere and has no parts, but it looks divided because of different pots. In the same way, the Supreme Soul seems divided because He lives as the inner knower (Kshetrajna) in every living being. The same Soul that lives in gods, humans, and all creatures is one and the same as the knower, so He is actually undivided. Although the Supreme Soul is present everywhere, He appears in special forms because of the limitations of bodies. Just as space is the support of water, air, fire, and earth, Brahman (the total consciousness) is the support of all living beings and the whole world. When a person meditates with full concentration and realizes the Supreme Soul, the world of names and forms disappears. Just as the same body remains one in childhood, youth, and old age, the same knowable Brahman remains unchanged through creation, existence, and destruction. The Supreme Soul accepts the quality of rajas and becomes Brahma to create everyone, accepts sattva and becomes Vishnu to protect and nourish everyone, and accepts tamas and becomes Rudra to destroy everything. The Supreme Soul is the only real existence; He can never become two. So, even when He appears as many, He is one, and even when He is one, He appears as many. The scriptures say: “Being one, He is seen in many forms.” Another scripture says: “There is only one supreme Vishnu present everywhere; there is no doubt about it.” Yet, by His unimaginable power, He appears in many forms, just like the sun that looks different in different pots of water. He lives inside every being as the individual inner controller and outside as the all-pervading universal Lord. The word “undivided” means that only a pure heart can truly realize Brahman present in everything. Just as the reflection of the sky is clearly seen only in clean water, and just as form is seen only through the eyes, the Supreme appears clearly only in a pure mind. This verse points to the same Brahman present both

inside each person and in the whole universe. Outside there is creation; inside the being there is awakening. Outside there is protection; inside there is well-being. Outside there is change and dissolution; inside everything arises and merges back into the Supreme Soul. In the teachings of saints, the primal power (Adya Shakti) playfully creates, sustains, and dissolves the world. That Brahman and that primal power are the same. When inactive, He is called Brahman or Purusha. When He creates, sustains, and dissolves, He is called Shakti or Prakriti. Purusha and Prakriti are the same; He is both bliss itself and the source of bliss. Whoever knows the male aspect also knows the female aspect; whoever knows the father also knows the mother; whoever knows darkness also knows light; whoever knows happiness also knows sorrow. Brahman and Shakti are not different; both are pure existence-consciousness-bliss. If we deny Shakti, the whole world becomes unreal – me, you, house, family, everything becomes false. It is only because this primal power exists that the world exists.

**jyotiṣām api taj jyotis tamasaḥ param ucyate
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ jñāna-gamyam hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam(13-18)**

Comm: The Supreme Self is the light among all lights. He is the illuminator of everything. He is beyond the darkness of ignorance, and ignorance can never touch Him. He is the “knowledge” that shines inside our intellect and thoughts. He is pure consciousness. Brahman is this very form of consciousness that reveals everything. Because of Him, worldly knowledge, inner knowledge, and all experiences of living beings become known. When the Supreme Self shines, then the sun, moon, stars, fire, and all other outer lights appear bright to us. The mind, intellect, and other inner lights of a person also shine because of Him. The Supreme Self gives light to everyone. He is the giver of all light. No one can give light to Him. He is self-luminous and the form of pure knowledge, so ignorance or darkness cannot exist in Him. Even though Brahman exists in all objects, each person’s intellect shines only in a limited way by receiving His light. In this whole world, the Supreme Self alone is worthy of being known. By gaining true knowledge through the various disciplines mentioned earlier (verses 7 to 11), one can know Him. Therefore, He is called “knowable through knowledge.” The place where the Supreme Self is realized is the heart. In the heart of a wise person, He appears clearly. He lives in the heart of all beings as the witness, the controller, and the inner guide. Therefore, He is also the knower. Brahman is the revealer of the light of knowledge. Without the light of knowledge, no other light can be useful. External objects are not revealed merely by the physical light that removes darkness. A conscious principle is also required to know them. By this conscious power, even the thoughts and feelings inside the heart become known. If that conscious being were not present, then the qualities and effects of objects would never be known to a person. Therefore, the illuminator of the inner mind, thoughts, and mental functions is the self-luminous Soul. This is why it is called the “light of the Self.” By the light of the Supreme Light, the darkness of delusion in the heart disappears. Only

when the mind joins with the senses do the five senses know their five objects—sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. Therefore, the “light” or illuminator of the senses is the mind. But the mind cannot clearly and steadily know objects unless it joins with the intellect. Therefore, the illuminator of the mind is the intellect. In the intellect, the knowledge of duty and non-duty, truth and falsehood, permanent and temporary is produced. But unless the “self” firmly accepts these in the intellect, they remain only intellectual knowledge. Such knowledge does not appear in one’s life or behavior. Whatever becomes firmly established in the “self” never gets destroyed. Therefore, the illuminator of the intellect is the Self. The Self is a part of the Supreme Self, and the Supreme Self is the whole. Knowledge and light come to the Self only from the Supreme Self. Therefore, the illuminator of the Self is the Supreme Self. No one can illuminate this self-luminous Supreme Self. From the Supreme Self, the original source of all illumination, light comes to the self, to the intellect, to the mind, to the senses, and to all objects. Therefore, the Supreme Self alone is the light of all lights and the illuminator of all illuminators. In Him, there is no difference between illuminator, illumination, and the thing illuminated. He Himself is knowledge and also the object to be known. He is the final goal of all knowledge. He is pure knowledge itself, existence–consciousness–bliss. The scripture clearly declares: “Brahman is truth, knowledge, and infinity.” By knowledge, when the unreal is given up, the Supreme Self is truly known. Therefore, He is called knowable through knowledge. Though He pervades all places, times, objects, persons, events, conditions, and states, still, He is realized only in the heart. He lives in the secret cave of everyone’s heart. One who experiences the presence of God in his own heart becomes able to feel God’s presence everywhere and at all times. One who cannot feel God inside cannot accept the truth that “God is everywhere.” The Supreme Self is one, yet He appears everywhere in all forms. There is not even the smallest possibility of duality in Him. In His realization, the seer and the seen become one, and the knower and the known, though different, merge into one essence of knowledge. When Brahman is attained, all distinctions such as means and goal become one.

**iti kṣetraṁ tathā jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ coktaṁ samāsataḥ
mad-bhakta etad vijñāya mad-bhāvāyopapadyate (13-19)**

Comm: In the previous verses, Lord Shri Krishna briefly explained the subjects of the field (kṣetra), the knower of the field (kṣetrajña), knowledge, ignorance, and the nature of what is to be known. There He also mentioned who is qualified to know this truth, and what disciplines and means are needed to know it. Now, in this verse, Lord Shri Krishna explains what result a person gets by knowing the true nature of My field, knowledge, and the knower of the field. Great sages like Vashishtha have given special descriptions of this truth in scriptures such as Yoga Vashistha. When a devotee understands this truth clearly at the level of the soul, a strong longing arises in his heart to attain Me. O Arjuna! Just as a person needs a boat to save himself from a terrible flood, in the same way, with the help

of the means I have described for becoming My own, a single-minded devotee gives up worldly attachments. Such a devotee surrenders his entire life in My service. He becomes fit to attain My loving nature and My true form, meaning he becomes qualified for the state of Brahman. Forgetting his own limited personality completely, he remembers Me constantly and becomes similar to My divine form. In this verse, the special meaning of the term “mad-bhakta” (My devotee) is as follows: According to Adi Shankaracharya, “The Supreme Lord is all-knowing and the original Guru of all.” Whoever can surrender the feeling of “the Supreme Self” to Me in this form of Vasudeva—the one Self in all—is truly My “mad-bhakta.” When a person understands the body through true spiritual knowledge, his attachment to the body falls away. Therefore, through both knowledge and devotion, the same non-dual Supreme Reality is attained. Swami Sivananda Maharaj says: “Whoever has unwavering devotion to Me, who accepts Me as Vasudeva, the Supreme Lord, the all-seeing one, the highest Guru, and the soul of everything, And who believes and realizes that whatever he sees, hears, or touches is nothing but God Himself, such a person, who has attained this real knowledge, becomes one with Me. That means he is freed from the cycle of birth and death.” The seeker who, through reasoning and discrimination, gains the correct understanding of the field and the knower of the field, And who realizes within himself that the one Vasudeva alone is the knower of the field in all bodies, that seeker is My exclusive devotee, and he attains My true form. To achieve this, it is absolutely necessary to take refuge in a true Guru and practise devotion sincerely.

**prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api
vikārāmś ca guṇāmś caiva viddhi prakṛti-sambhavān (13-20)**

Comm: In the seventh chapter, while describing Prakṛti, the Lord had earlier said that these two Prakṛtis – Aparā and Parā – are the root cause of creation. “Aparā” is that which is called Kṣetra (the field), and “Parā” or “Kṣetrajña” is the knower of this field. These two are different forms of the Supreme Soul (Paramātmā) and are denoted by the terms Prakṛti and Puruṣa. The Supreme Soul is eternal; therefore, it is logical that His two forms are also eternal or beginningless (anādī). Śaṅkarācārya has said: “Īṣṭavyābhāve īśvarābhāva prasangaḥ” – meaning, “If there were no Prakṛti, whom would Īśvara control? If there were no Puruṣa, whose inner controller would Īśvara be? Therefore, from beginningless time, Īśvara has been regulating both Prakṛti and Puruṣa.” Just as coolness cannot be separated from snow or night from day, similarly Puruṣa cannot be separated from Prakṛti. Day and night are two different names, yet the underlying reality is one. The existence or the real element in it is called Puruṣa, and the activity that takes place on the basis of that existence is called Prakṛti. The living entity’s connection with Prakṛti (its jīva-hood) is not due to some temporary cause; it is not adventitious – it is beginningless and eternally established. In the same way, this Prakṛti, which is the power of the Lord, should also be understood as beginningless and eternally established. According to Sāṅkhya philosophy, Prakṛti and Puruṣa are not only eternal and beginningless, but

they are distinct from each other, independent, and self-existent. According to Sāṅkhya, Prakṛti is the transformation or modification of the three guṇas. All the modifications that arise from the three-guṇātmikā Prakṛti – all elements and objects – are born from Prakṛti. Prakṛti is subject to time, place and causality, whereas Puruṣa is above them. Cause-effect relationship exists in Prakṛti, but Puruṣa is beyond cause-effect and beyond both real and unreal. Therefore, just as Prakṛti and Puruṣa are beginningless, their distinction is also beginningless. But according to Vedānta philosophy, Prakṛti or Māyā is born from Brahman; therefore, Māyā is not self-existent nor independent. The gross Prakṛti remained absorbed in the Supreme Person Lord Mahāviṣṇu, and at the time of creation it manifested through the medium of mahat-tattva. Prakṛti (i.e., Māyā) and Puruṣa (i.e., jīva) – these two are beginningless in the sense that they have no originating cause. Because both are powers of the Supreme Lord, they are eternal. Māyā is completely under the control of the Lord. Māyā is the causal body of the Lord. Māyā is the Lord’s magical power. Ātmā and anātmā, inert and conscious, Parā and Aparā – all these are the Lord’s Prakṛti. Being the master of these two Prakṛtis, He performs the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe. Due to impressions (saṁskāras) from previous births, a newborn child smiles, feels sorrow, fear, anger, happiness and pain. From this it is clearly proved that the same jīvātmā existed in the child’s previous births too, and thus, by this reasoning, the jīvātmā is beginningless. The Supreme Soul Himself, under names such as jīvātmā, kṣetrajña, puruṣa etc., is beginningless. Although the Gītā states that Prakṛti is beginningless, nowhere does it say that it is endless (ananta). In its flowing form (pravāha-rūpa) Prakṛti is eternal, but in reality it is merely apparent. From the viewpoint of a knower of truth, just as the blueness of the sky appears as long as it is seen with the eyes but is never separate from the sky, similarly Prakṛti, being eternal only because of its continuous flow, is never separate from Paramātmā. The Lord further says: O Arjuna, know that the three guṇas – sattva, rajas and tamas – which manifest as pleasure, greed, delusion etc., and all the modifications of the field mentioned earlier (desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, body, consciousness, firmness) are born from Prakṛti. The five great elements, ego (or mahat-tattva), ten organs, five sense-objects and the mind – all these are effects of Prakṛti; Prakṛti is their root material cause. The power of Māyā of the Lord that is the cause of all modifications and guṇas is called Prakṛti. The soul itself remains unchanging and without guṇas, yet it manifests all modifications and guṇas within the body. The modifications beginning with mahat-tattva are also born from Prakṛti. According to Sāṅkhya, the first modification of Prakṛti is mahat-tattva and the last gross modification is the earth element. In a pot, clay is the “vivarta upādāna kāraṇa” (apparent material cause) because the pot has no existence at any time without clay. Clay existed before the pot was made, clay exists while the pot exists, and when the pot is destroyed, only that same clay remains. Therefore clay is the vivarta upādāna kāraṇa of the pot. Similarly, the vivarta upādāna kāraṇa of the entire universe is Puruṣa, that is, Brahman. Clay turning into pot and pot again returning to clay – this process is called “pariṇāmi” (real transformation). Prakṛti is the pariṇāmi upādāna

kāraṇa of the gross and subtle universe. In making the pot, the potter, stick, wheel etc. are the “nimitta kāraṇa” (efficient cause). The efficient cause does not become manifest in the effect; just as the potter or wheel do not appear in the pot. Similarly, although Paramātmā is the nimitta kāraṇa in the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe, He remains unmanifest in the visible world. From the above discussion, Paramātmā is the upādāna kāraṇa and Prakṛti is also an upādāna kāraṇa. The only difference is that Prakṛti undergoes modification, whereas Puruṣa-Paramātmā remains unchanged. What Advaita Vedānta calls “vivartavāda”, Vallabhācārya calls “avikṛta pariṇāmavāda”. According to Vallabhācārya, Paramātmā does not undergo modification, yet this universe is His transformation of Him. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa rises above all these doctrines and establishes the conclusion that you should know both the pariṇāmi upādāna kāraṇa of the world (which is beginningless) and the vivarta upādāna kāraṇa Puruṣa as beginningless. Because whatever inert and conscious things are seen – everything arises from the connection between Prakṛti and Puruṣa. In the conditioned jīva three principles are observed: Prakṛti, Puruṣa and jīvātmā. All fields (kṣetra) are Prakṛti, the jīva is Puruṣa, and in between these two, My appearance as Paramātmā takes place.

**kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām bhokṛtve hetur ucyate (13-21)**

Comm: Earth, water, air, fire, and space—these five subtle (uncombined) great elements—and form, taste, smell, sound, and touch—the five objects of the sense organs—together make ten effect principles. The five sense organs (ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose), the five organs of action (speech, hands, feet, genitals, and anus), and mind, intellect, and ego—these thirteen indicate the cause or instrumental principles. Some commentators explain the word karana (instrument) as meaning both cause and instrument. That which is produced is called effect, and that by which the effect is accomplished is called cause. All materials required to perform an action are called instruments. “Effect” refers to the gross body, and “cause” refers to the subtle functioning of the subtle body. These twenty-three principles of cause and effect arise from Prakṛiti (Nature). Therefore, Prakṛiti is the material cause of all these. Prakṛiti alone is the sole foundation of all transformations in the form of doership, cause, and effect. The function of the mind is to combine the different objects received by the five sense organs. That is, the mind controls and coordinates the sense organs. After understanding the nature of the objects received by the mind, the intellect decides the appropriate response. During all these processes of mind and intellect, an imagined entity called “I” is always experienced. For example, “I think,” “I see,” “I hear,” and so on. This sense of “I” or ego appears due to the identification of the Self with the body. The organs of action are governed by the sense organs, the sense organs by the mind, the mind by the intellect, and the intellect by the ego. This means that all actions performed through the external and internal instruments actually take place in Prakṛiti alone. The conscious principle by which cause, effect, and doership are revealed

is called Purusha or the individual soul. The Gita describes this Purusha as the experiencer of pleasure and pain. The individual soul is a part of the Supreme Soul and is changeless and formless. Then how can it truly experience pleasure and pain? Experiencing pleasure and pain is not the real nature of the Self. It is an assumed or conditioned appearance of the Self. Pleasure and pain are only reactions of the mind. Experiences appear in the inner instrument due to the consciousness of the Self. Without the light of consciousness of the Self, no experience can arise in the inner instrument of a living being. When the Self identifies itself with the ego-thought, that ego becomes the doer. This ego contains both inert and conscious aspects. Due to the beginningless association of Prakriti and Purusha, Purusha is considered the cause of experiencing pleasure and pain. As long as the individual soul identifies with the body, it experiences the reactions of all performed actions. The moment the soul gives up body-identification and abides in the Self, it is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. The intellect is extremely subtle. The consciousness-power of the Self (reflection of consciousness) is reflected in the intellect. Because of this, the intellect experiences in harmony with consciousness. The true nature of the pure Self is also reflected in the intellect. This mutual superimposition of Prakriti and Purusha in intellect and Self is the cause of creation. Here, the word Purusha refers to the bound soul subject to rebirth, which experiences pleasure and pain. The Supreme Purusha is eternally free from worldly bondage and has no modification. Both Prakriti and Purusha are causes of worldly existence. Prakriti creates body, life-force, energy, mind, intellect, and sense organs. Purusha or the individual soul experiences pleasure and pain. Experiencing pleasure and pain is called worldly life. The individual soul is the worldly being. God is so compassionate to the soul that He dwells in the heart as the Supreme Self in every state. He continuously gives discernment and inspiration and shows the path to liberation. Knowledge-aspect of Prakriti, called Maya, is like a mother. Its purpose is to lift the soul from elemental identity and lead it to its true nature. It leads from ignorance to light, and from death to immortality. Due to the identification of Purusha and Prakriti, the dominance of consciousness creates the desire for liberation. The dominance of inert matter creates the desire for enjoyment. Therefore, in the end, consciousness alone attains true welfare, not inert matter. The withdrawal of Prakriti is eternal, and the attainment of Purusha is eternal. Complete withdrawal of Prakriti— meaning equilibrium of sattva, rajas, and tamas— is the fulfillment of Purusha. From the highest viewpoint, though Prakriti and Purusha have different natures, they are inseparable. The sense of doership attributed to Purusha arises due to superimposition caused by false knowledge. In reality, Prakriti alone is the cause of actions. Through association with Purusha, Prakriti transforms into actions and their results. Maya, called ignorance, creates this superimposition through its functions. Enjoyership is predominant in Purusha, while doership is predominant in Prakriti. Purusha is the illuminator but inactive, whereas Prakriti is blind, having no awareness. Just as a blind person and a lame person help each other, both benefit through cooperation. Similarly, through the union of Prakriti and Purusha, both enjoyment and liberation are

attained. This is the view of the Sankhya philosophy. One important point must always be remembered. The pure Self is not the real experiencer of material pleasure and pain. The soul manifested through marginal energy, due to identification with a body created by Maya, assumes enjoyership of pleasure and pain. The Supreme Self is predominant in the immutable inner Self. Therefore, He is without limitations and unchanged by the actions of Prakriti. But both Maya and the individual soul remain under the control of God.

**puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhuñkte prakṛti-jān guṇān
kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu (13-22)**

Comm: The Purusha (soul), which is of the nature of pure knowledge, resides in Prakriti (nature) and enjoys the qualities that arise from Prakriti in the form of happiness, sorrow, delusion, etc. This attachment to the qualities, or contact with the senses, or the feeling of oneness with them, causes the soul (jivatma) to take birth in good or bad species. When sattva guna is dominant, one takes birth in divine realms; with rajo guna, in human form; and with tamo guna, in lower forms like animals and birds. As long as the soul remains enchanted by the false pride of the body, it keeps taking one body after another. In truth, the Purusha is not situated in Prakriti or in the body, because its real nature is eternally detached. The Purusha has two kinds of positions: “Prakritistha” (established in nature) and “Svastha” (established in the self). To remain established in one’s true nature without feeling “I” or “mine” toward the body is called “Svastha” or “Atmastha” (established in the soul). In the Atmastha state, the knower of truth knows that all actions are done by Prakriti and does not claim the fruits of any action. Such a person becomes equal-minded, no longer experiences happiness or sorrow, and remains in the state of liberation while living (jivanmukta). A Vedic mantra says that the more the soul gains the company of the Supreme Lord and becomes a knower of truth, the more it can experience its eternal blissful life. When a person identifies with the gross and subtle bodies born from Prakriti and thinks of the body as “I” and “mine,” that state is called “Prakritistha.” Because a person does not feel “Svastha,” meaning he does not realise his true position in the self, he thinks he is in the body. Worldly actions happen through the combination of both Prakriti and Purusha. The body is mainly responsible for performing actions, but the Purusha connected to the body has to enjoy the results in the form of happiness and sorrow. Since the body is attached to pleasure and afraid of pain, the wisdom “I am separate—happiness and pain are separate” does not arise. In reality, the self-neither becomes happy nor unhappy; it only thinks so because it is mixed with the body. Happiness and sorrow are just ideas accepted due to lack of proper understanding. As long as a person is under the control of material nature, he wrongly thinks, due to illusion, that he is the doer or owner of the world. The soul, whose nature is marginal, turns away from God, takes the body as the self, accepts the doership and enjoyership of inert matter, and becomes bound to the world. Enchanted by maya, the soul has been trapped in the cycle of birth and death from beginningless time, suffering worldly pains. By the grace of

God or His devotees, when one gets good company (sat-sanga), the curtain of ignorance called maya is removed, the soul becomes established in its pure form, and it tastes the joy of serving the Lord. From the Vedanta view, Prakriti is not different from the Supreme Soul. The scripture says: “Know Prakriti as maya, and the Great Lord as the master of maya” (Shvetashvatara Upanishad 4.10)—Prakriti and maya mean the same thing. The Vedanta Sutra says that through the power of declaration and examples, knowing one thing leads to knowing everything. Therefore, Prakriti has no independent existence. Shri Nilakantha has said: When the Purusha stays in the body made of body, senses, mind, etc., it enjoys the qualities. In deep sleep, samadhi, or unconsciousness, when the Purusha is not in Prakriti, it does not enjoy the qualities. The Purusha gets attached to the effects of sattva and other qualities, performs good and bad actions to obtain them, and to enjoy their results goes to higher or lower births. There it again starts actions, and to enjoy those results goes to another birth. The relation with things, people, and actions is “association with qualities,” which causes birth and death. Association with qualities is temporary, while non-association with qualities is eternal. Whatever quality or object one becomes attached to creates that kind of desire and impression in the mind. According to habits and impressions, whatever is remembered at the time of death causes the soul to get higher or lower births. Shri Shankaracharya has said on this topic: The “association,” meaning the “I” feeling, with the qualities and changes of body, senses, etc., is a false superimposition caused by ignorance. The ignorant person, caught in this superimposition, wanders in various species. Delusion is removed through detachment and selfless action. As long as the soul does not give up sense enjoyment and does not practice the means to liberation such as knowledge and detachment, this worldly cycle continues.

**upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ
paramātmēti cāpy ukto dehe’smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ (13-23)**

Comm: The Purusha who exists in the living body and is different from the body and the senses is the witness in nature. From the standpoint of witnessing, He is called the Observer (Upadrashta). Because He gives true consent, He is called the Approver (Anumanta). Because He supports and sustains all beings, He is called the Sustainer (Bhartā). Because He experiences the tendencies of enjoyment, He is called the Enjoyer (Bhoktā). Because He is the Lord even of Brahmā, He is called Īśvara. Because He dwells within the living being, He is called the Inner Controller (Antaryāmī). That supreme reality who lives in the heart of the living being and is free from body-identification is called Paramātmā. Because He is pure, existence-consciousness-bliss itself, He is always known as the Supreme Purusha. All actions performed by the bound living being yield their results through Him. At a sacrifice, there may be an expert who does not perform the ritual but sits silently as a witness. When mistakes occur in the ritual, he gives guidance without performing the action himself. In the same way, the knowable Supreme Self is an intentionless observer. Whatever actions are done by the senses, mind, and intellect,

Paramātmā approves them and illuminates them. Even though He does not engage in action like the body and senses, because He is extremely close, He is called the Approver. A question arises: how does God, as the Approver, allow both good and bad actions? The answer is this: God never approves sinful actions. But when the living being ignores His prohibitive commands, God remains a silent witness. The living being then has to suffer the bad results himself. Paramātmā always approves righteous actions. The living being has a tendency to avoid God's approval and independently try to enjoy material nature. God has given the living being a priceless treasure called freedom. This freedom in the living being is called God's marginal energy. By proper use of this freedom, the soul can easily taste loving devotional service in God's eternal abode. But by misusing this freedom, the soul becomes bound by Māyā. Then it is burned by the threefold miseries and revolves in the cycle of birth and death. This knowable Supreme Self, when associated with an individual body, identifies with it and nourishes it through food, water, and so on. He also protects the body from heat, cold, and other disturbances. Without the presence of the Self, the body, senses, mind, and intellect can neither function nor gain strength. Therefore, He is called the Sustainer. Just as a husband maintains his wife and family, the Self maintains the body, mind, intellect, life-force, and senses. Just as heat is the inherent nature of fire, eternal consciousness is the inherent nature of the Self. This consciousness pervades all states of the mind— pleasure, pain, and delusion— and illuminates them all. Though changeless and unattached, because He experiences reflected objects in the intellect, He is called the Enjoyer. Within the body, He is the essence of all things. He is the great Lord, the Supreme God. He is above everything and dependent on no one. Therefore, He is called Maheshvara. Paramātmā is superior to all principles from the unmanifest to the manifest. Hence, He is called Supreme. Paramātmā is self-luminous. Because He is the Self of all beings, He is great. Because He is independent, He is called Īśvara. Because He is supreme among all inert objects, the Vedas call Him Paramātmā. When the imaginary identification with the field (body) is destroyed, the title "Purusha dwelling in Prakriti" no longer applies. He then remains only as Purusha. That Purusha is actually a part of Paramātmā. In reality, there is no difference between Brahman, Paramātmā, and the Knower of the Field. The apparent difference exists only due to the bodily limitation. The same Supreme Brahman is addressed by different names according to different contexts. The scriptures and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam clearly state that the individual soul is different from Paramātmā. "Two birds of similar nature sit together on the same tree." They dwell on the branch of the heart in the tree of the body. One bird, the individual soul, eats the fruits of action. The other bird, God, does not eat the fruit and remains ever satisfied in bliss. He resides happily, endowed with knowledge and other powers. Lord Krishna says that the living being is His friend. By remaining in his pure marginal nature, the soul can come into God's presence. This marginal nature itself is the soul's freedom. Using this freedom to attain God's pure love is the fulfillment of the soul's true duty. Misuse of this freedom is the cause of struggle in the material world. Swami Adgadanandji Maharaj, in Yatharth Gita, explains these

stages from the viewpoint of spiritual practice. That observing Purusha dwells in the heart closer than the hands, feet, or mind. Whether the soul does good or bad does not affect Him. He remains only as a witness. As the seeker progresses spiritually and turns toward God, the role of the observing Purusha changes. He becomes the Approver and begins to be experienced. With deeper practice, He becomes the Sustainer and provides protection and support. This is known as yoga-kṣema. With even subtler practice, He becomes the Enjoyer. “I am the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities and the Lord of all worlds.” (Gītā 5.29) Whatever is offered through sacrifice or austerity, He accepts it. After accepting everything, He manifests as Maheshvara, the great Lord. Then He becomes the controller of inner nature and guides the living being. In an even higher state, when that Purusha unites with the Supreme, He is called Paramātmā. Even while residing in the bound body, He remains different from the individual soul and always above nature. The only difference is that at first He is known as the observer, and gradually He is realized as Paramātmā. Different names describe the same single Purusha. In reality, there is no difference at all. The purpose of terms like observer and approver is to show that consciousness is one. Just as one person becomes father, husband, or brother due to relationships, in the same way, the knowable Purusha assumes different names due to association. In truth, such relationships exist only for duty, not for emotional attachment.

**ya evaṁ veti puruṣaṁ prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha
sarvathā vartamāno’pi na sa bhūyo’bhijāyate (13-24)**

Comm: One who truly knows the Purusha (Self) and Prakriti along with its three qualities does not take rebirth, no matter in which condition of life he may be living. Because of identification with Prakriti, desires arise, and due to these desires the individual soul repeatedly takes birth in different wombs. To understand the changes of the body and the pleasure and pain produced by the qualities of Prakriti, one must remain as a witness to them. Only by remaining a witness can one know the Supreme Self, who is the support of both Purusha and Prakriti. When that Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman, who is infinite in nature, is experienced as one’s own Self, ignorance, nescience, or Maya is destroyed. Then there is no rebirth for that person. The meaning is that while living in the world and performing actions, such a wise person does not create new desires like ordinary people. Because of firm establishment in knowledge, his ego is completely destroyed. A person who clearly understands Brahman is called a Brahman (knower of Brahman), and all his karmas are destroyed. This truth is taught in all the Upanishads. The knower of Brahman knows that he is eternally changeless. All changes that appear are only transformations of Prakriti caused by its qualities. All karmas that are seeds of rebirth are burned in the fire of knowledge. Just as seeds burned in fire cannot sprout again, karmas burned by the fire of knowledge cannot produce rebirth. Since the yogi does not identify himself with the body, he is not affected by the results of prarabdha karma, even though it continues to give results. This is because he rises above body-

consciousness and remains only as a witness of the body. From the vision of a jivanmukta sage, there is really no body and no effect of prarabdha karma. By the power of Self-knowledge, the cause of the body, namely ignorance, is destroyed, and along with it rebirth is also destroyed. The knower of Brahman understands that the three qualities arise from Maya in the form of Prakriti. Even though the yogi, because of having a body, may perform various actions, he remains detached and unaffected while acting. Just as space never becomes mixed with dust and always remains separate and untouched, he also remains separate and unattached. As long as the body exists, he never falls into delusion about the body. When the body comes to an end, there is no rebirth for him. Therefore, discrimination between Prakriti and Purusha, which is so beneficial, should be practiced by human beings. One who gains Self-knowledge and understands the inert body as separate from the Self, impermanent and unreal, attains liberation even while bound by prarabdha karma. The entire universe is only an expansion of Prakriti and is perishable, inert, momentary, and impermanent. To understand this truth is to truly know Prakriti along with its qualities. The union of Prakriti and Purusha is considered unreal like a dream and born only of ignorance. The moment complete knowledge of Prakriti and Purusha arises, their connection is broken. After this connection is broken, the individual soul no longer comes under the control of Prakriti and does not take any further birth. According to some scholars, liberation happens only at the time of the great dissolution, when the soul that has reached Brahmaloka along with Brahma merges into the Supreme Brahman. Some scholars argue that even after knowledge, rebirth cannot be denied, because producing results is the natural function of karma. Just as the karma that initiated the present body continues to give results until the body falls, even after knowledge arises, they argue that actions done after knowledge must also give results. This is because producing results is the inherent nature of karma. Therefore, according to them, liberation does not occur immediately after the rise of knowledge, but only at the time of the great dissolution. Shankaracharya has explained the resolution of this doubt through an example. An arrow shot from a bow to hit a target continues to move forward even after hitting the target, as long as some force remains in it. In the same way, the karma that began the body continues to give results after the attainment of knowledge, as long as residual momentum remains, until the body lasts. But an arrow that is placed on the bow and then withdrawn without being released has no momentum and cannot travel even a little distance. Similarly, actions performed after the attainment of knowledge, lacking the force of ignorance and ego, get exhausted in the body itself. They do not produce any results. Therefore, the Gita's statement about the wise person, "Na sa bhuyo abhijayate" (he is not born again), is completely correct and logical. Ramanujacharya explains this statement by saying that the knower of truth, after giving up the body, attains the pure Self free from Maya and becomes of the nature of infinite, uninterrupted knowledge.

**dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karma-yogena cāpare (13-25)**

Comm: Some spiritual seekers, according to their faith, inner trust, and personal capacity, are able to experience the Supreme Reality in a pure heart through meditation, using the power of their subtle intellect. Some other seekers realize this through the path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga or Sankhya Yoga). Other yogis realize it through “yogena,” that is, through the practice of Ashtanga Yoga. Some seekers attain Self-realization by performing actions in a spirit of surrender, renouncing attachment to the fruits of action, and purifying their inner being. In this verse, the Lord describes different methods and alternative paths for realizing the highest goal of life, which is the experience of the pure Self free from all limitations. For spiritual practice, following a definite path is necessary. By listening to scriptural teachings and the words of the Guru, and by shaping one’s life according to that knowledge, true inner growth becomes possible. While progressing on this path of self-development, the seeker has to face many difficulties. Therefore, with disciplined conduct, awakened discrimination born of knowledge, and full enthusiasm, the seeker must continuously engage in sincere practice. If a seeker, even after understanding the principles of knowledge and the object of knowledge, does not attain fulfillment or immediate liberation, then deep contemplation (nididhyāsana) becomes necessary. Through external practices such as service, austerity, vows, pilgrimage, and charity, the inner mind becomes purified. After the mind is purified, the essential inner practice required for Self-realization is meditation. Meditation is the contemplation of the non-difference between the personal, form-based God and the formless, attributeless Brahman. Meditation does not occur in a dull mind, nor in a restless and distracted mind. For the seeker whose heart and intellect are equally developed and who is endowed with dispassion, the path of meditation is the best path. Sitting steadily in a pure and solitary place, one must withdraw the senses from the external world through meditation, steady the mind in the intellect, and fix concentrated awareness on the conscious Self. One cannot remain established in the Supreme through any external means; one has to become established by oneself. When, through meditation, the mind becomes fully concentrated on the chosen ideal, it enters a restrained state known as samadhi. Through the pure and subtle intellect, the unique nature of the object of meditation flows continuously like an unbroken stream of oil. When the seeker experiences one’s own absolute reality, the intellect and other inner faculties no longer retain any independent existence. The mind, intellect, and consciousness all become the Self, just as waves and foam are nothing but the ocean itself. When the meditator realizes the Supreme Brahman, full of existence, consciousness, and bliss, within the heart through subtle intellect, the yogi becomes completely satisfied by directly experiencing the Self. This is described as seeing the Self by the Self through the Self by means of meditation. Considering all objects born of nature to be mere illusion, like mirage water or a dream creation, and remaining eternally established in unity with the all-pervading Supreme Reality without accepting

any other independent existence is the practice of Sankhya Yoga. According to Sankhya philosophy, the qualities born of nature function only among the qualities themselves, while the Self remains unattached to all bodily actions. Only a qualified seeker endowed with discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold virtues (control of mind, control of senses, withdrawal, endurance, faith, and mental balance), and a strong desire for liberation can easily practice Sankhya Yoga. Through study of scriptures, reflection, logical reasoning, and discrimination, the Sankhya yogi becomes free from doubts regarding the distinction between real and unreal, Self and non-Self, Purusha and Prakriti, and is established in a definite philosophical conclusion. Such a yogi understands the entire external world to be nothing but the functioning of mental modifications based on the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas. Through the understanding, “I am distinct from this visible world and am the eternal Self, beyond qualities, witnessing the actions of the qualities,” the Self remains established as the observer above all qualities. As a result, other mental modifications naturally dissolve, and only the awareness of the non-dual Self remains. For those whose inner mind, due to strong past tendencies, is not inclined toward meditation or inquiry, the path of Karma Yoga is necessary for exhausting old tendencies and preventing the rise of new ones. Karma Yoga means performing all prescribed duties according to scripture and one’s social role, without desire for results, with complete detachment, and with equanimity in success and failure. Whatever a Karma Yogi does—service, sacrifice, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, or vows—is done solely for the welfare of the world. Such actions are not done for bodily pleasure, nor for worship, honor, recognition, or prestige. When the seeker becomes completely unattached to the fruits of action, the sense of personal connection with actions, instruments, and the body is severed, and Brahman is experienced everywhere as non-different. The realization of the oneness of the Self and Brahman—known as “Brahma-Atma-Aikya Bodha”—is the highest culmination of all yogic paths. To see the Supreme means not to identify with the body, but to recognize the Supreme within oneself. Thus, united with the Supreme Reality, the seeker experiences the divine glory of the Supreme Lord within the purified inner being.

**anye tv evam ajānantah śrutvānyebhya upāsate
te’pi cātitaranty eva mṛtyuṁ śruti-parāyaṇāḥ (13-26)**

Comm: Emotional Meaning: In the previous verse, three paths to attain self-knowledge were described: Dhyana Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Karma Yoga. In this verse, the subject of Upasana or Bhakti Yoga is discussed. For those who lack the knowledge of spiritual practice and are unable to follow any of the yoga paths, associating with saints and remaining in the proximity of holy persons while performing worship of God is an easy and achievable path. Until the distinction between Purusha and Prakriti, and between the seer and the seen, is deeply understood, it is not possible for a seeker to practise steady meditation. Due to the abundance of desires in the inner being and attachment to sense objects, concentration on self-study becomes impossible. As long as egoism of doership

and selfishness are not renounced, the inner being cannot become free from disturbances, nor is it possible to perform all actions as offerings to God. In Karma Yoga, proper performance is essential. In Sankhya Yoga, excellent discrimination between the seer and the seen is required. In Dhyana Yoga, one-pointedness of mind is necessary. A person of limited intellect who lacks the above four qualities cannot easily grasp the truth of self-realisation. Therefore, such a person should listen to the teachings with deep faith from realised great souls and acharyas and engage in worship accordingly. Accepting the words heard from the Guru's mouth as the sole authority and performing worship of the Supreme Truth, God, with faith and devotion is the best path. Those endowed with such faith realise the eternal truth and cross over the transient world of death. Due to ignorance, identifying with impermanent, non-self adjuncts and being affected by their changes leads to the painful experience called "death". Living with this identification, a person faces death many times—this is the "world in the form of death". Childhood dies and adolescence is born. Adolescence dies and youth is born. Youth dies and old age is born. One who knows the imperishable Self that transcends all these changes undoubtedly crosses over the world of death. That is, one remains unaffected and unshaken in all changing conditions, and the accepted relationship with the body is severed. Sri Shankaracharya has said that if even a person lacking discrimination attains liberation by hearing teachings with faith from others, then what to say about seekers endowed with discrimination and dispassion! In the Chandogya Upanishad (4.4-9), it is mentioned that Satyakama, son of Jabala, approached Maharshi Haridruma of the Gautama gotra desiring knowledge of Brahman. The Guru, being very weak, gave him sickly cows and said: "Dear one, take these cows and herd them separately." Following the Guru's command with great reverence, enthusiasm, and joy, Satyakama took the cows to the forest. He resolved that he would return to the Guru only after their number reached one thousand. He kept them in safe forest areas with good grass and water, and returned to the Guru's ashram when there were one thousand cows. As a result, even on the way back, he attained knowledge of Brahman. From a bull, he learned about the first quarter of Brahman. From fire (which he tended while searching for food), about the second quarter. From a swan, about the third quarter. And from a diving bird named Madgu, about the fourth quarter—thus gaining complete knowledge. In this way, by accepting the instructions of realised souls and following them with utmost faith and love, even the difficult-to-attain knowledge of Brahman becomes possible. The seeker benefits more by remaining indifferent to the worldly behaviour and actions of realised saints and great souls, focusing only on the spiritual connection. In modern so-called civilised society, there is insufficient opportunity to receive education on self-knowledge. In Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam, the method of listening (shravana) is given great importance. Especially, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu placed utmost emphasis on listening and chanting (kirtana). His main teaching is that through the influence of hearing divine stories, chanting the Lord's names, and remembrance, one can easily attain service to the Lord. Lord Brahma, Sri Narada, Sri Vedavyasa, Sri Shukadeva Goswami, Maharaja

Parikshit, Prahlada Maharaja, and others attained direct realisation of God through this method. Swami Chidananda Saraswati has said in “Ponder These Truths” that in Vedantic sadhana, the path of knowledge has three limbs: shravana, manana, and nididhyasana—that is, listening, reflection on the teachings, and meditation. One must be taught how to listen to the words of knowledge with firm devotion, humility, pure mind, and sattvic thoughts and attitude, praying: “Maharaj! I do not know this subject; kindly remove my doubts; I have a great desire to know this.” Curiosity itself means humility—expressing humbly “I do not know” is called jijñāsā (inquiry). Therefore, while walking the path of shravana, manana, and nididhyasana, you must remain careful. During shravana, you must listen attentively and in the proper manner.

**yāvat sañjāyate kiñcit sattvaṁ sthāvara-jaṅgamam
kṣetra-kṣetrajña-saṁyogāt tad viddhi bharataṛṣabha (13-27)**

Comm : The relation that arises between the knower of the field (Kṣetrajña), that is, the Purusha dwelling in Prakriti, and the subtle and gross bodies born from Prakriti, is called the union of the field and the knower of the field. As a result of this union, living beings of different forms are born from different wombs. Humans, gods, animals, birds, insects and other moving beings are called mobile (jaṅgama). Trees, creepers, grass, shrubs, mountains and other unmoving things are called immobile (sthāvara). That which is subject to creation and destruction is called the field (kṣetra). That which knows this field, and which is free from creation and destruction and always remains the same, is called the knower of the field (kṣetrajña). Because the Purusha dwelling in Prakriti, that is the Kṣetrajña, accepts a false relation with the body as “I” and “mine,” the soul is compelled to take birth in mobile and immobile bodies. Here a question arises: attraction and union are possible only between similar things, so how can the knower of the field (conscious) unite with the field (inert), which is dissimilar? Its answer is given by Swami Ramsukhdas in Gita Sadhak Sanjivani, where it is said that just as the union of night and day is not really possible, in the same way the union of the field and the knower of the field is also not truly possible. However, as a part of God, the field has the power to grasp a dissimilar entity and accept a relation with it. God Himself has given this freedom. By misusing this freedom, the soul does not accept its relation with God but accepts a relation with the world, and thus falls into the cycle of birth and death. Another explanation is the method of superimposition, which is a clever function of the human mind and is called adhyāsa in Vedānta. In adhyāsa, due to ignorance, some other object and its qualities are superimposed on an existing base, like seeing a ghost on a pillar. In such superimposition, the deluded person actually sees the form, qualities and actions of a ghost that does not exist. Because of the mutual superimposition of qualities, the false ghost is seen, but the real pillar is not seen. In the same way, the qualities of the Self are superimposed on the body, and the qualities of the body are superimposed on the Self. Consciousness, due to ignorance, takes the body to be the conscious Self. The activities of the body or Prakriti

are imposed upon the silent witness, the non-doer Self. When pure consciousness appears to establish a relation with the field, it is then called the Purusha dwelling in Prakriti or the Kṣetrajña. At that time, it seems as if desire, hatred, pleasure and pain arise in the knower of the field. Thus, the field and the knower of the field are not truly united through cause-and-effect relation. This is only a mutual superimposition, which Vedantins call Māyā. Just as waves arise in water due to the movement of air, and just as the illusion of mirage appears due to the heat of the sun over land and sky, in the same way the appearance of the entire world arises due to this relation between the field and the knower of the field. For the management of the universe, all activities and manifestations of this apparent union have been operating since beginningless time under the control of the Supreme Lord, who governs both the higher and lower powers. Whatever immobile and mobile objects are produced in this world arise from the contact of Prakriti and Purusha. That is, they appear due to the presence of Brahman in Māyā. This “Purusha dwelling in Prakriti,” or the individual soul, creates the world by producing many modifications through false attachment. When the soul stands as a witness, remaining separate from the actions of Prakriti, it no longer thinks of itself as a “jīva,” but knows its true nature as only “Purusha” or “pure consciousness.” Therefore, “O Arjuna, know this: this world of names and forms is not different from that principal reality, the knower of the field.”

**samaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṁ parameśvaram
vinaśyatsv avinaśyantaṁ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati n(13-28)**

Comm: The one who directly experiences the Supreme Soul abiding equally—that is, in an undifferentiated form of pure existence—in all perishable stationary and moving beings is the true seer with perfect vision. In another sense, the one who feels oneness with all diverse living beings that are subject to birth and death is the real seer. The world and all objects in it are impermanent and transient. The Supreme Lord (the Self) resides equally in all these stationary and moving entities. Yet, even when this world is destroyed, the one who sees that Self as indestructible—that is, who deeply realises “the body is impermanent, the Self is eternal” and faithfully applies it in practical life—is the true knower of the Self. When one seriously contemplates the oneness of body and Self, it becomes clear that all beings are multiple forms of that One, and all are that One alone. In other words, no matter how different beings appear in form and qualities, that One Supreme Lord is the root cause of everything. All inert objects manifested through consciousness—along with body, mind, and intellect—exist within the bounds of time, so they are naturally ever-changing. Amid these changes, the Supreme Lord is the eternal, unchanging substratum that makes all these changes possible. Just as only water exists in all waves, and just as gold alone is the basis in all transformed ornaments, this indestructible consciousness is the revealer of all that perishes and the support of the ever-changing world. The Supreme Lord is the sky of consciousness (Chidakasha), Chidambaram, or the screen of pure consciousness. It is the underlying support of the

entire universe. Due to false identification between the inert and the conscious, the body and the Self, the field and the knower of the field in this state of constant change, the painful world appears to exist. Even as names and forms keep changing, the seeker who sees the indestructible Supreme Lord equally present in all names and forms—that is, who realises or experiences the Self—is the true knower of reality or seer of the Self. Through the senses, one can only perceive the limited forms of the world’s objects and persons bearing names and forms, but no one can see their ultimate truth. Delusions of the mind, false imaginations, and distractions veil the true nature of things—”I am not manifest to all, being veiled by Yoga-Maya” (Gita 7/25). Therefore, Lord Krishna, the Master of Yoga, firmly declares that only the person who can see this supreme One truth truly has eyes. In this world full of events—despite creation and dissolution, birth and death, famine, flood, and war—the existence itself undergoes no change. Whether one is bound or liberated, sinful or virtuous, this unchanging existence is equally present in all. Country, time, objects, persons, events, situations, actions, states, etc., flow on continuously, but the Self (the conscious existence) remains perfectly still and unchanged. Change occurs in country, time, etc., but not in the Self. The seeker who, through the study of scriptures, the Guru’s teachings, and the influence of proximity to realised great souls, simultaneously experiences the body, the indweller (Self), and the Supreme Self (the friend or totality of the Self), is the true knower. The person who accepts only the body’s existence, identifies the perishable body as “I”, and believes everything is lost when the body perishes, is ignorant. The vision of a knower of truth becomes free from attachment, aversion, and the like. He has no attachment to any person or object, nor any hatred. After attaining knowledge of truth, the vision that arises sees no differences anywhere, and this equal vision is also evident in his conduct. Even the laws of nature surrender before him and cannot harm him. The well-known Puranic stories of Prahlada, Meera, and others illustrate seeing God equally everywhere and behaving with equal vision toward all.

**samañ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram
na hinasty ātmanātmānañ tato yāti parāñ gatim (13-29)**

Comm: Only because of ignorance does the Supreme Self appear different in different bodies. The world is not stable even for a single moment. Even though it is unreal, it appears as real. In reality, only the one Supreme Self exists as the truth. Therefore, the apparent existence of the world is merely an illusion arising from ignorance and delusion. The person who thinks of the body as “I” and accepts all the changes of the body as his own changes falls into the cycle of birth and death, as if killing himself. This means that identifying with the perishable body is like committing suicide or causing one’s own downfall. It is binding oneself to the cycle of birth and death. Not understanding one’s true nature and accepting the body, wife, son, house, wealth, property, etc., as the Self—that is, as “I” and “mine”—is doing injustice to the Self. Due to ignorance, instead of

liberation, repeatedly obtaining bodies and remaining immersed in the ocean of suffering is similar to killing the Self. In other words, all ignorant people are self-killers. The one who experiences the truth of the Supreme Self, which is fully present everywhere in this perishable world, does not cause his own downfall; instead, he saves himself—that is, he attains the supreme destination. The world is merely a flowing stream of perishable things that keep passing by. Just as only the water element exists in a river’s current, similarly, in essence, only the Supreme Self exists in the world. The success of human birth lies in realising that Supreme Self. Attaining that which is called the supreme abode, from which there is no return, the ultimate fruit of all spiritual practices—this is attaining the supreme destination. Wise people know the eternity and indestructibility of the Self, so they do not wish to destroy the Self or cause it to fall into lower births. They do not become self-killers by being covered by ignorance. To give up the vision born of ignorance and see the world with the vision of knowledge means, while living in this indifferent, sorrowful, and impure world, to search for perfection, bliss, divinity, and purity. When the experience of divinity arises in the heart, the ego (“I”-ness) is completely destroyed. Because of this experiential knowledge, no sorrow or fear remains. With the help of pure intellect and discrimination, one becomes able to manage life properly. The knowledge of the Supreme Self completely destroys ignorance and thus eliminates all inauspiciousness. While accepting this idea and living it in practical life, the seeker should not consider himself weak or helpless. The infinite power and energy of that Supreme Self are fully present within oneself. The seeker is capable of shaping himself into an embodiment of the Supreme Lord. God’s help and God’s wisdom are available everywhere and at every moment. God’s glory and bliss are also always available. One only needs to move forward. The human body that was given to Lord Rama, the body granted to Lord Krishna for His divine play, the body that became the incarnation of knowledge for Lord Vyasa and Lord Shankaracharya as playful divine incarnations—such human bodies are obtained only by the infinite grace of God; this must be firmly accepted. One should not allow in life the state in which Arjuna, feeling himself lowly and wretched, dropped his bow and arrows and began to weep in despair. Sri Nilakanthaji has also said that a person who sees the one Self everywhere, just as he ignores the state of his own body and, with a compassionate nature, bears others’ pain himself and dedicates himself to alleviating their suffering and misery—such a person understands the truth of the Supreme Self in the best way. That great soul does not fall downward; instead, he gradually progresses in the world of consciousness.

**prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānam akartāraṁ sa paśyati (13-30)**

Comm: The wise person who experiences that all actions done by body, mind, and speech are performed only by the māyā power of Prakriti, and who realizes the Self within as the non-doer, is truly a right seer. In the presence of Purusha, Prakriti is always active. Prakriti alone performs all actions. The Self or Purusha is always complete, free,

and a non-doer. When the knower of the field, or the Purusha dwelling in Prakriti, or the individual soul leaves the body, the body becomes inactive and lies still. In Sāṅkhya philosophy it is said, “Know Māyā as Prakriti, and the wielder of Māyā as the Supreme Lord.” This means that whatever is seen and whatever thoughts arise are all manifestations of the divine power of the primordial conscious energy. Purusha is a non-doer and does nothing at all. Prakriti performs all actions. Purusha remains only as a witness and merely observes. Driven by the actions and qualities of Prakriti, the bound soul develops the ego that “I am the doer” of material actions. The Self is all-pervading, formless, and free from all limiting conditions, therefore no action ever takes place in the Self. The Self is eternal, pure, aware, free, and free from all modifications. Therefore, the Self is neither the doer of any action nor the enjoyer of the results of actions. Clouds arise in the sky, move within the sky, and finally dissolve into the same sky, yet the sky itself remains unmoving. In the same way, the Self always remains motionless and free from change. The Self has no inseparable limiting attributes. All actions are carried out only by Prakriti. In reality, this body is a machine. It is created by Prakriti to perform worldly functions and is enlivened by God. Forgetting this great purpose of God, and due to desires and craving for enjoyment, the soul falls into various painful conditions to experience pleasure and pain. Prakriti is the power of the principle of consciousness and by nature remains changeless, balanced, and peaceful. Even during dissolution, its activity does not stop. During creation, the gross activity of Prakriti is called the active state, and during dissolution, due to subtle activity, it is called the inactive state. Just as light and darkness do not truly stop functioning, in the same way Prakriti remains continuously active during creation and dissolution, as well as during great creation and great dissolution. The actions produced by Prakriti and its qualities through the body appear to belong to the Self due to their association with the Self, which is naturally changeless, balanced, and peaceful. In reality, no action ever occurs in the Self itself. The Supreme Lord, though dwelling as the inner controller in the hearts of all beings and inspiring all actions, is still a non-doer. In the Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is also said, “O Uddhava, material ego alone is the cause of sorrow, joy, fear, anger, greed, delusion, desire, and birth and death.” The pure Self has not even the slightest connection with these. The conclusion is that all actions arise only from Prakriti. Prakriti can never become inactive even for a moment, and Purusha never performs any action even for a moment. The Purusha neither acts nor causes action to be done.

**yadā bhūta-prthag-bhāvam eka-stham anupaśyati
tata eva ca vistāraṁ brahma sampadyate tadā (13-31)**

Comm: When the seeker sees the diversity and differences of all beings as existing solely in Prakriti. And realizes that all manifestation and dissolution occur due to Prakriti. At that moment, the seeker attains the fundamental reality of Brahman, which is the source of both body and Prakriti. That non-dual Self exists as the Self in the bodies of all beings. It exists as the indwelling controller. Due to the existence of that Self, the entire world

appears like a snake imagined on a rope. The knower of truth always realizes that the sense of separateness in stationary and moving beings—that is, the feeling of difference—exists only in the Supreme Self. They also understand that the entire world has originated from Brahman alone. That is, the world has no separate existence apart from Brahman. Just as all waves are merely extensions of one ocean. Similarly, this entire creation is an extension from the one supreme truth, the Self. Therefore, the consciousness principle present in the form of stationary and moving beings is eternally situated in the Supreme Self alone, just as waves are based on water, just as particles are based on earth, just as sun rays are based on the sun, just as emotions are based on the mind and just as sparks are based on fire, in the same way, all forms of beings are based on the Supreme Self. This matter is stated in the Chandogya Upanishad (7/26/1): “Atma prana atmata asha atmaḥ smara atma akasha atmataḥ teja atmata apah - atmata avirbhavati tarabhavatmatonnama”. That is, when the seeker understands that this manifested world is nothing other than the one Self. For example: prana is in the Self, hope is in the Self, resolve is in the Self, space is in the Self, fire is in the Self, water is in the Self, food is in the Self, appearance is from the Self, and disappearance is in the Self. All expansion is seen only in the Self. The very moment this divine knowledge arises within the seeker. At that instant, he attains Brahman. That is, he himself becomes the form of Brahman. There is not even the slightest delay in this. Attaining oneness with the Brahman that is pure existence-consciousness-bliss is called attaining the supreme goal, liberation, ultimate happiness, and supreme peace. In this verse, Sri Shankaracharya and others have explained the word “ekastham” as abiding in Brahman or the Self. Sri Ramanujacharya and others have mentioned “ekastham” as abiding in Prakriti. The conscious Self, upon coming into contact with Prakriti, obtains various bodies. The bodies of all beings arise from Prakriti, remain in Prakriti, and merge back into Prakriti. Therefore, all groups of beings are non-different from Prakriti. During dissolution, the differences in form of stationary and moving beings are seen as one in Prakriti alone. And during creation, the entire moving and non-moving world expands from that same Prakriti. When the seeker experiences that the origin, sustenance, and dissolution of his own gross, subtle, and causal bodies—as well as those of all beings—occur in Prakriti. At that time, the veil of attachment and aversion is removed from his vision. And he attains the Supreme Self, his own self-established nature that is beyond Prakriti. The meaning of “attains the form of Brahman” is that whether the prarabdha karma is exhausted or some remains. The seeker experiences no difference whatsoever. As long as prarabdha remains, he lives in the state of jīvanmukta (liberated while living) and through that brings about the welfare of the world. After the exhaustion of prarabdha karma, he attains videha kaivalya (bodiless liberation).

**anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ
śarīra-stho’pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate (13-32)**

Comm: O son of Kunti, because the Supreme Self is beginningless and free from qualities, He is imperishable, and even while dwelling in the body He neither performs

actions nor becomes bound by the results of actions. The individual soul and the Supreme Soul both dwell equally within the body, but due to attachment to the qualities, the individual soul (Purusha) enters worldly bondage, while the Supreme Soul remains only as a witness. In reality, the mind, intellect, senses, and the body are all expansions of the qualities of sattva, rajas, and tamas. The Self has no connection at all with these qualities. It always remains beyond the qualities. While the body has a relationship with the world, the Purusha or the Self has a relationship with the Supreme Lord. Before the body was born, the Supreme Self existed, and even after the destruction of the body, the Supreme Self will continue to exist. He eternally remains as that one, changeless reality. Both Purusha and Prakriti are beginningless. However, Purusha (the Self) is free from qualities, while Prakriti is associated with modifications of the qualities. Because the Self is imperishable and eternally pure, it is a non-doer, unattached, and always beyond the six modifications such as birth and death. The relationship between the Self and the body is like a reflection seen in a mirror. The difference between the body and the Self is as great as the difference between night and day. Even though the Self supports the body, the Self cannot be said to belong to the body. A face is seen reflected in a mirror, but in reality the face is not inside the mirror. In the same way, the Self is reflected in the subtle body, yet it has no real connection with the body. The Self only appears as if it resides in the body. The Self existed before the body, and it exists even after the body. It remains exactly as it always was, unchanged. Dust rises because of the wind, but the wind has no real connection with the dust. In the same way, the relationship between the body and the Self is temporary. Just as day and night continuously come and go, in the same way the processes of the body's birth and destruction continue upon the existence of the Self. The body is born of the five great elements and is bound by the rope of karma, but the Self is beginningless. The Self is simple, eternal, and pure, and it is free from qualities. It is neither complete nor incomplete. It is neither subtle nor gross. It is neither inactive nor active. "As beings perish, this does not perish" (Gita 8.20). It has no birth at the beginning of creation, nor is it destroyed during dissolution. It neither diminishes nor increases. Whatever actions occur in the body and senses have no connection with the pure and undisturbed consciousness. Even if it appears that the body of a knower of Brahman undergoes change or destruction, it does not cause any disturbance or modification in him. When the body of the wise person is active, the wise one remains actionless at the highest level, just as the deep part of a wave-filled ocean remains calm. Even though the sun appears to move when reflected in disturbed water, the disturbance of the water cannot affect the sun. Only the reflection of the sun on the water appears to move. The continuous experience of the absence of doership and enjoyership (desire and possessiveness) is itself liberation while living. All objects are perishable, but the Supreme Self is always unchanging. Because the Supreme Self is beginningless and without qualities, His imperishability is eternally established. By His mere presence, He enables inert objects made of the five great elements to function as if they were conscious. Yet the Supreme Self Himself never becomes involved in any

action. To make it clearly understood how the all-pervading, non-dual, ever-complete Supreme Self remains a non-doer, the sages of the Upanishads have made great efforts. The Supreme Self is a non-doer, without qualities, indivisible, without parts, and does not perform actions. Because He is beginningless, unattached, and changeless, He is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. Śrī Vallabhacharya has stated that the inner Purusha, who exists as the Supreme Self or as the soul within beings, is imperishable, beginningless, and free from qualities. Therefore, He is eternal and undecaying. Even when, by the will of God, He appears to be distinct, He remains a non-doer and completely unattached.

**yathā sarva-gataṁ sauḥṣmyād ākāśaṁ nopalipyate
sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate (-13-33)**

Comm: Since the Self is without qualities, it is not affected by the qualities of the body. In this verse, the example of space (akasha) is given to establish the unattached nature of the Self. The four great elements—air, fire, water, and earth—are effects of space. Therefore, they are contained within space. But space, being the cause, is not contained within these four. Among the five great elements, space is the most subtle. That is why it is all-pervading. In the same way, there is no place, however small, where space does not enter or pervade. “Avakashat akashah”—that which provides room for all manifest and unmanifest objects to exist is space. Due to its subtlety and non-attachment, space pervades everywhere but is not attached to any object. That is, it has no connection with anything. No object can impart its defects or qualities to space. Similarly, the Self and the Supreme Self residing in the bodies of all beings are not affected by the physical qualities or defects of the living beings. Even though the Supreme Self pervades all, no second entity can pervade It. Everything except the pure conscious existence is merely an imagination in the form created by the mind. That conscious existence alone is the basis, substratum, illuminator, and support of all imaginations. The entire creation is contained within that existence. The conscious existence is not located in the body or in Prakriti. Rather, like space, it exists everywhere. That all-pervading existence alone is the true nature of the individual soul. And that itself is the truth of the Supreme Self. The Self pervades all bodies (like pots). Because the Self is subtler than the body, senses, and qualities. Therefore, the Self is in no way attached to the body or to any other object. Even through the results of actions—such as good and bad, happiness and sorrow, sin and merit—the Self and the Supreme Self are not affected or contaminated.

**yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokam imaṁ raviḥ
kṣetraṁ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata (13-34)'**

Comm: O Arjuna, descendant of the Bharata dynasty, just as the one sun illuminates this entire universe, in the same way the Kṣetrī—that is, the single Lord of the field, the Kṣetrajña (Supreme Self)—illuminates all bodies. In this verse, the non-doer nature of the Self and the principle of non-dualism are established, showing that the Supreme Self is

one. By the single sun, all living and non-living beings receive existence and activity and become illuminated. The same one sun, as the presiding deity of the eyes, gives the power of vision within everyone, and as the external cosmic force, illuminates the whole world. That sun also exists within the inner being of all as a spiritual force and gives energy in the form of the mantra, “Savitur bhargo devasya dhīmahi.” The sun is the illuminator, but it does not possess the form, qualities, or changes of the objects that are illuminated. From the standpoint of truth, the sun does not really “illuminate” the world. Illumination is the nature of the sun, and every object shines by itself merely in the presence of the sun. The meaning of this idea is that the sun does not have the sense of doership, such as “I am illuminating everyone.” In the same way, consciousness is the nature of the Self. In the presence of this conscious Self, all things become self-revealed. Although the body, mind, and intellect are illumined by the Self of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, the sins of the mind, the defects of the intellect, or the faults of the body cannot affect the Self. Because of the association with different inner instruments, the Self appears to manifest differently in different bodies. Even then, like the sun, it is neither the doer nor the cause of actions, nor is it affected by the results such as pleasure and pain. That imperishable Self, though residing in the body, remains always and in every state as pure consciousness, non-doer, changeless, equal, and untouched. In the same way, the Kṣetrī (Supreme Self) is not associated with the qualities of the field (the body), nor is He the cause of performing or making others perform all bodily actions. The body and the actions done through it serve worldly purposes, while the Self always remains unattached and unaffected. The Self is only pure conscious existence. Pure consciousness is always complete, and it has no need for the body or bodily actions. In the Brahma Sūtra this is stated as, “Guṇād vā lokavat,” which means that although the individual soul is atomic in nature, by its quality of consciousness it pervades the entire body. Here, the word Kṣetrī refers to the Supreme Self. This is because the Supreme Self alone is the complete knower of all fields. The individual soul is only a partial knower of the field. Each individual soul is the knower of its own single body, but the Supreme Lord is, at the same time, the complete knower of all fields.

**kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor evam antaram jñāna-cakṣuṣā
bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣam ca ye vidur yānti te param (13-35)**

Comm: The essence of the chapter is presented in this final verse. Knowing the distinctions between field and knower of the field, knowledge and the knowable, Purusha and Prakṛiti, real and unreal, eternal and non-eternal, etc., separately is called “eyes of knowledge.” Seeing with the eyes of knowledge means acquiring discriminative vision through the grace of scriptures or the Guru and viewing spiritually. For example, deeply contemplating the difference between fire and wood leads to realizing that “wood is not fire, and fire is not wood.” The same difference that exists between space and air, or wood

and fire, exists between the field and the knower of the field. Through study of scriptures, power of meditation, following the Guru's words, and the Guru's grace, the seeker's eyes of knowledge open. With this eye of knowledge, attaining realisation of truth, the seeker endowed with discrimination and dispassion feels himself separate or free from the qualities and modifications born of Prakriti. He always remains established in his true Self-nature. The seeker is considered a fully realised person only when he experiences the complete absence of Prakriti. This field or body is subject to modifications; it does not remain the same and changes every moment. The field has no consciousness of its own. It is always limited and subject to transformation. Within the body, the senses function due to the three qualities of Prakriti. On the other hand, Brahman alone is the ultimate reality, pure consciousness, non-doer, unchanging, and infinite. But due to false identification with Prakriti caused by ignorance, the Self appears involved with the actions performed by Prakriti. The supreme goal of human life is to know the nature and relationship between field and knower of the field and realise one's own Self. Through proper discrimination between field and knower of the field, with the help of Self-realisation, the world can be completely transcended. The moment one turns away from the Supreme Self, who is fully manifest everywhere, the world appears as darkness with independent existence and gives rise to various fears. But after true knowledge arises, the independent existence of the world ceases, and all fears are removed. The Supreme Self is fully present as It is in all places, times, objects, persons, situations, etc. Therefore, when connection with the world is completely severed, the experience of the Supreme Self arises spontaneously. In the vision of the knower, nothing exists except the pure conscious principle. The knower of truth considers the body as insignificant as a blade of grass. Just as when the illusion of a snake on a rope is removed, joy arises spontaneously. Similarly, when it is deeply realised that the transient body is not the Self, and that it is merely an extension of Maya in the form of Prakriti spreading the entire world in various forms, attaining Brahman becomes easy. The apparent oneness between field and knower of the field is rooted only in ignorance. Just as a swan separates milk from water, the knower, after realising the Self as separate from the body, becomes detached from the qualities of Prakriti. He becomes firmly established in oneness with his true Supreme Self nature. This state is considered the liberation of the individual soul from Prakriti and its effects. Just as the only way to be freed from troubles experienced in a dream is to wake up from sleep. Similarly, for the knower, after understanding the distinction between field and knower of the field, all the visible world born of Prakriti along with ignorance vanishes. As a result of the dawn of Self-knowledge, the identification with the body connected to the Self is destroyed. Identification with the body—that is, considering the perishable body as the Self—is ignorance, which is the cause of worldly bondage. Discrimination between body and Self—that the Self is separate from the body—is liberation or nirvana. It is written in the Kathamrita that “the body is made of the five elements and will eventually merge back into those five elements. But that which kept this body made of five elements

alive—the Self—has no death. After understanding the truth of that eternal formless Self, the joys and sorrows, birth and death, disease and grief arising from body-identification are destroyed like a dream.” According to Vedantins, the Self is unattached. Smoke can soil a wall, but the dirt clinging to the wall cannot touch the light. The Self is similarly eternal, pure, and luminous. Therefore, knowledge of the distinction between body and Self, or field and knower of the field, is true knowledge. And that itself is the knowledge of the Supreme Self or Brahman.

**Om tat sat. iti śrīmad bhagavad-gītāsūpaniṣatsu brahma-vidyāyām yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde kṣetra-kṣetrajña-vibhāga-yogo nāma trayodaśo’dhyāyaḥ.**

||13||

Thus, with the utterance of the sacred words “Om, Tat, Sat,” the Thirteenth Chapter, called “Kṣetra–Kṣetrajña Vibhāga Yoga” (The Yoga of the Distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field), of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which is the essence of Brahma-vidyā (the knowledge of the Absolute) and Yoga, and which is in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, comes to an end.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 14 (Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga)

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parām siddhim ito gatāḥ(14-1)**

Comm: Just as a mother patiently persuades and feeds her child until the child eats enough food, in the same way Gītāchārya Śrī Krishna repeatedly explained this knowledge until his disciple Arjuna attained Self-knowledge. A true Sadguru continuously guides the disciple until the disciple becomes firmly engaged in spiritual practice on the right path. Without proper knowledge of the three guṇas, a seeker cannot notice the faults within himself nor find the means to remove them. By gaining true knowledge of the three guṇas, many thoughtful seekers have attained spiritual perfection. To realize that nothing exists except the one Supreme Self is the highest attainment. When the highest perfection is attained, action and material objects lose all importance, and nothing remains except pure conscious existence. The knowledge that shows the distinction between Prakṛti and Puruṣa, that enables one to detach oneself from Prakṛti, and that leads to the realization of the Supreme Reality, is the highest and most excellent knowledge. No other knowledge is equal to it. An eternal principle of spiritual philosophy is that the Self is the principle that gives consciousness to inert matter, and that this Self is absolutely one. When this eternal conscious Self expresses itself through inert Prakṛti, the diverse and varied universe comes into existence. The one Supreme Self appears as living beings in many forms through

different limiting conditions. Although the basic nature of Prakṛti is the same, this unequal diversity is caused by the guṇas that arise from primal Prakṛti. The pure Self exists beyond the guṇas. The movement and destiny of the individual soul depend on the particular guṇa in which it abides. All actions are performed by the guṇas alone. The Self is beyond all guṇas and is a non-doer. Because of identification with the guṇas, the individual soul repeatedly takes birth in higher and lower wombs. In every being, the three guṇas exist together in different proportions, and they continuously function within the inner being. A person's inner behavior and personality are influenced by the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas. Most revered Śrī Chidānanda Maharaj has stated in his Daily Study: “Prakṛti, that is the universal nature, is composed of the three guṇas. Since we live within Prakṛti, we must conduct our lives while dealing with the actions and reactions of the three guṇas. Among them, sattva leads one toward progress, rajas keeps one at the ordinary natural level, and tamas causes downfall. All three guṇas are unavoidable. Each is needed in greater or lesser measure, and each has its own regulated function and necessity. What is that necessity? The three guṇas exist in the body, mind, thoughts, emotions, impulses, and actions of all beings. Without the three guṇas, no one could exist or perform actions properly. They purify us, test us, and by displaying their influence, create struggle and competition. Primarily, one should cultivate sattva, use rajas only to a necessary and proper extent, and abandon tamas as much as possible.” Attachment to the guṇas alone is the cause of auspicious and inauspicious births. The influence of these three guṇas is known as māyā. Remaining as free as possible from the influence of the guṇas is the sign of exclusive devotion. Therefore, by clearly understanding the nature and effects of the guṇas and remaining alert, a person can give up evil and demonic tendencies, immoral desires, and animal impulses, and by practicing self-control, right conduct, and righteous living, can attain supreme peace. As long as a seeker cannot free himself from the ideas of being the doer and the enjoyer, the influence of the guṇas will surely continue to create disturbances in the inner mind. In all fields of action, one should not allow even the slightest stain of the guṇas to cling to oneself. By remaining unaffected by the characteristics of the guṇas, by staying firmly established in inner balance, and by performing one's duties steadily, fearlessly, and without wavering, there can never be any downfall in life.

**idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharṁyam āgatāḥ
sarge 'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca (14-2)**

Comm: The virtuous and enlightened person who has truly understood and fully realized this knowledge attains My own nature. Just as I am eternal, pure, free, and always beyond old age and death, that person also attains the same state. Taking refuge in this knowledge means that when this knowledge is directly experienced, all doubts are destroyed, and the seeker himself becomes knowledge in essence. Just as there is no sense of doership or enjoyership in Me, in the same way the enlightened person experiences complete detachment and changelessness. To attain this knowledge, a

person must become the holder of all divine qualities. One who possesses these divine qualities is not disturbed either at the beginning of creation or at the time of dissolution of the world. When a lump of salt is thrown into the ocean, it loses its separate identity and returns to its original source. Similarly, when the knower of truth becomes one with Brahman, he rises beyond nature and its modifications. The knower of truth no longer has to take a body under the compulsion of karma. The phrase “mama sādharmaṃ āgatāḥ” means that just as the Supreme Lord is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda (existence, consciousness, bliss), the realized sage who attains Him also becomes of the same essence. The enlightened person remains engaged in the divine service of the Lord and constantly beholds the Lord’s lotus feet. Understanding the true nature of Prakṛiti and Puruṣa, becoming completely transcendent to Prakṛiti along with its qualities, and remaining firmly established in the attributeless, formless, Sat-Chit-Ananda Supreme Reality—this alone is abiding in this knowledge. When a pot breaks, the space inside the pot merges with the vast space, and all duality disappears. Distinctions such as “I” and “you” vanish, and name and form merge into a single undivided reality. The scripture declares, “One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman.” According to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the word “sādharmya” does not merely mean similarity of qualities; it means identity in true nature. Through Self-realization, the sense of individuality comes to an end, pure consciousness is attained, and spiritual completeness is realized. At that very moment, the soul becomes free from the influence of the three guṇas and is able to experience its absolute nature. After attaining Self-knowledge, many qualities of the seeker become partially similar to those of the Lord. Even after liberation, exclusive devotees do not give up their individual spiritual identity. Established in their true nature, they remain eternally engaged in loving service at the lotus feet of the Lord. For the seeker who has gone beyond ordinary consciousness, there is no suffering caused by limited identity or external labels. The enlightened person attains My true nature and becomes eternal, immortal, and perfected. By continuous spiritual practice and attainment of Self-knowledge, they become non-different from Me and therefore do not take birth again at the beginning of creation, nor suffer during dissolution. The Purāṇas describe that during the great dissolution there is no rain for a hundred years. Fire then spontaneously spreads over the earth. That fire continues for another hundred years. After that, there is extremely heavy rainfall for a hundred years. Any attempt to counter this destruction becomes completely futile. During this great dissolution, the knower of truth experiences no physical or mental suffering. He remains firmly absorbed in his own true Self. The knower of truth does not become anxious at the time of the body’s end. This is because the true end of the body occurred on the day he realized his true nature. After that, the body remains merely as a dwelling place of the Self. By recognizing his all-pervading nature, the enlightened person sees no importance in the birth or death of the body. In this state of complete liberation, there is no experience of fear of death at all.

**mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām tato bhavati bhārata (14-3)**

Comm: O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna! My vast Brahma form, the root Prakriti—that is, the Maya made of three qualities—is the place of conception or origin for all living beings. In that place of origin, I place the seed in the form of the collective consciousness for creation. From that conception—that is, from the union of the inert and the conscious—all living beings are born or originate. In the bodies of living beings, the material cause and the basis for conception are called the yoni (womb). The process of origin for every creature is this: the seed is placed or deposited in the yoni. That seed in the womb, over time, receives nourishment and manifests as the body of the living being. The conception process through which the origin of all living beings is directly seen—that same process is what the Lord has described regarding the initial origin of the entire creation. “Yad yat pinde tat tad brahmande”—that is, whatever sequence of creation etc. is seen in the individual body, the same sequence exists in the entire universe. In the world, which is non-different from the Supreme Soul, the most vast principle is the root Prakriti. Apart from the Supreme Soul, there is no other principle more vast than this. Prakriti consists of the five subtle elements and is also the resting place of the universal mind. This Prakriti, formed by the three qualities, is the cause of the creation of all living beings. “Mahat”—the mahat-tattva, that is, the collective intellect—since it is intermediate between Brahma (the Supreme Soul) and others, the root Prakriti is called Mahat Brahma. The root Prakriti or the unmanifested is a vast hidden womb full of infinite possibilities. It is not any substance. During the great creation, infinite universes are created from this hidden womb, and during the great dissolution, the entire universe merges back into that hidden womb. At that time, it has no connection with the three qualities. The principle from which the inert world has originated—that root Prakriti is the “great cause,” and the entire world is its “effect.” In the Mundaka Upanishad (1-1-9), this entire material Prakriti is described as the “mahat tattva.” The cause of all visible worlds is the “great tattva,” and since all these material causes contain the three qualities of Prakriti, it is called “Brahman.” “Tasmad etad brahma nama rupam annam ca jayate”—that is, in that Brahman, through the Supreme Person, the seed of living beings is infused. Again, from Prakriti comes the creation of the universal cosmos, and the nourishment of the world of name and form is done by this Prakriti itself. The collective form of desires, thoughts, feelings, and actions is that root Prakriti, which in Vedanta is named Mahat Brahma. In Sri Venkatanath’s Brahmanandagiri commentary, it is said that since Prakriti in the form of yoni is not limited by space and time, it is called “mahat.” Because this vast principle is of the nature of sattva, rajas, and tamas qualities, the entire universal cosmos is controlled by it. In the Vedas and Srutis, in some places, it is indicated by names like yoga-shakti or Maya made of three qualities. The nature of Maya is ignorance or avidya. The difference between the jiva (individual soul) and Ishvara (God) is that the jiva is

under Maya due to ignorance, but Ishvara keeps Maya under His control. During the great dissolution, all living worlds, along with their respective impressions, merge into the root Prakriti situated in the Supreme Soul. At the beginning of the great creation, connecting those collective living beings situated in the Supreme Lord with Prakriti in a special way is placing the collective consciousness seed in the yoni in the form of Prakriti. In the above union of the inert and the conscious, according to their own karmic impressions, all living beings manifest in different forms like gods, humans, animals, birds, etc. This union of Prakriti and the Purusha in the form of living beings happens only by the will of the Supreme Lord. The Lord's intention in saying "my" regarding the yoni-form Prakriti is that Prakriti, which is the cause of the qualities, is a part of Ishvara and originates from Ishvara. The root Prakriti first gives birth to Brahma, and just as a potter creates various forms and shapes of pots from clay, Hiranyagarbha or Brahma, having been born, bestows life to all living beings. In this view, the cause of the birth of living beings is not merely physical Prakriti or accidental. The resolve for the creation of living beings—"I am one, let me become many"—is provided by the Lord Himself in the form of the seed. Under the supervision of the Lord, Prakriti creates different physical bodies according to previous karma. The living being, identifying with that body, experiences happiness and sorrow according to previous karma. To an ordinary person, it appears that living beings originate from Prakriti. But in reality, the root cause of all manifestations in the world is the Supreme Lord Himself. Just as in a child produced from the mother, there is the father's seed-like part and the mother's nourishing part, similarly, living beings produced in Prakriti by Ishvara are also parts of Ishvara.

**sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsām brahma mahad yonir ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā (14-4)**

Comm: O Arjuna, son of Kunti, all gross and subtle bodies of various colors and forms—such as gods, humans, demons, animals, and birds—are formed only from parts of material nature. From the four sources of birth—womb-born, egg-born, sweat-born, and seed-born—millions of species arise from each source. When we look at creation, we understand that the birth and death of countless beings is continuously taking place every day. All living beings arise from the union of inert matter and consciousness, and when the material body decays and ends, that is called death. Because of differences in material bodies and limiting conditions, differences appear among beings. But the conscious principle present in all beings is one and indivisible. That conscious soul is a part of the Supreme Soul. From the relationship between the higher (para) and lower (apara) principles, all embodied beings manifest. "Mahat Brahma," meaning material nature, is their mother, and "I," the seed-giver, am the father who places the seed. Through material nature as the mother and the seed-giving Lord, all living beings manifest on earth, in water, and in space. Although the universe appears diverse like different limbs of one body, the root principle is one single seed. Without material nature, consciousness cannot express

itself. In brief, this principle shows that God is the eternal father of the entire universe. Just as fire and heat are not separate, the moving and non-moving universe and the Supreme Lord are not separate. The entire world is the Supreme Lord, because without the Lord, the world could neither appear nor be known. A question arises here: by calling nature the great womb and Himself the seed-giving father, is the Lord accepting duality at the root of creation? If so, then why is the Gita described as “the nectar of non-duality”? The answer is this: where creation and dissolution are described, how can duality not exist? And if there were no duality, how could dissolution take place at all? This is a profound vision. Clay is one and non-dual, but pots made of clay represent duality. Similarly, the five elements are one, but names and forms in creation are many. In the same way, the Supreme Consciousness is one, while its reflections appear many. Without affecting the unity, the processes of creation and dissolution continue in multiplicity. Space is one, but the space inside each pot appears different. If a hundred pots show a hundred reflections of the sun, does that mean there are a hundred suns? Therefore, non-duality remains intact, while multiplicity appears as a reflection upon the same original seed principle. For the knower of truth, the pot is nothing but clay. For the wise, the root cause is non-dual, while for those bound by desires, multiplicity alone is seen. Even within the appearance of multiplicity, non-duality is never lost. According to this understanding, one cannot see God by separating Him from the world, because God Himself is the entire universe. God has manifested Himself through different names and forms. Even when clouds cover the sun, the clouds are seen only by the light of the sun. From a gross viewpoint, the Supreme appears divided within different bodies. But through subtle understanding, one realizes that the same Supreme Reality completely fills the entire world and all beings. Observing the process of creation shows that creation cannot happen by nature alone, nor by consciousness alone. Here, the body is born and destroyed. But the soul is conscious, pure knowledge itself, and has neither birth nor destruction. “Mahat Brahma” refers to nature awakened as the great principle, and in essence, it too is Brahman. Just as a child is born from mother and father, the Lord clearly says, “Mahat Brahma is My womb,” meaning primal nature is My consort. Therefore, it must be understood that there is no real difference between mother and father at the ultimate level. When nature transforms and manifests as the Mahat principle, called Mahat Brahma, the Lord’s consciousness is reflected in it as the act of impregnation. This reflected consciousness appearing in pure nature is described as conception. Through this process, bodies of many colors and forms arise from nature. From pure nature, innumerable beings—gods, humans, animals, birds, and even Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh—are born through the reflection of the Supreme Father in the great cosmic mother. By the will of God alone, this Mahat Brahma manifests through various wombs. Just as the seed of the father is necessary in the field of the mother for the creation and expansion of human life, similarly, through the placing of the seed by the Supreme Father in the field of Mother Nature, the vast creation of countless universes comes into existence.

**sattvaṁ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehe dehinam avyayam (14-5)**

Comm: O mighty-armed Arjuna! The qualities born of Prakriti—sattva, rajas, tamas—bind the imperishable, unchanging embodied soul in the body through identification with the body. Thinking ‘I am the body’ and ‘the body is mine’ is called body-identification. These three qualities are different from each other and are the functions of Prakriti. All material substances are expansions of these three qualities. Qualities are the fundamental elements that constitute Prakriti, and they are the basis of all things. Prakriti is the material cause of these three qualities. Since cause and effect are non-different, the qualities are of the nature of Prakriti and are all-pervading. These qualities exist in the external world as objects, and in the internal world, in the minds of humans, as forms like attachment, hatred, greed, sleep, laziness, negligence, control, restraint, truth, compassion, forgiveness, etc. Due to the influence of the qualities, the thoughts and flow of actions arising in the inner mind of the living being become of different types. Just as in one body there are three states—childhood, youth, and old age—in the same mental disposition, the influence of these three qualities exists. In spiritual literature, these three qualities—sattva, rajas, tamas—are respectively indicated by white, red, and black colors as symbols of threefold mental states. Sattva is the most excellent, completely pure and bright, which is opposite to the black-colored tamas and completely different from rajas. The bones, flesh, skin, etc., that are formed in the body are the functions of tamoguna. The actions like walking, moving, standing up, sitting, etc., that occur in the body are the functions of rajoguna. The knowledge perceived through sound, form, taste, touch, and smell is the function of sattvaguna. The three qualities in the inner mind of the living being do not always remain in a balanced state. Sometimes there is predominance of sattva, sometimes of rajas, and sometimes the strength of tamoguna is seen. Due to the variations in these three qualities, many differences are seen in the behavior of living beings, just as the shine and value of gold ornaments vary a little or a lot according to the amount of alloy. Sattvaguna is the best because it is the supreme means to liberation. Another meaning of the word ‘guna’ is rope or cord. It appears as if this rope endowed with three qualities binds the truth-consciousness nature of the self with the unreal and inert non-self elements. Due to ignorance, a person, in deluded intellect, cannot give up body-identification and becomes entangled in worldly happiness and sorrow. Substances, wealth, family, body, nature, mental tendencies, situations, actions, reactions—all these are forms of the functions of the qualities. By considering these as one’s own, a person, though free, becomes bound. These three qualities create a sense of ‘mine’, attachment, and pride in the soul due to corresponding enjoyments and identification with the body—that is how the soul is bound by the qualities. But the connection of these qualities, which are associated with the material world and inert adjuncts, with the liberated, eternally pure, imperishable soul is unreal and completely false. Due to identification with the body and mere attachment

to it, the soul perceives the body's modifications as its own modifications. Due to this illusory form of action of the qualities, such delusion occurs in every person. The soul is inherently free from all kinds of modifications and imperishable, so it is completely free from the influence of the qualities. Goswami Tulsidas has said: "Ishwar ansh jeev abinashi – chetan amal sahaj sukh rashi" – meaning, this imperishable nature of the living being is never bound by qualities. When the perishable body is considered as 'I', 'mine', and 'for me', then the living being feels bound by qualities due to its imagined notion. Due to identifying with the impermanent body, the living being desires to keep it eternal. Because it itself is eternal. If there is no connection with the body, then there will be no desire for the living being to remain eternal, nor fear of death. As long as there is desire to remain eternal and fear of death, the living being remains bound under the influence of qualities. Separation from the body is happening naturally every moment. Where is the difficulty in detaching from something that is naturally separating or diminishing? Therefore, the seeker only needs to continue this effort: not to give place in the mind to things that are naturally detaching. Then, one's imperishable and transcendent-to-qualities nature will be automatically realized. In the above view, since the qualities have no independent existence, their absence is also true, meaning a state without qualities is also possible in a person's inner mind. Only due to beginningless ignorance, the living being experiences itself as bound instead of free and accepts that bondage exists. If qualities were the cause of bondage, then no one could be free from them or attain liberation in life as long as qualities exist. As long as the soul remains associated with material adjuncts, it remains bound under the influence of qualities and perceives itself as small and narrow. Until it realizes itself as non-different from the Supreme Soul once again, the living being remains subject to birth-death and experiences happiness-sorrow, joy-grief. Even after attaining the state of a renunciate, by engaging in actions tainted by the defects of qualities, the attained knowledge begins to contract, and distraction in the mind becomes certain. Giving the example of Jada Bharata, Shankarananda writes that Bharata was wise. But due to the defect of compassion for beings arising from the development of sattvaguna, his sense of guardianship and attachment towards a deer calf caused him to be bound in the noose of affection for it, leading him to fall again into the bondage of birth etc. The balanced state of qualities in the inner mind is transcendence to qualities, under whose influence supreme peace, supreme bliss, and immortality are attained. The person who remains absorbed in constant realization of the self, always experiences the absence of happiness and sorrow in himself, transcends the qualities, and becomes capable of attaining bodiless liberation.

**tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha (14-6)**

Comm: O Arjuna of pure and sinless heart, among the three qualities, sattva-guna is pure and transparent. Because of its purity, it is illuminating, peaceful, and free from defects and distortions. Yet, it binds the individual soul through attachment to happiness,

such as the feeling “I am happy,” and through attachment to knowledge, such as the feeling “I am knowledgeable.” In other words, even sattva-guna becomes a cause of bondage because of identification with the body. By addressing Arjuna as “Anagha” (sinless), the Lord indicates that Arjuna is naturally pure and therefore need not fear bondage. Sattva-guna is as clear and transparent as crystal. “Satobhāvaḥ sattvam” means that sattva is the state or expression of sat (existence). There are two kinds of existence: one is objective existence, and the other is experiential or mental existence. Everything in the world possesses existence. Objective existence is called the Supreme Self, while experiential existence is called sattva-guna. Vedic literature states that sattvic quality means greater knowledge and a tendency toward happiness. A person established in sattva-guna is not greatly disturbed by material suffering. Such a person also makes progress in material knowledge. When sattva-guna predominates, tendencies born of rajas and tamas become clearly visible. One gains clear understanding of defects such as desire, anger, greed, pride, and jealousy. Sattva-guna lifts a person away from worldly indulgence, negligence, laziness, and excessive sleep. It connects the person to sattvic happiness through self-reflection and inner contemplation. That very attachment to sattvic happiness becomes a subtle bondage. A sattvic person compares himself with others and feels pleased about his own superiority. He feels delighted by his own knowledge. Thinking “I am happy” and “I am knowledgeable,” he becomes bound to corresponding tendencies. This attachment to happiness is itself a form of illusion. It is a type of ignorance. Due to the illusory power of material nature, a person considers a life of material happiness and knowledge to be a truly happy life. From ignorance arise lack of discrimination and lack of right judgment. Therefore, the individual soul fails to distinguish between the eternal and the non-eternal, and between the doer and the action. The power of cognition is knowledge, which is a function of the mind, intellect, ignorance, and ego—not of the soul itself. Inner happiness flows only within the process of knowing. Attachment to mental happiness and knowledge creates obstacles on the spiritual path. Although sattva-guna is calmer than rajas and tamas, it is still a product of nature and therefore not absolutely changeless. Only one’s transcendent nature beyond the gunas, or the Supreme Self, is completely changeless. Eternal happiness exists only in the Supreme Self. Self-realization itself is what is truly called knowledge. Sattva-guna binds the soul to the body until realization of the Supreme Self takes place. By observing and analyzing thoughts and emotions arising in the mind, a person can determine which guna is influencing him at a given moment. In this way, a seeker can strive to become free from bondage caused by the gunas. Under the influence of sattva-guna, when a seeker remains engaged in self-enquiry, glimpses of correct understanding and faith regarding the soul arise. However, the knowledge of non-difference between the soul and Brahman does not yet occur. If a partially awakened person claims, “I have attained knowledge,” that claim is not true. Once, when Sage Vashistha was instructing Lord Rama, Rama repeatedly asked, “Have you attained Brahman-knowledge?” Finally breaking his silence, Vashistha replied, “O Rama, one

who has attained Brahman-knowledge no longer speaks about it.” In a state of incomplete knowledge, a person appears to be a knower. The feeling “I am knowledgeable” prevents the seeker from transcending the gunas. Experiencing happiness or acquiring knowledge is not a fault. But becoming attached to them, identifying with them, and taking pleasure in them is harmful. By continuing sincere spiritual practice, the seeker gradually develops disinterest in such happiness. This disinterest helps in realizing the Supreme Self. Therefore, during experiences of sattvic happiness and knowledge, the seeker must remain extremely cautious. From another perspective, only knowledge of one’s true Self is eternal happiness. Since sattvic happiness and knowledge arise from nature and not from the Self, they are dependent and temporary. The difference between sattvic knowledge and true spiritual knowledge is this: In sattvic knowledge, the observer remains, and one feels a sense of personal distinction. In true knowledge, individuality disappears; there is no observer and no sense of superiority or inferiority. When true knowledge dawns, bliss of the Self is attained. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains that worldly knowledge of matter and consciousness and the happiness derived from it are bodily and sensory pleasures. Attachment to such knowledge and happiness leads one to perform actions whose results must be experienced. To experience those results, one must accept another body. Thus, freedom from the cycle of birth and death is not attained. The verse “Desire, hatred, happiness, sorrow, aggregation, consciousness, and determination” (Gita 13.6) clearly states that these belong to the field (body-mind complex). Happiness stored in the mind has no connection with the soul. The knowledge gained along with such happiness is also a property of the field, not of the soul. Material happiness and knowledge belong to the field and are superimposed on the soul due to ignorance. Through association with these, sattva-guna binds the soul.

**rajo rāgātmakaṁ viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam (14-7)**

Comm: Rajoguna is of the nature of passion, meaning it has the quality of attachment or affection. It is called “raja” because it deludes the living being. Desire (trishna) and attachment (sanga) nourish rajoguna. A strong wish for the enjoyment of sense objects, or longing for unattained enjoyable things, is called ‘trishna’. Even when desires are fulfilled, not feeling satisfied is also trishna. Trishna forces the living being to remain engaged in action for its own satisfaction. Intense attachment to objects of enjoyment is called ‘sanga’. A person dominated by rajas is completely attached to the accumulation of enjoyable objects. Such a person runs after sensory pleasures, and his desires burn more and more intensely, like a lamp fueled with oil. Rajoguna creates hope for happiness in the mind and keeps desires alive. Therefore, O son of Kunti, Arjuna! Know rajoguna as of the nature of passion, meaning it produces attachment or love. From rajoguna arise this trishna and sanga. The main characteristic of rajoguna is the emotion that appears at the mental level. This emotion expresses itself in various tendencies such as desire,

passion, emotional excitement, etc. Eagerness toward actions that serve seen or unseen purposes is ‘attachment to action’, which becomes the cause of bondage. Even though the soul is different from the body, a person allows rajoguna to enter his mind and binds himself in the chain of desires. A person remains entangled in the bondage of desires until death. Sattvaguna only binds, but the bondage of rajoguna is very tight and dense. The attachment that a person with body-identification has while performing actions is a kind of relish in which he remains deeply connected. This rajoguna makes a person attached to actions with desire and binds him so firmly that escaping from it is difficult. The Lord says: O son of Kunti, Arjuna! Rajoguna binds. How does it bind, O great king? It binds in this way: the desire to remain forever young by taking medicines every day; the greed to earn unlimited wealth through some work and store it for the next three generations; planning to accumulate wealth through dishonest means without considering the welfare of society or the nation—these are many such examples. All these are expressions of trishna, and they keep the person bound. By making him attached to actions—do this, do that—rajoguna turns a person into a greedy individual. A person under rajas runs after name, fame, sacrifices, luxury, and enjoyment, and involves himself in countless actions. Becoming involved in actions and remaining attached to their fruits is called ‘attachment to action’. In this verse, the word ‘ragatmak’ (of the nature of passion) is taken in the sense of love or affection. Whatever affection arises toward any object, person, situation, event, or activity—that is the nature of rajoguna. An example of rajoguna being naturally affectionate is the mutual attraction between man and woman. Rajoguna creates craving for enjoyment in the embodied soul. Such a person always desires earning money, a beautiful wife, handsome children, and a happy family. All these are characteristics of rajoguna. Under the influence of rajoguna, the entire world becomes attached to objects of enjoyment and falls into the bondage of Maya. In the present time, due to the influence of modern Western civilization, the predominance of rajoguna everywhere has led to an increase in unrighteousness, conflict, and family disorder in society. Even in a person who has transcended the gunas, impulses arise due to the influence of rajoguna, but they do not arise with attachment or passion. At the beginning of the great creation, the Supreme Soul’s resolve— “Let me become many”—is of the nature of rajoguna. At the time of creation, this rajoguna-like resolve causes agitation in the root Prakriti, which in the Gita is called ‘karma’. When the tendency to perform actions increases, one remains thinking about starting new actions and gets no time for self-welfare or liberation. When desires and wishes grow, even if a person gets Mount Meru, he still hopes for more. Out of greed for sons, wealth, property, etc., he tries to perform sacrifices. Gradually, he performs larger vows, worship of gods and goddesses, etc. In this way, rajoguna binds the embodied being in attachment to the pleasures of action, meaning it causes birth and death. Therefore, if a seeker performs his duties without desire, there is no relish or attachment in it. Since there is no motive for accumulation or enjoyment of pleasure, new actions do not begin. Rajoguna grows through desire and attachment, and desire and attachment grow through

rajoguna. Between rajoguna and desire, there is a mutual dependence like that between seed and tree. Among them, rajoguna is like the seed, and desire or attachment is like the tree. To rise above attachment to action, the seeker must reflect on some experiential truths of the world, such as: All the stages passed so far—childhood, youth, etc.—can never return. Life is rushing toward death every moment, and creation is moving toward dissolution every moment. The final condition of kings, emperors, powerful people; the ruins of great palaces and buildings—just like that, the final stage of this body, wealth, property, house, etc., is certain. Through such reflection, sattvic tendencies awaken in the seeker’s inner mind, creating the possibility of rising above attachment to action. By refraining from starting new actions for the purpose of accumulation and enjoyment of pleasure, he becomes capable of performing duties without attachment according to the situation that arises.

**tamas tv ajñāna-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinām
pramādālasya-nidrābhis tan nibadhnāti bhārata (14-8)**

Comm: O Arjuna, descendant of the Bharata dynasty, you should know that tamoguna, which is born of ignorance, throws all living beings—especially body-identified humans—into delusion. It weakens the power of knowledge in the mind and senses and produces confusion in ignorant people. Those who have ego and possessiveness toward the body are bound by tamo-guna through negligence, laziness, and sleep. Tamo-guna is a binding force that inclines the soul toward avoidance of action, laziness, sleep, and foolish behavior. Tamo-guna is opposite to sattva-guna, and a person dominated by tamo-guna is not inclined toward righteous action. Due to avoidance of duty and carelessness, such a person’s intellect becomes impure and clouded. Tamo-guna dulls all the senses of the body. The mind becomes confused, and disinterest and lethargy appear in all physical activities. Tamas creates delusion and lack of discrimination. In those who consider the body to be the soul, tamo-guna creates special confusion. Due to tamo-guna, ignorance increases, and due to ignorance, tamo-guna increases. Between these two, there is a mutual dependence like the relationship between seed and tree. A person dominated by tamo-guna is unable to easily understand or grasp any subject. Such a person lacks proper thinking power and intelligence. This type of person always appears sorrowful. He becomes especially attached to intoxicating substances and sleep. He is unable to distinguish between what is proper and improper. Sleep becomes his constant companion. When he gets sleep, he considers even heaven insignificant. A person dominated by tamo-guna is foolish, devoid of discrimination, and acts only under instinctive impulses. In such a person, there is no steadiness of purpose, brilliance of intellect, softness of feeling, or skill in action. Under the influence of tamo-guna, the intellectual capacity to distinguish between truth and falsehood, eternal and non-eternal, duty and non-duty becomes covered. As a result, the person behaves like one who is deluded or foolish. Though such people are human, they live like creatures among the eighty-four lakh species. Just as animals and birds eat,

drink, and sleep, they too live in the same way. Due to tamo-guna, false notions arise in the inner instrument regarding what is real. Therefore, tamo-guna creates delusion in body-identified humans. As a result, a person cannot attain true knowledge and cannot become free from worldly bondage. Useless activity of the mind and senses and neglect of scripturally prescribed duties is called *pramāda* (negligence). One who is negligent and extremely careless cannot distinguish between the eternal and the non-eternal. Therefore, tamo-guna is the main obstacle to divine realization. Lack of initiative in performing one's duty is called laziness. A lazy person is always afraid of effort. Drowsiness, dreaming, and deep sleep together are called sleep. Through negligence, laziness, and sleep, tamo-guna deprives a person of the means of liberation. It binds the soul in the net of worldly existence in the form of repeated birth and death. According to another commentator, the word "sleep" here does not merely mean physical sleep. The world itself is night. A tamo-guna-dominated person remains absorbed day and night in worldly delusion and remains unconscious of the light of true knowledge. This is the sleep produced by tamo-guna. Human birth is extremely rare. It is attained through the accumulated merit of countless lifetimes. It is the only means for attaining liberation. To waste such a human birth is true negligence. "Even a single moment of life cannot be bought with all the treasures of the world." One who wastes that moment is indeed a negligent and fallen human being. Negligence in righteous action is called laziness. In a person inclined toward tamo-guna, *sattvic* tendencies do not awaken easily in thought. Negligence means engaging in useless actions and thinking about meaningless subjects. Such a person does not succeed in any of the four goals of life—*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, or *mokṣa*. *Rajo-guna* destroys *sattvic* tendencies. *Tamo-guna* destroys both *sattvic* and *rajasic* tendencies. It pushes the person into states of negligence, laziness, and sleep. But those who have no sense of ego toward the body, senses, and inner instruments—such liberated beings who have transcended the *gunas* do not accept any identification with the body at all.

**sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty uta (14-9)**

Comm: In the previous three verses, the characteristics and functions of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—have been described. In this verse, it is explained in which activities which *guna* has greater predominance. The Lord says: O Bharata! *Sattvaguna* binds the living being in happiness; *rajoguna* in action; and *tamoguna*, by covering knowledge, engages the living being in negligence, laziness, etc. When *sattvaguna* is predominant, even if there is some attachment to action, grief, delusion, sleep, laziness, etc., the desire for happiness and knowledge increases in the living being. When *rajoguna* is predominant, even if there is desire for happiness etc., laziness, or sleep, the tendency toward various Vedic and worldly actions increases. Similarly, when *tamoguna* is predominant, it covers knowledge—which is the function of *sattvaguna*—and increases negligence, meaning inattention and delusion. The soul also becomes subdued by sleep,

drowsiness, and laziness. Sattvaguna, which is based on dharma and is pure, grants divine bliss to the living being. The sattvic happiness that sattvaguna provides—by keeping the person away from worldly enjoyments and efforts, as well as from negligence, laziness, and sleep, through contemplation of the self-etc.—is what binds him in that happiness. Sattvaguna attaches the person to happiness. In activities like listening to divine plays (lila), hearing scriptures, meditation, chanting, samadhi, self-study, reflection on the Gita, reading the Bhagavata—an intimate spiritual happiness is felt in the inner mind. When sattvaguna arises, it attracts the mind of the person toward divine activities like good company (sat-sanga), devotion, listening to divine plays, etc. Such a person finds self-satisfaction in performing selfless actions for the group. In reality, when knowledge increases under the influence of sattvaguna, a kind of pride arises in the seeker: “How knowledgeable I am.” From this kind of pride also, a certain happiness is obtained. As a result, the seeker becomes bound in it. In front of a person, situations of material happiness or extreme suffering always arise. Due to the influence of sattvaguna, no matter how many causes of sorrow and pain are present, sattvaguna does not allow them to be felt, and instead makes one experience inner happiness and keeps one bound in it. Rajoguna makes the living being restless in action and engages him in actions with desire. By generating various desires for enjoyment, it engages the person in scriptural actions with desire that grant fruits in the form of enjoyment in this life and the next—that is how rajoguna keeps the person attached to those actions. In this way, a person under rajoguna becomes engaged in actions with desire, becomes attached to the fruits of action for the purpose of enjoyment, and desires honor, respect, worship, hospitality, etc., from others. He always remains active in accumulating wealth and property. He considers activities like contemplation of God, self-study, study of scriptures, good company, devotion, etc., meaningless and a waste of time. Upon seeing saints and holy persons, doubt arises in his mind toward them. Keeping the main objective of earning money, a person endowed with rajoguna establishes institutions like schools, hospitals, food distribution centers, etc., for the sake of social honor and fame, and engages in various charitable and religious works. Although performing action is absolutely necessary for a person, it is prescribed that a seeker should always remain vigilant toward his duty-bound actions. Having any kind of attachment, fondness, or excessive interest in actions is improper. No matter how much material happiness is obtained under the influence of rajoguna, due to greed, the person cannot give up the tendency toward action. Tamoguna covers knowledge and discernment and definitely engages the living being in negligence or inattention. Just as dark clouds cover the sun, tamoguna covers the brilliance and light of the soul. Tamoguna engages the person in ignorance, aversion to action, neglect, and confusion about duty. A person under tamoguna engages in actions that are not beneficial either for himself or for others. Due to ignorance, tamoguna keeps one engaged in evil conduct and such tendencies. Tamoguna destroys the discerning power that decides what is duty and what is not. Sometimes, it destroys the conscious power of the inner mind and senses, producing the tendency to

sleep. Causing neglect in performing duty and engaging in futile efforts is negligence (pramada), and lack of effort in duty-bound action is laziness (alasya)—these are the two major effects of tamoguna. When tamoguna comes, it does not allow knowledge related to truth-falsehood, duty-non-duty, beneficial-harmful to awaken. Tamoguna is opposed to the two tendencies: knowledge (discernment) and illumination (clarity). In brief, sattvaguna binds the living being with the happiness of a complete life. On the other hand, when under rajoguna, a person becomes deeply attached to thousands of desires and, for the sake of satisfying those desires, becomes involved in endless activities. Due to its nature, tamoguna covers the discernment between eternal and temporary. As a result, the living being becomes attached to false notions. He becomes inattentive to the noble inner guidance. The three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—function together in the inner mind. When the flow of two gunas is suppressed, the third guna functions. Even though the functions of these three gunas are separate, their mutual relationship is considered interdependent. Due to the inherent nature of these three gunas, one remains dependent on the other.

**rajaṣ tamaś cābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaś caiva tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā (14-10)**

Comm: O Arjuna, sometimes sattva-guna increases by suppressing or overpowering rajo-guna and tamo-guna. At other times, rajo-guna becomes dominant by overpowering sattva-guna and tamo-guna. Again, sometimes tamo-guna increases by suppressing sattva-guna and rajo-guna. When any one of the three gunas becomes stronger, the distinct qualities of that guna manifest clearly in the human body and mind. Sattva, rajas, and tamas always exist together. These three gunas are interconnected like the sides of a triangle. When one side of a triangle comes forward, the other two remain attached but move to the background. Similarly, when one guna becomes prominent in the body, the other two remain present as supporting forces. Among the three gunas, one combines with another, produces effects through another, and functions in mutual dependence. One guna lives by depending upon another. Why does one guna sometimes become more powerful than the others? Explaining this, Śrī Rāmānuja Āchārya says: “Although all three gunas are connected with prakriti, still due to past actions and factors such as food and habits, one guna becomes more dominant and is experienced more strongly.” When sattva-guna rises to prominence by overpowering the other two gunas, a person becomes discriminative and thoughtful. A pure flow of noble thoughts arises in the mind. The mind turns away from sense pleasures and becomes inward-focused. When sattvic nature becomes established after defeating rajas and tamas, the soul says, “I am peaceful and happy.” When rajo-guna increases by overpowering sattva and tamas, the soul loses interest in everything except action. Restlessness, agitation, greed, desire for enjoyment, and intense craving for various activities arise in the body, senses, and mind. In that state, the sattvic qualities of clarity, discrimination, and peace almost disappear. The tamasic qualities like sleep, negligence,

and laziness also remain suppressed. When tamo-guna becomes dominant by blocking the tendencies of sattva and rajas, delusion increases in the body, senses, and mind. The person becomes inclined toward negligence. Mental activities lose discrimination and clarity. As a result, the effects of sattva-guna such as light and knowledge, and the effects of rajo-guna such as activity and enjoyment, almost vanish. The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam mentions ten causes responsible for the increase of the gunas. “Scripture, water, progeny, place, time, action, birth, contemplation, mantra, and impressions—these ten are the causes of the gunas.” The meaning is that whatever these factors associate with, they strengthen that particular guna. Each guna becomes powerful and effective for a certain period of time. In such conditions, the other two gunas do not completely disappear, but their influence becomes weak. When a person is under the dominance of sattva-guna, rajo-guna and tamo-guna do not have enough strength to express themselves. Therefore, they remain ineffective at that time. The meaning is that when one guna overpowers the other two and grows stronger, it is called dominant. That dominant guna engages the person in actions of its own nature. As a result, the dominance of that guna becomes visible in the person’s behavior, actions, and even food habits. Through impressions, intellect, and discrimination-based knowledge, sometimes the dominance of sattva-guna gives happiness to a person. At other times, due to craving for sensory enjoyment, the intellect becomes influenced by rajo-guna, and the person becomes attached to action. Similarly, when tamo-guna becomes strong, sleep, negligence, and laziness increase. Therefore, in living beings, the tendencies of sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic natures are observed. Regarding pure sattva, Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa said: “Unless rajo-guna is removed and pure sattva arises, the mind does not become steady in God. Love for God does not arise. God cannot be attained.” Through spiritual practice and conscious effort, the growth of sattva-guna is possible. Although these three gunas of material nature exist everywhere, still, through willpower and firm determination, a seeker can increase sattva-guna and receive the blessing of remaining steadily in it. Gradually, the seeker transcends even sattva-guna and becomes established in pure or eternal sattva. He then attains the state beyond the three gunas. This state is called “Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti” — “Vāsudeva alone is everything.” In this state, the seeker becomes capable of understanding divine knowledge of the Supreme Lord.

**sarva-dvāreṣu dehe ’smin prakāśa upajāyate
jñānaṁ yadā tadā vidyād vivṛddhaṁ sattvaṁ ity uta (14-11)**

Comm: When divine illumination and the power of discernment arise in this body, the inner mind (antahkarana), and all the senses, one should understand that there has been a special increase in sattvaguna. In this verse, the signs that arise when sattvaguna predominates are described. In this body, which is the field of enjoyment, when knowledge manifests clearly through all the knowledge-acquiring senses like eyes, ears, nose, skin, etc.—meaning, if all the senses function smoothly without any obstruction in acquiring

their respective objects—then it must be concluded that sattvaguna predominates in the inner mind. Knowledge of the external world is gathered through the five senses. The light of the self (atma-jyoti) exists in the form of consciousness-illumination in the inner mind and at the gateway of each sense organ. For example: through the eyes, the consciousness-light illuminates all forms and colors of the world. Through the ears, knowledge of sound arises. Similarly, through the tongue, taste is perceived. Each ray of light emanating from the self illuminates one specific object through its designated sense. Due to purity and clarity in the senses and inner mind, clear knowledge awakens regarding what is truth and what is falsehood, what is duty and what is non-duty, what is beneficial for the self and what is self-destructive, what is beneficial and what is harmful. In this state, when correct understanding arises about every object, it should be known as the state of sattvaguna. Just as sunlight reflects on an object and provides illumination, similarly, the consciousness-light reflects in the intellect and illuminates the external world of objects as well as the inner mental tendencies. Rajoguna creates distraction due to impurity, causing instability in the intellect, while tamoguna brings impurity due to veiling. A sattvic person, whether man or woman, remains detached in all actions and is inspired toward devotion to God. Therefore, when these two gunas (rajas and tamas) predominate, it is natural for the illumination of the intellect to diminish. Rajoguna and tamoguna can increase in the bodies of other beings as well, but sattvaguna can increase only in the human body. In this lies the success of human life. When sattvaguna predominates, the intellect develops. Every action begins to be performed carefully and smoothly. Errors in the field of work decrease. Under its influence, attachment to the world fades, giving rise to dispassion. Restlessness disappears, and peace is experienced. Greed is destroyed, generosity arises, and tendencies become sinless. The wisdom of a person endowed with sattvaguna manifests outwardly. At the gateway of all his senses, and even throughout his body, discernment acts like a guard. Just as the royal swan separates milk from water, similarly, the senses separate the good from the bad and do not allow forbidden objects to enter the inner mind. New pure streams of thought awaken in the brain. Like the rays of the full moon, examination by knowledge occurs in the mind. When the mind is freed from sensory delusion and desires contract, tendencies gradually come to a halt. Dispassion toward worldly objects arises. When the measure of sattva increases, the ears will not hear what is unworthy of hearing. The eyes will avoid seeing what is unworthy of sight. The tongue will not speak what is unworthy of utterance. The mind will not become attached to sensory pleasures. In this way, through chanting, meditation, and self-restraint, the purity of sattva gradually increases. When the measure of sattva increases, the measure of knowledge also grows. For self-knowledge, sattva alone certainly establishes the foundation of knowledge. With the help of sattvaguna, a human can attain liberation. This privilege is not available in other species. Swami Sivananda Ji Maharaj, in his commentary on this verse, has said: “Replace tamoguna with rajoguna and rajoguna with sattvaguna. Now stand firmly

in sattva. You will see that you receive more light, more purity, more peace, and more sweetness in it. You will feel a power pulling you upward toward the supreme divine light. Sattvic food, chanting, meditation, self-study and scripture reading, solitude, good company, singing the names and glories of the Lord, and pranayama increase sattva. Look within yourself. Gaze inward, very carefully observe the movement of the gunas. Stay alert, remain watchful like a gatekeeper. Allow only sattvic thoughts to enter the workshop of the mind. Control rajoguna—suppress tamoguna, and inner balance will remain. When both illumination and knowledge arise, spontaneous dispassion toward the world comes. A flood of withdrawal and happiness-peace flows in the mind. That is, attachment-aversion, sorrow-grief, worry, fear, restlessness, sleep, laziness, etc., disappear. You will attain complete tranquility. The mind will become well-established. You will see everything clearly and transparently. The intellect will not be clouded. Inner vision will become sharp. The eye of self-knowledge will open wide. The senses will no longer take interest in external objects.” According to Sri Shankaracharya, when, under the influence of sattvaguna, rajas and tamas are suppressed and the senses effortlessly gain knowledge of their objects, then purity and clarity are experienced in it. Sri Ramanujacharya has clarified ‘prakasha’ (illumination) in this way: when the senses like the eyes see the true nature of an object without any illusory form, then illumination or clarity is felt in the senses. The knowledge perceived in that illumination is true knowledge itself. When such pure knowledge is obtained through the senses, it should be understood that sattvaguna is increasing. Sri Purushottamaji, in his Amrita Tarangini, has written in the commentary on this verse: “When the ears drink only the nectar of the Lord’s stories, and the eyes see only the Lord’s divine form, then understand it as the increase of sattvaguna.” The illumination in the form of knowledge is inevitably necessary for all actions. Before performing any action, detailed knowledge about it is required. The sequence of accomplishing any action is: first, knowledge about that action; then, the desire to engage in it; and finally, effort for it. Only then is the action smoothly completed. When this sequence is observed everywhere in all actions, the increase of sattvaguna is known. According to many commentators, when an object comes into proximity, a mental modification (vritti) in the form of that object arises in the inner mind. This modification arises only with the increase of sattva. When a modification in the form of the object arises in the inner mind upon the object’s proximity, understand that sattvaguna is increasing. When illumination and brilliance are present, the good that is hidden within everything becomes visible. A person whose knowledge is subtle can see with a penetrating vision the good (the presence of the Supreme Lord) that is hidden everywhere and in every object. When knowledge is weak, it cannot reach up to the Supreme Lord—it reaches only up to defects. The closer one gets to ‘sat’ (truth), the more sattvaguna increases. Non-difference vision is the nature of sattvaguna. The more one realizes the one undivided complete existence, the more sattvaguna predominates and increases in the inner mind. Emotional or feeling-based existence is sattvaguna.

lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ sprhā rajasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha (14-12)

Comm: O Arjuna, when rajo-guna increases, greed arises. There is a strong urge to engage in action. Actions are begun with selfish motives and desire for results. Restlessness, that is, agitation of the mind, appears. Intense craving for sense enjoyment is generated. Rajo-guna is active by nature. Its dominance is clearly seen through excessive physical activity. For a person dominated by rajo-guna, whether the action is virtuous or otherwise, the main goal is to gain something. His greed increases so much that he becomes restless to obtain everything. He even becomes ready to perform impossible or improper actions. The thought that one day death will come does not even touch his mind. Before his endless greed, even the ocean or fire would seem defeated. A rajasic person, intoxicated by social pleasure, does not get rest day or night. Greed is the craving for wealth. Taking possession of others' property and desiring more wealth even when one already has enough is called greed. In other words, thirst for accumulating wealth is greed. Because of greed, a person continuously thinks of increasing wealth even when there is no real need. While earning wealth, he abandons the distinction between duty and non-duty. He tries to assert his claim over others' property. Even when a proper occasion for charity comes, a greedy person does not give up wealth. The nature of a greedy person is that no matter how much he gains, he is never satisfied. He becomes active again for gaining still more. When a person becomes controlled by selfishness and greed, peace and stability are lost. Earning one's rightful wages through hard and honest work does not come under greed. Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya defines greed as the desire to take another's wealth. According to Śrī Rāmānujāchārya, unwillingness to give up one's own wealth is also a form of greed. Charity in many forms clearly expresses renunciation. Where scripturally prescribed charity or renunciation is absent, greed must be assumed to exist. Accepting charity that is prohibited by scripture is also called greed. Śrī Vallabhāchārya has described miserliness as greed. The mental inclination to perform various actions is called pravṛtti. Constant attachment to sense-based actions becomes pravṛtti. Engaging in action without attachment, for sustaining the body or for public welfare, is not sinful. Even great liberated beings beyond the gunas act in this manner. Rajasic people may say they are working for the welfare of the world. But behind their actions, some personal desire always remains. According to them, immersion in enjoyment and pleasure is the fullness of life. According to Śrī Rāmānujāchārya, unnecessary restlessness or agitation of one's nature is called pravṛtti. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī says that constant engagement in action for fulfilling desires is pravṛtti. Śrī Puruṣottamajī explains pravṛtti as the effort to acquire more wealth for worldly pleasures. Effort toward action with the aim of fulfilling desires is called ārambha. Initiating new actions for enjoyment and accumulation is called ārambha. The effort to perform various actions to gain material pleasures is known as ārambha. In Karma-yoga, such ārambha is not a fault. Because without action, a seeker

cannot attain equanimity in yoga. When actions are begun without attachment, according to circumstances, that is not true ārambha. It is merely pravṛtti, through which desires gradually disappear. Restlessness of the mind is called aśānti (lack of peace). Even after doing many actions, dissatisfaction and the desire to do more is called unrest. When wealth, status, fame, or recognition are not obtained as desired, mental agitation arises. Being disturbed by enjoyment and attachment, resulting in anxiety and instability, is called aśama. Endless thoughts and ceaseless desires create this state of unrest. When joy and sorrow arise due to favorable and unfavorable outcomes, peace cannot exist. Feeling the need for something in the mind is called spṛhā (craving). Thinking that some worldly object is necessary for oneself is called spṛhā. The belief that life is meaningless without wealth, property, honor, and prestige is spṛhā. In other words, thirst for sense pleasures is spṛhā. Therefore, a seeker must give up the desire to obtain objects. Because the certainty of obtaining anything is not under one's control. When rajo-guna increases, the influence of sattva-guna and the qualities of discrimination are suppressed. The tamasic qualities of sleep and laziness are also overpowered. At that time, the need for various sense pleasures is strongly felt. A strong desire to accumulate wealth arises in the inner mind. The mind becomes restless, and the force of desires increases. Various actions begin according to these emotions. Worshipping God for sense enjoyment is also rajasic devotion. Such worship should be considered dominated by rajo-guna. Beginning spiritual practice with the intention of gaining results is also a sign of rajo-guna. Remaining in an agitated state due to joy and sorrow is called aśama. Constant determination to remain engaged in action is also called unrest. According to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, not allowing the mind to become calm because of desires and constant planning is aśama. When a seeker feels the rise of rajo-guna, he should immediately reflect. He should think, "When life is already going on sufficiently, what is the need for more?" By such reflection, rajasic tendencies should be removed. One must become detached and indifferent to them.

**aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca pramādo moha eva ca
tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe kuru-nandana (14-13)**

Comm: O Arjuna! When tamoguna increases in a person, darkness envelops the inner mind, and discernment disappears. The absence of light in the senses and the inner mind is called 'aprakasha' (non-illumination). Without light or illumination, there is no knowledge. When tamoguna predominates, there arise in the inner mind: apravritti—meaning aversion to duty-bound actions or reluctance toward work; pramada—meaning futile efforts; and delusive tendencies like sleep, etc. Tamoguna is a great obstacle on the path of spiritual progress as well as on the path to success in any field of life. 'Aprakasha' means the inability to properly or truly discern any object or situation with reasoned judgment. When tamoguna increases, the power of awareness in the senses and inner mind vanishes. Past matters are not clearly remembered, nor does new discernment arise. A person who cannot properly understand his own true nature and its relation to the external world—his

life becomes a kind of delusion, and his existence appears as a painful flaw. Laxity in effort and extreme aversion to work are indicated by the word ‘apavṛtti’. Not taking any responsibility on one’s shoulders, considering oneself incapable of accomplishing any task, showing reluctance and lack of interest in duty-bound work, believing “this is not in my fate” and remaining indifferent—these are signs of apavṛtti. Neglect of scripturally prescribed actions and futile efforts are called pramāda. When tamoguna is strong, high aspirations, energy, and capability are not seen. The mind becomes deluded; nothing stays in memory; drowsiness arises; one reaches a state of dream or deep sleep; the power of discernment is lost; there remains no strength to understand any subject—these are said to be the arising of moha (delusion). Considering impermanent things as permanent and remaining attached to them is a sign of moha. Under the influence of moha, a person becomes thoughtless. Foolishness embraces him. Lack of proper conduct becomes evident. In a person endowed with tamoguna, the mind becomes excited toward evil actions, and due to misunderstanding without cause, he becomes excessively angry. When anxious to obtain forbidden things, the mind and senses pursue them. With the increase of tamoguna, the mind neither engages in sense objects nor shows interest in performing necessary actions—that is true—but this cannot be called the state of samādhi. It is a condition of delusive intoxication. Having the capacity to work but not making effort to do so, being conscious yet remaining inactive—these are indicators of a wasted life. The tendencies arising from the three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—naturally come into being, perish, and undergo decrease or increase. They are subject to change. Modifications in the inner mind do not persist continuously; rather, the unchanging state persists continuously. Modifications come and go. But the self remains continuously unchanging. Modifications arise in the mind and intellect. However, due to delusion, the seeker identifies with the mind and intellect and superimposes those modifications onto himself, thereby becoming influenced by them. If the modifications are not superimposed on oneself, the accepted relationship with them is removed.

**yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti deha-bhṛt
tadottama-vidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate (14-14)**

Comm: Whatever guna becomes dominant at the time of death, the result corresponding to that guna is attained in the next birth. If death occurs when sattva-guna is predominant, the soul attains pure and joyful worlds such as those of the worshippers of Hiranyagarbha. This is also stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.25.22): “Those who depart while established in sattva go to the higher worlds.” This means that one who gives up the body during the rise of sattva-guna attains heavenly realms. A person established in sattva-guna, after death, attains Brahmāloka or higher worlds where sages and seers dwell. There, such a soul enjoys divine pleasures. Sattva-guna is the purest condition within the material world. Those whose thoughts, actions, and knowledge are noble and guided by discrimination are called knowers of the highest truth (uttamavettā). When

sattva-guna increases due to past impressions or other causes, light and knowledge arise in the body, senses, and inner instrument. At that time, the connection of the individual soul with the mind, senses, and vital airs in the gross body comes close to separation. At the moment when the life-force leaves the five prāṇa-sheaths of the body, the subtle body (mind, intellect, and memory) withdraws from sense-objects. As a result, the individual soul proceeds to those pure worlds over which virtuous souls have authority. Therefore, sattvic tendencies are noble, just like virtuous actions. Compared to rajo-guna and tamo-guna, the tendencies arising from sattva-guna are subtler, more expansive, and more powerful. Earlier, in Chapter 8, Verse 6 of the Gita, the Lord has said that whatever mental state a person holds at the final moment determines the soul's future course. One who has no desire to enjoy the fruits of actions is called a knower of the highest truth. Such a person attains realms even higher than heaven. Worlds higher than heaven—such as Jana-loka, Tapa-loka, Maha-loka, and Satya-loka—are prescribed for such knowers. Explaining the word “amālā”, Śrī Śaṅkarānanda says that birth, old age, and disease are impurities. A world free from birth, old age, and disease is therefore called a pure (amala) world. The term “nitya-sattva-stha” means that when a person does not identify with sattva-guna itself and transcends even the joy born of sattva, then he attains direct realization of the Supreme Self and reaches the Supreme Abode of the Lord, where absolute purity exists. Those whose subtle body still contains ego and possessiveness are subject to rebirth in various forms. But those great souls who have completely destroyed body-identification are liberated while living and do not undergo birth and death again. According to Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya, the attainment of different worlds after death is not based on caste or social order. Rather, it depends entirely on which guna is dominant at the time of death. Śrī Puruṣottamajī writes that whichever guna is dominant at the moment of death, the soul moves in that direction. The soul resides in the world where that guna is most prevalent. The Self alone is supremely exalted. Therefore, the knower of the Self is the highest knower, and embodied beings attain the world where such knowers dwell. Śrī Vallabhāchārya explains “uttamavidām” as yogis who know the supreme spiritual means. He interprets the word “loka” to mean body. The meaning is that a person dominated by sattva-guna takes birth in a yogic family. As stated in the Gita (6.41): “The fallen yogi is born in the house of the pure and the prosperous.” The Shruti and Smriti clearly declare that after death, the next body is attained according to one's actions. In other words, the soul's future state depends upon virtuous and sinful deeds. At first glance, stating that movement to other worlds depends on the dominance of gunas appears to contradict the scriptures. The resolution is that rebirth is indeed based on virtue and sin. But it is these very virtuous or sinful actions that cause a particular guna to become dominant at the time of death. Therefore, seekers and all people should always engage in noble actions. Resolving to perform righteous deeds according to one's capacity leads to the growth of sattva-guna. Every person possesses some good qualities. By properly using one's abilities and virtues, those qualities increase. When a sattvic person lives a life of virtuous actions,

the remembrance of God at the final moment is assured. Thus, the soul's journey after death is determined by the combined result of one's entire way of thinking and living.

**rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate
tathā pralīnas tamasi mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate (14-15)**

Comm: In the previous and this verse, it is said that after death, depending on which of the three gunas—sattva, rajas, or tamas—was predominant at the time of death, one obtains different bodies and environments. The main function of rajoguna is that it keeps a person bound in attachment to actions. If at the time of leaving the body rajoguna is predominant, then due to attachment to actions for fulfilling desires, birth occurs in the homes of people who are attached to action. Those people who are attached to actions and their fruits are called karmasangi (attached to action). Here, 'karmasangi' means a person attached to actions. A person who, due to greed, excessive tendencies, etc., remains constantly engaged in forbidden actions is karmasangi. Every living being has to perform actions anyway. Therefore, Sri Ramanujacharya has indicated that karmasangi means people who perform actions seeking fruits. Thus, under rajoguna, a person is born among ordinary human beings. The homes of people endowed with rajoguna are the suitable field for starting actions with desire and enjoying their fruits. Therefore, being born from such parents is being born among karmasangis. Even after being born in the best circumstances or environment, not all people equally make proper use of it to develop their life on the right path or attain spiritual establishment. Instead of progressing on the ladder of development, they pass life in negligence and laziness and ruin themselves. Therefore, the Lord has said here that if death occurs when tamoguna is predominant, the soul obtains a body in ignorant (muda) species. Muda-yoni means animal species. A person endowed with tamoguna is born in animal or bird species. If the soul leaves the body while experiencing the fruit of some extreme sinful action, then according to the nature of increased tamoguna, birth occurs as animals, birds, insects, moths, trees, etc. Therefore, according to the theory of evolution, once human birth is obtained, it is not certain that human birth will be obtained again. To obtain human birth again, the soul has to take countless births. Therefore, for the rare human birth, a person must try to rise above tamoguna by adopting rajoguna, and then rise above rajoguna to become established in sattvaguna. Furthermore, by obtaining the company of pure devotees and taking shelter of pure devotion, attaining direct realization of God is the ultimate goal of human life. It is a law of Prakriti that the guna acquired by the soul in one birth is safely preserved in the next body obtained after death. According to some scriptural scholars, once the soul obtains human birth, it does not again obtain the body of lower creatures. A person extremely endowed with tamoguna, after death, obtains only a human body that is ignorant, lifeless, or extremely uncivilized and low-class. One who has performed good actions and conduct throughout life, whose nature is pure, will have good conduct and feelings in the next birth as well, and will tend toward auspicious actions. If a person

under rajoguna remains attached to objects, people, activities, etc., becomes controlled by lust, anger, greed, pride, etc., and remains engaged in sinful actions, then in the next birth he will have to suffer extreme mental and physical pain. Similarly, if at the time of leaving the body, under the influence of tamoguna, one was engaged in evil actions and sinful conduct, then even if human birth is obtained in the next life, it will be endowed with demonic qualities. The meaning is that whether in the form of action it is rajoguna or tamoguna, a person who remains engaged in auspicious actions and embraces death will have good qualities and conduct in the next birth as well. His nature will help engage him in excellent actions.

**karmaṇaḥ sukr̥tasyāhuḥ sāttvikam̐ nirmalam̐ phalam
rajasas tu phalam̐ duḥkham̐ ajñānam̐ tamasaḥ phalam (14-16)**

Comm: The fruit of good deeds, virtuous actions, and meritorious karma is predominantly sattvic, pure, and full of happiness. Similarly, in rajasic actions, since there is a mixture of sin with virtue, there is little happiness and more sorrow. The fruit of tamasic actions, that is, forbidden deeds, leads to ignorance and lack of discernment, as stated by sages, rishis, and other wise people. All auspicious actions performed under the influence of sattva guna purify the inner self. As a result, the mind always remains cheerful, and the person constantly experiences happiness and joy. The actions performed by a person endowed with sattva guna are sattvic actions. The situations obtained as the fruit of sattvic actions are certainly pure, spotless, and joyful. Actions performed in a selfless manner according to the scriptures are called sukruta (highly virtuous deeds), in which there is no desire for any gain in this world or the next. Through sukruta actions, sattva guna establishes itself in the heart. Sri Purushottamji has written: “Actions performed to please God are sukruta actions. The pure sattvic fruit of such sukruta actions is God’s pleasure.” In Sri Ramcharitmanas, Saint Tulsidas has a couplet: “Janaka’s sukruta took the form of Vaidehi (Sita). Dasharatha’s sukruta took bodily form as Rama. We are all a heap of all sukruta, having been born as residents of Janakpur.” All the accumulated virtues in King Janaka’s life took embodied form as Mother Janaki (Sita). All the sukruta in the life of the virtuous Dasharatha took embodied form as Lord Rama. The residents of Janakpur say: “All the fruits of sukruta are these – that we have been born in Janakpur.” Through the impressions of past lives, pure feelings like knowledge and detachment arise in the inner self, and after death, one attains divine, radiant worlds – this is the pure sattvic fruit. The inner self of a person living a noble life is certainly purer. If a person lives a life of service, love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, peace, contentment, cheerfulness, and purity, all signs of a sattvic nature will be visible in him. All religions of the world firmly agree that living a life dedicated to truth, culture, good conduct, and moral values is the highest human duty. Therefore, good conduct and disciplined behavior are the first step toward self-welfare. Respecting elders, following the words of the guru, avoiding falsehood, having an inquisitive mind, studying scriptures, performing duties with devotion, and

helping others – all these actions are considered sukruta. Through the practice of all these rules, mental agitation is destroyed, the mind becomes calm and cheerful. Discriminating thought in the inner self is the source of all actions. A person endowed with sattvic qualities never becomes overwhelmed by sorrow, no matter what situation he faces. By not connecting knowledge and deliberation with qualities and actions, he neither becomes unhappy in any situation nor gets bound. When a person, under the influence of rajo guna, constantly engages in desire-motivated actions, he certainly experiences some mental satisfaction, but it lasts only for a very short time. Due to impressions from past actions, rajasic feelings like enjoyment, desire, greed, and impulses repeatedly arise in the inner self, making the mind restless and disturbed. Since desires have no end, the fruit of rajasic actions is always bitter. It causes sorrow, despair, and dissatisfaction, making a person attached to greed. In the second chapter, the Lord says: “Kripanah phala-hetavah” – those who desire fruits are always miserable. The fruit of rajas is like the mahakala fruit – beautiful on the outside but full of poison inside. Its consequence is full of sorrow. Rajo guna creates thirst and attachment to actions and their fruits. --As a result, becoming greedy for wealth and property, a rajasic person is slowly pulled into a suffocating pit of sorrow and suffering. “Oh, I have many palaces, I have abundant stored wealth, I have respect and prestige among people, people worship and honor me” – such pride and ego temporarily feel pleasurable to the mind, but due to the fear of losing all this, the mind always remains fearful and restless. Rajo guna creates disturbance in the mind and makes the heart restless and anxious. Like the neem fruit, the fruit of rajo guna looks beautiful but is a mixture of sweet and bitter. From rajasic actions, all worldly enjoyments, physical pleasures, respect, and honor are certainly obtained, but these very attachment-related enjoyments become the cause of sorrow – “Ye hi samsparshaja bhoga duhkha-yanaya eva te” (Gita 5/22). A person who acts under the control of tamo guna is ignorant. The fruit of tamasic actions is ignorance, meaning turning away from God. Since his intellect and discernment are lost, all his actions become demonic in nature. As a result, he has to take birth in lower species like animals. Due to ignorance, a person does not realize that this entire universe is controlled by the Supreme Lord and that every soul is a child of the Supreme Soul. Therefore, killing animals and eating meat to satisfy the tongue is considered a heinous act according to the scriptures. Tamasic actions lead the soul forward on the path of immorality and unrighteousness. What is life? What is the ultimate goal of life? Due to ignorance, a tamasic person has no such thinking or far-sightedness. Bribery, theft, lying, violence – these are all tamasic actions. Not performing prescribed duties and engaging in forbidden actions is tamasic action. Tamo guna covers the power of discernment and destroys the ability to properly understand external objects or people. The nature of tamo guna is delusion. Due to delusion, a person becomes devoid of intellect and discernment, and out of foolishness, becomes prone to anger and violence in all actions. As the fruit of such actions, one has to take birth in ignorant species like animals, birds, insects, trees, and creepers. Sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic – these three types

of action-impressions remain accumulated in every person's inner self. Whenever which impression becomes dominant, corresponding sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic feelings arise, and accordingly, new actions are performed. It is from the relationship between qualities and actions that one obtains birth in good or bad species.

**sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca
pramāda-mohau bhavato tamaso 'jñānam eva ca (14-17)**

Comm: This verse explains the role played by the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas—in the inner mind of a human being. Knowledge, light, happiness, peace, and all such sattvic qualities arise only from sattva-guna. Here, the word “knowledge” is used in the sense of realization of God. Greed, activity, attachment, desire, and selfish action arise from rajo-guna. Carelessness and ignorance arise from tamo-guna. When the inner mind is pure and calm, that is, when it is sattvic, the capacity for knowledge increases. Sattva-guna awakens and sharpens the intellect. Only through a pure mind and intellect is the direct realization of the eternally pure, conscious, and free Self possible. The Self, limited by the mind and intellect, is called the knower. Sattva-guna is the main means of self-realization. It is the foundation of self-control. Just as the sun is the cause of daylight, so sattva is the cause of the rise of knowledge. Because of the rise of knowledge, discrimination between good and bad actions awakens in a person. As a result, by the increase of sattva-guna, a person understands the true essence of objects, people, and situations in the external world. By behaving appropriately, the person attains peace. Attachment to action is the main characteristic of rajo-guna. To fulfill the continuous desires arising in the mind, one becomes engaged in various actions. Because of repeated attachment to action and its results, the mind always remains restless. The mind never experiences satisfaction. As a result, the person becomes greedy. When dominated by rajo-guna, a person becomes greedy, and the desire for sense enjoyment has no limit. Even if a person has abundant wealth and all objects of enjoyment, happiness and mental peace are still absent. Just as fire can never be fully satisfied, greed can also never be satisfied. Greed becomes the cause of sorrow and suffering. Rajo-guna creates endless desires. A rajasic person uses others' interests as a means for personal advancement. Desiring more than what is necessary or already obtained is called greed. A greedy person shows two kinds of behavior. One is excessive attachment to accumulated wealth, due to which the person hesitates to use it appropriately; such a person is called miserly. The other behavior is collecting wealth through improper means such as falsehood and deceit. In both cases, due to extreme attachment to self-interest, the person goes against conscience and becomes involved in sinful actions. As a result, the person loses mental balance and lives in a disturbed state. Therefore, the result of rajasic actions is suffering. From tamo-guna, carelessness, delusion, and ignorance arise. Tamo-guna covers and clouds the intellect. Not understanding objects, people, and situations correctly is ignorance. Lack of discrimination and reasoning power is delusion. Actions done without discrimination

and reasoning never give the desired result. Instead, opposite results occur, causing great harm to the person. Acting carelessly and misunderstanding reality is called negligence. Therefore, a person dominated by tamo-guna remains engaged in useless efforts. Such a person blames others for one's own suffering. In a tamasic person, short-sightedness, ignorance, and dullness arise. When carelessness, delusion, and ignorance enter the intellect, it remains in darkness. As a result, the person cannot distinguish between right and wrong, duty and non-duty. Living without a clear goal, the person wastes human life. A tamasic person does not think about future consequences. Such a person becomes completely body-centered. Driven by revenge, the person does not hesitate to commit sinful actions. Tamo-guna is an obstacle to true vision and right understanding. Just as seeds arise from a tree and many more trees grow from those seeds, similarly, ignorance arises from tamo-guna. From ignorance, tamo-guna further increases and becomes stronger.

**ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ (14-18)**

Comm: People with predominant sattva guna go to higher worlds after death, starting from the ancestral world (Pitriloka) up to Brahmaloka, depending on the degree of their sattva. People with predominant rajo guna, according to their level of excess or deficiency, take birth after death in human wombs such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, or others, and remain in this human world. People with predominant tamo guna, depending on the lesser or greater degree of tamas, become prone to laziness and negligence, go downward, and take birth in lower species like animals, birds, insects, and moths, thus experiencing hellish suffering. The security, happiness, comfort, peace, and joy that humans experience are the standards for measuring the development of humanity. In this ladder of development, three categories have been described regarding the soul's movement and position after death. These are: upward movement, staying in the middle, and downward movement. In people who live a pure life with discernment, proper judgment, and self-control, sattva guna progressively increases. Such calm, creative, and powerful persons, after death, go to one of the higher worlds like heaven (Swargaloka), Tapoloka, or Satyaloka, and stay there in a subtle form. Above the earth, there are seven worlds: Bhuh, Bhuvah, Swah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satyaloka or Brahmaloka. Similarly, below the earth, there are seven lower worlds named Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Mahatala, Talatala, Rasatala, and Patala, as described in the Puranas. The higher the soul goes upward, the purer and more unchanging its form becomes. The lower it goes, the more it obtains lower births. The ultimate goal of the soul is to become free from mental and intellectual bondage and merge into the Supreme Soul. In this world, the soul takes a body and remains bound by its own limitations. Obtaining a human birth in this mortal world to realize the great possibility of liberation that exists in the heart is extremely rare. Devotion, knowledge, and detachment are possible only in a human body. By properly using this human body, one can attain a very excellent destination. This opportunity does not come again and again. The higher

worlds attained by a sattvic person are of two types. One is such a higher world where, once the soul goes there, it does not return. The other upward path is to a world where, after enjoying heavenly pleasures, the soul is born again in the mortal world. The lifestyle of a sattvic person is to become free from the prison of sorrow, pain, disturbance, and desires, and to seek spirituality. Those who live a life of luxury and indulgence according to scriptural limits but with a sense of enjoyment, and who have attachment and clinging to material objects, are called rajasic here. People with a fully rajasic nature—full of desires, disturbance, ambition for greatness, and success—continue to obtain this human world until their inner self and mind become purified. Because they remain attached to desires throughout life and do not give up attachment to the wealth, honor, and prestige they have gained, the soul repeatedly takes birth in families attached to actions. As a result, even for a long time, rajasic persons in the middle category keep revolving in the cycle of birth and death. A rajasic person is never completely pure. Rajo guna is a mixed quality. Rajasic persons who are oriented toward sattva remain engaged in many charitable and virtuous acts with the aim of gaining respect, fame, and prestige, and gradually there is a possibility of transforming into a sattvic nature. Similarly, rajasic persons who remain oriented toward tamas become extremely greedy for wealth accumulation, selfish, lose mental balance, and there is a possibility of engaging in sinful acts. Tamasic people attain downward movement. Souls that indulge in low tendencies like negligence, delusion, and ignorance, without seeking the path of peace, joy, and liberation, take birth in lower developed categories. Downward movement means birth in the lowest groups—humans who, even having a human body, behave like animals. According to the increase in tamo guna, the soul attains wretched states like animals, birds, reptiles, trees, etc. Tamo guna is described here as the vilest. These human-like animals remain engaged in beastly actions. Therefore, after experiencing bodily pain and suffering with such tendencies, there is no further need to take birth as actual animals. Those in whose life sattva or rajo guna was present, but at the time of death tamo guna suddenly increases, attain after death a “special species” downward path—that is, lower ignorant births like animals and birds. Those who live their whole life with predominant tamo guna and remain involved in evil actions attain after death a “special place” downward path—that is, human birth with animal tendencies and become destined for hell. After leaving the body, whatever birth the soul takes, corresponding feelings enter into it. All these births are caused by past actions. Depending on attachment to different qualities, some feel “I am happy,” while others think “I am unhappy.” Some identify with the body, consider themselves powerful, become deluded, and cause the downfall of the soul. Whoever is in whatever varna (caste) and ashrama (stage of life), while staying there, should properly perform their duties, meditate only on God, and perform sattvic austerity or spiritual practice. To increase sattva guna, one should study scriptures, Puranas, Upanishads, etc. It is desirable to give up rajasic and tamasic food, take sattvic food, keep the company of wise people, practice according to their instructions, visit holy places, etc. One should abandon forbidden,

rajasic, and tamasic actions and perform auspicious actions prescribed by the scriptures. By performing all activities in this sattvic manner, old impressions are destroyed, and sattvic impressions increase.

**nānyaṃ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṃ yadā draṣṭānupaśyati
guṇebhyaś ca paraṃ vetti mad-bhāvaṃ so 'dhigacchati (14-19)**

Comm: When a wise and discriminating person, established as a witness, never accepts anyone other than the three qualities as the doer, and clearly understands that all actions are performed only by nature made of the three gunas, and realizes well that the Self is non-doer and changeless, then such a realized person attains God's pure devotion that is beyond the three gunas. The actions of sattva, rajas, and tamas are only modifications of those very qualities. Whatever actions take place in the body are caused only by the gunas. The gunas alone are responsible for all changes, all states, and all actions. In the natural condition, the individual soul lives under the false idea that it is the body. Because of this delusion, the person considers oneself the doer and enjoyer of all actions and lives accordingly. Within the bound body, the soul is controlled by one of the three gunas and is forced to act. In this helpless state, it keeps revolving endlessly in the cycle of birth and death. Whether actions are approved by scriptures or forbidden by scriptures, whether they are virtuous or blameworthy, the body and the senses are the instruments of action, and the three gunas are the causes. The eyes perform the act of seeing. The ears perform the act of hearing. Thinking and reflecting are functions of the mind. Gaining knowledge is the function of the intellect. Speaking is the function of speech. In this way, all activities of the world are carried out only through the body, senses, mind, and intellect. Therefore, all actions performed by the individual are functions or modifications of the three gunas present in the inner mind. However, this does not mean that everything in the world is only the three gunas and nothing else exists. Such an understanding is incorrect. There exists a principle that has no contact at all with these three gunas. The individual soul has taken a body that is a form of the three gunas. The three gunas rest in the body only because of the existence of the Self. Nature is the cause of these three gunas. The supreme controller of nature is God. Although God controls nature and its qualities, He always remains above them. Within the body, the true nature of the Self is pure consciousness, completely different from the gunas. The Self is never a doer, never an enjoyer, and is always beyond the reach of the senses. Even while the three gunas perform destined and present actions according to their nature, it is possible for the wise person to attain the state beyond the gunas. Just as a prince, perfectly disguised, plays the role of a beggar on stage, yet never forgets even for a moment that he is a prince, though he fully acts the part of a beggar, similarly, the wise person remains unaffected by the gunas, and abides as a witness in the awareness of the eternally pure Self. The gunas are always changing, while the Self can never change. By deeply reflecting on this truth with discrimination, the thoughtful seeker experiences oneself as beyond the gunas, unattached, and untouched. A person beyond

the gunas always remains established in Self-awareness. Such a person stays neutral, seeing oneself as a witness to the actions of the gunas. One constantly realizes oneself as non-different from the formless, attributeless, existence-consciousness-bliss Absolute. A person standing on the bank of a pond may see one's reflection trembling due to waves, yet understands that the reflection is shaking, not oneself. The divine reality that exists behind the gunas is not made of gunas. That reality is not affected by the actions of the gunas. Just as a dream appears unreal when one is awake, with true knowledge, the impermanence and unreality of the guna-based world is realized. Though the Self is non-doer, it illuminates the three gunas in the body and remains as the witness of all modifications. By gaining discrimination through scriptures and the teachings of teachers, the seeker becomes free from attachment to actions and their results, and remains established in the attitude of a witness. When connection with actions performed by the gunas is cut off, the natural and eternal relationship with the Supreme Self remains intact. By experiencing oneself as unattached to gunas, actions, and objects, the seeker becomes firmly established in yoga. Through continuous practice, such a state arises in which direct experience of the Supreme occurs. Remaining unattached to the functions of mind, intellect, and memory is the perfection of yoga. One who truly knows the Supreme Reality, which is distinct from the gunas, attains the pure devotion of God.

**guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha-samudbhavān
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute (14-20)**

Comm: When the soul transcends these three gunas, which are the cause of the body's origin, it becomes free from birth, death, old age, and sorrow, and attains liberation (moksha). The gunas themselves form the seed of this body's creation. Sri Shankaracharya has called the gunas the seed-form of the body. Just as a vast tree grows from a seed, in the same way, the body develops from the gunas. Intellect, ego, mind, the five senses of knowledge, the five organs of action, the five great elements, and the five objects of the senses—these twenty-three principles together form this gross body, which is the effect of the gunas born from Prakriti (nature). All kinds of suffering, such as disease, illness, old age, birth, and death, are present only in this body, which is a combination of senses, mind, vital energies, and so on. The gross body of a living being, especially a human, arises, exists, grows, transforms, decays, and is destroyed due to the influence of the gunas. Because of this, it becomes a storehouse of sorrow, pain, and suffering. Due to attachment to enjoyment and accumulation, one mistakenly considers this constantly perishing body to be permanent. Because of beginningless ignorance, the feeling of oneness with the body creates various emotions in the mind—happiness and sorrow, favorable and unfavorable situations, sin and virtue—based on the changes, nature, and distortions that happen in the body. However, through the practice of keeping the mind established in the steady form of the inner self, the seeker no longer pays attention to these emotional waves. In that state, the seeker has no deep attachment to the characteristics of the body. Association with the

gunas is the root cause of all experiences like happiness and sorrow. In reality, the soul (Atma) is unattached. The soul, being a special part of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma), does not become overwhelmed by the bodily gunas even while bound in the body. But by cutting off the connection with the body through knowledge and discernment, and directly realizing oneself as non-different from the attributeless, formless, dense existence-consciousness-bliss Brahman, and completely unrelated to the gunas—this is transcending the three gunas and becoming gunatita (beyond gunas). When the sense of oneness with the body is destroyed through self-knowledge, a discerning person experiences immortality. After giving up identification with the body, the wise person clearly realizes that all gunas are changeable, subject to birth and destruction, and can never truly attach to the essential nature of the self. In that state, the seeker must give importance to discernment and think: “I am not the body. While the body is constantly decaying, I remain established in immortality. I have no birth, nor is there destruction of me at the time of death.” Similarly, during life, a gunatita person thinks: “My true being never reaches old age; it is the body that grows old.” Of course, even with this understanding, as long as the body exists, old age and death will certainly come. Yet, for the wise person, these do not cause pain. When the wind-like movement of body-identification stops, there remains no difference between the individual soul and God, or between a wave and the ocean. Even while having a body, the wise person remains unattached to bodily connections, like the moon that stays untouched in the sky. The seeker who, while still alive, transcends the three gunas becomes merged into the Supreme Brahman, just as a river merges into the ocean. Such a person enjoys unbroken eternal bliss. They attain liberation and realize their true divine nature. Regarding the three gunas and the state beyond them, Sri Ramakrishna Deva said: “Sattva guna preserves, rajo guna creates, tamo guna destroys. But Brahman is beyond these three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—meaning outside the control of Prakriti. The gunas cannot reach there.” The wise person, in the gunatita state, returns to the root consciousness of “Aham Brahmasmi” (I am Brahman). Freed from ignorance, they attain their true eternal nature. This is the waking state of the wise person, similar to the state after deep sleep. Just as a traveler troubled by the sun’s heat feels coolness in the body under the shade of a great tree, the wise person, disturbed mentally by the effects of the gunas, finds peace by resting in the feeling of the self. True feelings, true actions, true thoughts, true stability, true company, true knowledge, true austerity—whatever comes to mind as “true”—by embracing all these good qualities, the seeker follows the path and goal of life. This makes life joyful and also helps attain the ultimate goal of divine bliss. In Buddhist literature as well, freedom from birth, death, old age, and disease is considered the highest goal of life, and this is called attaining Nirvana. Sri Purushottamji has written in his explanation that a person who has transcended the gunas obtains a divine supernatural body and enjoys divine pleasures with God. Sri Nilakanthaji has written that transcending the gunas happens through the practice of nirvikalpa samadhi and similar states. Lokmanya Tilak has said that the Prakriti of the Sankhya philosophy

and the Maya of the Vedanta are the same thing. Freedom from the grip of this Prakriti or Maya is the gunatita state, which the Lord in the second chapter of the Gita calls “Brahmi sthiti” (established in Brahman). A person established in Brahman is not overwhelmed by afflictions like birth, death, old age, and disease. Even knowledgeable devotees mixed with devotion, after attaining perfection in knowledge, give up knowledge and attain supreme devotion at the lotus feet of God. They remain engaged in the welfare of all beings and taste the nectar of divine love.

Arjuna Uvācha

**kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho
kim ācāraḥ katham caitāms trīn guṇān ativartate (14-21)**

Comm: Just as Arjuna asked questions about the sthita-prajña yogi in verse 54 of the second chapter, now he raises similar questions about the conduct and characteristics of a yogi who has gone beyond the three gunas. On hearing the profound statement that “a person transcends the three gunas while living and attains immortality,” Arjuna wishes to know the qualities, behavior, and the means of becoming guna-atita (beyond the gunas). Here Arjuna asks by which signs the knowledge of a guna-atita person can be recognized. He asks whether such a person follows Vedic or worldly rules, or not. He asks how the conduct, behavior, and activities of a nirguna person are. He asks whether such behavior is disciplined or undisciplined. He also asks by what spiritual means a seeker can cross the ocean-like, all-pervading gunas and reach the state beyond the gunas. With humility, Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna as “Prabhu” and prays to Him to kindly explain all these matters. Here, the meaning of guna-atita is not that the gunas stop functioning in the body. A guna-atita person is one whose actions are not controlled by the gunas. Rather, in such a person, the gunas are fully governed by intellect and discrimination. As long as the body exists, the qualities born of nature will certainly continue to create worldly tendencies and modifications in the inner mind. The guna-atita person spoken of by the Lord is not affected by these arising modifications. In verse 19 of this chapter, the Lord explains some means for becoming guna-atita. These means are as follows. First, giving up identification with the body and accepting oneself as unattached. Second, not identifying with the gross, subtle, and causal bodies and remaining established as the observer or witness. Third, remaining firmly established in the understanding that the Self is completely non-doer and non-enjoyer, and that the three gunas alone are the cause of all actions performed through the body and senses. One who clearly understands and remains established in these principles attains the realization of the Supreme Reality. Even after explaining these means, why does Arjuna again ask about the way to attain the guna-atita state? The answer is that the methods described by the Lord are difficult spiritual disciplines. Arjuna wants to know if there are some simpler means as well. By addressing Krishna as “Prabhu,” Arjuna wishes to convey that Krishna is the Lord, creator, destroyer, and the

all-powerful Supreme God of the universe. Therefore, only He can fully explain these truths. That is why Arjuna asks Him these questions. Without knowing the direct method of remaining constantly in a divine state, it is not even possible to properly understand the characteristics of a guna-atita person. As a sincere seeker, Arjuna is trying to know such a path of life in which there is no happiness or sorrow, no attachment or hatred, no fear of birth and death, and no inner conflict between worldly involvement and withdrawal.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**prakāśam ca pravṛttiṁ ca moham eva ca pāṇḍava
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati (14-22)**

Comm: The Lord said: O Pandava! The function of sattva guna is illumination or knowledge. The nature of rajo guna is action and restlessness. The nature of tamo guna is delusion and ignorance. Even when all these effects of the gunas arise naturally, a yogi who has transcended the three gunas does not hate them with a feeling of sorrow. Nor, when those effects naturally cease to appear, does he desire them with a feeling of happiness—in other words, he does not long for them again. The state of being beyond the gunas is something that can only be experienced personally. Being gunatita does not mean that a person has no connection whatsoever with the gunas. Only upon attaining complete liberation (kaivalya) is every connection with the gunas fully severed. As long as the feeling of oneness between the body and the soul remains, the effects of the three gunas will certainly be visible in practical life. However, a person who has reached the gunatita state acts without any attachment to the gunas. In his inner self, the firm conviction remains unshaken that the gunas themselves operate all activities. “I” am only the witness. The soul never allows the gunas to smear or affect it. The gunas smear the soul only when desire or aversion arises in the mind toward the effect of a particular guna. In the behavior of a gunatita person, there is neither desire for any guna nor aversion toward it. In sattva guna, the main quality is illumination, because without light reaching the senses and the mind, knowledge or discernment cannot awaken. Once illumination comes, knowledge awakens. A person who has transcended the three gunas does not consider himself a special or superior knower. Yet, due to the influence of that knowledge, complete peace and joy are fully visible in him. There is no room in the inner self for disturbances caused by sattva, rajas, and tamas. A liberated soul (jivanmukta) or sage never wishes to return to a lost state with a sense of enjoyment. The ocean, being full in itself, does not wait for rivers or rainwater. Similarly, for one who has gained complete knowledge and attained the gunatita state, there is no role for the effects or causes of the gunas in bringing peace and joy to the inner self. According to Vedanta, a person who has gained self-knowledge and walks the path beyond the gunas gives no importance to prescribed rules or prohibitions. This is because the gunas naturally continue their work in the field of the body and senses according to their own nature. Equanimity is the

measure of perfection. A wise person established in sattva guna always remains mentally balanced. A gunatita wise person has neither attachment nor rejection toward objects, people, or situations. Because he is beyond the gunas, the activities of the gunas come and go without affecting him. He naturally remains unattached to all these activities. He stays completely above all dualities—gain and loss, liked and disliked—and remains calm and independent. When the urge to act arises in the body or divine inspiration comes for the welfare of others, he does not hate that action. Even after performing the action, he feels no regret, because he has no attachment to the fruits of action. Due to acting with firm conviction and full concentration, he may appear outwardly deluded, yet he feels no pride in success nor anxiety in failure. He is not disturbed by gaining knowledge in a state of delusion or by giving up action in a state of knowledge. Natural delusion cannot cover his pure knowledge—meaning no illusion can remove the knowledge of the wise person. What ordinary people call sleep is the samadhi state for a gunatita person. After waking from sleep, a liberated soul receives a flowing stream of joy from the jivanmukta state. The peace and joy of the sleep state remain unbroken, without any negligence or laziness. Practical mistakes may sometimes appear in a gunatita person. Due to simple trust in others' words, he might mistake an innocent person for guilty or a guilty person for innocent—such delusion may appear, just like seeing a snake in a rope or water in a mirage. In the eyes of a gunatita person, there is nothing except the one Supreme Reality. There is a big difference between doing and being done, as well as between seeing and being seen. There can be fault in doing or seeing, but there is no fault in being done or being seen. In Sri Ramcharitmanas, Saint Tulsidasji has a couplet: “Listen, O brother! Maya creates many qualities and faults. Not seeing both qualities and faults, yet seeing one—this is ignorance.” Failing to focus on the ever-present, completely unattached, unchanging, and indestructible true nature, and instead focusing on changing, modifiable, and destructible activities is extremely harmful for a seeker. A seeker should deeply reflect that every activity arises and then perishes, but the Self (the true nature of the soul) always remains the same. Since activities are connected with the qualities and nature of the gunas, they change every moment. But because the Self is connected with the Supreme Soul, it remains unchanged even while the activities change.

**udāsīnavad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate
guṇā vartanta ity eva yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate (14-23)**

Comm: A person who has no connection of any kind with any event or object and always remains above it is called detached or neutral (udāsīna). Because the activities of the gunas in a guna-atita person have no real connection with the body, senses, inner instruments, or with objects and events, such a person appears to remain in a detached state. Although various worldly objects continuously come together and separate, such a person always remains changeless and balanced in his own state. In practical life, a person who does not support either side between two parties and does not speak for or

against anyone is called “neutral.” In the same way, between the world and the Supreme Lord, the guna-atita person appears to remain neutral. One who remains like a witness, appearing detached, is not disturbed by the activities of the gunas such as attraction and aversion, pleasure and pain. Thinking that “the gunas alone are engaged in their respective functions,” he remains established in oneness with the Supreme Reality of existence-consciousness-bliss and never becomes restless or deviates from that state. In other words, one who can endure all the shocks and counter-shocks of the world with an undisturbed mind is truly beyond the three gunas. However, the state of being guna-atita is possible only after complete knowledge, intense dispassion, and direct realization of the Supreme Self. In all pleasant and unpleasant experiences, the knower of truth remains completely detached, because he knows that the world is only a play of the gunas and of the mind and intellect influenced by them. At every moment, in both inner and outer fields of experience, the qualities of beings and objects interact with one another and produce actions. In such a situation, the guna-atita person remains a silent observer or neutral witness. “Remaining like a detached person” means that although he is aware of favorable and unfavorable situations, he is not agitated or disturbed by the events of the external world. Remaining established in his own true Self, he observes the inner and outer play of the gunas. Whether the three gunas are active in the body or not, or whether the body exists or not, he remains completely unconcerned about all these matters. In his vision, there is no independent reality in the world apart from the Supreme Reality. The world derives its existence only from the existence of the Supreme Self. If there is no reality other than the Supreme Self, then toward whom is the guna-atita person detached? The answer is this: To those who perceive both the world and the Supreme Lord as existing separately, the guna-atita person appears to be detached from worldly activities. Clearly understanding that “the gunas alone transform into the body, senses, and sense-objects,” and becoming free from ego and sorrow, the liberated soul abides in the Self, firm and unmoving like Mount Meru. No matter how strong the wind blows, the sky does not shake. Similarly, even though the three gunas move within the body of the wise person, his knowledge is never disturbed. He remains established in the state of “I am Brahman.” He is so absorbed in infinite bliss that he is never shaken from his true nature or from his natural, unbroken state of samadhi. In his inner being, the non-existence of the world and the existence of the Supreme Reality remain continuously and naturally awakened. The wise person is never driven into action by any guna, because in the imperishable, pure Self, no action ever takes place. Knowing that all actions occur only in the gunas, he remains established in his own changeless nature. The guna-atita person is naturally steady. He is not disturbed by himself, nor can anyone disturb him. The vision of great souls is not fixed on actions, but naturally rests on the conscious, spiritual Reality alone. A seeker guided by discrimination experiences that actions happen naturally, and that “I do nothing.” But one who has attained complete realization experiences only pure existence. That conscious Reality remains equally present in all actions. The true identity of a wise person or a guna-

atita person cannot be known merely by seeing whether he lives in a forest, a cave, or an ashram. A person's real nature is tested only when he lives amid worldly enjoyments, power, wealth, and authority. Similarly, true realization becomes evident only when one faces insult, suffering, and hardship. Just as sandalwood releases fragrance only when rubbed on stone, inner realization becomes evident only through life's trials. According to Sri Ramanujacharya, detachment is of two kinds. One kind arises from helplessness, when a person lacks the ability to act. The second kind arises after complete fulfillment, when a wise person has not even the slightest desire to act. Sri Purushottamji has said, "The interaction of the gunas takes place only by the will of God." Understanding this, the guna-atita person remains neutral. A devotee always remains beyond the gunas but sees God in a form with qualities. Although God is formless and attributeless, the devotee worships Him only in a personal, form-filled manner. Ultimately, by the grace of God, when divine vision awakens in the yogi, seeker, or devotee, the state of being beyond the gunas arises naturally. In the highest completeness, there is actually no such thing as "guna" at all.

**sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ svasthaḥ sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ
tulya-priyāpriyo dhīras tulya-nindātma-saṁstutiḥ (14-24)**

Comm : Meaning: The person who constantly remains established in his true self—that is, in the feeling of the soul (Atma), who considers happiness and sorrow to be the same, who views clay, stone, and gold as equal, who accepts both good and bad with equanimity, who does not react to his own criticism or praise—such a steady and patient person is called gunatita (one who has transcended the three gunas). For a pillar standing on the ground, day and night are the same. In the same way, a person who has transcended the three gunas remains constantly established in his true nature. Because of this, he is not affected by any disturbances arising from the body, mind, or senses. He lives far above the world of objects. Just as in cloth, there is no material other than cotton, in the view of a gunatita person, there is no second thing in the three worlds other than the existence of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma). In one's true nature, there is no happiness or sorrow at all. For a yogi established in the soul, favorable and unfavorable situations are the same. Living in his pure, dense existence-consciousness-bliss nature, he becomes free from all dualities and remains peaceful and steady. The feeling of happiness and sorrow arises only from the imagination of the mind. The mind sees the world through the colored glass of intellect and compares one's physical and mental state with others—this is what creates the feeling of happiness and sorrow. For one who has no identification with the body and who constantly remains in contemplation of Brahman, where is the place for happiness and sorrow? A person free from the bondage of the three gunas completely gives up the ignorance-born "I" and "mine" relationship with the non-self-objects of the world. Becoming independent from this uneven world—which is full of desires and attachments to objects, a home of sorrow, and impermanent—and living in one's true nature is the

state of jivanmukta (liberated while living). In the eyes of a gunatita person, there is no difference between clay, stone, and gold. For him, a diamond or sapphire is as valuable as a small lump of ordinary mud. Worldly people, under the control of greed and desire, want to accumulate countless things, but for the wise, all these are unattractive. In their view, all objects are illusory like water in a mirage, so they have no sense of difference toward any object. Equanimity toward clay, stone, and gold does not mean lack of knowledge about them. Even while knowing their practical value and usefulness, true equanimity is having neither attraction nor aversion toward them. Disturbance itself is the fault. In practical life, when living simply, there is no sense of difference toward the objects used or the people connected with them. A gunatita person sees both liked and disliked things and situations with the same eyes, remains unattached, and performs his duties. Liked and disliked, good and bad—these are only reactions at the level of the mind. There is no object in the world that remains liked forever. Depending on country, time, and situation, the mind and intellect's acceptance changes, so the feeling of liked and disliked also changes. In the eyes of an indifferent (detached) person, the entire visible world is like a dream. Having awakened from the dream world, a wise person uses others' criticism and praise to evaluate and correct himself if useful, otherwise considers it worthless and laughable and ignores it. Neither sorrow nor joy arises in him because of criticism or praise. He does not feel anger toward those who criticize, nor does he feel pleased with those who praise. Criticism and praise are both actions of others. Whatever nature or quality a person has, he expresses that feeling toward others in that way. A wise person becoming happy or sad because of others' opinions is nothing but foolishness. From the viewpoint of spiritual practice, criticism-praise, good-bad—all these are qualities related to the body. The soul has no connection with them. Hearing praise increases pride, while hearing criticism gives an opportunity for self-examination. Through criticism and fault-finding, sins are reduced, and the inner self becomes purified. Through others' praise, the merit earned is depleted.

**mānāpamānayos tulyas tulyo mitrāri-pakṣayoḥ
sarvārambha-parityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate (14-25)**

Comm: A person who remains equal in honor and dishonor, and who looks upon friend and enemy with the same understanding, and who does not make efforts for actions with a sense of doership or desire for results beyond the basic protection of the body, is called a guna-atita person (one who has gone beyond the three gunas). Praise and blame give rise to honor and dishonor. Honor comes through praise, and dishonor comes through criticism. One who has no concern for praise or blames naturally sees honor and dishonor as equal. Praise and blame usually happen through words after an event, whereas honor and dishonor are experienced directly through behavior. For a spiritual seeker, both honour and dishonour are the same. For one who considers the body to be everything, honour and dishonour feel very real. But a seeker maintains mental balance

in both respect and disrespect. Honour and dishonour are judged by the intellect, and the intellect changes according to time, place, and situation. For one who lives above ego, a crown of thorns and a crown of roses are the same. A seeker feels disturbed even by honor, as if drinking poison, because honor increases body-ego and becomes an obstacle on the spiritual path. A seeker should not harm himself by becoming attached to honor or angry when faced with insult. In the scriptures and Puranas, there are many examples, such as Dhruva, who, through insult, became intensely devoted to spiritual practice and finally attained their goal. A guna-atita person has no feeling of friendship or enmity toward any being. Therefore, he truly has neither friend nor enemy. Yet people imagine friendship or hostility toward him according to their own feelings. Effort made for desire-driven action is called “initiation” (ārambha). Actions done with desire for enjoyment in this world or the next, even if scripturally approved, are desire-based actions. Since a guna-atita person has no attachment to enjoyment in this world or the next, he does not strive for worldly actions, nor does he actively engage in ritualistic acts like sacrifices for rewards. This does not mean that a guna-atita person becomes inactive. “Renunciation of all initiatives” means action without doership, that is, acting without ego or selfish motive. He does not begin new actions for the sake of accumulating wealth or enjoying pleasures. There is no craving for the fruits of action in his heart. His past karmic results are burned away in the fire of knowledge. His activity or withdrawal happens naturally according to the situations that come by themselves. As long as even a trace of attachment and aversion, inequality, joy and sorrow, ignorance, or ego remains in the inner mind, one should know that the state of being beyond the gunas has not yet been attained. Attachment and aversion do not belong to inert matter, nor do they belong to pure consciousness, and they are not the true nature of the inner instrument either. They exist only in body-identification. Accepting the body as everything due to ignorance and lack of discrimination is called body-ego. The qualities described here for the guna-atita person agree with the qualities of the sthita-prajña described in Chapter Two and with the qualities of the single-minded devotee described in Chapter Twelve. From this it is concluded that although different paths are followed for attainment, the characteristics of those who have reached perfection are the same. Great teachers have also pointed out that whether one is perfected or liberated while living, action can never be completely abandoned in any state. Thus, the states of sthita-prajña, guna-atita, and single-minded devotee are all the highest stages of Karma Yoga. Sri Shankaracharya has stated in his commentary that seekers who desire liberation should adopt these qualities as spiritual disciplines. When steadfastness in knowledge is attained, these qualities arise naturally as one’s own true nature.

**mām ca yo ’vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyātān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate (14-26)**

Comm: In this verse, Lord Sri Krishna answers Arjuna’s question by stating that constant worship and service to Lord Narayana through unwavering devotion (bhakti yoga)

is the only way to transcend the three gunas and attain liberation (moksha). The person who, through exclusive devotion, constantly worships or serves Me—that is, the Supreme Soul with attributes who resides in all beings—such a person properly transcends these gunas and becomes qualified to attain the dense existence-consciousness-bliss Brahman. Accepting only the all-powerful Lord Vasudeva as the master, giving up selfishness and pride, and contemplating Him with faith and emotion in supreme love—this is called “avyabhicharani” (unwavering) bhakti yoga. Exclusive devotion means devotion to Me without any sense of duality—that is unwavering bhakti. In the context of bhakti yoga, unwavering devotion holds great importance. In a devotee’s mind, there is no thought other than thoughts of God. An unbroken stream of divine thoughts of God flows in him. The seeker has to transform his consciousness from the material level to the divine level—that is, to the level of the Supreme Soul. Because the Supreme Soul residing in all beings is completely divine, full of bliss, full of knowledge, and eternal. When even a moment’s forgetfulness of God becomes unbearable, that exclusive love is called unwavering “bhakti yoga.” “I” am born from God, come from Him, will go back to Him, and “He” and “I” are one—this feeling of oneness is exclusive devotion. This feeling or realization of the self comes only through the excellence of knowledge. The person who takes refuge in any form of God, or in any name of God, or in any action for God, or in a mantra as a word, or finally, without any word, constantly feels the presence of the Supreme God in all beings at all places and times—his tendency becomes completely unwavering. This very viewpoint is the essence and ultimate goal of yoga. The person who remains engaged in serving the Narayana form of the Supreme Soul residing in all beings attains self-knowledge and reaches the state beyond the gunas. He who has infinite divine qualities like boundless wealth, sweetness, beauty, and generosity eternally present is called saguna (with attributes). In saguna Brahman, there is the power to perform all actions like creation, sustenance, dissolution, grace, and control. The entire universe is the saguna form of God. Just as water and its wetness, sky and space, jaggery and its sweetness are not different, all these inert and conscious beings are the vast form of the Supreme Soul. Therefore, seeing God is not outside the world. It is possible within this world itself. He Himself exists in the form of the universe. Knowing in this way is unbroken devotion. The meaning of “bhaktiyogena” is: only God is trust, hope, refuge, strength, faith; He alone is the sole object of worship; taking shelter in Him is the only place of refuge—in this feeling, the devotee completely surrenders himself to God. Understanding that the body and all things belong to God, considering oneself merely an instrument without desire, acting according to His command, as service to Him, performing all actions for His sake, and constantly worshiping God. Sri Ramanujacharya has said: “Mere knowledge distinguishing Prakriti (nature) and the soul does not lead to transcending the gunas or liberation. Rather, only through exclusive devotion to the Supreme Soul—who has true resolve, capable of grace and control, and who is an ocean of affection toward dependent souls—can one transcend these gunas and attain liberation.” Therefore, if a person serves with great faith and firmness

for the welfare of all beings, he can very easily transcend these three gunas of material nature. When devotion becomes strong, the universe, the individual, and Brahman become one. Even the “so’ham” (He am I) tendency in a gunatita person reveals the glory of God. Because this tendency extends up to the Supreme Soul, nothing remains in the mind except “I am Brahman.” All the devotee’s learnedness disappears; ignorance is automatically removed. When the sense of difference completely vanishes from the mind, the devotee and God become one. The destination of the water flowing in the Ganga is only the ocean. Similarly, the ultimate goal of the soul is merger into Brahman, which is called sayujya mukti or moksha. The Upanishad statement is: “Brahmaiva san brahmapyeti”—meaning, only by becoming Brahman can one attain the state of Supreme Brahman. Therefore, the seeker must become one with Brahman in a qualified way. With exclusive devotion as the basis, becoming fully devoted to God and having boundless love for Him makes attaining Brahman natural and effortless. Anandatirtha (Madhvacharya) has written that by serving God through the path of devotion, the seeker becomes as dear to God as Prakriti (nature) is. Just as Prakriti is extremely dear to God; by serving the Narayana form in all beings, the devotee becomes dear to God and becomes nirguna (beyond gunas). For that, the soul does not merely become Brahman; the entire world is experienced as filled with Brahman. The qualification to become one with Brahman comes to him. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, it is mentioned: “Bhaktya ham ekaya grahyah shraddhaya atma priyah satam.” (Bhagavata 11-14-21) Its meaning is: “I am dear to the saints or good people, and I am their very soul. They attain Me only through exclusive faith-filled devotion.” A knower of knowledge, perfected in knowledge, gives up sattvic quality and becomes gunatita. My devotee, from the beginning, offers everything in exclusive love and becomes nirguna. Through exclusive bhakti yoga, by serving My dark-beautiful form, My devotee very easily crosses over these gunas incidentally and becomes capable of realizing My true nature.

**brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca (14-27)**

Comm: In this verse, the Lord concludes the chapter. He removes the doubt that different paths of worship—based on the saguna (with qualities) and nirguna (without qualities) forms—give different results. He establishes that all these paths finally lead to the same unity. That imperishable Supreme Brahman exists as the nirguna, the saguna-form, and the saguna-formless Supreme Self. He is the immortal and indestructible Brahman, the eternal Dharma, and the abode of supreme, unbroken bliss. Because “I” am the foundation of immortality, eternal Dharma, and imperishable bliss, therefore, My exclusive devotees will surely attain My state. Here the word Brahman refers to the nirguna, formless Supreme Reality. This nirguna, imperishable Brahman is not different from Me, the saguna Supreme Lord. Brahman is made of immortality, eternal Dharma, and unbroken bliss. That limitless Reality in which all distinctions dissolve, and into which the knower merges as the changeless, infinite, non-dual Truth, that very Brahman is “I”.

The consciousness that dwells in the seeker's heart as the Self is all-pervading, immortal, undecaying, eternal, and blissful. That Reality is Brahman. Therefore, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul are not two. They are one and the same Reality. "I" (the Self) am the abode of Brahman. Only from the standpoint of worship are they spoken of differently. For the knower, He is Brahman. For the devotee, He is God. According to the seeker's qualification, the one Supreme Brahman is described in different forms. One form is the Supreme Self beyond Maya— inconceivable, beyond mind and intellect, beyond speech, neither existent nor non-existent, all-pervading, invisible, changeless, unmoving, eternal, and imperishable. The other form is the saguna form, which has both formless and form-filled expressions. The form that pervades the entire universe, supports all beings, sustains all life through its unimaginable power, and though invisible is clearly experienced, is the saguna-formless aspect. Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, Surya Narayana, Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, and the divine glory of the universe are all the saguna, form-filled manifestations of God. By saying "I am the foundation of Brahman," the Lord shows the non-difference between His nirguna and saguna aspects. Attainment of nirguna Brahman is possible only through the experience of complete oneness. The immortality by which a being becomes free from birth and death is also "I". "I" am the support of that imperishable immortality. Immortality and "I" are not two realities. They are one and the same. The bound soul first seeks Self-knowledge with the help of mind and intellect. Gradually, it rises from the material level to the level of understanding Brahman. After that, through devotion, it attains the presence of the Supreme Lord. Thus, by serving God through the path of devotion, one attains eternal immortality. "I" am the foundation of eternal Dharma. Eternal Dharma is My saguna, form-filled nature. God incarnates again and again to protect this eternal Dharma. By declaring Himself as the foundation of true Dharma, the Lord shows that those who practice this Dharma ultimately attain Him alone. The qualities earlier described as dharmyamrtam for becoming guna-atita, sthitaprajna, and a dear devotee are all practices of eternal Dharma. The Supreme Self is the ultimate cause, yet He Himself never becomes an effect. Truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, patience, and kindness arise in the devotee's heart as expressions of God through eternal Dharma. Sri Ramanujacharya explains eternal Dharma as God's divine glory. Dharma is a means, but here eternal Dharma is also described as the supreme goal, whose result never diminishes like worldly rewards. When eternal Dharma is offered to God, the desire for supreme knowledge arises, and liberation, the eternal result, is attained. According to Lokamanya Tilak, though different yogic paths suit different seekers, the Gita emphasizes Karma Yoga as supreme, because without purification of the mind, Self-realization is difficult. Therefore, the essence of eternal Dharma is this: after gaining knowledge, the seeker should act selflessly for the welfare of the world and attain liberation while living. In both practice and realization, devotion—the supreme eternal Dharma—rests in "Me". Because everything depends on Me, worship of Me with the desire for liberation leads even to the realization of Brahman. The phrase "exclusive bliss" refers to eternal supreme happiness.

By calling Himself its foundation, the Lord declares that this eternal bliss is His own nature. To attain that bliss is to attain Him. This bliss has also been called imperishable and ultimate happiness earlier. It is the source of indivisible, infinite joy. This bliss is different from temporary worldly pleasure. It is divine, unbroken, and eternal. Such bliss is attained only through devotion to the all-powerful, all-supporting, indwelling Supreme Self, at all times, in all places, and in all conditions. The Taittiriya Upanishad says: “He is bliss itself; by attaining Him, one becomes blissful.” When the devotee attains God’s presence, there is a sharing of divine immortality and bliss between God and devotee. This infinite Brahman is immortal, undecaying, eternal, and blissful. Sri Shankaracharya explains this verse in three meaningful ways. First: Brahman is immortal, imperishable, the abode of eternal Dharma, and dwells in the hearts of all beings as the object of knowledge. Second: the compassionate power by which Brahman, as God, blesses devotees is “I”; therefore, “I am Brahman.” Third: the pure, attribute-less consciousness is the support and illuminator of both conditioned and unconditioned Brahman. Thus, truly, “I” am the non-dual, immortal, imperishable, indescribable, blissful Brahman. As Lord Krishna declares, “I am Brahman,” therefore, the realized seeker becomes Brahman.

**Om tat sat. iti śrīmad bhagavad-gītāsūpaniṣatsu brahma-vidyāyām yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde Guna-tray-vibhāga-yogo nāma Caturdaśo’dhyāyaḥ ||**

Thus, with the utterance of the sacred words “Om, Tat, Sat,” the Forteenth Chapter, called “Guna-tray-vibhāga-yogo” (The Yoga of the Division of the Three Qualities)” of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which is the essence of Brahma-vidyā (the knowledge of the Absolute) and Yoga, and which is in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, comes to an end.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 15 (Purusottama Yoga)

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham aśvattham prāhur avyayam
chandāmsi yasya parṇāni yas taṁ veda sa veda (15-01)**

Comm : In this chapter, the Lord gives advice to Arjuna about the true nature of the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) and the path to unite the individual soul (jiva) with Him. In the first verse of this chapter, the relationship between the perishable world and the eternal Supreme Soul is described. The Lord says: The scriptures declare that the world is like an ashwattha (peepal) tree. The Supreme Person (Purushottama), who is superior to both the perishable (kshara) and the imperishable (akshara), and who resides in the eternal abode, is the root situated above. Hiranyagarbha Brahma, who is born from the Primeval Lord and resides below the eternal abode, is the main branch of this tree. Because the indestructible Supreme Father is the root, and because its branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc., continue in an unbroken flow, this world-tree is indestructible. The Vedas, which are revealed from the mouth of Brahma and prescribe actions (karma), are the leaves of this tree. One who understands the essence of this world-tree in the above sense is truly a knower of the Vedas and the meaning of all scriptures. To create detachment or dispassion in Arjuna's mind, the world and worldly life are compared here to an ashwattha tree. The reason is that just as a tree can be uprooted and thrown away, the

world can also be cut off from the mind and intellect with the weapon of non-attachment. “ūrdhvamūlo’vāksākha eṣo aśvatthaḥ sanātanah” – Katha Upanishad (2.3.1). The word “ūrdhvamūla” means the one whose root is at the highest top, that is, the Primeval Person Narayan, the Lord, who is eternal, infinite, the support of all, and in His saguna form resides above all in the eternal abode. This world-tree has originated from that Lord of Maya, the all-powerful Supreme God. Therefore, it is called a tree with roots above. The unique Supreme Person, who is eternally great, the ultimate nature of all things, the root support of everything, the resident of the highest realm, and distinct from all, is the root of this world-tree. The world-tree that appears to have sprouted from the Supreme Soul can be uprooted through meditation on Him. Since Hiranyagarbha Brahma is born from that Primeval Lord and resides in Brahmaloka, which is below the eternal abode, he is described as lower compared to the Supreme Soul. Because creation and expansion of this world happen through Brahma, this world-tree is described as having branches spreading downward. Hiranyagarbha, the collective souls (jivatmas), cosmic intellect, ego, primal elements, etc., are the branches of the world-tree. The material world, plant world, animal world, and human world – each is a branch of this world-tree. All these branches spread downward. They develop from subtle to gross, and from gross to even grosser. The root cause of this tree, the Supreme Soul, is indestructible and exists from beginningless time. Therefore, the Lord calls it “avyaya” (indestructible). In another sense, the word “avyaya” indicates that this metaphorical world-tree is based on an unbroken sequence of birth and death, which has neither beginning nor end. It is eternal and uninterrupted in its flow. Being without decay in its flow and intensely vigorous, it appears permanent or stable. The reason for naming this tree “ashwattha” is that even though it is uninterrupted in flow, its branches are constantly changing, ever-decaying, and mortal. The analysis of the word “ashwattha” is: a + śva + stha, meaning “that which does not remain the same tomorrow morning.” In this view, there is no certainty about what or who in this world will remain until tomorrow. It is unworthy of trust. It changes every moment. Therefore, the name “ashwattha” is highly appropriate. In this regard, Swami Sivananda Maharaj has said: “This body is also an ashwattha tree. The seat of consciousness, the brain, is the root of this tree. The spinal column extending from the brain is the main branch; the nerves going to various organs, including the sushumna nadi, are the sub-branches.” Leaves arise from the branches of a tree and protect and nourish it. Similarly, the Vedas, which manifest from Brahma, are like the leaves of this metaphorical world-tree. The growth and preservation of the world occur only through the sacrifices and actions prescribed in the Vedas. Therefore, the Vedas are called “chhandāmsi,” meaning the leaves of the world-tree. Just as ashwattha leaves provide shade and shelter to living beings, the Vedas similarly provide shelter to souls by teaching dharma and adharma. Uprooting an ordinary tree causes it to dry up easily. But cutting the world-tree is not that simple. Only by uprooting ego and possessiveness from the heart with the weapon of non-attachment can true dispassion arise. The knowledge that “this world is impermanent, illusory, merely a

dream” awakens dispassion. The special purpose of this chapter is to establish that the world is illusory and to place the ego in its true nature. This world is a strange tree. An ordinary tree falls to the ground when fire is applied to its root or when struck with an axe. But the world-tree is not cut in that way. The visible universe, appearing as this tree, is a reflection of the real tree of the conscious world situated in the vast form of the Supreme Soul. Just as the reflection of a real tree appears in lake water, similarly, it is reflected in the mind filled with desires of the jiva and appears inverted. In the collection of material objects full of desires, this reflected tree becomes visible. One who fully understands the existence, movement, and outcome of this eternal illusory tree and severs its connection can attain liberation from it.

**adhaś cordhvaṁ prasṛtās tasya śākhā
guṇa-pravṛddhā viṣaya-pravālāḥ
adhaś ca mūlāny anusantatāni
karmānubandhīni manuṣya-loke (15-2)**

Comm: The branches of this world-tree grow by being nourished by the water in the form of the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas. From these widely spread branches, tender leaves appear in the form of sense-objects such as sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, which are grasped by the senses. The chief branch of this world-tree is Brahmā, from whom the sub-branches in the form of gods, humans, animals, and other forms of birth arise. These branches spread upward and downward throughout the three worlds. Downward, they extend up to animals, birds, insects, and worms, and upward they reach from the state of godhood up to Brahmā. Compared to the gross body and the sense organs, sound, touch, form, taste, and smell are subtle; therefore, they are compared to the tender leaves of the branches. The word “viṣaya-pravālāḥ” means that when sense-objects are given importance in the mind, these buds or tender leaves of sense enjoyment appear attractive and beautiful. Some branches of the world-tree move downward by taking support of the quality of tamas. Some branches remain in the human world by taking support of rajas. Other branches move upward toward heaven, Brahmāloka, and Satyaloka by relying on sattva. From Brahmāloka down to Pātāla, and all beings living there—gods, yakṣas, gandharvas, humans, animals, birds, insects, and worms—are all branches and sub-branches of this world-tree. The branches of this world-tree grow by becoming connected with activities and objects produced by the three qualities. Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janaḥ, Tapaḥ, and Satya are the higher worlds. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, and Pātāla are the lower worlds. According to a living being’s accumulated actions and mental impressions, the soul attains a particular world. In the higher worlds, gods, gandharvas, sages, saints, and other pure souls dwell in subtle forms. In the lower branches, humans, animals, birds, insects, and other embodied beings dwell. Human life is the central point of this world-tree and is the most important. It cannot be denied that the human body is the main support of this action-filled branch. When the air of sattva flows even within the

deep darkness of *tamas*, good thoughts sprout and tender leaves of virtue appear in the human body. With the rise of knowledge, noble understanding naturally progresses. The branch of austerity supported by *yama* and *niyama* grows and becomes connected with branches such as righteousness and detachment. From the branch of righteousness, the simple branch of devotion emerges and gradually leads to liberation by itself. In the field of worldly existence, it is seen that although the chain of births may rise upward, it often falls again to lower or animal levels. Only in human birth does discrimination awaken. By valuing this discrimination, a soul can move closer to God, or by indulging blindly in sense pleasures, it can fall into hell. In reality, the fault of sense enjoyment is more poisonous than the venom of a black cobra. Poison kills only the person who drinks it, but sense enjoyment harms even the one who merely sees it. Until liberation is attained, upward and downward movement is controlled by the three qualities—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The highest root of the world-tree is Brahman, described in the Vedas as “*Brahmāśvattha*.” From this main root arise many roots such as ego, possessiveness, and desires born of ignorance caused by attachment and hatred. These roots spread within the minds of mortal beings living in the human world. These roots, extended through the pursuit of action and its results, are the cause of bondage only for humans. They push humans toward virtuous or sinful actions according to their nature and firmly bind them to karma. This knowledge of karmic bondage is described in the Vedas as “*Karmāśvattha*.” It is said that one who understands both *Brahmāśvattha* and *Karmāśvattha* truly understands the essence of the Vedas. In other words, one who knows the secret relationship between Brahman and the world knows the Vedas. Except in human birth, no other form of life has the capacity to consciously form relationships with the external world. The human body alone has the power to create, change, or break relationships with the world. Intelligent performance of action is possible only in the human body. All other beings remain bound by nature. This unique nature of human life is known only through proper understanding. The roots in the form of accumulated actions and impressions from past births descend into the soul to create bondage. A desire-driven human, controlled by attachment and hatred, remains bound in the human world by ego, possessiveness, and desires. Only in human birth does the soul become bound by karma according to its actions. Until the fruits of actions are exhausted, the soul must take various higher and lower bodies. In this regard, Goswami Tulsidas wrote that human birth is the ladder to hell, heaven, and liberation and grants knowledge, detachment, and devotion. By accepting perishable things as one’s own, the soul becomes a servant of the world, forgets its true nature, and turns away from God. If a person does not consider perishable objects as “mine,” bondage to the world ends, self-realization arises, and divine love is attained. Since humans are bound by good and bad actions, liberation is also possible only in human birth. Complete knowledge exists only in humans and not fully in any other birth. Although gods possess great knowledge, they are considered not entitled to perform prescribed Vedic actions. Actions born from the desire for God-realization, saintly association, divine love, and the welfare of all beings

do not create bondage. Accepting oneself as non-different from the Supreme and breaking attachment to the perishable body is the path of knowledge. Firm faith that “God is the whole and the soul is His part” naturally turns the soul toward God and fills the heart with divine love—this is the path of devotion. Not considering the body and possessions as one’s own and using them for service and welfare frees a person from dependence—this is Karma Yoga. By sincere practice of any path according to one’s nature, a human can become free from bondage of action.

**na rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate
nānto na cādir na ca sampratiṣṭhā
aśvattham enaṁ suvirūḍha-mūlam
asaṅga-śastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā(15-3)**

Comm: The true nature of this wondrous world-tree is not perceived in the way it is described in the scriptures. For the soul bound by the three gunas, along with sense objects, the real form of this world-tree—as it appears to sight and hearing—does not feel the same after attaining true knowledge. Just as upon waking from sleep, one understands the unreality of dream scenes, similarly, upon gaining self-knowledge, the apparent world dissolves. Its beginning and end—where they are, where its origin is, and on what support this world stands—all these remain unknown. Therefore, it is necessary to cut this deeply rooted ashwattha tree of the world—that is, the bondage of maya covered by ignorance—with the sharpened weapon of non-attachment and dispassion. In other words, until desires and cravings are removed, the bondage of maya will not be cut, nor will true knowledge be attained. The nature of this world-tree is like a magician’s illusory city: “it is here” yet “it is not here.” What appears from afar becomes invisible when approached closely. The teacher of the Gita, Lord Krishna, says that this tree is not perceived exactly as described. The meaning is that the existence of the world-tree arises from ignorance of the Supreme Truth. As long as a person’s knowledge remains covered by the veil of desires, the world continues to exist (in perception). When this veil is completely destroyed through direct knowledge of the Self, the existence of the world-tree vanishes. Therefore, the world-tree has no real truth at all. It only appears due to false support. How can the effect of ignorance, which is the root of the world-tree, be true? Just as waves continue to form in the ocean until the wind stops, similarly, the true nature of the world-tree remains unknown until discrimination arises. With the help of a discriminating intellect, by separating oneself from the world—that is, by severing connection with it—one understands its perishable and sorrowful nature. All enjoyments of sense objects, from the mortal world up to Brahmaloaka, are momentary and perishable. Even though the world has no real existence, it seems to arise and dissolve every moment. The world is merely a reflection. Like flowers in the sky, it appears to exist but in reality, has no existence. The world comes forward only when a person imagines it. When imagination is abandoned, the world does not appear. This world-tree has neither beginning nor end. Something that has no existence or

stability—how can it have a beginning or end? Because it has no beginning or end, it is called beginningless (anadi). No one can know how far its end extends. No one can imagine until when the flow of the world will continue. As long as one accepts connection with the world and directs the mind toward enjoyments, it is impossible to know the beginning and end of this world. Even in its apparent duration, the world constantly changes. The form that existed a moment ago does not remain the same the next moment. In this way, the beginning, end, and duration of the world-tree—all three are not perceivable. Cutting the inner roots—such as identification with the immovable and movable world, and the ego, possessiveness, and desires that have become firmly established due to ignorance from beginningless time—is what it means to sever the secondary roots of the tree. Just as the sun destroys darkness, or waking destroys a dream, the sword of self-knowledge can quickly cut down and fell this world-tree. Through discrimination, understanding that the entire world is perishable, and seeing no happiness, pleasure, or charm in any enjoyments—whether wife, children, wealth, home, honor, respect, position, or heaven in this world or the next—and having complete absence of attachment to them—that is firm dispassion, or the weapon of non-attachment. With this weapon of non-attachment, abandoning thoughts of worldly objects, withdrawing from them, and uprooting the roots of ego, possessiveness, and desires—that is completely uprooting the world-tree with the sharp weapon of firm dispassion. If a person personally realizes through experience that “I” am not the body and the body is not mine, then desire, possessiveness, and identification—these three—disappear. This is true dispassion.

**tataḥ padaṁ tat parimārgitavyaṁ
yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ
tam eva cādyāṁ puruṣaṁ prapadye
yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī (15-4)**

Comm: After cutting this Aśvattha world-tree with the strong weapon called detachment (asaṅga), one should search for that supreme state, which is the complete form of the Supreme Lord. After reaching that state, one never returns again, meaning there is no rebirth in this world. The seeker takes refuge in that Ādi-Puruṣa, Nārāyaṇa, from whom this ancient world-tree has expanded. Even though a soul may know the sequence of creation beginning from Mahat-tattva, ego, and other principles, it often fails to understand that the Supreme Lord alone is the root support of nature and the shelter of all beings. Because of turning away from God, the soul becomes deluded by Māyā and is controlled by the three qualities in this material world. In this way, the soul becomes tired by taking many inferior and superior bodies again and again through countless births. When one clearly understands that this world-tree has no end, one feels the necessity of cutting it down. Through devotion practiced in the company of saints, detachment from the world arises. Becoming unattached to worldly enjoyment, a person surrenders at the feet of the Supreme Truth, Lord Śrī Hari, and begins devotional worship. When

outward-going tendencies greatly weaken, that is, when detachment is born through knowledge, the seeker tries to fix the intellect with awareness, devotion, and surrender in the Supreme Soul, who is the original source of the world and is of the nature of existence, consciousness, and bliss. Repeated contemplation and deep meditation on the qualities, divine play, power, and true nature of the all-powerful and all-supporting Supreme Lord is called searching for Him. The Supreme Soul is eternally attained and self-existent; therefore, He is not truly searched for. The Supreme Lord is never actually lost; only forgetfulness of Him occurs. Taking refuge in the One who has always been ours, who is within us, and who exists even now—that itself is finding Him. The soul is truly a part of the Supreme Soul. By accepting relationship with the world, the human being has forgotten the eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, who is the whole. When this forgetfulness disappears, the truth arises: “I belong to God and exist for God.” The eternal Supreme Reality cannot be attained by action-based practices alone. When the false identification with the inert world and the body is broken through renunciation, austerity, and similar means, the ever-present and eternally attained Reality is experienced, and remembrance awakens. Once remembrance of the Supreme Lord arises, it never disappears again. When the seeker realizes that attainment of the Supreme Lord is the final goal of life, and that all worldly pleasures are insignificant compared to it, sincere effort toward God-realization begins. The true state is when the seeker gives up all personal desires to gain or achieve anything for oneself and firmly accepts that everything happens according to the will of God. This complete acceptance of God’s will is real surrender.

**nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣā
adhyātma-nityā vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-samjñair
gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayaṁ tat(15-5)**

Comm : As described in the previous verse, those whose false ego and delusion have been destroyed through complete surrender to the Lord, who have conquered the fault of attachment to worldly objects, who are constantly united with the Supreme Soul’s true nature and abide in the Self, who have completely renounced all desires and cravings from their own vision, and who remain free from all dualities known as pleasure and pain—such wise persons, free from ignorance, attain that indestructible supreme abode of the Lord. The Supreme Person, the Lord, is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of this entire world. Ignorant people, deluded by pride in their own physical strength, wealth, status, and prestige, consider themselves honourable and feel proud. It is only because of identifying with the body that names, titles, honour, and respect are mistakenly felt as belonging to the self instead of the body. The lack of discrimination in properly recognizing what is real and unreal, Self and non-Self, true and false—this is called “delusion” (moha). This delusion is removed only through knowledge of one’s true Self. In a person who has taken refuge in the Supreme Lord, there is not even a trace of ego or delusion in any corner

of the mind. Just as darkness vanishes upon the arrival of the sun, ignorance and bodily identification disappear the moment one realizes the true nature of the Self. Attachment to any object is called “sanga” (association), and feelings arising from likes and dislikes in the heart—such as possessiveness, longing, expectation, and opposition—are called “dosha” (faults) or disturbances. Identifying with the body and indulging only in sense pleasures means wasting the rare human life in vain. Therefore, only one who conquers this fault of worldly attachment becomes qualified for liberation. The influence of “sanga-dosha” (bad company or attachment) is greatly seen in character building. Those persons from whom there is never separation from the Supreme Lord even for a moment, whose state remains steadfast in the Self at all times—they are called “always absorbed in the Self” (adhyatmanitya). Every living being always exists only in that all-pervading, all-illuminating, all-controlling Lord. Yet, due to delusion, the soul does not accept its existence in the Lord and clings to the world instead. Those devotees who accept only their relationship with the Lord remain eternally and constantly established in Him. He by whose light the intellect functions, by whose existence the body remains alive, by remembering whose blissful nature one experiences joy, who as the witness is all-knowing, who as the Self is the Supreme Soul—constantly contemplating where He resides in the body, in what form His influence works—this is being “always absorbed in the Self.” In this way, a part of that infinite great power resides in the heart of the jiva and causes the flow of life energy. Those persons in whom there is not even a trace of desire, craving, thirst, or longing—they are called “free from desires” (vinivṛtta-kama). The moment a knower realizes the true nature of the Self, all desires vanish at once. Just as birds fly away from a burning tree, desires flee from such desire-free persons in the same way. Just as dust cannot stay before the wind, no impulse or pressure from the senses affects them. All desires are burned away by the fire of knowledge. As Goswami (Tulsidas) writes in the *Manas*: “jimi pratilābha lobha adhikāṁ”—meaning that no matter how many objects are obtained, desires are never fully satisfied. Happiness is the nature of the Self. Happiness is never a quality of objects. With this firm conviction, cessation of desires becomes possible. Therefore, to become free from desires, the seeker should not establish relationship with the body, which is constantly perishing moment by moment, thinking it permanent. The object-based world is never experienced as unchanging or uniformly pleasing. It always creates dualities like liked and disliked, favorable and unfavorable, good and bad. As long as the mind remains bound to the world of objects, it can never be free from these dualities. When the seeker fully understands the true nature of the Supreme Reality, then he becomes free from dual notions like pleasure-pain and joy-sorrow, and attains complete knowledge. With the firm belief that “whatever is happening is all the Lord’s auspicious will”—dualities are very easily destroyed. Loving service at the lotus feet of the Lord is the way to attain that eternal abode. To receive this joyful service, one must first take complete refuge at the Lord’s lotus feet. But taking refuge in the Lord is also not easy or simple. Considering the world as permanent is foolishness. For the ignorant, the body and world clearly seem to

exist. For devotees who are free from this foolishness, the existence of the Supreme Lord is clearly felt. They certainly attain that indestructible Supreme Soul, after attaining whom there is no need to take birth again in this perishable world. The word “amūḍhāḥ” refers to wise great souls. The seekers described in this verse, endowed with the above qualities, are qualified to attain that all-powerful, all-supporting supreme abode of the Supreme Lord. In reality, the sole purpose of all spiritual practices is to sever connection with the world (inertia/materiality).

**na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama(15-6)**

Comm: The Supreme Self (Paramātmā) is self-luminous. By His light, the entire universe is illuminated. This verse is found almost word-for-word in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad and the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad: “The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and stars; lightning does not shine there—how then could this fire? By His shining alone does everything shine; by His light, all this is illuminated.” (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.15) The meaning is this: That self-luminous Supreme Brahman, the Paramātmā, cannot be illumined by the sun. Neither the moon nor the stars can illumine Him. Even lightning cannot illumine Him. No one can make Him shine. Where even the sun cannot illumine Him, what to speak of ordinary fire? The reason is that the sun, the moon, and fire themselves are first illumined by that Supreme Light. Only after that do the sun, moon, and fire illumine the world. Therefore, whatever is seen in this world shines only by His light. The sun and the moon receive their light from the Supreme Brahman. The radiant effulgence of all the Vaikuṇṭha worlds is called Brahma-jyoti, which pervades the supreme sky. It is a vast mass of divine radiance. The sun, moon, and all planetary systems shine only by resting in that effulgence. That divine light exists equally everywhere and in all beings. One who attains that radiant Supreme Abode never returns to this material world. That abode existed before the creation began. It will remain even after the dissolution of creation, when the sun, moon, and all manifestations merge into the unmanifest state. As long as the soul remains in this dark material world, it is in a bound condition. But one who cuts down this false, distorted tree of the material world and reaches the spiritual sky becomes liberated. In the liberated state, after entering the spiritual kingdom, the soul becomes an associate of the Supreme Lord. There, the soul lives a life full of existence, knowledge, and bliss. In the mortal world, the forms and colors of all objects illumined by the sun, moon, and fire are seen with the help of the eyes. But although the sun, moon, and fire are the presiding deities of the eyes, mind, and speech respectively, they cannot reveal the knowledge of the senses and their objects. The light by which all knowledge is experienced is the light of consciousness. This consciousness is a part of that Supreme Light, the Brahma-jyoti. In the spiritual sky, there is no need for luminaries like the sun or moon, because that abode is self-luminous. Self-luminous means that there is no difference between the illuminator and the illumined. The scriptures clearly state that the eyes, mind, and

speech function only by the inspiration of the Self. Therefore, they cannot illumine the Self. The conscious principle by which happiness and sorrow are experienced in life is the conscious Self itself. That Self is eternal and imperishable. Here, the Lord describes it as the Supreme Abode. The radiance of that supreme substance is the very nature of the Self. When the light of the Self shines, the entire world, including the sun and moon, becomes insignificant. This light of the Self is completely oriented toward Brahma-jyoti. Just as a drop of water thrown on red-hot iron cannot be found again, similarly, when a soul merges into Brahma-jyoti through pure knowledge, its cycle of birth and death comes to an end. From the viewpoint of saṁguṇa Brahman, the word “dhāma” means a realm. From the viewpoint of formless saṁguṇa Brahman, it means radiance. From the viewpoint of nirguṇa, formless Brahman, “dhāma” means one’s own essential nature. In this verse, the meaning of “dhāma” is the nature of the Self, not any particular place or world. In the individual soul, this conscious principle—the illuminator—pervades all illumined objects completely. Yet, there is no ego in that consciousness that says, “I am the illuminator.” Because it is a part of the Supreme Self, pure consciousness is self-luminous and beyond the reach of mind, intellect, and senses. The qualified seeker described in the previous verse rises above the restless tendencies of mind and intellect in meditation. He reaches the Supreme Abode, realizes the Truth directly, and becomes one with the infinite Brahman. In reality, the Supreme Abode or Supreme Knowledge is nothing other than God Himself. After attaining that undivided bliss, the soul becomes completely detached from worldly pleasures and never returns again to the mortal world. By this, the Lord declares that His eternal abode is full of existence, consciousness, and bliss. It is divine, conscious, and identical with His own nature. Therefore, it is the Supreme Abode—beyond māyā. Thus, the soul is essentially non-different from that imperishable abode. In other words, the Supreme Abode is eternally attainable for the soul. According to the different understandings of devotees, that one Supreme Abode is known by various names—Brahmaloka, Sāketa Dhāma, Goloka Dhāma, Devī-dvīpa, Śivaloka, and others. That Supreme Abode is consciousness itself, knowledge itself, radiant, and identical with the Supreme Self. Just as rivers become calm after merging into their source, the ocean, similarly, when the individual soul merges with the Supreme Self, it attains true and lasting peace. Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya explains that knowledge is the illuminator of all things, and the Self is of the nature of knowledge. External lights like the sun and moon remove the darkness obstructing the connection between senses and objects. But through yoga, the light of Self-knowledge arises. When the bonds of beginningless karma that act as obstacles are destroyed, the soul takes refuge in God. On attaining that state, rebirth does not occur. This is possible only through complete surrender to the Lord.

**mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati (15-07)**

Comm: The individual soul (jivatma) that has assumed an eternal form in this world

or in the body is merely a part of Me, that is, of the Supreme Lord. However, this individual soul, along with the mind residing in the material body, attracts all the vital forces (pranas) and senses to the field of worldly actions, meaning it identifies itself with them. Swami Vidyanandagiri Maharaj, in his commentary on this verse, has said: “O Arjuna! the individual soul residing in this body is a part of Me alone. It is beginningless and eternal. This individual soul attracts the senses, vital forces, and mind situated in the body it is leaving, for the purpose of enjoying objects in the next body it will obtain.” The soul is a part of the Supreme Soul, but because it accepts oneness with the body, mind, and senses—which are products of prakriti (nature)—it becomes the “jiva” (bound soul). In essence, the jiva and Brahman are non-different. The four great Vedic statements mentioned in the Vedas—“Tat tvam asi” (Thou art That), “Prajnanam Brahma” (Consciousness is Brahman), “Aham Brahmasmi” (I am Brahman), “Ayam atma Brahma” (This Self is Brahman)—have been proclaiming from beginningless time the truth that “the souls in the mortal world are My eternal parts.” The “jiva state” of the pure soul residing in the body is neither real nor actual. By mixing with inert matter like the body, the jiva forgets its true conscious nature. The jiva is only a part of the Lord. Therefore, it has relationship only with the Supreme Soul, not with prakriti. The relationship with prakriti is accepted by the jiva itself due to ignorance. The jiva is not a part of the attributeless (nirguna) Brahman, but rather a part of the qualified (saguna) Lord. “Īśvara aṃśa jīva avināśī. cetana amala sahaja sukhārāśī || so māyāvasa bhayau gosāṃh. baṃdhau kīra marakaṭa kī nāṃh ||” (Manas 7.117.1-2) This means: “Just as the Lord is indestructible and eternal, similarly the jiva is eternal, indestructible, conscious, pure, and naturally full of bliss. The only difference is that the jiva, under the control of maya, binds itself like a parrot or monkey, whereas the Lord keeps maya under His control.” Since Brahman is pure conscious existence, the relationship of part and whole is not possible in it. When associated with the body, it is called jiva. Without association, it is Brahman. Therefore, the jiva is eternally a specific part of the Supreme Lord. According to Vedic teachings, the Lord manifests Himself in countless forms and expands Himself in countless ways. In the Varaha Purana, it is described that the Lord has two types of parts: sva-amsa (personal expansions) and vibhinnamsa (separated parts). Among these, sva-amsa is the Vishnu-tattva. Avatars like Matsya, Kurma, Nrisingha, Rama, etc., are sva-amsa tattva. The jivas, born from the Lord’s inseparable marginal potency or supreme potency, are vibhinnamsa tattva. Because they are specific parts of the Supreme Lord, partial qualities are seen in the jivas. Being identical to the Lord in some aspects and different in others, the jiva has an inconceivable relationship of simultaneous oneness and difference (bhedabheda) with the Lord. The jiva has two states: one bound, the other liberated. In both states, it is eternally qualified like the Supreme Lord. In the liberated state, the jiva is free from illusory limitations and remains engaged in serving the Lord. But in the bound state, it is covered by gross and subtle bodies—illusory limitations—and falls into worldly bondage. This vibhinnamsa of the Supreme Lord is not like a fragment of some material inert substance; rather, it is

eternal. In every jiva's body, the vibhinnamsa of the Supreme Lord is present. The conscious entity expressed in the subtle body of mind and intellect is called jiva. In the vibhinnamsa manifestation, the divine "I-ness" (aham-tattva) of the Lord is not present. Instead, an independent "I-ness" arises in the jiva. The bound jiva is covered by a physical body along with mind, intellect, and ego. According to the modifications of the inner instrument (antahkarana), the jiva experiences itself as happy, unhappy, worldly, etc. But its pure conscious nature, the soul, always remains unchanging. When this material covering is destroyed, in the liberated state, the jiva takes refuge in the Supreme Person, the Lord, and becomes free from connection with prakriti. By receiving the Lord's grace, it obtains its original divine body in a Vaikuntha planet in the spiritual world and enjoys divine bliss in the Lord's association. In this way, in both liberated and bound states, the jiva remains eternal and continues as "jiva." In the scriptural view inspired by dualism (dvaita), illusion or ignorance in Brahman is not possible. Therefore, according to scriptures, the Lord is the controller of maya (mayadheesh), and the jiva is under the control of maya (mayavashya). But the Lord's potency itself has transformed into the jiva and the world. Since the Lord's potency and the Lord are non-different, in this view, the jiva and the world are also called a form of Brahman (mahat Brahman) in the scriptures. Therefore, the Lord says, "I am the Purushottama tattva, beyond the perishable (kshara) and imperishable (akshara)." According to the non-dual (advaita) philosophy, in reality, the jiva and Brahman are one. Due to delusion, ignorance, or superimposition, a difference seems to exist between them. Therefore, the individual soul is an imaginary or false part of Brahman. It is not any real part. Because the Supreme Soul is indivisible, undivided, and one single existence. The individual soul is a ray of the Lord. One ray of the Supreme Soul enters prakriti, attracts the five senses and the mind toward itself there, and becomes an embodied soul or jiva. Although Brahman is without division and equally pervades everywhere, due to association with different bodies, it appears as if divided separately. Therefore, fundamentally, the individual soul is non-different and inseparable from the Supreme Soul or Brahman. When the covering of ignorance that limits it is destroyed, the individual soul realizes its non-difference from the Supreme Soul. The jiva state attained by the soul is only due to ignorance. Therefore, that jiva state is merely apparent, not real—like the moon in the sky and the moon's reflection. The pure soul, mixing with prakriti, takes on the jiva state and superimposes the qualities of prakriti upon itself. The superimposition of doership upon the soul is nothing but illusion. When crystal is placed near red kumkum, it appears red, but in reality, the crystal's purity remains as it is. The mind alone is the cause of the false difference between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. This illusory distinction between jiva and Brahman breaks when the mind is destroyed. When ignorance is destroyed by self-knowledge, the mind, which is its effect, is also destroyed. Just as when the limiting pot is broken, the space within the pot merges into universal space, similarly, when ignorance ends, the individual soul becomes non-different from Brahman, and the jiva naturally becomes the Self. As long as ignorance

remains, the existence of the jiva continues. After the illusory bondage of maya—including the mind and senses—is destroyed, the individual soul no longer has to return. The gross body is not capable of expressing consciousness. The mind, intellect, and knowledge senses form the subtle body. Although the subtle body is material, because it is in a pure state, conscious power can be expressed through it. This conscious subtle body is known as jiva. The body, which is a product of prakriti, serves as the basis for the mind, intellect, and senses. When the soul leaves one body and goes to another, it first attracts the senses along with the mind from the previous body and takes them along—this is called the “causal body” in the scriptures. Accepting the jivas as parts or limbs of the Supreme Lord would also require accepting modification in Him. But in no theistic school is the Supreme Soul accepted as subject to modification. Jagadguru Shankaracharya, in resolving this, has said that the imagination of jiva as a part of the Supreme Lord is not from the absolute viewpoint but is due to limiting adjuncts (upadhi). Because the jiva notion arises in consciousness limited by ignorance’s adjunct, the moment that adjunct is destroyed, the jiva notion dissolves. When the adjunct in the form of a pot is destroyed, the separate existence of pot-space ceases. All adjuncts are false. Therefore, the concept of parts in the Supreme Lord exists only in the worldly state. In the state beyond the world, the Supreme Brahman is “one without a second” (ekamevadvitiyam). Sri Madhusudana Saraswati, in his commentary on this verse, has said that in deep sleep, the state of Brahman is attained, but upon waking, in the transactional state, one again comes to the jiva state. That is the absence of Brahman state in the ignorant condition. But one who, through knowledge, removes ignorance and attains the Brahman state does not return to the worldly state again. For all these reasons, fundamentally, the jiva and the Lord—these two—must be accepted as part and whole to each other, yet as two distinct separate principles. In the qualified dualism (visishta dvaita) view, Sri Nilakantha ji has explained that the Lord Himself is the one who departs at the time of giving up the life-bearing adjunct. Therefore, here the Lord says that the eternal jiva in the world of jivas is My part alone. An example is given in the Vedas: just as sparks fly out and separate from a great mass of fire, similarly the jiva separates from the Lord. Just as a spark, separating from the fire, again creates a new mass of fire, similarly the jiva, separating from the Lord, creates its own new creation. Just as there is no real difference between the spark and the fire even after separation from the mass, similarly, even after separation from the Lord, there is no actual difference between jiva and the Lord. Whatever difference appears is due to limiting adjuncts.

**śarīraṁ yad avāpnoti yac cāpy utkrāmatīśvaraḥ
grhītvaitāni saṁyāti vāyur gandhān ivāśayāt (15-08)**

Comm: O Arjuna, at the time of death the individual soul, which is the owner of the body, gives up the present body and accepts another body. Just as the wind carries fragrance from flowers and moves it to another place, in the same way the individual soul carries the mind, life-force, and senses and enters another body. Even

after death, the bound condition of the soul does not come to an end. In this verse, the word “Īśvara” is not used in the sense of the Supreme Lord, but in the sense of the controller of the body. Only after taking a body does the individual soul appear to be a doer and an enjoyer. As long as the soul feels, “I am the doer” and “I am the enjoyer,” it remains completely body-centered. The mind, intellect, five organs of action, five organs of knowledge, and five vital airs—these seventeen elements together form the subtle body. When the wind takes fragrance from a flower, it leaves the flower behind and carries only the fragrance. Similarly, the gross body is compared to the flower, the tendencies and intentions present in the subtle body are compared to the fragrance, and the individual soul is compared to the wind. At the time of leaving the body, whatever kind of consciousness controls the soul, according to that consciousness it receives a new body in the next birth (Gita 8.6). The present body and the actions produced by its qualities create the basis for the next body. Therefore, according to one’s habitual thoughts and actions, a person receives different bodies, and in due time the soul leaves those bodies as well. Since the individual soul is a part of the Supreme Soul, it is by nature eternal, motionless, and stable. Is it logically acceptable that the soul moves from one body to another? The answer is that the soul is bound within the body. In Vedānta, the body is called a “place of experience” (bhogāyatana). The separation of the subtle body from the gross body is called the death of the gross body. Because at the time of death the soul remains identified with the subtle body consisting of the senses, mind, and intellect, it does not return to its original source, the Supreme Soul. Although the abandoned gross body remains in its former shape, the subtle body is no longer active within it. The subtle and causal bodies remain attached to the soul and search for entry into another gross body. All these processes of the subtle body happen in such a subtle manner that they are never visible. According to the impressions of the previous body, that is, the condition of the subtle body, the soul obtains the present body and continues performing actions. Again, under the influence of accumulated and destiny-bearing actions, the soul has to take other bodies in order to experience various results. The wind and fragrance do not have a permanent relationship. Just as the wind is essentially untouched by fragrance, in the same way the individual soul, being a part of the Supreme Soul, is different from nature and the body formed by actions. However, because the soul accepts the feeling of “I” and “mine” in relation to the mind, senses, and body, it becomes attracted to the subtle body and wanders through different forms of birth. In reality, the soul has no true relationship with the gross, subtle, or causal bodies. Through knowledge and discrimination, whenever it chooses, the soul can give up this false, imagined relationship and experience its eternal relationship with the Supreme Soul. When identification with the body is completely removed, the process of changing bodies comes to an end. To break this false and illusory relationship, the individual soul is fully free and capable.

**śrotraṁ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca rasanāṁ ghrāṇaṁ eva ca
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cāyaṁ viṣayān upasevate (15-09)**

Comm: The soul residing in the body enjoys objects like form, sound, taste, smell, and touch through the sense organs such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin, with the help of the mind. The pure consciousness that is the soul cannot by itself reveal the essential nature of any object. When the intellect is illuminated by pure consciousness, this illuminated intellect reveals objects through the five sense organs in the body, like eyes and ears. Complete knowledge of external objects comes only when the mind is connected with all the sense organs. The soul's acceptance of its relationship with the sense organs through the mind and intellect is called "adhithaya," meaning taking support or residing in them. In reality, the soul is neither the doer of actions like enjoying objects, nor the experiencer of their results, such as happiness or suffering. This is because the soul (the conscious principle) is far superior to the inert body, sense organs, mind, intellect, and so on. In the body, there is a close relationship among the five great elements, the five knowledge-acquiring senses, and the five action organs. For example: (1) Space - ears - speech - sound (2) Air - skin - hands - touch (3) Fire - eyes - feet - form (or sight) (4) Water - tongue - genitals - taste (5) Earth - nose - anus - smell From each of the five great elements: The sattva guna part creates the knowledge-acquiring senses, The rajas guna part creates the action organs, And the tamas guna part creates the five objects like sound, touch, etc. When the five great elements combine: From the sattva guna part come the mind, intellect, and ego (the subtle body), From the rajas guna part come the five vital airs (pranas), And from the tamas guna part come the gross body parts like bones and flesh. The soul is the support and illuminator of all these—the body, senses, and so on. The soul itself does not enjoy objects. It experiences objects only through its conditioning (upadhi) like the senses. When the connection with these conditionings breaks, the individual soul becomes free from identification with them (from superimposition). A person always thinks something or the other in the mind. In the dream state, some of those thoughts appear as dreams. In the waking state, since the intellect controls the mind, not all thoughts of the mind fully manifest. When different qualities of objects—such as beautiful-ugly, cold-hot, tasty-untasty—are experienced through the respective senses, there is no change in the state of the soul itself. Similarly, even though favorable or unfavorable feelings about objects reflect in the mind during their perception, the soul remains unaffected. Due to ignorance and lack of discrimination, people believe that the soul itself takes bodies and enjoys objects. In reality, birth, death, experiencing karmic results, and so on are properties of nature or the body. They are not properties of the soul. Because the individual soul is pure, its consciousness is also pure. It only appears modified according to contact with material qualities, just like a crystal placed near saffron appears colored. When a person stays in an environment of thinking about God, the senses become free from objects, the mind becomes free from resolutions (nirvikalpa), the intellect naturally becomes balanced,

experiences the Supreme Soul, and the person lives a pure life. If consciousness becomes polluted by material desires and cravings, then due to the bondage of actions, the person takes births in higher or lower species and keeps revolving in the cycle of samsara.

**utkrāmantam sthitam vāpi bhuñjānam vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti paśyanti jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ (15-10)**

Comm: The ignorant and indiscriminating people cannot understand the true nature of the individual soul. This soul lives in the body, identifies itself with the senses and qualities, enjoys sense objects, and leaves the body at the time of death. They cannot understand this because their minds are turned outward toward sense objects. But wise people, who possess the eye of knowledge, are able to know the soul in its true nature. When a person dies, the soul leaves the dead body. This departure of the soul is called “utkrānti” (departure). The soul is present everywhere as a witness, even during actions like eating and other activities. The soul also remains as a witness in happiness, sorrow, and delusion. The same soul alone gives consciousness to the subtle body at the time of taking a body and at the time of leaving it. During the lifetime of a particular body, the soul alone illuminates all experiences. The knowledge of constantly changing sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic states is also possible only because of consciousness. Although the soul is by nature beyond the qualities, it becomes bound by establishing relationships with place, time, persons, and objects. Living beings, objects, events, and situations are never permanent. When the soul leaves the gross body along with the subtle and causal bodies, takes another body, and enjoys sense objects, it appears to be attached to qualities. But in reality, it always remains unattached. In truth, the soul does not really depart or remain anywhere. All these appearances arise due to the limiting conditions such as the senses and the body. Deluded people cannot understand the true nature of the soul in all these activities. The ignorant think that the soul itself performs all actions. Whatever actions a person performs, the Supreme Lord, present as the inner witness, observes them all. Even then, people without discrimination cannot recognize the truth of the soul. To directly realize that “the process of dissolution of the visible world is continuously going on within time” is to see through the eye of knowledge. The eye of knowledge is not a physical or inner sense organ. When a seeker endowed with discrimination and detachment reflects on the soul using scriptural teachings, the understanding that arises from that reflection is called the eye of knowledge. One whose eye of knowledge has opened experiences the presence of God as a witness in all actions and everywhere. Such a person knows that in reality there is no departure, no staying, and no enjoyment. A person with a restless and distracted mind, whom the Lord calls “deluded,” cannot recognize the soul that is established in oneself and in all beings. In reality, the soul is a non-doer. Because the soul becomes associated with the limiting qualities, it appears to go out of the body, remain somewhere, or enjoy objects. But the wise understand that the qualities of the limiting conditions are falsely imposed upon the soul. Because of this false imposition,

the illusion arises that the soul performs all actions. In truth, the qualities can never have any real relationship with the soul. The relationship that appears to exist due to ignorance disappears when true knowledge is attained. Therefore, all relationships connected with the soul are false. And the objects connected through those relationships are also false.

**yatanto yoginaś cainaṁ paśyanty ātmany avasthitam
yatanto 'py akṛtātmāno nainaṁ paśyanty acetasaḥ (15-11)**

Comm: Accomplished yogis who have gained spiritual powers, are discriminative, and diligent, directly perceive this truth of the Atman residing in their hearts as the witness. But those with impure minds and lacking discrimination cannot recognize the presence of this Atman, even if they make efforts. A true seeker with firm resolve, extreme devotion, and a balanced mind realizes: “The Supreme Soul is established in the heart—’So’ham’—He is ‘I’.” This feeling remains in constant remembrance for him. By meditating on the true meaning of the great Upanishadic statement “Aham Brahmasmi—I am Brahman,” self-knowledge is attained, ignorance is destroyed, and direct vision of truth is achieved. When distractions caused by ego and selfishness are absent, and discrimination between the Self and non-Self awakens, the veil of ignorance is removed, and the mind becomes pure. In the truth of the Supreme Soul, there is no distance of space or time. He exists equally everywhere and, in every way, as the Atman in the hearts of all beings. Through practices like listening (shravana), reflection (manana), and deep contemplation (nididhyasana), a seeker can recognize the Atman that resides in the mind and intellect as their illuminator. Only those seekers who succeed in concentrating the mind and freeing the intellect from desires and attachments, thereby purifying the mind, experience the eternity and infinity of the Atman. When attaining the Supreme Soul becomes the sole aim of the seeker, detachment, non-possessiveness, and desirelessness come naturally. The individual soul experiences its non-difference and oneness with the Supreme Soul. One whose mind is turned toward Brahman and whose heart is illuminated by the light of knowledge knows that the Atman is eternal, everlasting, and actionless. Just as the reflection of the moon in water is unreal, accepting the body as the Self is similarly an illusion. The discrimination of a person attached to enjoyment and accumulation does not remain steady. Terms like “akṛitatma” (unrefined self) and “achetas” (without awareness) refer to people whose inner instrument is afflicted by the three defects: impurity (mala), distraction (vikshepa), and veiling (avarana). Such people, without purifying their inner instrument, cannot understand the truth of the Atman even if they make superficial efforts like studying scriptures. To remove impurity and distraction, selfless action and selfless worship are essential. How can that truth, which is beyond nature, be known through the effects of nature—senses, mind, intellect, space, time, objects, etc.? Therefore, by severing connection with qualities and actions born of nature, the truth is attained, and this is possible only by itself (through direct realization). One who does not purify their life through a true guru, true tradition, and true scriptures cannot attain Self-realization; such

an unrefined person remains deluded. Thus, attainment of the Supreme Soul happens only at the highest level of a true guru, true tradition, good conduct, and noble intentions.

**yad āditya-gataṁ tejo jagad bhāsayate 'khilam
yac candramasi yac cāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam (15-12)**

Comm: The Supreme Soul, existing as the Self, is the essence of everything. He alone is the foundation of all experiences. To make Arjuna clearly understand this truth, the Lord has given a brief explanation of the soul's different manifestations and its all-pervading nature in four verses of this chapter (verses 12–15). These points are explained as follows: First, the Self, in the form of the Supreme Lord, is the light of all illuminating consciousness. Second, He is the life-giving principle that nourishes all beings. Third, in all living beings, He remains as the digestive fire to sustain the body. Fourth, He dwells in the hearts of all as the Self, giving inspiration and being the ultimate object of knowledge in every way. The light by which the sun illuminates the entire world, and the reflected light of the sun that appears in the moon and fire, all have their cause and support in the supreme radiance of the Supreme Soul. The sun, moon, and fire are respectively the presiding deities of the eye, the mind, and speech. Therefore, the power by which the eye, mind, and speech reveal the objects of the world is only a part of the Lord's radiance and glory. The clarity of a reflection depends on the purity of the reflecting medium. The supreme light of the Supreme Lord, which is full of sattva, reflects beautifully and pleasantly in the eyes of beings through the sun as the light of knowledge. The cool and soothing moonlight is also the radiance of that same Supreme Lord. Lord Krishna says here that He Himself is known as the sun, the moon, and fire. Fire burns only because of the heat that comes from the Lord's radiance. The divine light or brilliance coming from the Lord's supreme abode itself becomes sunlight. Without the grace of the Lord, the sun and moon cannot remain in the sky, and fire cannot manifest. But the soul deluded by illusion is unable to realize this truth. Even in the inert material world, the conscious existence of the Supreme Lord shines through the radiance of the sun, moon, and fire. Therefore, the existence and expression of all objects, feelings, substances, actions, and qualities in the entire universe have the Supreme Lord as their root cause. Controlled by natural ego, human beings try to dominate water, air, the sun, the moon, and other forces of nature. They make vain efforts to use them only for their own material enjoyment. Material science, which is established by collecting sense-perceived facts, can progress only up to a limited point. If one asks who created the countless stars and planets seen in the sky, including the sun, scientists may not remain silent, but science itself has no final answer. Where science reaches its limit and becomes unable to show the path further, people turn to the Vedas, Puranas, and philosophical scriptures to satisfy the intellect's curiosity. The only answer that provides a true solution is this: "The Supreme Soul manifests Himself in various forms, by which the existence and order of the universe are maintained."

**gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā
puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ (15-13)**

Comm: And the Lord further says that He Himself, in the form of divine power, has permeated the earth and is sustaining all moving and non-moving beings. He provides His vital essence (oja) as food to the entire plant kingdom. This vital essence enters the soil and creates sweet, delicious juice in trees, creepers, shrubs, grasses, and so on. He Himself, as the essence (rasa) in the form of the nectar-filled moon, nourishes all herbs and plants. The entire planetary system, including the earth, floats and moves in space. This is possible only because the supreme power of the Supreme Person enters and pervades them. Due to the strength and power of the Lord, all stationary and moving beings remain in their respective positions. Because divine power holds it, this vast earth neither falls, nor breaks, nor sinks into the lower regions. Even though the water level is higher than the land surface, and three-quarters of the earth is water while one-quarter is land, the earth does not become submerged. This is solely the effect of the Lord's sustaining power. Due to the influence of the moon, who is the Lord's representative, all plants become tasty and nutritious as food. The Lord's power manifests as the nourishing essence in the form of rasa. The moon has two powers: the power to illuminate and the power to nourish. In the bright fortnight (shukla paksha), the moon nourishes, and in the dark fortnight (krishna paksha), it absorbs. In the bright fortnight, nectar rains down from the moon's cool rays, due to which trees and creepers become fully nourished and bear flowers and fruits. The moon is considered the storehouse of all juices and tastes. Even a child in the womb grows during the bright fortnight. By eating food nourished by the moon's influence, humans, animals, birds, and all living beings gain nourishment. Soma (the moon) is full of nectar-like juice, through which all medicinal herbs gain life-giving power.

**aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṁ deham āśritaḥ
prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pacāmy annaṁ catur-vidham (15-14)**

Comm: The Lord says that He Himself resides as the digestive fire in the navel region of all living beings. This digestive fire is kindled and sustained by the prāṇa and apāna airs. With their help, it digests the four kinds of food—chewed, sucked, licked, and drunk. In the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad (5.9.1) it is stated: “This fire, known as Vaiśvānara, resides within the human body, by which food is digested.” The meaning is that the Supreme Lord dwells in the body of the living being in the form of fire and digests all food that is eaten. The digestive fire present in the body, which digests food, is only a manifestation of the Supreme Lord. The Lord calls this fire Vaiśvānara Agni. In the process by which life-energy (ojas) is produced from food, heat becomes manifest in the body. As long as life-energy flows in the body, the internal organs naturally perform their respective functions. Just as in human beings, this Vaiśvānara digestive power functions also in plants and trees, which are immobile beings. It also functions in animals and birds, which are

mobile beings. Based on the method of eating, food has been classified into four types. Food that is chewed with the teeth is called chārṡya. Food that is drunk and swallowed is called peya. Food that is sucked or drawn in is called choṡya. Food that is licked with the tongue is called lehya. The processes of inhaling and exhaling air in the body are called prāṇa and apāna respectively. The consciousness in the form of the soul manifests as prāṇa and carries the eaten food to the stomach. The prāṇa and apāna airs together kindle the digestive fire. The prāṇa air resides in the heart, sends the breath outward, and helps in digestion. The apāna air, residing in the lower region, draws the breath inward and expels waste matter from the body. It also helps in the delivery of a child from the womb. The samāna air, residing near the navel, performs the subtle function of distributing the essence of food to all parts of the body. The udāna air resides in the throat. During eating, it separates solid and liquid food. At the time of death, it causes the subtle body to depart from the gross body. The vyāna air pervades the entire body. It enables contraction and expansion of the body and limbs. In addition to these, there are five subsidiary prāṇas known as nāga, kūrma, kṛkara, devadatta, and dhanañjaya. Through these subsidiary prāṇas, functions such as belching, blinking of the eyes, sneezing, yawning, and swelling of the body after death take place respectively. Vaiśvānara Agni is the eater. That which is eaten by this fire is Soma, or the moon principle. The world of living beings is formed by the relationship between food and the eater, that is, Soma and Agni. Through the balanced combination of Agni and Soma, the waste or impurities present in food do not harm the body. If one reflects upon this verse before eating, no defect arising from food remains.

**sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṡṡo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca
vedaīś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham(15-15)**

Comm: In the previous three verses, Lord Sri Krishna explained that through the sun, moon, fire, and so on, He illuminates everyone; through the earth and others, He sustains everyone; through the moon, He nourishes everyone; and through Vaishvanara (digestive fire), He digests food—saying that all this is done by just a fraction of His power. Now, He is describing His own form endowed with qualities like being the indweller of all (sarvantaryāmitva) and omniscience (sarvajnatva), and declaring Himself worthy of being known in every way. “I,” the Supreme Soul, reside as the indwelling Purusha and as the knower of the field (kṡhetrajña) in the hearts and intellects of all beings, from Brahma down to the tiniest insect. From Me alone arise knowledge and the memory of all experiences. The means for the dissolution of memory and knowledge is also accomplished by Me alone. After leaving the body, the jiva forgets everything from past lives. Therefore, a person should perform all actions in the present life as inspired by God, because the Lord Himself is watching everything as the witness. In all the Vedas, “I” am the main subject, the one to be known, and the only one truly worth knowing. As the incarnation

of Vyasa, “I” am the author of the Vedas and the decider of their true meaning. “I” alone, residing in the intellect, become the knower of the essence of the Vedas. As the power of consciousness, “I” am the Self of all beings. In this world, there is nothing other than Me. The entire living world is “Me.” “I” am their food, “I” am their object of worship, “I” am their life. A question arises: If God resides everywhere, in everyone’s body, and controls everyone, then why are some happy and others suffering? The answer is: It is not false that God exists in everyone. He is the source of both knowledge and ignorance, as well as vidya-maya (knowledge-giving illusion) and avidya-maya (ignorance-giving illusion). A person sees everything according to his faith. One who has deep faith in God attains knowledge through yoga practice and guru’s grace, and with a pure mind and intellect, rests in the true nature of the Self. Such a person, having realized the Self, remains ever happy. One who lacks faith in God fails to recognize My presence, remains immersed in worldly enjoyments, and leads a life full of sorrow and suffering. A righteous person, by performing good actions, gains memory power and knowledge as their fruit. When a person performs bad actions, his knowledge is destroyed and he suffers loss of memory. Good actions promote peace and also enhance intellectual power. In an advanced seeker, there arises the fourth state of knowledge (turiya jnana) beyond country, time, cause, and this visible world, along with the recurrence of experiences from past lives. The Lord says that “I” am the one who reveals Self-knowledge, in which the Shruti, Upanishads, and the entire objective world merge and dissolve. The purpose of the Vedas is to understand the truth of the Supreme Soul. The Vedas show the path to understand the Supreme Soul and also indicate the methods of spiritual practice. Just as all rivers—whether coming from the west, east, or any direction—ultimately reach the same ocean, similarly, whether it is the Vedas or Vedanta, the goal of all is to attain Me. The ultimate aim of the jiva is nothing other than attaining God. “I am not only the object of worship for the jiva as Brahman or the Supreme Soul, but also the eternal well-wisher and guide of the jiva. Therefore, for the welfare of all beings—through My three manifestations: as Brahman in nature, as Ishvara in the heart of the jiva, and as the supreme advisor Bhagavan—I am the savior of the bound soul.”

**dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭa-stho ’kṣara ucyate(15-16)**

Comm: In the previous verse, when Lord Krishna said, “I alone am the knower of the Vedas,” He now, in these three verses (Ch.15/16–18), briefly explains the essential truth of all the Vedas. Two principles known as Kṣara (perishable) and Akṣara (imperishable) are well known in all the fourteen worlds. Among these two, all moving and non-moving beings are called Kṣara, because they are effects and are destructible. That which is unchanging, indestructible, and the cause is called Akṣara. Because these two collective principles, Kṣara and Akṣara, represent the manifest and unmanifest forms of the Supreme Person, they are both described as Purusha. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has

described Akṣara as the Māyā power of the Lord. This Akṣara Māyā power is the seed from which the Kṣara Puruṣa arises. From this Māyā power, all Kṣara beings—starting from Brahmā and including all moving and non-moving creatures—come into existence. Since Parabrahman is eternal, His Māyā power is also eternal. This Māyā power is non-different from the Supreme Lord. Although all inert and conscious beings, moving and non-moving objects, and all material principles arise from this Māyā power, this Māyā itself never undergoes destruction. Therefore, the Māyā of the Lord is called the imperishable (Akṣaya) Puruṣa. Because the individual soul continues endlessly through the flow of bodies and worldly existence, without beginning or end, the jīvātmā is also described as Akṣaya Puruṣa. That which continues to exist even when the body is destroyed is called Kūṭastha, meaning the conscious witness. No matter how many bodies the jīvātmā assumes, its essential nature always remains unchanged. The jīvātmā is in truth the very principle of the Supreme Self. But due to ignorance, it identifies itself with nature and its effects, such as the body, and therefore it is called a “jīva.” This Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣa principle has earlier been described as Parā and Aparā Prakṛti (Gītā 7.4) and as Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña (Gītā Ch. 13/2–3). The Akṣara Puruṣa, which is the jīvātmā, is destroyed only through true knowledge. The body, senses, mind, and intellect are limiting adjuncts, and their nature is completely changeable and destructible. Therefore, all these belong to the Kṣara Puruṣa. The knower of these adjuncts—the Self—is the Akṣara Puruṣa. In all the activities of these perishable adjuncts, the Self remains changeless and unattached. Just as gold placed on an anvil is struck and takes new shapes, while the anvil itself remains unchanged, similarly the body changes, but the Kūṭastha Self remains unaffected. Here, the word Kūṭastha refers to the Self that exists within all bodies. It always remains exactly the same. Since it never undergoes decay, destruction, or absence in any condition, it is called Akṣara. Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains in his Gītā commentary that, in reality, there are not two separate Puruṣas called Kṣara and Akṣara existing in different realms. For the purpose of explanation, the jīva—who is a partial manifestation of the Lord’s consciousness—is called Kṣara Puruṣa. Due to beginningless ignorance, the jīva deviates from its true nature and, driven by karma, manifests in various forms, from the collective Brahman down to immobile beings. Therefore, because of its tendency to fall from its original position, the jīva is called Kṣara Puruṣa. But that aspect which never deviates from its true nature is called Akṣara Puruṣa, and this is known as Kūṭastha. That which remains the same at all times and in all conditions is Kūṭastha. Beyond these two—Kṣara and Akṣara—there exists a third Puruṣa, who is distinct from both and is the creator of the universe. This Supreme Being is described in the next two verses as Paramātmā, Avyaya, and Īśvara.

**uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyaḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ
yo loka-trayaṁ āviśya bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ (15-17)**

Comm: There is a supreme person who is even more excellent and distinguished

than both the perishable (kṣhara) and the imperishable (akṣhara) beings. The scriptures call him Paramātmā (the Supreme Soul). He is the Lord worthy of the title Īśvara, the creator, the controller, and the unchanging form known as akshara (imperishable). He enters the three worlds in the form of his own consciousness power and sustains all living beings. Because he is the original image distinct from the reflected image which is the individual soul (jīvātmā), he is superior to it. That is why he is called Paramātmā (supreme over the soul). He is completely free from destruction or loss. Therefore, he is akshara (imperishable). This is the Upanishad statement: “Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate” — even after taking the full from the full, the full alone remains. This illustrates the imperishability of the supreme person. The person who is beyond the designations of kṣhara and akṣhara, and completely free from all designations, is the imperishable person, Paramātmā. All designations related to effects are kṣhara (perishable). All designations related to causes are akṣhara (imperishable). The supreme person, different from both kṣhara and akṣhara, is the ultimate reality. From the perspective of superimposed designations, he appears like kṣhara and akṣhara. In the absence of those designations, he remains only in his eternal, pure, unqualified natural form. In the book ‘Gītā Jñāneśvarī’ written by Saint Jñāneśvara, it is mentioned: “Even though fire is in wood, fire is different from wood. Similarly, the ‘supreme person’ is different from kṣhara and akṣhara. In the supreme person, there is no question of waking, dream, or deep sleep states. Near him, there is no knowledge of oneness or duality, or whether something exists or not. Such an indescribable state is the supreme person or Paramātmā.” ‘Paramātmā’ is a symbolic indicative word for Puruṣottama (the supreme person). Silence alone is the true word that expresses his all-pervading nature. Not knowing any material object is his knowledge. Not knowing any form of word-meaning is his existence. In that, even the sense of ‘That I am’ dissolves. Even though one cannot touch or feel the light between the original image and its reflection, it cannot be denied. He is not comparable to anyone else, because he is completely full himself. He is the innermost consciousness of all beings. He is the basis and controller of everything. He is not under anyone’s control or subjection; he is completely independent. He is Lord Nārāyaṇa, the all-seeing God who is the culmination of fullness. He is the highest person, the resting place of all rest. He is the lord of happiness. Therefore, in Vedānta, he is addressed as Paramātmā. By his own radiant power, he penetrates the three worlds — earth, atmosphere, and heaven (bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ) — and sustains all worlds merely by his presence. Because in this act of sustaining and nourishing, there is no deficiency or increase in the form of Paramātmā, he is avyaya (imperishable). His ability to be, not to be, or to become otherwise in all ways is his divinity (Īśvaratva). According to some commentators, the three worlds mean the triad (tripuṭī): seer, seen, seeing; knower, knowledge, known; and waking, dream, deep sleep. The Upanishad says: “Abhinna nimitta upādāna karaṇatvena praviśya” — as the unchanging efficient and material cause, he pervades the entire triad, meaning he is fully present in it. He

is the root person free from decay, avyaya. “Paramātmēti cāpyukto dehasmin puruṣaḥ paraḥ” (Gītā 13.22) — in the body, this supreme person is called Paramātmā. He is the witness, permitter, sustainer, enjoyer, yet unrelated; from the perspective of his nature, he is the supreme, the great Lord. Just as when impurity mixed with sweetness is removed, sweetness becomes supremely sweet, similarly, when any designation or attribute covering the pure soul nature is destroyed, the soul shines as beyond qualities, pure, in the form of Paramātmā.

**yasmāt kṣaram atīto ’ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato ’smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ (15-18)**

Comm: In this verse, the Lord is revealing His most secret truth, saying: “I (who have personally descended in a manifest, personal form) am Purushottama—the Supreme Person.” I am completely distinct from the kshara (perishable) principle. I have no connection or equality with the kshara tattva. My existence is beyond this perishable, illusory world created by maya. I am also superior to the akshara (imperishable) tattva, which is the seed of the world. Even though the jivatma is akshara, it is still gripped by maya. Maya, however, is subordinate to Me. Although the jivatma is My eternal part, it appears tainted because it remains under the control of maya. Just as a river flows continuously and the body changes constantly, the akshara (jivatma) remains unmoving and unattached like a rock lying at the bottom of the river current. I am above all smallness and limitation. O Dhananjaya (Arjuna)! I am non-dual, free from conditioning, beyond all qualities, and self-luminous—I am the highest among all kshara and akshara principles. Therefore, in the three worlds and in the Vedas and Puranas, I am known by the name Purushottama. Whether in the bound state or the liberated state, no purusha principle can ever be equal to the Lord or surpass His inconceivable power. Only from the perspective of the perishable (kshara) can the Supreme Soul be separately designated as akshara; otherwise, He Himself is without attributes (nirvishesha). Sri Shankarananda has said that the Lord’s supremacy, His being without parts (nishkala), eternal, beyond qualities, conscious, and so on—these are merely indications of His distinctive nature. Just as the canvas (background) has an existence separate from the painting on it, upon close examination, the painting cannot have an independent existence without the support of the canvas. In the same way, the imperishable Purusha (avyaya purusha) remains distinct from kshara and akshara yet serves as their support. In the world, three purushas are spoken of—the kshara, the akshara, and the avyaya (imperishable). Among them, because He is beyond and superior to both kshara and akshara, the avyaya purusha is called the Uttama Purusha (Supreme Person)

**yo mām evam asaṁmūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam
sa sarva-vid bhajati mām sarva-bhāvena bhārata (15-19)**

Comm: O Arjuna, descendant of the Bharata dynasty, the desireless, delusion-

free seeker of liberation who truly understands Me as Parabrahman, the Supreme Purushottama, beyond worldly laws, is called Sarvavit, the knower of all. That all-knowing person worships Me with full heart, life, and faith. In other words, by being fully engaged in My service, he attains supreme bliss. A person who is free from delusion completely gives up body-identification and false self-association. He accepts himself as non-different from Brahman or the Supreme Self. Such a knower worships the Supreme Lord with mind, body, and full life force. That means he sees the One Supreme Self in the many, and sees the many within the One Supreme Self. After explaining the worshipable Paramātmā principle of the yogis, Lord Krishna Himself describes the Paramātmā-tattva and His glory in this verse. On the path of devotion, by hearing the divine pastimes of the incarnate Lord, by chanting His names and glorifying His qualities, and by accepting all power and glory as His divine manifestations, one firmly realizes that “Lord Krishna is not an ordinary human being; He is directly the Supreme Purushottama, the Paramātmā.” This firm conviction alone is the mark of exclusive (ananya) devotion. In Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu also, from the philosophical viewpoint, Śrī Nārāyaṇa and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are accepted as non-different, while from the standpoint of devotional rasa, the special excellence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is highlighted. In conclusion, there is no difference between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Nārāyaṇa, yet from the devotional perspective, the superiority of the Kṛṣṇa form is emphasized. In the Vaiṣṇava tradition it is said that one who serves Lord Kṛṣṇa with devotion does not require any other yogic process to attain Brahma-knowledge, that is, to realize the Supreme Brahman. The imperishable Purushottama is the root cause of all worlds. When the true knowledge of the cause is attained, the knowledge of all effects naturally follows. For a lover of God, nothing more remains to be known. Even if such a person lacks material or worldly knowledge, he is truly all-knowing. As a result, every thought, tendency, and action of such a person automatically becomes an act of worship of the Lord. On the path of knowledge, emphasis is on knowing. On the path of devotion, emphasis is on accepting with faith. After realizing the true nature of the Self, the entire visible and invisible universe is experienced as a part of that one Supreme Self. A knower of truth remains in a state where the material principles present in the body are surrendered to God, the Saguna Brahman. In such a realized person, the Kṣara and Akṣara principles merge into the Nirguṇa nature of the Supreme Lord, just as when a pot breaks, the space inside the pot merges into the vast space. When the darkness of māyā is destroyed by the sunlight of true knowledge, and one recognizes Me as Purushottama, then just as dreams disappear upon waking, all worldly knowledge transforms into divine knowledge. After realizing My true nature, there remains no scope for duality. The relationship between the knower or devotee and God is like that between waves and the ocean, or rays and the sun. For attaining the supreme goal, three paths are accepted in Indian tradition: karma (action), upāsana or bhakti (devotion), and jñāna (knowledge). These three spiritual disciplines support one another. Especially in the Bhagavad Gītā, the Lord emphasizes

the harmony of knowledge, action, and devotion. The uniqueness of the Bhagavad Gītā's teaching is that when any one of the three paths— karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, or bhakti-yoga— is perfected, a person automatically attains fulfillment, complete understanding of what is to be known and not known, and the realization of what is to be attained and what is no longer needed.

**iti guhyatamaṁ śāstram idam uktaṁ mayānagha
etad buddhvā buddhimān syāt kṛta-kṛtyaś ca bhārata (15-20)**

Comm: The Lord says: O sinless Arjuna! In this manner, I have taught you the extremely secret and highly confidential knowledge of Brahma-tattva that was mentioned before. A wise and knowledgeable person who truly understands it becomes fully fulfilled. You will also certainly become fulfilled—there is no doubt about it. In this verse, the words “Anagha” (sinless) and “Bharata” that the Lord uses to address Arjuna are full of deep meaning. The mind becomes impure and one accumulates sin by looking for faults in others. That is why the scriptures forbid sharing secret topics with people who lack faith and always find faults. Only a person with pure feelings and no tendency to see faults is qualified to hear this confidential teaching of the Lord. Since Arjuna's heart was pure and free from fault-finding, he was worthy to understand the truth of Purushottama. For the good of all souls, Lord Sri Krishna reveals the secret of His own true nature and says: O Arjuna! I am Purushottama, and this is the highest secret truth. Through you, I am revealing Myself. What was until now most precious and deeply hidden, I am now sharing with the whole world through you. By knowing this, a person becomes free from all illusions. He becomes fearless and completely fulfilled. Beyond the discussion of inert matter and conscious soul, this chapter clearly establishes that Sri Krishna Himself is the highest excellence. Sri Shankaracharya has said: “The entire Gita is indeed a scripture.” Yet the fifteenth chapter of the Gita, which deals with kshara, akshara, and the imperishable Purusha, deserves to be called a separate scripture. The Lord concludes the chapter by describing the three—apara (lower nature), para (higher nature), and Ishvara—as kshara, akshara, and Purushottama. The Upanishadic idea that knowing the One gives complete knowledge is fully supported here. Sri Ramanujacharya has said: “The intelligence or buddhi-yoga needed to reach the Lord comes from this knowledge.” Whatever other duties remain are also completed when this knowledge is gained. True knowledge of the Lord's existence as the root cause and of this many-formed world created by maya leaves no mistake in deciding about liberation. As a result, no delusion or suffering arises for oneself. In the practice of intellect-yoga and action-yoga, once one feels “I have nothing to do for myself,” knowledge of the Supreme Soul arises naturally. Then full contentment comes to the mind—this is life's highest goal. That feeling itself means one has done all that needs to be done. After that, no duty or anything to attain remains for such a person. In the verse discussed, the word

“buddhiman” (wise) means one who has known all that should be known. That is, after understanding the Supreme Soul and the difference between kshara and akshara, nothing more remains to know. Similarly, when the feeling “I need nothing beyond closeness to the Lord” constantly shines in the heart, the devotee has attained all that should be attained. All beings already have what is worldly (kshara and akshara). So only the supreme transcendental truth remains as the final thing for the soul to attain. In this verse, with the words “sarvavit” (knower of everything) and “sarva bhavena” (in every way), the Lord shows that whoever knows My Purushottama truth gains the full fruit of karma-yoga, jnana-yoga, and bhakti-yoga. In other words, he becomes fulfilled, knows all that needs knowing, and attains all that needs attaining. Sri Nilakanthaji has said: “All actions are useful only until knowledge of the Supreme Soul is reached.” When one truly knows the Supreme Soul, all human goals come to an end. During bhakti-yoga practice, through good company and pure devotion, major obstacles must be removed. The main one is the heart’s weakness in the form of worldly attachment. The pure soul misuses the freedom given by the Lord and desires to enjoy maya—this is the first weakness. Then, by moving in the world, attachment to sense pleasures grows—this is the second weakness. All troubles arise from these two weaknesses of the heart. In the first five verses of the chapter, to remove these weaknesses, the Lord teaches pure detachment. From the sixth verse to the end, He discusses the Purushottama truth along with pure detachment born from devotion. The difference between inert and conscious, how consciousness shines, and the analysis of worldly differences—these are the specially attractive topics of this chapter. Truly knowing this scripture means properly understanding the Lord’s qualities, influence, truth, and nature as described here, and realizing that Lord Sri Krishna Himself is Purushottama. Even if one knows the Supreme Soul’s existence and greatness, not accepting it wholeheartedly and not seeing the Lord as one’s own is the main obstacle in spiritual practice. Since the soul is a part of the Lord, it can never be separate from Him. Therefore, there is no other way to gain devotion except by accepting the Supreme Soul as one’s own. One cannot be separate from Him, so no doubt or question should arise about that relationship. Therefore, one should love and devote oneself to the Lord without hesitation. If a person does not accept relationship with the world, he becomes free and a true devotee. Expecting something in return from the Lord instead of pure devotion is mixed or impure devotion. If one does not expect fulfilment of desires from the Lord, one separates from Him. By fully surrendering oneself to the Lord, the devotee becomes one with Him. In the scriptures, the ways given by the Lord Himself to know His Purushottama truth can be taken as the summary of this chapter: (a) From the true viewpoint, see the world as an ashvattha tree (one whose staying is temporary and uncertain). (b) With the weapon of non-attachment, cut the accepted bonds with the world, seek the Supreme Soul, and take refuge in Him. (c) Experience the presence of the Supreme Soul in a pure heart. (d) Through study of

the Vedas, become aware of the glory and influence of the Supreme Soul in the soul.
(e) Know Lord Sri Krishna as Purushottama, worship Him in every way, and remain devoted to His service.

**Om tat sat || iti śrīmad bhagavad-gītāsūpaniṣatsu brahma-vidyāyām yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde Purusottama Yoga nāma Panchadaśo'dhyāyaḥ ||15||**

Thus, with the utterance of the sacred words “Om, Tat, Sat,” the Fifteenth Chapter, called “Purusottama Yoga ” of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which is the essence of Brahma-vidyā (the knowledge of the Absolute) and Yoga, and which is in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, comes to an end.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 16 (Daibasura Sampada Vibhaga Yoga)

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**abhayaṁ sattva-saṁsuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaś ca yajñaś ca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam (16-1)**

**ahiṁsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaśunam
dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ mārḍavaṁ hrīr acāpalam (16-2)**

**tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nātimānitā
bhavanti sampadaṁ daivīm abhijātasya bhārata (16-3)**

Comm: In the 7th Chapter, verse 15, and in the 9th Chapter, verses 12 and 13, the Lord spoke about the threefold nature of divine, demonic, and rakshasic beings. In this chapter, He explains the same subject in a detailed manner. In verses 1 to 5, the Lord describes divine and demonic qualities along with their results. In verses 6 to 20, He explains the characteristics of people endowed with demonic qualities and their downfall. In verses 21 to 24, He urges the abandonment of actions opposed to scriptures and inspires one to follow scripture-approved conduct. The Lord mentions the 26 qualities of a liberation-seeking, God-oriented great soul in the first three verses. The main subject of this chapter is the clear distinction between divine and demonic natures. These divine qualities, known as Daivi Sampat, help a seeker attain Self-knowledge, experience inner bliss, and reach the

highest state of nirvikalpa samadhi. Every human being is born with these divine qualities. This is because the Supreme Lord Himself resides in the heart of every living being as their foundation. However, due to association with the three-fold Maya, the mind and intellect become covered by impurity, distraction, and ignorance, and these divine qualities do not fully develop. In humans, sattva, rajas, and tamas work together in a mixed form. Rajas and tamas lead towards bondage, while sattva guides one towards liberation. There is a close relationship between qualities and actions. Actions are performed according to one's dominant quality. A sattvic person performs righteous actions. Rajasic and tamasic persons engage in unrighteous actions. The Self or Brahman is actionless. It remains only a silent witness. All sattvic tendencies are called divine wealth (Daivi Sampat). In the 13th chapter (Kshetra–Kshetrajna Yoga), the Lord described twenty qualities as “knowledge”, which align fully with these divine qualities. This shows that moral purity and spiritual growth go together for a sincere seeker. When God alone becomes the sole goal, divine qualities naturally manifest in the seeker. Due to impressions from previous births, some divine qualities may also appear in this life. The attainment of these divine qualities depends entirely on God's grace. When this understanding is maintained, ego does not arise in the seeker due to divine qualities. These qualities act as a guiding light for the liberation-seeker. Like a lamp, they remove the darkness of delusion and give bright illumination. The 26 divine qualities are practically useful in daily life as described below: (1) Fearlessness: Fearlessness is the first and most important divine quality. Fear arises from the fear of death and the loss of possessions such as family, wealth, honor, and status. Avoiding one's duty and engaging in sinful actions also create fear. When one realizes that all worldly possessions including the body are temporary, and that the Self alone is eternal, fear disappears. A Self-realized yogi, a truthful, virtuous, God-centered person is completely fearless. For one who experiences Brahman-bliss, nothing in the world can cause fear. Fear arises when knowledge is covered by ignorance. (2) Purity of Mind (Sattva-shuddhi) Purity of mind and intellect means absence of hypocrisy, deceit, and false conduct. Growth of sattva, freedom from doubt, and one-pointed concentration qualify the heart to remember God. Without faith in God, inner purity cannot arise. (3) Steadfastness in Knowledge and Yoga Meditation on the Upanishadic truth “I am Brahman” and realization of the Self is knowledge. Effort to control mental modifications is yoga. Direct experience of God according to scripture and guru's guidance is called steadiness in Jnana-Yoga. (4) Charity: Helping others selflessly according to one's capacity is charity. Giving food, knowledge, kind words, service, time, labor, land, or even life for others' welfare is charity. (5) Self-control (Dama) Control of the senses and self-discipline is dama. A disciplined life restrains sense indulgence. Qualities like patience, truthfulness, non-violence, and forgiveness arise from self-control. (6) Sacrifice (Yajna) Performing duties selflessly according to one's role, capacity, and situation is yajna. Worship, scripture observance, service to humanity, and devotion to elders are also yajna. (7) Self-study (Swadhyaya) Reading scriptures, discussing spiritual truths, chanting God's name, and

self-reflection constitute swadhyaya. True self-study means internalizing scriptural truths through experience. (8) Austerity (Tapas) Enduring hardship while performing one's duty is tapas. Tamasic austerity done for harmful purposes is condemned. Moderate bodily discipline for liberation is approved. (9) Straightforwardness (Arjavam) Simplicity and absence of pretence in thought, word, and action is straightforwardness. Truthful and just persons are naturally simple. (10) Non-violence: Not causing physical or mental harm to any being through thought, word, or deed is non-violence. Violence arises from anger, greed, and jealousy. God-consciousness removes it. (11) Truth: Speaking what is real, beneficial, and pleasant is truth. That which is eternal and imperishable is spiritual truth. (12) Absence of Anger: Remaining calm in all situations is absence of anger. Self-control and forgiveness support it. (13) Renunciation : Giving up desires, ego, and attachment to results is renunciation. Renouncing doership is the highest renunciation. Renunciation leads to peace. (14) Peace : Calmness of mind, stability of intellect, and absence of restlessness is peace. Peace arises from self-control and renunciation. (15) Absence of Slander : Avoiding gossip, fault-finding, and criticism of others is absence of slander. God-centered living removes these tendencies. (16) Compassion for All Beings Kindness towards suffering beings arises from Self-knowledge. God's compassion toward devotees is limitless. (17) Absence of Greed Freedom from craving and excessive attachment to objects is absence of greed. (18) Gentleness : Humility, softness, and kindness of nature is gentleness. Gentle persons attract love and respect. (19) Sense of Shame : Feeling shame in doing prohibited actions protects one from wrongdoing. (20) Steadiness : Absence of childish restlessness and thoughtless actions is steadiness. (21) Spiritual Radiance : Inner brilliance empowers a person to uplift society. Such a person's words and actions transform others. (22) Forgiveness : Forgiving even when one has the power to punish is forgiveness. A forgiving person remains unaffected by insult. (23) Fortitude : Remaining steady and dutiful even in adversity is fortitude. It leads to both worldly and spiritual success. (24) Cleanliness : External cleanliness and inner purity free from attachment and hatred is cleanliness. (25) Absence of Malice : Not harming or blaming others without reason is absence of malice. A Self-realized person sees harming others as harming oneself. (26) Humility (Non-pride) : Not seeking praise, honor, or recognition is humility. Spiritual ego is a major obstacle on the path. A seeker who accepts God-realization or liberation as life's highest goal naturally develops these divine qualities. These qualities remove all obstacles on the path to eternal peace, liberation, and supreme bliss.

**dambho darpo 'bhimānāś ca krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca
ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm (16-4)**

Comm: O son of Pritha! Those who are born with demoniac (asuric) nature for the sake of enjoying material pleasures show traits like performing religious acts as a pretense to gain fame, pride due to wealth and relatives, exaggerated self-importance, anger, cruelty, and lack of discrimination. These are rajasic and tamasic qualities. Dambha

(hypocrisy or ostentation): It is false behavior done to prove oneself as righteous, wealthy, learned, or virtuous. Hypocrisy is another name for dambha. Darpa (pride or arrogance): It is the unnecessary feeling of pride in one's mind based on physical beauty, knowledge, wealth, or influence. A proud person cannot tolerate others' prosperity. He spends his life in an imaginary sense of self-respect and greatness, thinking that no one is equal to him. Abhimana (conceit or ego): "I am powerful, I am wealthy, I am knowledgeable, I am a renouncer, I am happy with wife and children, I am charitable, I am God" – these self-proclaimed titles are body-based ego, which are temporary and impermanent. This false body-identification and ego appear in the speech and behavior of an egoistic person. Krodha (anger): When desires are not fulfilled, a vengeful excitement burns inside the heart – that is anger. Just seeing others' entertainment, wealth, or good fortune creates agitation in the mind – that too falls under anger. An angry person loses judgment and causes harm to himself and others. Parushya (harshness or cruelty): Behaving cruelly toward others out of hatred is harshness. Insult and harsh words are verbal harshness. Lack of humility and gentleness is physical harshness. A feeling of revenge is mental harshness. These are seen in the behavior of people with demoniac nature. Ajnana (ignorance): A person without discernment cannot properly understand what should be done and what should not. Due to lack of judgment, an ignorant person cannot decide what is true or false, right or wrong, allowed or forbidden actions. He acts blindly like a fool. As a result, an ignorant person walks the path of destruction. The above six demoniac qualities are obstacles on the path to liberation (moksha). Such people have no faith in scriptures, moral sayings, or saints and sages. For a person with demoniac nature, hypocrisy, unjust accumulation of wealth, and indulgence in sensual pleasures with women and riches become the goal of life. They take birth having already accepted these inauspicious impressions even while in the mother's womb.

**daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandhāyāsuri matā
mā śucaḥ sampadam daivīm abhijāto 'si pāṇḍava (16-5)**

Comm: Divine qualities act like a bridge on the path to liberation, whereas demoniac qualities become the cause of bondage. The Lord says, "O Arjuna, do not grieve. You need not feel sorrow. You are born in a noble lineage, and you are fit for divine qualities and for following your own sacred duty." In this verse, the Lord explains the results of both divine and demoniac qualities. The desire, "I want to live only for enjoyment and pleasure," is the main characteristic of demoniac nature. Divine qualities are associated with faith in God, while demoniac qualities are associated with disbelief. By the strength of divine qualities, a human being attains supreme bliss and liberation. Since every living being is a part of the Supreme Lord, divine qualities are naturally present in everyone. But when a person turns away from the Supreme Lord, and faces material nature instead, that is, when one identifies oneself with the perishable body, demoniac qualities arise in that person. Those who are controlled by sensual enjoyment and commit sinful, unjust, and immoral actions,

first attain demoniac births, and later, according to their misconduct, fall into lower states of existence. The world continues to exist on the ignorance-born belief, “I am the body, and the body is mine.” The moment this false notion is removed by true knowledge, the accepted bond with the material world is destroyed, and all the bad qualities and immoral tendencies of demoniac nature begin to decline. Gradually, all the noble qualities of divine nature, which are the cause of liberation, begin to manifest. When a person holds the feeling, “May the welfare of all beings take place,” and offers one’s so-called body, senses, mind, intellect, wealth, and possessions to the Lord for the welfare of the world, the natural oneness between the individual and God becomes revealed. This itself is Self-knowledge. This is what the Lord indicates by the phrase “Divine qualities lead to liberation.” Because Arjuna had to enter the battlefield with the intention of fighting and killing brothers, relatives, and revered elders, family attachment and fear of sin (adharma) arose together in his mind. Seeing Arjuna feel ashamed, thinking that this reaction might be due to demoniac traits such as cruelty and anger, the Lord speaks words of reassurance and says: “O Arjuna, do not worry. Even if you do not recognize it yourself, you are born in a warrior family and are endowed with divine qualities. In a righteous war, taking life or causing pain is not considered cruelty or sinful violence for a Kshatriya.” Therefore, hearing this instruction, you should give up your sorrow. Indirectly, the Lord gives this teaching: a spiritual seeker should never lose hope regarding spiritual progress. “The moment a living being turns toward Me, the sins of millions of births are destroyed.” (Ramcharitmanas 5.44.1) . That means: As soon as a soul turns toward the Lord, the sins accumulated over countless births are completely destroyed.

**dvau bhūta-sargau loke ’smin daiva āsura eva ca
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuram pārtha me śṛṇu (16-6)**

Comm: O Partha! In this world, two types of beings are created: divine (daivi) and demoniac (asuri). I have already explained in detail about the divine nature, that is, beings with godly qualities. Now, listen from me about the creation of beings with demoniac nature. The statement from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is: “Dvayā ha vai prajāpatyā devāśca asurāśca” – meaning, Prajapati Brahma has two kinds of children: devas (gods) and asuras (demons). Every human being in this world belongs to one of these two categories. Those who worship God are divine (daivi), and those who turn away from God are demoniac (asuri). These two types of created beings act according to their own nature or qualities. Another name for the Supreme Soul is “Deva”. All the good qualities and good conduct that are means to attain the Supreme Lord are called divine wealth (daivi sampada). On the contrary, those who hate devotees and God are called asuras. In reality, these divine and demoniac categories are born based on past impressions (samskaras) where either sattva guna dominates or rajas and tamas gunas dominate. Divine nature is that in which sattva is prominent. The saying is: “Indriyeṣu ramate iti asura” – meaning, one who delights only in sense pleasures is an asura. People with demoniac nature ignore

dharma and scriptures and spend their lives in sensual enjoyment. Those who are born with divine wealth or divine qualities follow the path approved by scriptures and live a disciplined, restrained life. By nature, every being has some divine traits and some demoniac traits. As it is said in the Ramcharitmanas (5-40-3): “Sumati kumati saba ke ur raha hīm. Nātha purāna nigama asa kaha hīm.” That means : O Lord! The Puranas and Vedas say that good intelligence and bad intelligence reside in everyone’s heart. If attaining the Supreme Lord becomes the goal of life, then good thoughts gain dominance and bad thoughts start getting destroyed. If worldly enjoyment becomes the goal, then bad thoughts gain dominance and good thoughts gradually disappear.

**pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ
na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate (16-7)**

Comm : O Arjuna, a person of demonic nature does not truly understand what actions should be done according to duty and righteousness, and what actions should be avoided because they are against scripture and dharma. Because of this, people of demonic nature do not possess purity of body or purity of mind. They never speak the truth. Falsehood is seen everywhere in their conduct. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says in his commentary on the Gītā that people with demonic nature are impure, undisciplined, deceitful, and habitual liars. They are completely ignorant of the difference between the body and the Self. Because of strong identification with the body, they perform actions only for sense pleasure. Falsehood and deception become their main support in life. Due to lack of discriminative intelligence, they are unable to judge properly between dharma and adharma, duty and non-duty, sin and merit, good conduct and bad conduct. Therefore, no pure intention or righteous resolve arises in their inner mind. Such people do not follow moral rules and principles meant for the welfare of society. As a result, social order becomes disturbed and miserable due to their influence. Swami Vidyānandagiri says in his explanation of the Eighteen Discourses that a person of demonic nature is ignorant of both the path of action (pravṛtti) and the path of renunciation (nivṛtti), which lead to freedom from worldly suffering. The householder’s life belongs to the path of action, while the stages of brahmacharya, vanaprastha, and sannyāsa belong to the path of renunciation. According to some commentators, the words pravṛtti and nivṛtti also indicate creation and dissolution. A person of demonic nature is completely ignorant of these truths as well. Throughout the entire Bhagavad Gītā, the Lord never expresses hatred or vengeance toward sinful or wicked people. Instead, He shows them a path of hope by pointing toward liberation from ignorance. From this it is clear that there is no lack of compassion or kindness in God’s heart even toward people of demonic nature. A demonic person follows falsehood knowingly. The real truth is that, being helpless under the force of his own nature, he feels incapable of behaving honestly. In fact, even a demonic person does possess knowledge of right and wrong. This is proven by many ancient examples. Although Rāvaṇa, the king of Lanka, was extremely wicked, he was also a great scholar and a devotee of Lord Śiva.

In the Mahābhārata, Duryodhana himself once said, “I know what dharma is, but I am unable to act according to it. I know what adharma is, but I am unable to withdraw from it. As some power seated in my heart inspires me, so do I act.” The power seated in the heart that Duryodhana refers to is nothing but demonic nature itself.

**asatyam apratiṣṭhaṁ te jagad āhur anīśvaram
aparaspara-sambhūtaṁ kim anyat kāma-haitukam (16-8)**

Comm: According to people of demonic nature and followers of extreme illusionism, the world is unreal, without any foundation, and without God. They say the world is unreal like the son of a barren woman, without support like a flower in the sky, and godless, meaning that there is no divine cause behind creation, preservation, and destruction. According to the naturalistic Buddhists, the world arises purely from its own nature. The Cārvākas and other materialists hold the view that the world is unreal and that even the scriptures which declare truth are unreal. They believe that there is no such reality as Brahman, the support of the universe. They also do not accept the existence of God in the world. According to them, sexual desire alone is the only cause of the creation of living beings. They say there is no such thing as the law of karma. They believe that the world has come into existence merely by the union of man and woman driven by lust. According to them, there is no concept of dharma or adharma. The conclusion of such demonic-minded people is that the world has not arisen from any orderly chain of cause and effect. That is, there is no need for, nor existence of, any supreme cause called God. Rejecting the authority of the Vedas and other authentic scriptures, they try in vain to explain the origin of the world using their own imaginary arguments. According to the Purāṇas, the earth rests upon Śeṣanāga who dwells in the netherworld. But people of demonic nature believe that the world has no foundation at all. They follow only direct perception as valid knowledge. What they cannot see with their own eyes, they do not accept. Since they do not directly see God or any divine being, they deny the existence of God. Therefore, they say that inquiry into Brahman and higher truths is a useless effort. Because they see that the world expands through the union of man and woman, they conclude that desire alone is the root cause of the world. In modern society, a group with this demonic tendency appears under the name of “rationalists.” They insult and reject all the principles of our Sanātana Dharma by claiming that it is not based on science. They argue that no eternal, unchanging foundational principle is required for the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the universe. However, modern scientists are now beginning to accept that without an eternal and unchanging foundation, change in the universe cannot occur or even be understood. The process of change is a subtle and relative transformation within nature. Just as a motion picture cannot be projected without a stable and unmoving screen, appearances cannot arise without a supporting base. That eternal support of the entire universe is called Truth or God. Based on the Upaniṣads, the origin of the world is accepted as a definite sequence. According to the Taittirīya Upaniṣad

(2.1), from the Self arose space, from space arose air, from air arose fire, from fire arose water, from water arose earth, from earth arose plants, from plants arose food, and from food arose living beings. Thus, the creation of the world is explained in a well-defined order. Some commentators criticize Śrī Śaṅkarācārya by calling him an illusionist because of his statement, “Brahman is real, the world is false.” In reality, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya never said that the world is unreal like a barren woman’s son or a flower in the sky. He stated that the world is indescribable, different from both absolute reality and absolute unreality. Although the world is real as a flowing process, all the names and forms through which it appears are not eternal. They are changing every moment. From this point of view, the world may be called unreal. Śrī Rāmānujācārya said that according to the Vedas, Smṛtis, and other scriptures, Brahman alone is eternal, everlasting, and the fundamental support of the universe. Brahman is both the material cause and the efficient cause, inseparably connected with the entire world.

**etām drṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno ’lpa-buddhayaḥ
prabhavanty ugra-karmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato ’hitāḥ (16-09)**

Comm: Those who adopt the above-mentioned false worldview and whose nature has become completely corrupted—these evil-minded, harmful, and cruel-acting people—are born only to cause the destruction of the world. They have no faith in any true religious practice or spiritual path. Because they believe that desire (kama) is the main cause behind the creation of the world, they encourage unrest, quarrels, destruction, immorality, and similar evils in society. Here, atheists are called “nasta-atman” (ruined souls). Since they have turned away from the conscious principle (the soul/atma), their downfall is already complete. People with demoniac nature neither believe in God’s existence themselves, nor do they tolerate those who do believe. The term “alpa-buddhayaḥ” (limited intelligence) refers here to people who completely abandon the goals of dharma (righteousness) and moksha (liberation) and act only under the control of artha (wealth) and kama (desire). When they do actions against moral principles, they have no thought of right or wrong, sin or virtue. They have no interest in heaven, nor any fear of hell. These are moving pillars of sinful fame. They do all their actions only for selfish gain and fulfilling desires, and they destroy peace and harmony in the world. In their desire to bring the world under their control, they take shelter in violence. Whoever resists them, they kill that person. They feel no hesitation at all in committing violence or murder. For these people with ruined nature, the only purpose of their power, wealth, prosperity, ability, position, authority, etc., is to use them for destroying the world. Through mind, speech, and body, they keep all living beings in fear, cause them pain and suffering, and perform extremely fierce actions like destroying them. Whether in the name of developing human civilization or for enjoying material things, inventing new substances and misusing them to cause unprecedented harm to human society is also the work of these violent-minded people. They strive to invent such substances or machines that can become the cause of destruction of the entire

living world. Atomic weapons, nuclear bombs, chemical weapons, and similar things have been specifically created for the destruction of the world. Because they do not accept the existence of God, such atheistic thinking arises.

**kāmam āśritya duṣpūraṁ dambha-māna-madānvitāḥ
mohād gr̥hītvāsad-grāhān pravartante ’śuci-vratāḥ (16-10)**

Comm: These atheistic people of demoniac nature live by depending on desires that are impossible to fulfill in any way. Being intoxicated with hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance, and deluded by ignorance, they accept false conclusions that are against the scriptures. Entertaining many false hopes, they become engaged in the worship of minor deities through tantric practices, mantras, and impure vows. People of demoniac nature, who live only for sense enjoyment, do not believe in God, life after death, the law of karma and its results, or destiny. The greater a person’s hunger for desires, the more sinful that person becomes. Pretending to be what one truly is not, for the sake of praise and honor in worship and respect, is called hypocrisy. Thinking oneself to be learned, wealthy, or intelligent, and considering oneself worthy of worship and honour above all others, is called pride. Being intoxicated with beauty, virtues, power, knowledge, wealth, wife, children, titles, and similar things is called arrogant intoxication. People of demoniac nature, intoxicated with hypocrisy, honour, wealth, and physical power, remain absorbed only in fulfilling their selfish interests. They consider it an achievement and a matter of pride to violate the scriptures, the Vedas, the varna-ashrama system, and traditional family values. Because of their corrupted intellect, they stubbornly accept what should not be done as duty, unrighteousness as righteousness, and sin as virtue. People of demoniac nature remain fully involved in immoral activities such as intoxication, sexual indulgence, and gambling, thereby creating various kinds of disorder in society. Ignoring all the noble values of human life, they become shameless, intolerant, and cruel, and remain constantly engaged in struggle in their field of action. In this verse, Lord Krishna clearly describes how a materialistic and ignorant person, influenced by atheistic thinking, lives under the control of demoniac tendencies, spending life in the desire for momentary sense pleasures.

**cintām aparimeyāṁ ca pralayāntām upāśritāḥ
kāmapabhoga-paramā etāvad iti niścītāḥ (16-11)**

Comm: Up to death, that is, until their final breath, these atheistic people spend their lives thinking endlessly about sense enjoyment. They firmly believe that attaining pleasure through the senses is the highest goal of human life. They strongly conclude that fulfilling desire and lust is the supreme purpose of life, and that there is nothing beyond this. They accept the rigid belief that everything visible in the world—whether living or non-living—exists only for bodily enjoyment. Because of this gross and corrupted understanding, people of demonic nature are unable to perceive subtle and

higher truths. In the present age, this way of thinking can be seen to some extent in almost all human beings. In this unstable and momentary world, no one knows what will happen in the very next moment. Yet, even while living in such uncertainty, people with demonic tendencies continue making countless plans for happiness until death. Their lives end while they remain absorbed in thoughts of making those plans successful. Their minds are focused only on collecting objects of pleasure and remaining immersed in enjoyment, with no attention toward anything else. According to their belief, after death the body simply merges into the earth. Therefore, they think it is right to enjoy all worldly pleasures while they are alive. They remain ignorant of what true joy and peaceful life really mean. They waste all their energy in false hopes and fruitless actions. In the end, they become exhausted, disappointed, sorrowful, and distressed. Finally, they meet a miserable and dreadful death, sometimes even through acts like suicide. If you want, I can also:

**āśā-pāśa-śatair baddhāḥ kāma-krodha-parāyaṇāḥ
īhante kāma-bhogārtham anyāyenārtha-sañcayān (16-12)**

Comm: People with demonic (asuric) nature remain bound in hundreds of nooses made of desires. They become slaves to lust and anger, and constantly remain worried due to their desire for momentary sensory pleasures. To fulfill their desires, they strive to accumulate the necessary resources through unjust and dishonest means. Accumulating wealth and enjoying material objects is the main goal of people endowed with demonic qualities. To fulfill their desires, they do not take refuge in God, any deity, good deeds, or noble thoughts; instead, they mainly rely on lust and anger. There is no greater bondage in the world than desire. Just as a silkworm creates threads from its own body and gradually gets trapped in them, leading to its death, similarly, a lustful person creates many desires in the mind, gets entangled in them, and invites his own death. The intellect of a person bound by desires does not remain steady. Even in small matters, they lose patience and forfeit discernment and mental balance. Worldly desires are never fully satisfied. Even if they are fulfilled, the obtained object either leaves them, gets destroyed, or even if the enjoyable object remains, they are unable to enjoy it or are no longer alive. Due to unfulfilled desires, they become vengeful and cause harm to others. There is a scriptural saying: “Hope is the greatest suffering; freedom from hope is the greatest happiness”—desire causes great sorrow, while detachment from desires brings supreme joy. To acquire the financial resources needed for sensual enjoyment, they engage in injustice and oppression. Their desires have no end. Even after becoming owners of vast wealth acquired through unfair means, their greed for money does not diminish; rather, it increases day by day. As a result, they fall prey to greed and commit sins. In their hearts, there is no place for compassion or righteousness. They remain engaged in trying to seize others’ wealth through methods forbidden by scriptures, such as theft, cheating, lying, deceit, gambling, and intimidation. They remain completely ignorant about the supreme peace of life.

**idam adya mayā labdham imaṁ prāpsyē manoratham
idam astīdam api me bhaviṣyati punar dhanam (16-13)**

Comm: “Today I have obtained the object I desired. After this, my other desires will also be fulfilled. I already have so much wealth, and in the future, I will get even more wealth.” In this way, like building a palace in empty space, a person of demonic nature nurtures many false hopes and keeps wandering in an imaginary world. Dreaming of becoming the owner of everything visible on all sides, he wastes his life. Till today, no materialistic wealthy person has ever felt satisfied by thinking that the wealth he possesses is sufficient. As his wealth increases, his desires also keep increasing in the same proportion. Day and night, he remains mentally obsessed with collecting more and more wealth. Because of wealth and possessions, such people become proud and arrogant. Greed for wealth and self-conceit destroy their intellect and sense of discrimination. For the sake of bodily pleasures, without thinking about righteousness or unrighteousness, sin or virtue, they accept fulfillment of desires and accumulation of wealth as the main goal of life. Due to ignorance, people of this nature live an extremely restless, fearful, and miserable life. Without searching for real happiness, they become crushed by sin and suffering in this life as well as in the next.

**asau mayā hataḥ śatrur haniṣyē cāparān api
īśvaro ’ham ahaṁ bhogī siddho ’haṁ balavān sukhī (16-14)**

Comm: People with demonic nature float around in a dream world by constantly imagining useless and fanciful things in their mind. This verse describes how they do that. They think like this: “I have killed that enemy, and I will also kill in this life all others who oppose me. I am the lord of this entire creation. I myself am God and the sole enjoyer of all wealth and luxuries. I am the perfect, fully satisfied, accomplished man in this world. I am powerful, strong, successful, and happy.” They consider themselves very mighty and greatly powerful, and imagine themselves as emperors who rule over a kingdom of pleasures. They think of themselves as the basis or foundation of all enjoyments and riches. They believe and proclaim that no one else in the world is equal to them, and that they alone are the greatest accomplished person. Just like Hiranyakashipu described in the Puranas, they consider themselves the supreme best. While outwardly boasting and praising their own greatness, people of demonic nature remain inwardly burning in the pain and torment caused by their sinful actions.

**ādhyo ’bhijanavān asmi ko ’nyo ’sti sadṛśo mayā
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya ity ajñāna-vimohitāḥ (16-15)**

Comm: I am wealthy. I belong to a high lineage and a large family. I have the support of many people behind me. No one is equal to me. I will perform many sacrificial rituals. I will give charity and gifts. I will live a life full of enjoyment and pleasure.” With this kind of mentality, a person of demonic nature lives in a deluded and restless

state due to ignorance. The meaning of the term ‘deluded by ignorance’ is the inability to understand things and situations as they really are. This state of misunderstanding itself is called delusion. Considering oneself to be the doer of all actions is the greatest ignorance. Such a person thinks that even Brahma, the creator of the universe, and Kubera, the lord of wealth, are not equal to him in front of his manpower and wealth. He distributes wealth and jewels only to those who praise him and provide objects of enjoyment for his pleasure. In reality, people of demonic nature do not perform truly sattvic sacrifices or genuine charity. Being controlled by ego and pride, they keep thinking, “I will do, I will do.” In fact, they either do nothing at all or do not sincerely wish to do anything. Only to spread their influence over others, they arrange showy rituals, charity, festivals, and other grand displays. Through such acts, they try to exhibit their own greatness and self-importance. Their real inner life is extremely painful and miserable.

**aneka-citta-vibhrāntā mohajāla-samāvṛtāḥ
prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣu patanti narake ’śucau (16-16)**

Comm: A person of demoniac nature remains completely drowned in useless worries born of many kinds of desires. Being bound in the net of delusion and being extremely attached to sense enjoyment, such a person commits many sinful acts. As a result, they have to suffer in foul-smelling hells like Kumbhīpāka. People of this nature are naturally materialistic and therefore do not accept the system of righteousness and unrighteousness. Due to attachment to lust, they remain involved in many sinful activities and live a very miserable and fearful life. Their mind is never steady. The mind keeps wandering and gets scattered in all directions. Because of lack of discrimination, they are unable to judge what is good and what is bad. Excessive attachment to collecting wealth, sexual enjoyment, a luxurious life, and showing one’s pride and arrogance—to the extent of losing reason and intelligence—is called being caught in the net of delusion. Just as a fish, driven by strong desire of the tongue, gets caught in a net and loses its life, in the same way, people of demoniac nature get trapped in the net of delusion and, being unable to come out of it in any way, fall into the jaws of death. A person with an undisciplined personality cannot experience peace and fulfillment in any condition. God has given human beings the capacity to attain equanimity, by which they can turn hell into heaven, and through a distorted outlook they can also turn heaven into hell. Heaven and hell depend on the balance or imbalance of a person’s inner mind. Beings who are destined for hell receive a “body of suffering” in this mortal world. Until a being suffering in hell has fully undergone the punishment of their sinful actions, even though extreme pain is inflicted, they do not die. Whatever condition a person lives in during life, the same kind of state becomes their destiny after death as well.

**ātma-sambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-madānvitāḥ
yajante nāma-yajñais te dambhenāvidhi-pūrvakam (16-17)**

Comm: Those people who are intoxicated with pride due to their wealth become extremely arrogant and egoistic. They declare themselves to be great souls full of all good qualities. Whether others accept them as established or great or not, they themselves promote and proclaim that they are established and famous. They have no humility or gentleness at all. Their mind and intellect are completely filled with self-conceit. They do not give proper respect to gods, Brahmins, saints, or holy persons. They feel shy or hesitant to bow down humbly and offer respects to them. They always remain intoxicated with the pride of wealth and honor. Wealth and honor are the support and strength for people of demonic nature. Because of all this, their pride increases and their chest swells with ego. Without keeping any pure or sattvic attitude, they organize grand yajnas (sacrifices) only to increase their own fame and reputation. They have no faith in getting the fruits of yajna. They perform yajnas only to spread their name and fame in society. Because they have no belief in God, the afterlife, or the results of actions (karma), they pay no attention to the rules and regulations. They do not care about the scriptural rules for invoking deities in yajna, chanting mantras, giving donations, or offering dakshina (gifts to priests). Pretending to be knowledgeable, learned, and charitable, they stay involved in various religious activities. They create trust among ordinary people and fulfill their own selfish goals. Whatever they do, they do it only to deceive people. Ordinary people worship them as if they are God. Foolish people cannot understand their deception and accept them as highly elevated souls. A yajna without faith, without following rules, without mantras, without distributing food, and without dakshina is called a tamasic yajna. Such yajnas are performed by people of demonic nature. Lord Krishna has already said earlier that the word “yajna” should not be limited only to Vedic rituals. Any service or duty performed selflessly and offered to God should be accepted as yajna. In short, “Work offered to God is truly yajna.” Many political leaders and social workers appear to be working hard for the nation and society. Yet, the reason why there is no proper progress in peace, prosperity, and development in the country is the abundance of people with demonic nature and their deceptive mindset.

**ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ
mām ātma-para-deheṣu pradviṣanto ’bhyasūyakāḥ (16-18)**

Comm: Arrogant, boastful, proud, powerful people of demoniac nature, who constantly speak ill of others and are tormented by lust and anger, develop hatred toward the Supreme Lord who dwells as the inner witness in themselves and in all others. According to the scriptures, even remembering and contemplating God is a form of sacrifice (yajña). As stated by the Lord in the previous verse, people of this nature outwardly pretend to accept God only for fulfilling their own selfish interests. They add titles to their names and feel proud because of those designations. But in real life, just as a devotee depends on God, a demoniac person depends on ego, strength, pride, lust, and anger. Becoming aggressive and trying to dominate others is called pride (darpa). Such people firmly

believe that through arrogance, pride, and ego their honor increases, they receive respect everywhere, and their fame grows in the world. They think that life without desires and passions is useless and full of suffering. People of demoniac nature are extremely stubborn and believe that only their own opinion is true. The knowledge they possess is used for arguments and disputes, their wealth is used for intoxication and arrogance, and their strength and power are used to oppress others. Those who do not accept God, righteousness and unrighteousness, and the scriptures and Purāṇas take shelter of brute force and become hostile toward others. Taking shelter of pride, they become arrogant; being driven by lust, they engage in immoral conduct; and being dominated by anger, they indulge in violence. Even a slight resistance to their plans or actions makes them violent, and they cause harm to others. They do not even hesitate to kill someone if it suits their purpose. When strength, pride, lust, and anger combine, a person becomes lawless and inclined toward violence. Demoniac people slander saints, truth-loving, virtuous persons, and those who have faith in God. The Supreme Lord resides in all beings as the indwelling witness. Therefore, enmity toward anyone, hatred, and physical or mental violence are certainly offenses against God. Ignoring all divine virtues and living a life of ego, selfishness, and sensuality results in total destruction. A wicked person remains restless themselves and spreads an atmosphere of unrest around them. Such people do not believe that the present life is a preparation for the life after death.

**tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu narādhamān
kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu (16-19)**

Comm: The Lord says that He repeatedly casts those hateful, cruel, and sinful lowest among men into sinful wombs like animals in this world. People with demonic nature do not accept the supreme lordship of God and consider themselves as God. Having obtained a human body, they remain indifferent to their duties, become controlled by the mode of ignorance, and engage in many sinful activities. As a result, those who lose their human qualities are made by Me to take birth again and again in this miserable world in low and dark wombs. Repeated birth in low wombs is itself the experience of hell. People with demonic tendencies do not get birth as gods, ancestors, or humans, but certainly take birth many times in low species like lions, tigers, snakes, scorpions, mice, eagles, vultures, and other animals, birds, insects, and worms. “It is better to live in hell than to have the company of wicked people, which the Creator gives.” (From Manas 5/46/4) This means: Living in hell is better, but may God never give the company of wicked persons. Because living in hell destroys sins and brings purity, but staying with wicked people brings bad qualities and increases sinful actions. In this way, seeds of sin are sown that are not completely destroyed even after experiencing hell and eighty-four lakh births. Here a question arises: God is the savior of everyone—saints, holy persons, yogis, sinners, and wicked people alike. If He pushes people of demonic nature to even lower levels, then when and who will save them? The answer is: Although God is capable of doing, not

doing, or doing otherwise everything, still every soul must experience the fruits of its own actions. The Lord makes no distinction between saints and sinners. He ordains the fruits of actions for the soul, and according to those fruits, the soul takes birth in various species. “Good actions give good results, bad actions give bad results”—this rule of God never fails. Therefore, the soul itself is responsible for its birth in demonic species due to its own karmic fruits. The Lord Himself is the one who delivers the soul from the ocean of worldly existence. How can a soul that has turned away from God be delivered? Therefore, it has to take birth in inauspicious wombs from one life to another. But because the Supreme Soul resides as a witness in all beings and because the soul has supreme freedom in its true nature, at some auspicious moment or as a result of some past good karma, a glimpse of the light of knowledge of the Supreme Soul flashes for a moment in the heart of the human being. As a result, dormant discernment begins to awaken, and the person starts searching for the path of deliverance. In this way, the most merciful Lord knows, does, and casts even those lowest of men who hate Him into demonic wombs. Removing the past sins of the soul, purifying it, and showing it, the path of welfare is also the duty and purpose of the Lord.

**āsurīm yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani
mām aprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yānti adhamām gatim (16-20)**

Comm: It is as if the Lord speaks with regret, saying, “O son of Kuntī, even after obtaining this rare human body, ignorant people lose the golden opportunity to attain Me.” Instead of rising, they fall to an even lower state and take birth in wombs such as worms and insects. People of demoniac nature, being controlled by tamasic tendencies, enter lower and lower forms of life as the result of lust and anger. Because they deny the existence of the Supreme Lord, they are deprived of divine grace. Demoniac nature is opposed to spiritual progress. Therefore, until faith in God awakens in them, they keep wandering from birth to birth, attaining such low forms of life. There are examples where people of demoniac nature, after gaining great power through unscriptural sacrifices and austerities and receiving boons from gods, sages, and seers, reached the extreme limits of unrighteous oppression. In such cases, the Lord Himself incarnated on earth and destroyed them. According to the statements of the scriptures, one who dies at the hands of the Lord becomes freed from all sins. The lives of many demons such as Rāvaṇa, Kaṁsa, and Hiraṇyakaśipu are examples of this truth. Evil thoughts give rise to immoral actions, and immoral actions further strengthen evil thoughts. Therefore, as long as a person does not become concerned for their own welfare and destroy the evil tendencies rooted in their ego, they will surely suffer greater and greater torments of hell. It is true that animals, birds, and other lower beings do not possess the qualification to attain God. This is because their actions are limited and controlled by nature. Only human beings have been granted freedom of thought and feeling by God. Only in the human body has God given sufficient opportunity to change one’s nature and to purify the ego.

**tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet (16-21)**

Comm: Desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and envy—these are called the six enemies (ṣaḍ-ripu). These six are interconnected and of the same kind. Among them, the Lord says that desire (kāma), anger (krodha), and greed (lobha) are the root causes of all evil and the reason for going to hell. These three lead to the downfall of the soul. Every person who wants true welfare must completely avoid these three demonic qualities in every possible way. The root seed of all six enemies is desire (kāma). It is this desire that takes the form of anger and greed. When desire keeps getting fulfilled, it turns into greed through the attitude of accumulation. When there is an obstacle in fulfilling desire, anger arises. Constant thinking about an object as a means of enjoyment creates a strong desire to obtain it. Fulfilment of desire is like heaven or happiness; non-fulfilment of desire is like hell or suffering. In human life, experiencing both these states is unavoidable. Apart from enjoyment of objects, the desire for marital happiness is also included in kāma. For the purpose of continuing the lineage, desire is a natural instinct given by God to humans and all living beings. But the kind of desire that the Lord calls the gateway to hell is the impure or wrong desire. The desire that is considered righteous, part of the four goals of life (dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa), and offered to God, is not against dharma and follows the scriptures. Therefore, the desire that is against dharma and belongs to demonic qualities is the gateway to hell. Where there is desire, anger naturally finds a place. Anger is the result of the mode of passion (rajo-guṇa). When desire remains unfulfilled, the agitation and excitement that arise in the inner mind is called anger. Under the grip of anger, a person commits various sins like violence and revenge. Excessive desire makes a person attached to accumulation and creates greed. When desire is fulfilled, there is fear that something may obstruct it in the future, so the person starts hoarding wealth and possessions. Extreme craving for wealth and other things is called greed. As a result, a lustful person follows unjust and irreligious paths, snatches others' possessions and wealth, and gets involved in sinful acts. Insatiability is the natural quality of greed. A greedy person never finds true happiness or peace. Desire, anger, and greed—these three are the root cause of all human suffering, the enemies of peace, and the foes of devotion and knowledge. Giving importance to the non-self (body and senses) is desire, anger, and greed. Desire is related to women and men; anger is related to enemies; greed is related to wealth and possessions. When a person's mind is bound by desire, anger, and greed, his intellect becomes corrupt, his discernment remains asleep, and his mind gets filled with impure thoughts. Life becomes empty of happiness, peace, and purity, and turns into suffering; and after death, he gets birth in demonic species. Therefore, the Lord calls these three faults the destroyers of the soul. Here, destruction of the soul means the fall or degradation of the soul. When a person becomes controlled by desire, anger, and greed and acts against scriptures, dharma, and social norms, his downfall is certain. Even a

learned person or a yogi, no matter how hard he tries, cannot completely control these enemies. But a true devotee who takes shelter of a saintly guru, under the influence of holy company, easily engages in the service of God and becomes capable of conquering these enemies. The Bhagavad Gita is a spiritual scripture. Therefore, throughout the entire Gita, in most chapters, the Lord explains the need to give up desire, anger, and other such things, according to the context.

**etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya tamo-dvārais tribhir naraḥ
ācaraty ātmanaḥ śreyas tato yāti parāṁ gatim (16-22)**

Comm: O Arjuna, a seeker of liberation becomes fully free from lust, anger, and greed—the three gateways to hell. Being free from these, he becomes capable of engaging in spiritual practice for his welfare, in the form of worship of God, with faith and according to proper rules. By performing actions according to God’s command for his own upliftment, he attains liberation through purification of the mind. Giving up lust, anger, and greed, and selflessly developing the divine qualities and good conduct taught in the scriptures, is the true path of self-welfare. Practicing devotion to God while remaining controlled by lust and anger is like rowing a boat without loosening the anchor rope. When these three paths to hell are completely abandoned, the path to liberation becomes clear before the seeker. He then enjoys listening to the scriptures. He reflects deeply on them, meditates upon them, and finally attains liberation. In the Kāṭha Upaniṣad, in the dialogue between Yama and Naciketā, Yama tells Naciketā: “Śreyas and Preyas both come before a human being.” A wise person carefully examines and discriminates between the two. Preyas is that which appears pleasant at first but becomes dreadful in its results. Śreyas is that which appears difficult or unpleasant in the beginning but becomes highly beneficial in the end. Therefore, after examining both, choosing the path of Śreyas is the essence of the Lord’s teaching. By following the path of Śreyas, not only does the seeker attain personal welfare, but it also contributes to the welfare of the surrounding society. According to the Vedic system, life is arranged into four stages (āśramas) and four social orders (varṇas). This system is known as Varṇāśrama Dharma. Different duties, rules, and disciplines are prescribed for different varṇas and āśramas. By following these and engaging in sincere spiritual practice, a seeker can rise to the highest level of spiritual realization. The means to give up demoniac qualities and to adopt the path of Śreyas are described only in the scriptures of dharma. Therefore, studying the scriptures and living according to them is truly beneficial for human beings.

**yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnōti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim (16-23)**

Comm: A person who has the ability to act, but abandons the rules of the scriptures and performs actions under the control of desires according to his own wishes, gains neither purity of mind, nor heavenly happiness, nor liberation (moksha). Acting while

ignoring the scriptural rules that teach what should be done and what should not be done, and being motivated by desires like pride, ego, or fame, is called arbitrary conduct or self-willed behavior. The rules laid down in the scriptures coordinate knowledge and action. The purpose of this is that through pure actions and correct knowledge, the soul attains the state of purity in the mode of goodness (sattva-shuddhi), which is the foundation of fearlessness. The highest scriptures are the Vedas. The divine vision of Mother Veda shows every human being the path to discern what is good and what is bad. Sri Shankaracharya has indicated that the word “shastra” (scripture) refers specifically to the Vedas. Following the prohibitions and prescribed conduct given in the Vedas is considered following scriptural rules. Some commentators also include Smritis and Puranas under the category of scriptures. Performing actions motivated by sense-driven desires and the idea of enjoyment, based on the ritual section (karma-kanda) of the Vedas, becomes an obstacle to attaining God. Those who, influenced by orthodox or ritualistic scholars, give priority to sensory pleasures and commit sinful actions, are led by death to hell. Whatever is forbidden by the scriptures is sinful action, and performing such actions causes downfall and misery. Such a person does not attain the full supreme goal in life. A person driven by desire, encouraged by greed, and disturbed by anger always lives a restless and cruel life. Such a person neither obtains material happiness nor experiences the growth of the soul. When worship of deities is done according to scriptural rules, strength is infused into the senses. Worship of rishis (sages) increases knowledge. Worship of ancestors ensures that the family lineage continues in an excellent way and protects culture. Worship of God frees one from attachment and aversion, and brings the realization that the supreme truth is one consciousness pervading everything. The Gita itself is the complete scripture, which has come directly from the mouth of Lord Shri Krishna.

**tasmāc chāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te kāryākārya-vyavasthitau
jñātvā śāstra-vidhānoktaṁ karma kartum ihārhasi (16-24)**

Comm: Therefore, O Arjuna, in deciding duty and non-duty—what should be done and what should not be done—the scriptures alone are the final authority. Hence, after properly understanding the scriptural rules and prohibitions, a human being should engage in action in this world according to that authority. The living being, bound by illusion, gives up sattvic purity that reveals God and develops a tamasic, demoniac nature. Giving up this demoniac nature and practicing the ninefold devotion prescribed in the scriptures with faith is taught by the Lord in this chapter as the highest duty for the liberation of the soul. A welfare-seeking person should, according to their qualification and capacity, understand scriptural injunctions properly under the guidance of a guru and practice devotion to Śrī Hari. Before performing any action, one should consider what the scriptural command regarding that action is. This is a special feature of Sanātana Dharma—that all scriptural rules are so closely connected with our culture that they are reflected in daily conduct, family auspicious ceremonies, social customs, and the observance of festivals.

Without following scriptural authority or guidance, a person can never rise to the state of true fulfillment. Violation of scriptural ethics, social customs, and national laws is an offense and the cause of all kinds of downfall. When Arjuna turned away from battle, the Lord urged him by explaining that fighting injustice and unrighteousness is the duty of a Kṣatriya and is sanctioned by the scriptures. The Vedas, like a protective armor, are unique in bringing people away from harmful paths and giving beneficial instruction. By adopting the practical principles of yoga taught by Lord Śrī Krishna in the Bhagavad Gītā, great saints, sages, teachers, and noble souls attained supreme realization of God and proved this path to be flawless and directly beneficial for humanity. In this chapter, Yogeshvara Śrī Krishna has described in detail the two kinds of wealth—divine and demoniac. The place of these two tendencies is the human heart. By clearly understanding the results of both, a person should take shelter of divine qualities and attain the supreme state. Not becoming attached to the body and life-forces, and performing scripturally prescribed actions solely for the attainment of the Supreme Lord, is the true purpose of human birth.

**Om tat sat. iti śrīmad bhagavad-gītāsūpaniṣatsu brahma-vidyāyām yoga-
śāstre śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde ‘Daibasura Sampada Vibhaga Yoga’ nāma
Sodashadyāyaḥ || 16 ||**

Thus, with the utterance of the sacred words “Om, Tat, Sat,” the Sixteenth Chapter, called “Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga” (The Division between Divine and Demoniac Qualities) of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which is the essence of Brahma-vidyā (the knowledge of the Absolute) and Yoga, and which is in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, comes to an end.



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SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 17 (Sraddha-Traya Vibhaga Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

**ye śāstra-vidhim utsrjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ (17-1)**

Comm: Arjuna said, “O Krishna, those people who, due to ignorance or inability to properly understand the deeper meaning of the Vedas, Śruti and Smṛti scriptures, neglect scriptural rules, but still worship gods and goddesses with faith or with a theistic attitude—what is the nature of their faith? Please tell me whether such people attain the state of sāttvic, rājasik, or tāmasik persons.” Arjuna’s question is extremely important. Earlier, Arjuna had heard from the Lord that as long as sattva, rajas, or tamas exist in a living being, they become the cause of birth in one type of womb or another. In the previous chapter, the Lord said that those who neglect scriptural injunctions and act under the influence of desire fall down spiritually. Because of this, a doubt has arisen in Arjuna’s mind. His doubt is this: if a person has no bad intention, yet does not give importance to scriptural rules, but performs his prescribed duties with faith, believes in God, and worships various deities, does such a person not attain higher progress—such as purity of sattva and upward movement to higher births—through jñāna-yoga or karma-yoga? Generally, scriptural rules are neglected for three reasons. The first is ignorance. The

second is unfavourable circumstances, even without bad intention. The third is an attitude of opposition. In worldly life, due to agitation, mental stress, and anxiety, most people are not able to strictly regulate their lives according to scriptural injunctions. Even among the scriptures themselves, there appear to be statements that contradict one another. Their true meaning also needs proper interpretation. Moreover, scriptures are not easily available to everyone. Many people, even after reading them, cannot easily understand their inner meaning and fall into doubt. Despite all these limitations, a sincere person who has firm faith or devotion to noble life and religious ideals, who performs his duties faithfully according to his family tradition, varṇa-āśrama, and cultural practices, and who is guided by positive intentions, undoubtedly attains spiritual welfare. Arjuna's question has two aspects. The first is that a person who knows the scriptures, yet neglects scriptural rules due to enjoyment or bad intentions, cannot be called a person of true faith. The second aspect is that a person who lacks scriptural knowledge, but performs his prescribed duties with sincerity and faith, directly receives the result in the form of inner satisfaction. Attaining self-contentment through action is itself a visible achievement. Even without knowing the scriptures, a wise person is often seen to follow social customs and the conduct of elders with faith. Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha has said that ancestral traditions established by forefathers, the righteous conduct and good advice of elders, and the rules and disciplines of one's family tradition, are also regarded as valid forms of scriptural authority.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā dehinām sā svabhāva-jā
sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tām śṛṇu (17-2)**

Comm: The Lord said: O Arjuna! Those people who are unable to follow the rules of the scriptures in any way, but worship gods and deities with faith and belief in God, their faith is of three types: predominantly sattvic (goodness), rajasic (passion), or tamasic (ignorance). Faith arises from the natural disposition present in a person's inner being. This "natural disposition" (svabhāva) is the special accumulated impressions (samskaras) from actions done in past lives. The kind of flow of impressions in a person's inner being determines his nature, and from that nature arises the corresponding type of faith. Faith is a natural state of the inner being that is born at the final moment as the result of actions from many past lives. The faith that arises from hearing and studying the scriptures is called "born from scriptures" (śāstra-jā). The faith that arises from the natural disposition created by impressions from past lives is called "born from nature" (svabhāva-jā). According to the influence of the three gunas (qualities of nature), faith takes three forms. Sri Ramanujacharya has said that faith is the feeling that appears when accepting something that helps achieve one's desired goal. Desire, taste, or faith arises from the soul's alignment with dharma (righteousness). In whatever one has faith; faults are not

noticed. Faith removes the tendency to see faults. Through faith, firm belief is established. Therefore, a person's physical actions, mental feelings, and intellectual thoughts are naturally guided according to his faith. Since faith becomes visible outwardly only when connected with the mind, the purity of faith depends on the purity of the mind. Even if faith and devotion are of the highest quality, when connected with the human mind, they take different forms based on the gunas. As soon as a soul takes birth, it comes under the influence of maya (illusion) made of the three gunas, and maya stirs the mind. Even after many births, the influence of these three gunas does not go away. The feeling of faith that arises in the mind happens only according to these three gunas. When pure sattva guna increases, knowledge dawns. When faith or belief is connected with this knowledge, it leads the person on the path to liberation (moksha). When rajo guna becomes strong, faith becomes active in various worldly actions. When tamo guna is dominant, the faith that arises in the mind creates demonic tendencies, negligence, laziness, and so on. Since the soul comes in contact with material nature (prakriti), its connection with the various qualities of nature continues forever. A person's mental tendencies are formed due to this relationship with the gunas of nature. These mental tendencies can change when a person gets the company of a proper guru or teacher and follows his instructions, scriptural evidence, or rules.

**sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata
śraddhā-mayo 'yañ puruṣo yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ (17-3)**

Comm: O Arjuna, descendant of the Bharata dynasty, every person's faith or belief is according to the tendencies of their inner mind, that is, according to the nature of their consciousness. No human being is without faith. Every person is endowed with faith; that is, the inner mind of every person is filled with faith. Just as the food sheath is filled with food, and the bliss sheath is filled with bliss, in the same way the inner mind of a human being is filled with faith. All living beings possess faith. In this world, all creatures have feelings of love and faith. The entire world is pervaded by faith, but this state is not beyond the three qualities (gunas). It is influenced by the gunas. According to the impressions stored in their inner mind, all human beings develop attachment and aversion toward worldly objects. Whatever type of mental tendency a person has, that same type of faith arises in them. The words "svabhava" (nature) and "sattva" are synonymous. Based on the merits and demerits, sins and virtues of past births, certain impressions are formed in the inner mind, and these self-created impressions become a person's own nature. As a person's faith is, so does that person become. A person's tendencies and character are formed on the basis of their faith. Faith alone is the measure of one's intellect and character. Faith alone shapes conduct and behaviour. Due to the differences of sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic faith, human beings become sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic. Acharya Shankara has said in his commentary that whichever impressions are strongest in the inner mind, the person's faith becomes according to those impressions. That is, a human being is driven by

impressions earned through past actions. The “purusha,” that is, the individual soul, takes birth in order to experience the fruits of actions and, under the influence of impressions, performs new actions. A person associates with others according to their own faith or belief. The cause of firm belief or faith in any matter is the quality of sattva. However, in materially bound life, no action born of material nature is completely pure. Actions are not purely sattvic; they are mixed. Pure sattva is divine. When a person remains in the state of pure sattva, they can understand the true nature of the Supreme Lord. Until a person’s faith becomes completely pure, that is, until they attain the state of pure sattva, their faith remains influenced by some quality of material nature and is therefore imperfect. Without faith in both the goal and the means, progress on the spiritual path is impossible. In worldly faith, enjoyment is predominant. In religious faith, emotional devotion is predominant. In spiritual or transcendental faith, truth and reality are predominant. Wherever true faith exists, love naturally arises.

**yajante sātṭvikā devān yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ
pretān bhūta-gaṇāṁś cānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ(17-4)**

Comm: The Lord, in this verse, explains in detail how different types of worship arise according to the differences in faith caused by the three gunas (qualities of nature). People whose nature is sattvic (pure and good-hearted) worship the highest gods and deities. People whose nature is rajasic (passionate and intense) worship yakshas and rakshasas (demonic beings). People whose nature is tamasic (ignorant and deluded) worship ghosts, spirits, and departed souls (bhutas and pretas). According to the scriptures, only the Supreme Lord (Param Purusha) is truly worthy of worship. Those who do not have faith in scriptural rules worship various deities according to their own nature and personal desires. The faith of sattvic people expresses itself on the sattvic path, the faith of rajasic people expresses itself on the rajasic path, and the faith of tamasic people expresses itself in the tamasic form. Sattvic people, who possess divine qualities, worship the thirty-three main deities mentioned in the scriptures—such as the twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, and the two Ashwini Kumaras—without any selfish motive. They worship with full mind and heart whichever form of God naturally inspires their faith. Here, the word “devān” (gods) should include the five supreme deities of the divine category: Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Shakti, and Surya. Because in the context of divine qualities (daivi sampatti), the word “deva” refers to God Himself, and His worship leads to liberation (moksha). Sattvic people, influenced by their pure and divine impressions, worship high and divine ideals. They become living examples of good conduct in the world, embodying the ideals of the scriptures, Vedas, and Smritis through their lives. Those who have rajasic faith worship yakshas and rakshasas to fulfill their personal desires. (Yakshas symbolically refer to figures like Kubera who are focused on gathering great wealth, and rakshasas refer to beings like Rahu and Ketu who are extremely powerful and destroy others through violence.) People with rajasic faith are naturally ambitious and active. They always desire

friendship with rich and influential people. Those with tamasic faith perform disgusting practices like tantric rituals and animal sacrifices to please ghosts and spirits (bhutas and pretas), and then use these spirits for harmful or evil purposes. Pretas (ghosts or unsatisfied spirits) are souls that, after death, do not take birth in any new body as a result of extremely sinful actions. Instead, they wander around in an airy body dominated by wind element, remaining unsatisfied. Just like the human species, the ghost/pretā species is also one kind of birth (yoni). It is obtained as a result of sinful actions that must be experienced. Here, the words “bhūta-pretā” indicate certain special kinds of tamasic powers or entities. By taking shelter of a true guru, studying the scriptures, or being in the company of good and holy people, the three types of faith gradually change: from tamasic to rajasic, from rajasic to sattvic, and from sattvic to the pure nirguna (beyond the three gunas) state.

**aśāstra-vihitaṁ ghoram tapyante ye tapo janāḥ
dambhāhaṅkāra-saṁyuktāḥ kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ(17-5)**

**karśayantaḥ śarīra-sthaṁ bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ
mām caivāntaḥ-śarīra-sthaṁ tām viddhy āsura-nīscayān(17-6)**

Comm: Those people who perform severe austerities without following scriptural rules are filled with hypocrisy and ego. They are driven by intense desires for enjoyment of worldly and otherworldly objects. By torturing the vital forces and the senses present in the body, they also cause pain to Me, the Supreme Lord, who dwells within the heart as the inner witness. Know such people to be of demonic nature. Those hypocritical and arrogant persons who perform austerities under the control of desire and attachment are guided by impulses of craving. They not only torture their own bodies but also cause suffering to others. A hypocritical person wants others to respect and accept them as a virtuous and great individual. In reality, such people are not truly noble in nature. Acharya Shankara has said in his commentary, “When actions are not performed according to the Lord’s instructions, the Lord is, as it were, pained.” Although the scriptures generally prescribe duties for everyone, only sincere spiritual seekers perform austerities according to scriptural rules with the aim of self-purification and liberation, seeking patience and grace from the deities. During such austerities, the mind remains calm, peaceful, and cheerful. On the other hand, most people, being rajasic or tamasic by nature, perform severe, non-scriptural austerities either to display their self-importance or out of attachment to desired objects. Giving up food for long periods, sleeping on beds of thorns, hanging upside down while inhaling smoke from a sacred fire, standing on one leg for long durations, exposing oneself to fire against scriptural injunctions, and inflicting various kinds of suffering on the body, mind, and senses—such practices are the austerities of people with demonic tendencies. Since the Supreme Soul dwells in the heart of all beings as the Self, causing pain to one’s own soul or to another’s soul is the same as causing pain to the Supreme Lord. The Lord condemns such practices and such practitioners. Such practices are not beneficial either for oneself or for others.

Even though such people may gain some powers as a result of their austerities, they misuse those powers due to the impurity of their inner mind. No kind of spiritual growth occurs through practices filled with ego and lack of discrimination. Therefore, sattvic faith should be carefully nurtured, so that it does not turn into attachment or craving and does not cause suffering to the body or the soul. Gautama Buddha received inspiration on this matter during his period of austerity from a lute player. He learned that if the strings of a lute are tightened too much, they break, and if they are too loose, no sound is produced. Wise moderation is true austerity, not cruel physical self-torture.

**āhāras tv api sarvasya tri-vidho bhavati priyaḥ
yajñas tapas tathā dānaṁ teṣāṁ bhedaṁ imaṁ śṛṇu (17-7)**

Comm: All people have three types of preferences for food according to the three gunas (qualities of nature). From the kind of food a person likes, we can determine whether his faith or disposition is sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic. Similarly, sacrifice (yajna), austerity (tapas), and charity (dana) are also of three types, and the Lord advises Arjuna to listen in detail about the differences in qualities among them. Even if a spiritual seeker is in any state—even the state of liberation while living (jivanmukta)—he should not completely give up the actions of sacrifice, austerity, and charity. These must be performed, because these three types of actions—sacrifice, austerity, and charity—purify the inner being of a person (Gita 18/5). The kind of food a person eats shapes his inner being accordingly, and faith also follows the nature of the inner being. If food is pure, the inner being becomes pure—”Purity of food leads to purity of sattva” (Chandogya Upanishad 7/26/2). Food particularly affects a person’s body and mind. A person’s qualities or mental tendencies, physical efforts, intellectual thoughts, behaviour toward others—all these are closely connected with his food preferences. From a person’s taste in food, his nature and character can be known. Therefore, the food or substances that build the body and mind must be pure, nutritious, full of essence, health-giving, and soft and sweet. Through pure food, spiritual strength develops, and purity of mind grows. Giving up the restlessness caused by rajo guna (passion) and the negligence and delusion caused by tamo guna (ignorance), and attaining a firm state of mind through the constructive awareness of sattva guna—this is called “purity of mind” (chitta shuddhi). Mental strength is infused into the body through food. The actions done by a person due to his nature are of two kinds: one is scriptural, the other is practical or daily. Eating, drinking, walking, talking, etc., are practical actions, while sacrifice, austerity, charity, etc., are scriptural actions. Both practical and scriptural actions are completely controlled by the mind.

**āyuh-sattva-balārogya-sukha-prīti-vivardhanāḥ
rasyāḥ snigdhaḥ sthirā hr̥dyā āhārāḥ sāttvika-priyāḥ (17-8)**

Comm: According to the science of Ayurvedic medicine, a human being’s body structure and nature depend on the food that is taken and, on the formation,

and condition of the seven bodily elements (food essence, plasma, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, and bone). The thoughts and impressions in the mind also correspond to the condition of these seven elements. Food also influences and regulates breathing and sleep. In a healthy person, breathing in and out occurs about 21,600 times within twenty-four hours. Due to the influence of food, excessive sleep increases the rate of breathing. As a result, there is a possibility of reduction in lifespan. Foods that increase a person's lifespan, generate sattvic strength and enthusiasm in the body, mind, and intellect, keep the body healthy, and bring happiness and peace are called sattvic foods. Foods that are juicy, oily or smooth like ghee, nourishing, tasty, and satisfying are dear to sattvic people. By consuming sattvic food, the inner mind becomes pure and spiritual power and right understanding increase. Pure food intake increases vital energy and physical strength. Such food strengthens mental stability and patience. Even while performing hard work, a person does not feel fatigue. Sattvic food keeps a person healthy in every respect. Food that increases affection and mental cheerfulness is also called sattvic. Food items are classified into different categories based on their qualities and usefulness. Juicy foods such as milk and sugarcane juice are called “rasya.” Butter, ghee, and oils produced from sattvic foods are called “snigdha,” meaning oily or nourishing substances. Foods whose essence remains in the body for a long time and helps keep the body fresh are called “sthira” or highly nourishing foods. Foods that are fresh and create a sattvic liking in the mind just by being seen are called “hridya.” Foods of the hridya category strengthen the heart, lungs, and similar organs and produce gentleness in mental activity and intellect. In this way, sattvic food is especially beneficial for both the body and the inner mind.

**kaṭv-amlā-lavaṇāṭy-uṣṇa-tīkṣṇa-rūkṣa-vidāhinaḥ
āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā duḥkha-śokāmaya-pradāḥ (17-9)**

Comm: The word “ati” (excessively), which is used with “uṣṇa” (hot), also applies to the other six words: kaṭu (bitter), amla (sour), lavaṇa (salty), tīkṣṇa (pungent), rūkṣa (dry), and vidāhinaḥ (burning). Foods that are extremely intense—causing shivering and excitement in the body; excessively sour, overly salty, heavily spiced, dry and hard without oil, more burning than lime, and causing inflammation—are loved by people of rajasic nature. Rajasic people choose food based on what satisfies the tongue. When eating such foods, water flows from the eyes and ears; there is increase of gas in the tongue, throat, and stomach; indigestion causes pain; teeth become weak and cannot chew hard things; coughing occurs—these and other physical sufferings keep the mind unhappy. As a result, many negative thoughts arise in the mind. Due to the effect of this food, the body quickly becomes prone to diseases. In this way, rajasic food is described as the giver of sorrow, grief, and suffering.

**yāta-yāmaṁ gata-rasaṁ pūti paryuṣitaṁ ca yat
ucchiṣṭam api cāmedhyaṁ bhojanaṁ tāmāsa-priyam (17-10)**

Comm: Foods that are unripe, or foods that have been prepared and left for more than one prahar (about three hours), foods that are tasteless or dry, foul-smelling, or cooked the previous day and become stale are liked by people of tamasic nature. Besides these, foods that are forbidden for sacrificial purposes, and impure or prohibited items such as fish, meat, and tobacco, are also dear to tamasic people. In the Manu-smṛiti, foods such as fish are declared to be strictly prohibited. It is said: “One who eats the flesh of a being is called an eater of that being’s flesh; one who eats fish is considered an eater of all flesh, therefore fish should be completely avoided.” This means that eating fish is equivalent to eating the flesh of all creatures and should always be avoided. Eating leftover food of anyone other than one’s teacher or elders is forbidden by the scriptures. Food that has been cooked long ago and has become cold, food that is overcooked, and fruits that have lost their natural juice or have become dry are not beneficial for health. Consuming rotten and foul-smelling food gives rise to mental disturbances, which is characteristic of people with demoniac tendencies. There are three kinds of food that should not be consumed: First, stimulating foods such as onion, garlic, spicy items, and impure foods like fish and meat. Second, food prepared or served by sick persons or by cooks and servers with impure thoughts or dull intellect. Third, food prepared in unclean places such as areas with drains and garbage, using polluted water, or food on which flies have sat or which contains hair, nails, or similar impurities. Through thousands of years of research and spiritual practice, Hindu scriptures have given a very important place to purity of food on the spiritual path. It is stated: “When food is pure, the mind becomes pure; when the mind becomes pure, constant remembrance of Brahman arises.” From the Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is known that food offered to God becomes beyond the three qualities. Such food keeps the body healthy and strong, purifies the mind, and inspires devotion to God. Vaishnavas and learned spiritual persons partake of such sanctified food.

**aphala-kāṅkṣibhir yajño vidhi-dṛṣṭo ya ijyate
yaṣṭavyam eveti manaḥ samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ (17-11)**

Comm: Scripture-prescribed selfless action itself is called yajna. With the firm conviction in mind that “performing yajna is my essential duty,” any yajna performed according to scriptural rules, without the slightest expectation of results, is sattvic in nature. The person performing yajna should not have any desire in the heart for honour, fame, attainment of heaven, or rebirth. At the beginning of creation, Prajapati Brahma instituted yajna and instructed all human beings to perform yajna in the form of their respective duties. Any yajna performed with devotion and faith, following proper rules and discipline, is pure and sattvic. There should be no attachment in the mind of the performer toward recognition or social respect. Actions done with a pure mind and

firm determination, solely for maintaining the body and exhausting past karma, are called niyata (regular) actions. Actions performed by following social, community, and national rules, with a spirit of service for the welfare of the world, are called naimittika (occasional) actions. Both daily (nitya) and occasional (naimittika) actions together are known as dutiful actions. From this viewpoint, all duties performed according to one's family tradition, social order (varnashrama), and individual capacity are also included within yajna. Any action performed selflessly, without attachment to results, free from ego of doership, and offered to the Lord, is yajna. A sattvic person, keeping self-purification in mind, joyfully performs actions for the welfare of society, the nation, and ultimately the entire world. Yajna purifies a person and helps the spiritual seeker progress on the path toward self-knowledge. For the complete development of sattvic nature, renunciation of desire for results is absolutely necessary. In sattvic yajna, sincerity and inner attitude are of the highest importance.

**abhisandhāya tu phalaṁ dambhārtham api caiva yat
ijyate bhārata-śreṣṭha taṁ yajñam viddhi rājasam (17-12)**

Comm: But O Arjuna! Any sacrifice performed only with pride and ego, just to show off one's wealth and importance, or keeping in mind fruits like attaining heaven, you should know that sacrifice as rajasic. Desire is the characteristic or expression of the rajo guna. People with rajo guna naturally perform all actions motivated by desire. The sacrifices performed desiring wife, son, wealth, house, fame, victory, power, etc., and for their fulfillment, those are rajasic sacrifices. In rajasic sacrifices, both the sense of being the doer and the enjoyer are present. "People should accept me as a giver, virtuous, and performer of sacrifices, and through this my fame in the world should increase" — with this attitude, performing sacrifice is called here as hypocritical sacrifice or sacrifice with pride. "I am learned, I am performing sacrifice, let me obtain enjoyment, fame, etc., let my enemies be destroyed, let there be no insult or humiliation for me" — being under the control of such desires for desirable outcomes and avoidance of undesirable ones, rajasic persons perform or cause to perform various sacrifices with great pomp, like ghee sacrifice, name sacrifice, food sacrifice, service to the poor as Narayana, etc., and propagate their own self-praise. Even if any sacrifice is performed as prescribed in the scriptures and with faith, if there is ego and attachment to fruits in it, then that sacrifice is a rajasic sacrifice.

**vidhi-hīnam asṛṣṭānnaṁ mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam
śraddhā-virahitaṁ yajñam tāmasaṁ paricakṣate (17-13)**

Comm: A yajna performed without following scriptural rules, and without feeding Brahmins or offering food charity in the form of service to the poor (Daridra Narayana), is called a tamasic yajna. Living beings are born from food. Therefore, food donation is a continuation of God's divine resolve, "Eko'ham bahu syāmi" — "I am One; I become many." In a food-offering yajna, after the meal, some money or goods are distributed by the

yajna performer as dakshina to Brahmins and poor people. At the conclusion of the yajna, dakshina is given as a sign of the satisfaction of the receiver and the spirit of renunciation of the giver. Along with charity, dakshina symbolizes complete surrender through body, mind, and speech. Failure to chant the prescribed mantras meant for the deities and the chosen form of worship, or chanting impure or incorrect mantras, is called mantra-less. A yajna performed without proper mantras according to rules becomes a futile yajna. The person organizing a yajna should possess sattvic faith. Any yajna performed with selfish intention and influenced by attachment and hatred is a tamasic yajna. No beneficial result is obtained from such a yajna. When there is no faith or loving devotion toward the yajna rules, and a person dominated by tamasic qualities bears all the expenses merely to display pride and arrogance, such performance only increases ego and vanity.

**deva-dvija-guru-prājña-pūjanam śaucam ārjavām
brahmacharyam ahimsā ca śārīraṁ tapa ucyate (17-14)**

Comm: Worshiping deities, Brahmins, gurus, scholars, and liberated great souls in the proper way, maintaining inner and outer purity, living with simplicity, observing celibacy (brahmacharya) in thought, word, and deed, and completely giving up harming or causing pain to others— all these actions together are called physical austerity (sharirika tapa). Austerity (tapas) is of three types based on the gunas: sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic. Based on the field or medium, austerity is of three kinds: physical, verbal, and mental. In physical austerity, the body has to work hard; in mental austerity, the mind; and in verbal austerity, speech. Therefore, the word “tapa” everywhere implies effort or disciplined labor. Naturally, in austerity, some discomfort to the body is inevitable. But all that discomfort is willingly accepted (as desirable). So, we should not take the meaning of “tapa” as mere torture of the body. Instead, it is better to understand it as a disciplined way of life through which wasteful expenditure of physical and mental energy is stopped, and that energy is directed toward self-welfare. Gathering materials for deity worship requires considerable effort, yet a true devotee feels joy and happiness in all these tasks. Here, the word “deva” (deities) mainly refers to the five principal deities: Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Shakti, and Surya. Among these five, one should worship without desire the personal chosen deity (ishta devata) toward whom one has the most faith. From the caste perspective, a Brahmin is one who has undergone proper sacraments, wears the sacred thread (yajnopavita), regularly chants the Gayatri mantra, performs sandhya vandana and bali vaishvadeva, and faithfully follows Brahmin dharma. From the conduct perspective, the term “dvija” (twice-born) applies to the three varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya. After being born from a human mother’s womb, freeing oneself from the bonds of material limitations created by nature and attaining steadfastness in the supreme bliss of one’s true Self-nature is the second birth. Therefore, those who have realized the Self are also called “dvija.” In society, Brahmins are symbols of purity, righteousness, and renunciation, so they

are always worthy of worship. Worship of the guru is well-known in all scriptures. In this verse, the word “guru” includes not only professional teachers and initiation gurus but also mother, father, acharya, elders, and any person superior to oneself in any way. Father, mother, and guru are always worthy of worship even if they are not learned or scholars. At times, a guru tests the disciple through hard physical service, such as offering dakshina. There is no hatred toward the disciple in this, nor any intent to merely cause suffering. Rather, the pure intention is to impart earned knowledge along with developing sufficient strength and activity for future life. Scholars (prajna or vidvan) and liberated souls (jivanmukta) who demonstrate scriptural truths through their conduct and guide society are always worthy of worship. Those who have realized “I am Brahman” are prajna (truly wise). Vidura, though born a Shudra, was a prajna and a yogi. The phrase “worship of deva, dvija, guru, and prajna” means: considering deities, Brahmins, gurus, and wise persons as forms of Narayana Himself, offering namaskar or full prostration, giving due respect and honor, trying to provide comfort through service, and offering incense, lamps, food offerings, etc., while reciting their praises— all such actions are described as worship (puja). In the act of worship, one should set aside ego and focus on purity and simplicity (straightforwardness). A spiritual seeker’s outward behavior should be free from deceit. A crooked person loses mental balance, capability, and peace. Observing brahmacharya involves mainly physical effort along with mental effort. “Brahmacharya” means restraint or complete renunciation of sexual desire, especially in certain stages of life (varnashrama). Through meditation, chanting, singing God’s names, inquiry, and prayer, the mind becomes pure, and sexual desire weakens. For this, besides mind control, sense control is absolutely necessary. Preserving semen (virya) increases sattvic energy in the body, which helps in spiritual welfare. In the householder stage (grihastha), faithfully following monogamy and uniting with one’s wife only for procreation is also included in brahmacharya. In another sense: “Brahmani charitum shilam brahmacharyam iti”— meaning, the natural habit of always dwelling in Brahman is brahmacharya. Until the body and mind are fully withdrawn from sense enjoyment, this is not possible. In the effort not to hurt others, one often has to accept physical hardship. Therefore, the spirit of non-violence (ahimsa) is also part of physical austerity. All the above actions have a special connection with the body, and through them, impurities of the mind and senses are destroyed, and the inner being becomes pure. That is why they are called physical austerity.

**anudvega-karam vākyam satyam priya-hitam ca yat
svādhyābhyasanam caiva vāñ-mayam tapa ucyate (17-15)**

Comm: A person whose words are truthful and beneficial, whose speech does not cause even a little pain in the listener’s mind, and whose sweet words bring joy to the heart as soon as they are heard, such a person is called a practitioner of *verbal austerity* (vācika tapasya). The speaker’s words should never be provoking or obscene in any

situation. Reciting the Vedas, chanting the names of God, and performing devotional singing (saṅkīrtana) are also forms of verbal austerity. Control of speech is a difficult spiritual practice. Speech is an organ of action, and because it is constantly active, it consumes a large amount of the body's energy. By practicing restraint of speech, a great amount of energy is saved, and deep inner peace is experienced in the mind. Words that are free from violence, jealousy, and hatred, and that are truthful while being filled with love, compassion, forgiveness, and goodwill, are certainly beneficial to others. Daily reading of scriptures such as the Shastras, Upanishads, Gita, Bhagavata, and Manas is prescribed. This helps spiritual progress. Through this practice, purity comes to speech, peace is attained, and inner spiritual strength is gained. Acharya Shankara has said in his commentary: "If a statement is pleasant and non-disturbing but is not true, then that statement cannot be called verbal austerity." In Manusmriti (4/138) it is said: "Speak the truth, speak what is pleasant; do not speak unpleasant truth; and do not speak pleasant falsehood—this is the eternal law." Its meaning is that a person should always speak the truth. If the truth is unpleasant, then even though it is true, it should not be spoken. Likewise, if something is false, it should not be spoken even if it is pleasant. This indeed is Sanatana Dharma (the eternal law). The Mundaka Upanishad says: "This pure, radiant Self is attained through truth, austerity, right knowledge, and constant celibacy." That is, this pure and luminous Self is realized through truthfulness, spiritual discipline, correct self-knowledge, and brahmacharya. The two indeclinable words "*ca eva*" also include other restrictions related to speech. For example, conversation should not be sarcastic or spoken with hidden harmful intentions. Many times, harsh speech and rough words force a person to pay a heavy price. They can even unknowingly create many enemies. Criticizing others, repeating others' faults with one's own mouth, talking more than necessary, making negative comments about the Guru and God, and reading obscene books— all these prohibited actions destroy verbal austerity. To avoid all these, the sincere practice of observing silence (mauna-vrata) proves very beneficial.

**manah-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ
bhāva-saṁśuddhir ity etat tapo mānasam ucyate (17-16)**

Comm: Mental Austerity (Manas Tapasya) Maintaining serenity of the mind, a calm nature, silence (meaning not remembering anything other than the beloved deity), control of the mind (meaning withdrawing the mind from worldly objects and fixing it in meditation on the beloved deity), purity of the inner heart, and sincerity—these qualities of the mind are together called mental austerity. Serenity of the Mind (Manah Prasadah) Just as the water in a lake without waves is calm and still, a mind that remains detached from desires for worldly objects is serene, peaceful, and full of clear understanding. The calm nature of the mind is reflected on the face. That is why one should always keep the face smiling. When the mind is gloomy, the face looks sad, and this affects the person who sees it. For an uncontrolled and lustful person, serenity of the mind is rare. Their

mind is always engaged in seeking sensual pleasures. Even in adverse situations, one must try to keep the mind serene by remembering God and praying to Him. Gentleness (Saumyatva) : A peaceful mind is gentleness. Mental peace is achieved only by keeping the mind away from desires for sensory enjoyments. Remembering the past or planning for the future burdens the mind and makes it restless. Only by focusing the mind on the present and freeing it from unnecessary thoughts does the mind become free from worries, calm, and steady. Truth naturally appears in a calm mind. In adverse situations, by patiently performing one's duties and surrendering to God, the mind does not become disturbed. Silence (Maunam) : Withdrawing the mind from worldly objects and fixing it in meditation on the beloved deity—this is the state of silence for sages. Here, “silence” refers to contemplation or quietness of the mind. In deep thinking about self-realization, speech naturally becomes silent. After attaining self-realization, the mind loses its restless nature. Constant contemplation of Brahman (the Ultimate Reality) is silence. That is why the nature of sages is also called silence. Remaining peaceful by rising above dualities like favorable-unfavorable, union-separation, attachment-aversion, pleasure-pain—this is silence. If things happen as the mind desires (meaning giving freedom to the mind), one may get temporary physical pleasure, but true mental quietness does not come. Self-Control of the Soul (Atma Vinigraha) Self-restraint is control over the self. Consciously and with discrimination keeping the mind under control is self-restraint. With self-control, the mind does not run after the senses, nor do the senses chase sensual objects. The spiritual seeker does not act under the control of the mind; instead, the mind acts under their control—this is control of the mind. Purity of Emotions (Bhava Sanshuddhi) : The complete removal from the mind and inner heart of negative emotions like attachment-hatred, lust-anger, greed-attachment, jealousy-enmity, disgust-contempt, thoughts opposing the beloved deity, and other impure ideas, along with the full development of positive qualities like compassion, forgiveness, love, humility, and service to others—this is called purity of the self or inner purification. When the inner heart becomes pure, there is no deceit, cunning, or envy in dealings with others. Giving up ego about the body and engaging the mind in the welfare of the world is an easy way to achieve inner purification. Without depending on worldly objects and by solely remembering God, one becomes dependent on Him, and emotions become pure. If attaining the Supreme Soul is the only goal, then inner emotions quickly become free from flaws and pure.

**śraddhayā parayā taptam tapas tat tri-vidham naraiḥ
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ sāttvikam paricakṣate (17-17)**

Comm: The three kinds of austerity—physical, verbal, and mental— when performed with supreme faith by a person engaged in selfless action, without desire for results, are called sattvic austerity by the scriptures. A person who never desires, even slightly and for any reason, any pleasure or relief from suffering either in this world or in the next world, is called one who is free from desire for results (aphalākāṅkṣī). Yoga practice performed

without desire for results, only for pleasing Vasudeva (Lord Krishna), with faith, pure sattvic feeling, and a theistic and pure intellect, is the practitioner's sattvic austerity. Through sattvic austerity, purification of the mind occurs, and gradually liberation (moksha) becomes possible. The two main mental conditions of sattvic austerity are: absence of desire for sense enjoyment, and an inner heart filled with faith. Here, the word “yuktaiḥ” means a person endowed with good conduct. When, based on faith, selflessness, and right conduct, the seeker's aim becomes detachment from perishable objects, then physical, verbal, and mental austerities naturally and fully begin to be practiced on their own.

**satkāra-māna-pūjārthaṁ tapo dambhena caiva yat
kriyate tad iha proktaṁ rājasam calam adhruvam (17-18)**

Comm: Austerity that is performed with pomp and show, aiming to receive honor, respect, and worship, and whose main purpose is to fulfill selfish desires or to advertise one's own greatness—this type of austerity is called Rajasic austerity. The fruit of this Rajasic austerity is highly impermanent in this mortal world—it lasts only for a short time—and its results are also uncertain. Let people greet me as an ascetic and praise me—let them consider me worthy of first worship and give me the highest seat in gatherings—let them chant victory to my name—these pomp-filled emotional actions are called “honor” (satkar). Let them know me as a great practitioner of self-control, a great renouncer, and a speaker of truth; let them consider me the best and show loyalty to me—harbouring such inner desires is called “respect” (maan). While alive, let people garland me, perform my aarti (worship with lamps), apply the dust of my feet on their heads, and praise me; and after death, let them build a memorial for me and worship it with flowers and sandalwood—harbouring desires for all these actions is called “worship” (puja). Due to desires, the mind of a person full of Rajas quality remains filled with resolve and doubt. They perform austerity only for the sake of honor, respect, worship, and showing off pride. In this austerity, there is no sincere devotion or firm faith. Hypocrites perform austerity only to advertise their own greatness and for the purpose of gaining wealth, respect, fame, and status. Lord Shri Krishna has called such people hypocrites or pretenders. There is no certainty whether the goal for which the austerity is performed will bear any fruit or not. Even if some fruit is obtained, it provides only temporary enjoyment and then perishes. Therefore, it is called “unstable” (chala). The fruit of Rajasic austerity is neither attainment of heaven nor hell. Rajasic austerity gives fruits like glory and praise in this world and then ends. Because Rajasic austerity is “unstable and impermanent,” it is worthy of being abandoned.

**mūḍha-grāheṇātmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ
parasyotsādanārthaṁ vā tat tāmasam udāhṛtam (17-19)**

Comm: Austerity performed under deluded understanding, by causing pain to the mind, speech, and body, or by wishing harm to others with a stubborn and cruel attitude, is called tamasic austerity. Holding burning fire on the head, piercing the body with iron

spikes, hanging upside down over a burning fire, standing on one leg for a very long time, standing in icy cold water, sitting surrounded by fire on all sides while bearing the heat of the sun from above— such practices, including sitting within the five fires (pañcāgni), are called tamasic austerity. This type of austerity does not help in attaining self-knowledge, nor does it help in yoga-realization, that is, purification of the inner mind. Austerity performed to achieve something impossible in the worldly realm is truly tamasic austerity. A person who seeks true welfare should practice sattvic austerity. A spiritual practitioner should have proper understanding of the true nature of austerity, its goal, and its correct method. The result of foolish tamasic austerity is the increase of demonic tendencies and arrogance. It is never beneficial for the welfare of the individual soul. A sattvic person performs austerity with great faith, without desire for results, with the aim of attaining God. A person of rajasic nature performs austerity for respect, honor, worship, and pride. A person of tamasic nature practices austerity by causing suffering to himself and with the intention of giving pain to others as well.

**dātavyam iti yad dānaṁ dīyate 'nupakāriṇe
deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad dānaṁ sātṭvikam smṛtam (17-20)**

Comm: Giving charity is the supreme duty”—with this divine quality (daivi guna) in mind, the charity given without any expectation, to a worthy recipient who is unable to return the favor, at holy places like pilgrimage sites and during auspicious times—this is called Sattvic charity. Although the concept of ‘charity’ is mentioned in other cultures, the importance of charity in Sanatan Dharma, its detailed explanation with reasons, and its widespread practice in conduct are extremely rare. According to one’s stage of life (ashrama), situation, and circumstances, practicing dharma in a proper way and using one’s wealth, possessions, etc., as much as possible for the welfare of others—this is a human being’s supreme duty. Everything that exists in the entire creation is for the world and meant for the world. None of it belongs personally to anyone. If something is not ours but is with us, and others need it, then we should consider it theirs and give it to them. Whatever object reaches a person, we must understand that it rightfully belongs to them. The greatest weakness of human beings is the feeling of hoarding and possessing. Whether one uses an object or not, the tendency to collect and keep it is a natural instinct in humans. Similarly, the greed to acquire things without paying anything, whether needed or not (parigraha), increases a person’s greed. The best way to be free from this is through ‘charity’. That is why Prajapati Brahma gave humans the mantra in the form of the syllable ‘da’ and advised them to give charity. When giving charity, it is improper to harbour any desire in the mind. There must be no expectation of receiving anything in return from the recipient. ‘Diyate anupakarine’—this means: charity should be given selflessly to someone who has not helped in the past, is not helping now, and has no possibility of helping in the future. Where there is even a trace of self-interest, any intention of worldly gain, or giving out of favor to one’s

own relatives—that is not Sattvic charity. In such cases, there is a lack of dharma and faith. It does not lead to inner purity or character building. Charity should be given after considering the place, time, and recipient. Otherwise, there is a risk of misuse of the donated wealth or items. It is proper to give charity at places like pilgrimage sites, the banks of the Ganga, temples, food distribution centres, orphanages, charitable hospitals, charitable educational institutions, and religious organizations. According to the scriptures, one should generously give to worthy persons who are embodiments of good conduct and purity at holy places. The recipient should ideally be a pure person, a holy Brahmin, one of good character, a scholar, knower of scriptures, a saint, sage, sannyasi, or yogi. Besides these, hungry, thirsty, unclothed, homeless, poor, sick, distressed, orphaned, or fearful beings are worthy recipients of food, water, clothing, sufficient money for livelihood, medicine, consolation, shelter, and assurance of safety. Similarly, auspicious times like eclipses, full moon, new moon, Sankranti, Ekadashi, etc., are considered by scriptures as excellent times and places for charity. In addition, during natural calamities like drought, flood, famine, earthquake, epidemic, etc., one should give sufficient charity to help the afflicted. During a nation's economic crisis, adequate charity should also be given. Some scholars believe that there is no need to consider place, time, recipient, etc., when giving charity. Just as a tree gives its fruit to all kinds of beings, a human should selflessly renounce all resources in their possession for the welfare of the world. 'Charity' strengthens the willpower to renounce and helps the seeker detach from sensual enjoyment. Charity means removing one's own claim over an object and establishing the recipient's ownership over it. At the end of the resolve to accept the recipient's ownership over the donated item, it is said: "Idam na mama"—meaning, from now on, this object is no longer mine. In reality, through charity, we are not giving to anyone. Rather, the objects of the world have been placed with us by God as caretakers, and when needed, God Himself comes to take them. We are not the giver; instead, God comes to take it and frees us from a burden. The recipient of charity is Brahman (the Supreme), and the giver is also a part of Brahman or the Lord. When charity is given with the feeling of seeing Brahman everywhere—in both the giver and the recipient—then the giver also benefits, and the recipient's suffering is relieved. On the other hand, the recipient of charity can never fully repay the giver. They can only pray for the giver's well-being and find inner satisfaction. In the Shri Ram Charit Manas, Lord Shri Ramchandra tells Hanuman: "Sunahu kapi tohi samaana upakaari, nahi kou sur nar muni tanudhaari. Prati upakaar karau ka tora, sanmukh hoi na sakata man mora." Meaning: Lord Ram says, "Listen, O best of monkeys! No god, human, or sage in bodily form is as great a benefactor as you. Let alone repaying your favor, I cannot even bow my head before you." In the Shrimad Bhagavatam, Lord Shri Krishna declares Himself indebted to the gopis. The only service a recipient can offer to the giver is to express heartfelt gratitude.

**yat tu pratyupakārārthaṁ phalam uddīśya vā punaḥ
dīyate ca parikliṣṭaṁ tad dānaṁ rājasam smṛtam (17-21)**

Comm: Charity that is given with difficulty—that is, reluctantly, out of compulsion even when unwilling—or given in expectation of a return favor, or with the desire for material fruits like heaven—this is called Rajasic charity. In practical life, most acts of charity are based on Rajas quality. Most people have the mindset: “To get something, I have to give something.” If charity is given to show obedience at the request of an elder or an influential person, then in the next moment, one regrets: “Why did I give so much money?” Giving charity with the aim of increasing one’s own honor, status, and respect is a practice common among people with Rajasic nature. Charity given to Brahmins or deities with the feeling of atonement for sinful actions or planetary defects is also Rajasic charity. A Rajasic person selects the recipient keeping in mind those from whom they have received help or those who might fulfill their self-interest in the future. Some people with Rajasic nature, in the name of charity, bargain with God. While Sattvic charity opens the path to detachment from sensual enjoyments, in Rajasic charity, the main basis is the desire to obtain sensual enjoyments.

**adeśa-kāle yad dānam apātrebhyaś ca dīyate
asat-kṛtam avajñātaṁ tat tāmasam udāhṛtam (17-22)**

Comm: Charity that is given without respect, without interest or goodwill, with feelings of regret and contempt, and given at an improper place, wrong time, or to an undeserving person, is called tamasic charity. In giving charity, there are mainly two viewpoints. One is service to others, and the other is the spiritual welfare of the giver. Therefore, that charity is considered the best in which both the giver and the receiver are benefited. Not offering a seat to the receiver of charity, not welcoming him properly, and behaving rudely instead of speaking kind words— all these are called “asat-kṛta” (disrespectful giving). Similarly, while giving charity, speaking harsh words with criticism, looking down upon the receiver, and insulting him— these are called “avajñāta” (giving with contempt). Charity given with such attitudes is completely tamasic charity. In short, tamasic charity is the opposite of sattvic charity. It is stated in the scriptures that in the Kali Yuga, charity alone is considered the main form of dharma. From this view, any kind of charity appears to be beneficial. The purpose of saying this is that in the Kali Yuga, it is very difficult to properly perform auspicious actions like sacrifice, charity, austerity, and vows according to strict rules. Therefore, giving charity is a good practice to awaken the spirit of renunciation. However, for a spiritual seeker who has given up attachment to the body and worldly identity, and who has completely surrendered to his chosen deity, the greatest charity is greater than all others. That highest charity is staying away from all sense enjoyment and offering complete surrender of the mind and everything to God. As Lord Krishna Himself says:

“With your mind and intellect fixed on Me, you will surely attain Me without doubt.”
(Gita:8/7)

**om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ
brāhmaṇas tena vedāś ca yajñāś ca vihitāḥ purā (17-23)**

Comm: O Arjuna! The three words—Om, Tat, and Sat—are taken from the mantras of the Rig Veda. The knowers of Brahman have mentioned in the Vedas that these three words—Om, Tat, and Sat—refer to the Supreme Person, the Supreme Soul, who is the essence of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (Sachchidananda). These three names indicate the Supreme Brahman (Parabrahman). From this indication, in ancient times, all beings (praja), the Vedas (which are the cause of yajna), and the actions in the form of yajna were created by Vedic scholars, Brahmins, and others. Here, the word “yajna” refers to all scripturally prescribed actions, such as yajna (sacrifice), tapas (austerity), dana (charity), and others. “Om Tat Sat” is a mantra that is the fundamental basis of the entire universe. Through it, the non-dual nature of the Supreme Brahman can be experienced in a manifest form. Lord Brahma (Prajapati) constantly contemplated this mantra and thereby gained the ability to create the universe. By uttering “Om Tat Sat” at the beginning of all sacred activities—such as performing yajnas, self-study (svadhyaya), reading scriptures and Puranas, japa (repetition), meditation, and other holy works—all obstacles and hindrances are removed. Through this mantra, the creative power present in the Creator is released. With the strength of that creative power, the Supreme Soul created the Brahmins, gave them the Vedas to show the path, and instructed them to perform religious rites like yajna. “Om” is Nada Brahma (the Sound Brahman) or Akshara Brahma (the Imperishable Brahman). The word “Om” denotes that state of Brahman in which the entire manifested world becomes calm and unchanging. “Om” is the symbol of that principle of the Self (Atma tattva) which is unborn, indestructible, free from all limitations, and the underlying cause of all limitations like the body. The word “Tat” denotes that state of Brahman in which the desire for creation arises: “Eko aham bahu syam prajayeya”—I am one; may I become many. “Tat” means “That.” Therefore, the word “Tat” points to that Supreme Truth which is the place of origin, sustenance, and dissolution of the entire universe. The word “Sat” signifies the manifested existence of the world that is reflected through Brahman’s resolve. Thus, “Sat” means existence that is unbroken through all three times (past, present, and future). This Sat nature is all-pervading. Therefore, by remembering the Supreme Soul—who is beyond the universe, the cause of the universe, and pervading the universe—through the mantra “Om Tat Sat,” one’s actions, emotions, and thoughts become purified. Whatever happens in the world happens only by the will of that Supreme Person, the Lord—Om Tat Sat. If one remains engaged in Sattvic actions and simply utters this mantra, then liberation (moksha) is not far away.

**tasmād om ity udāhṛtya yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
pravartante vidhānuktāḥ satataṁ brahma-vādinām (17-24)**

Comm: For this reason, by chanting “Om”—the one-syllable mantra that represents Brahman—followers of Vedic principles and knowers of Brahman engage in rituals such as sacrifice, charity, and austerity according to scriptural rules. “Om” is a symbol of remembrance of the Supreme Self, and through its chanting and meditation, ego, along with its limiting identities and bondages, is forgotten. In the beginning, “Om,” that is, the Pranava, was manifested first. This Pranava has three sounds or parts: “A,” “U,” and “M.” From these three sounds arose the three-footed Gayatri, and from the three-footed Gayatri, the three Vedas were manifested. Therefore, the Pranava alone is the essence of the Vedas. All the Vedic hymns and revelations do not become fruitful unless “Om” is pronounced; that is, they do not give any result without it. By the direct contemplation of “Om” at the beginning of any action, and by its chanting in the form of a mantra, even actions that normally cause bondage are transformed into a bridge toward liberation. .

**tad ity anabhisandhāya phalaṁ yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
dāna-kriyāś ca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ (17-25)**

Comm: The word “Tat” indicates Brahman—it points to the Supreme Brahman (Parabrahman) who is beyond the universe yet all-pervading. The Supreme Soul alone exists everywhere—all things are meant for the Supreme Soul, and all these belong to the Supreme Soul alone—these three ideas are expressed through the word “Tat.” Seekers of liberation (mumukshu) and those desiring the highest welfare completely renounce the desire for fruits, utter this holy mantra that purifies the mind, and begin all auspicious and meritorious actions. The word “Tat” signifies surrender to the Supreme Soul. Uttering “Tat” while giving charity means accepting: “All this is not mine—nothing remains for my enjoyment.” With this attitude, the wise remain absorbed in remembrance of Brahman, detach themselves from actions and their fruits. When an action begun with “Om” is offered through “Tat,” that action becomes “Brahma-like” (of the nature of Brahman). Whatever is started with the utterance of “Om” becomes dedicated to Brahman through the utterance of “Tat.” Yogis, sages, and spiritual practitioners meditate on “Tat.” They constantly seek Brahman in all activities. By uttering the word “Tat,” they express this feeling: “All our actions and their fruits are dedicated in the name of Tat (Brahman).” Any action dedicated to “Tat” becomes of the nature of Brahman. Because there is no attachment to the fruits of actions, all such actions become directed toward attaining the Supreme Soul. Therefore, by uttering the word “Tat,” ego related to the body is destroyed, purity of the inner self is attained, and the path to liberation opens. The word “Tat” points to the material cause (upadana karana) of the objects in front of us. When viewing the world and all its objects with this understanding, it becomes clear that Brahman alone is the material cause of the entire moving and unmoving universe. Because the existence of the Supreme Soul

in the form of Brahman is eternal and constant. Thus, Brahman exists everywhere, and not a single moment passes without the experience of Brahman. Brahman is experienced everywhere in the form of existence, consciousness, and bliss. Therefore, in the beginning, middle, and end of every object, Brahman remains the unchanging subject of experience. In another sense, one must experience that ever-present Supreme Soul indicated by the name “Tat.” Through the indication of “Tat,” seekers of liberation, knowers of truth, and wise persons experience the existence of Brahman everywhere. By using the word “Tat” at the beginning of actions, they strengthen their feeling of Brahman in every object. Those who seek the welfare of the self-perform actions like yajna (sacrifice), dana (charity), tapas (austerity), svadhyaya (self-study), dhyana (meditation), and samadhi (absorption). They regard all these as done for the sake of the Supreme Soul, to please the Lord, and as obedience to the Lord’s command.

**sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca sad ity etat prayujyate
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sac-chabdaḥ pārtha yujyate (17-26)**

Comm: O Partha, the word “sat” is used to indicate good intention and noble attitude, that is, to affirm the existence and excellence of something. The word “sat” is also used for virtues and praiseworthy actions. “Om” signifies the purity of actions such as sacrifice, austerity, and charity. “Tat” signifies purity of intention, that is, directing the action toward the Supreme Lord. “Sat” signifies purity of the doer, the qualified performer of the action. Therefore, noble inner feeling (sadbhava) is necessary. There should not be even the slightest impurity in it. One name of the Supreme Lord is “San,” and bhava means existence or being. Thus, the conviction that “the Supreme Lord exists” is called sadbhava, awareness of divine existence. The word “sat” conveys the eternal existence of the Supreme Lord and His nature as the cause of everything. All forms— with attributes or without attributes, with form or without form— are included within sadbhava. Even in the personal, form-based aspect, all incarnations such as Vishnu, Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesha, Surya, and others are included within sadbhava. The name of the Supreme Lord is used only in one sense— the sense of truth. The Atma alone is the supreme truth— eternal, timeless, imperishable, and immortal. That which is eternal among all that is temporary, and upon which all changing forms are based, is called “sat.” Developing devotion toward this truth is called sadbhava. Existence, consciousness, and bliss are the very nature of Brahman. Brahman, as pure existence, pervades everything everywhere. Nothing that exists can exist without this existence-principle. Therefore, the word “sat” indicates the existence-nature of Brahman. That which is sat never becomes absent in the past, present, or future. It alone is truly eternal. It can never be destroyed. To realize that truth, noble conduct (sadhuhava) is required. One in whose heart this awareness of “sat” resides is called a sadhu. The word “sat” is used for realized souls, devotees of God, and saints. The noble qualities found in the hearts of spiritual seekers— such as compassion, forgiveness, and other virtues— all come under sadhubhava. The

auspicious and praiseworthy actions that help attain such qualities are understood as spiritual disciplines on the path of practice, and for them also the word “sat” is used. For inner purification and attainment of the Supreme Lord, noble qualities such as truthfulness, forgiveness, generosity, renunciation, and good conduct—which are divine qualities—are all described using the word “sat.” Divine qualities are called “sat,” and demonic qualities are called “asat.” Acceptance of “sat” and rejection of “asat” is itself regarded as “sat.” By chanting “Om Tat Sat,” from which these syllables originate, the individual soul reaches the source of their origin. That original source is the pure Supreme Brahman.

**yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ sad iti cocyate
karma caiva tad-arthīyaṁ sad ity evābhidhīyate (17-27)**

Comm: The Word “Sat” When auspicious actions like yajna (sacrifice), tapasya (austerity), and dana (charity) are performed with full devotion for the sake of Brahman, they are denoted by the word “Sat.” When actions are performed with steadfastness in Brahman and the supreme devotion awakens as the sole aim, then the seeker’s inner self becomes pure. Through this purity, the supreme goal—the immortal essence, liberation (moksha), and eternal bliss—is attained, and the seeker becomes one with the nature of Sat (the Eternal Reality). All actions performed by surrendering their fruits, with the attitude of obeying the Lord’s command to please the Supreme Lord, naturally become “Sat-karma” (true actions) in the form of yajna, tapasya, or dana. The word “sthiti” (steadfastness) mentioned in the verse refers to the seeker’s faith, loving devotion in the heart, and firm theistic conviction in spiritual practice. Here, “yajna karma” indicates both obligatory duties and spiritual actions like worship, recitation, singing devotional songs, chanting, and contemplation. All actions offered to God are called “Sat” because they are means to liberation. When actions are connected with the Supreme Soul who is Sat in nature, they become divine qualities that grant liberation. Just as rivers lose all distinction after merging into the ocean, similarly, in actions offered to Brahman, there is no difference between small, complete, or incomplete actions. When all actions are surrendered at the state of Brahman, everything becomes filled with Brahman. Actions done with desire give their fruits and then perish, but actions done for the supreme spiritual purpose never perish—they become “Sat” (eternal). The conclusion of this verse is: To become free from the bondage of actions, “Sat-karma” (true actions) is the only support.

**āsraḍdhayā hutam dattam tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat
asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha (17-28)**

Comm: Any sacrifice or fire ritual performed without faith, any charity given without faith, any austerity practiced without faith, and any other so-called good actions done without faith are called “asat” (unreal). The word “asat” means devoid of existence or reality, that is, without true being. It is said that such actions do not produce any result either in this world during one’s lifetime or in the next world after death. Therefore, faith

combined with surrender is absolutely essential while performing any action. Faith is the very life-force of righteous action. The three types of faith and practices such as austerity function according to the division of the three qualities like sattva, rajas, and tamas. Every living being must experience the result of his or her own actions. Good actions give good results, and bad actions give bad results. There is not even the slightest exception to this rule. From Brahma down to the tiniest insect, the same law applies to everyone. Even if hundreds of sacrifices are performed, and even if all the wealth of the world is given away in charity, without faith and belief, and without loving devotion at the feet of the Lord, all such actions become fruitless. A person's faith alone gives direction to his actions. In the Manas it is said: "Without faith, no righteousness can exist, just as without the earth, no one can perceive fragrance." Without faith, no religious or righteous act can take place, just as fragrance cannot exist without the earth. Faith is necessary at the beginning of every action. Faith is not only important in the spiritual field, but it also plays a major role in achieving worldly results. Only through faith can a person make full effort using his complete capacity and strength; otherwise, it is not possible. Just as trying to embrace a shadow or striking the sky with one's hand is useless, actions done without faith are equally useless. When faith and belief in one's duty mature over time, they are then called love for God. Because all actions of a knower of Brahman are performed with the words "Om Tat Sat," they become endowed with noble qualities. By teaching that faith is the main foundation of all yogic practices, Lord Krishna concludes this chapter.

॥ Om tat sat ॥

**iti śrīmad bhagavad-gītāsūpaniṣatsu brahma-vidyāyām yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde "Shraddha-traya-Vibhaga Yoga namno
Saptadasodhyayah.**

Thus, with the utterance of the sacred words "Om, Tat, Sat," the Seventeenth Chapter, called "Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga" of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which is the essence of Brahma-vidyā (the knowledge of the Absolute) and Yoga, and which is in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, comes to an end.





SRI PARAMAATMANE NAMAH
Srimad Bhagabad Gita
Chapter 18 (Moksa- Sannyasa Yoga)

Arjuna Uvācha

sannyāsasya mahābāho tattvam icchāmi veditum
tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pr̥thak keśini-sūdana (18-1)

Comm: In the previous chapters, the Lord has described the paths of sannyasa (the path of knowledge, or jnana yoga) and tyaga (the path of selfless action, or karma yoga). These paths are meant for liberation from the ocean of worldly existence (bhava sagara), where living beings have been wandering in the cycle of birth and death since beginningless time. The Lord based these teachings on His divine glories and opulences (vibhuti and aishwarya), as well as on the knowledge and actions related to the soul. In this chapter, Arjuna wants to understand the true nature of these two paths separately and in detail. At the beginning of the fifth chapter, Arjuna had asked which of the two—karma yoga or jnana yoga—is superior. Here, he expresses his desire to know the essence or true form of both. In Arjuna’s mind, there are detailed questions about performing actions, renouncing actions, what tyaga exactly means, and the scope of tyaga. He wants to hear the nectar-like words from the Lord in a thorough manner. The address “Mahabaho” (O mighty-armed one) used by Arjuna in the verse indicates strength and capability. “Hrishikesha” indicates the Lord as the inner controller of the senses. “Keshinishudana” (slayer of the Keshi demon) indicates the remover of obstacles. Arjuna is not asking these questions merely to

understand the theory. His goal is to understand the principles and then shape his own life according to them. The result of practicing the Gita is sannyasa and tyaga. Questions like these may have arisen in Arjuna's mind: Who is called a sannyasi? What is the relationship of sannyasa with actions? What purpose is achieved through sannyasa? Similarly, who is called a tyagi (one who renounces)? What is the means to practice tyaga? What is the fruit of tyaga? Arjuna is praying to Lord Shri Krishna to hear doubt-free, nectar-like words on all these matters. Adopting the vow of tyaga and rising above the three gunas (qualities) of material nature (prakriti) to attain the divine level—this is the supreme goal of life. Therefore, what is the role of sannyasa and tyaga in achieving this supreme goal? Which actions are helpful and which are obstructive on this path—the Lord clarifies these ahead. Through complete renunciation of actions followed by sannyasa, one gains freedom from dependence on actions. No duty remains in the name of obligation. This is called “Brahmi sthiti” (establishment in Brahman). How one can become free from the bondage of actions, what is the means to self-knowledge, how knowledge is invoked, what is the best field for knowledge – these are the confusions, Arjuna needs to make clear in his mind. Besides this, how, through the practice of sannyasa and tyaga, a person can attain liberation from the world. The auspicious words that Lord Shri Krishna speaks to Arjuna on these topics form the eighteenth chapter. In this chapter, all the instructions given by the Lord in the previous chapters reach their full completion. Therefore, in the eighteenth chapter, the entire Gita scripture is fully understood. The conclusive truth that the Lord states in the very last verse of this chapter is unparalleled and unique.

Śrī-bhagavān Uvācha

**kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsaṁ sannyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ prāhuḥ tyāgaṁ vicakṣaṇāḥ (18-2)**

Comm: O Arjuna, learned scholars understand sannyāsa as the complete renunciation of desire-motivated actions, such as Agniṣṭoma, Jyotiṣṭoma, Putreṣṭi and similar prescribed rituals, as well as actions performed for attaining heaven and enjoyment. The wise seers call tyāga the renunciation of the fruits of all actions, including desire-motivated actions, and also daily obligatory (nitya) and occasional (naimittika) duties. The basic meaning of both sannyāsa and tyāga is “renunciation.” According to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the words sannyāsa and tyāga have essentially the same meaning—mere renunciation. The sacrifices, austerities, charity, vows, and worship performed for gaining sons, wealth, or relief from difficulties are called kāmya or desire-motivated actions. Almost all actions arise from strong mental desires or cravings. Since kāmya actions are prompted by desire, they may be either auspicious or inauspicious. The results of desire-motivated actions must inevitably be experienced by the person who performs them. According to the scriptures, the essential daily duties performed for sustaining the body and for the inner

purification of the soul are called nitya karmas. Devotion to God, worship of deities, daily prayers, Gāyatrī japa, service to parents and elders, sacrifice, austerity, charity, earning a livelihood according to one's varṇa and āśrama, and duties performed due to time, place, circumstance, or special occasions are called naimittika karmas. If these duties are not performed, ethical order, religious tradition, and social discipline are disturbed, and the laws of the state or society are violated. Therefore, all such duties fall under naimittika karma. Nitya and naimittika actions are governed by various life situations and events. In this verse, the Lord clearly distinguishes between sannyāsa and tyāga. Giving up desire-motivated actions entirely, and performing nitya and naimittika duties without desire for results, is called sannyāsa. The saying “samyak nyāsaḥ sannyāsaḥ” means that sannyāsa is offering everything of prakṛti back to prakṛti, and severing one's identification with prakṛti through discrimination. Experiencing “doing without doership” and “being without attachment” is sannyāsa. In other words, performing actions without ego, without attachment or aversion, is the true practice of sannyāsa. Seeing the undivided Supreme Self within all divided beings is the inner spirit of sannyāsa. Entering into the reality of the Supreme Self is the goal of sannyāsa. Performing all kinds of actions—nitya, naimittika, and kāmya—while completely renouncing their fruits is called tyāga. Not abandoning actions themselves, but giving up only their results, is the true meaning of tyāga. When a person is driven by desire and anxiety for enjoying results, life becomes full of suffering. If attachment to desired results is not renounced, one cannot fully use one's capacity for action. Withdrawing the mind and senses from the world of objects is the means of tyāga. Remaining established in the truth of the Supreme Self is the goal of tyāga. Both sannyāsa and tyāga are disciplines that guide human conduct and moral life. Sannyāsa is of two kinds—primary and secondary. Renunciation of desire-motivated and forbidden actions for gaining knowledge is called vividiṣā sannyāsa. After attaining knowledge, the complete renunciation of all actions is called vidvat sannyāsa. These two are known as āśrama sannyāsa. For primary sannyāsa, strong dispassion is absolutely necessary. Without intense dispassion, adopting sannyāsa is inferior to performing desireless action. By gradual practice, first the mind becomes purified through renunciation of the fruits of action. After inner peace is attained, renunciation of action itself becomes possible. In sannyāsa attained after perfect knowledge, not only desire-motivated actions, but all actions are renounced. This is because the fully realized knower is established in the state beyond the three guṇas. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, “As long as realization is not attained, one should continue performing actions.” The Yoga Vāsiṣṭha states: “The yogī does not abandon actions; rather, through actions, actions themselves abandon the yogī.” Forbidden actions naturally fall away because they are forbidden. After adopting sannyāsa, desire-motivated actions do not arise, since desires and latent impressions are absent. Renunciation of the fruits of action alone is thus established as true tyāga. In this way, after the exhaustion of all actions, self-knowledge naturally comes and stands at the door of the seeker. Therefore, one should not renounce what ought not to

be renounced. Abandoning actions blindly, without proper discrimination, does not lead to liberation but becomes a cause of bondage. This is the teaching of the Bhagavad Gītā.

**tyājyaṁ doṣavad ity eke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ
yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyam iti cāpare (18-3)**

Comm: Some Sankhya philosophers and scholars say that all actions are inherently faulty and can never be free from defects. All actions give rise to desires (vasanas). These desires cover and obscure the soul (atman). In their view, every action is tainted like a prohibited act. Understanding this, one should completely renounce all actions. On the other hand, some Mimamsa scholars hold the opinion that prescribed actions like yajna (sacrifice), dana (charity), and tapas (austerity) should never be abandoned. Because if one neglects carefully considered reasoning and renounces actions, it leads to adverse or opposite effects. Complete renunciation of all actions would also make the maintenance of life impossible. All the discussions about actions mentioned here are directed toward karma yogis. Because jnana yogis and sannyasis have risen above worldly levels, this conflict of opinions arises for them (i.e., it does not apply to them). In Vedic literature, many types of actions are described, and as a result, there are various differences of opinion regarding the renunciation of actions. Some Sankhya philosophers believe that violence, such as animal sacrifice in yajnas, and other repulsive acts can never be free from fault. Simply by performing any action, one becomes connected to some sin or the other. Therefore, all kinds of actions should always be renounced. On the contrary, some Mimamsa thinkers believe that actions like yajna are prescribed by the scriptures, so they are not to be abandoned. As long as one has the eligibility or right to perform actions, performing yajna, tapas, dana, etc., is obligatory. Through the performance of yajnas, the world is benefited, and the performer's inner being becomes purified. Through austerity (tapas), the senses become controlled and remain engaged in contemplation of the Lord. Through charity (dana), the attachment to wealth and possessions is purified. Thus, there are various conflicting views regarding the renunciation of actions. Lord Shri Krishna advises Arjuna to renounce only those actions that are faulty and to perform spiritual actions with a spirit of surrender and dedication. Calling out to human society, Lord Shri Krishna has said in the Gita: "Action itself is the greatest devotion to the Supreme Soul."

**niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharata-sattama
tyāgo hi puruṣa-vyāghra trividhaḥ samprakīrtitaḥ (18-4)**

Comm: O Arjuna, the best of the Bharata race, listen carefully to My definite conclusion regarding tyāga (renunciation of the fruits of action), out of the two—sannyāsa and tyāga. O best among men, according to the distinction of the three guṇas, tyāga is described in the scriptures as being of three kinds—sāttvika, rājasa, and tāmasa. In the previous two verses, the Lord has already described the four different philosophical

opinions of learned thinkers. Now, in the next three verses, He first presents His own clear view regarding tyāga. Since the Lord Himself is present in the Gītā, His words should be accepted as the final and authoritative conclusion. In order to awaken Arjuna’s highest qualities, the Lord addresses him here as “Bharata-sattama” and “Puruṣa-vyāghra.” The method of renunciation must be examined in the light of the three guṇas of material nature. According to the Lord, sāttvika tyāga alone is true renunciation. For attaining liberation of the individual soul, one should adopt sāttvika tyāga and abandon rājasa and tāmasa forms of renunciation. Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya classifies tyāga into three categories: (1) renunciation of the fruits of action, (2) renunciation of the sense of enjoyership, and (3) renunciation of the sense of doership. One who wishes to attain freedom from worldly bondage must sincerely strive to understand the true nature of tyāga. Here, although Arjuna asked about both sannyāsa and tyāga, the Lord expresses only His conclusion regarding tyāga, thereby indicating that sannyāsa and tyāga are essentially one. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya also states that the threefold division of renunciation into sāttvika, rājasa, and tāmasa, as explained by the Lord, is not meant for those firmly established in pure knowledge as renunciates. Rather, it is applicable to those who are still qualified for action and engaged in karma.

**yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat
yajño dānaṁ tapaś caiva pāvanāni manīṣiṇām (18-5)**

Comm: Actions in the form of yajna (sacrifice), dana (charity), and tapas (austerity) are not fit to be renounced. They must certainly be performed. Because when yajna, tapas, and dana are performed with a selfless attitude for the welfare of the world and for self-welfare, the inner being of even those tyāgis (renouncers) who desire fruits becomes purified, and all bonds of action are broken. The word “manishi” means a person who is thoughtful or reflective. Actions performed selflessly for self-welfare and the welfare of the world become purifying—that is, they destroy impurities like bad qualities, evil conduct, and sins, and grant great bliss. On the other hand, yajna, tapas, dana, and similar actions performed with desire for enjoyment, along with pride and ego, instead of purifying, become causes of bondage. The implication of the words “cha-eva” is that all obligatory duties—whether daily (nitya), occasional (naimittika), or related to livelihood and the body—should certainly be performed. In Satya Yuga, tapas (austerity) alone was considered the highest means of spiritual practice. Similarly, in Treta Yuga, the path of knowledge for attaining Brahman, and in Dvapara Yuga, the performance of yajnas and sacrifices according to scriptural rules, were the highest means. In the present Kali Yuga, “dana” (charity) alone is the highest means of spiritual practice. According to the teachings of the Gita, giving knowledge to a worthy recipient, giving food, giving education, giving life (saving lives), and similar acts of offering bring welfare to both the giver and the receiver. The action of yajna is intended for attaining the Lord. Until one gains complete knowledge about the nature of the soul (atma), it is improper for anyone to renounce actions like yoga. Every human being should continuously perform actions

like yajna, tapas, and dana, following the prescribed rules according to their own stage of life. Even in the three ashramas—brahmacharya (student life), grihastha (householder life), and vanaprastha (retired life)—actions are prescribed for each. For householders, actions of yajna are prescribed; for vanaprasthis, actions in the form of tapas; and for brahmacharis (celibate students), actions like serving the guru and studying the scriptures are prescribed.

**etāny api tu karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā phalāni ca
kartavyānīti me pārtha niścitaṁ matam uttamam (18-6)**

Comm : O Pārtha, actions such as sacrifice, charity, and austerity, as well as daily obligatory and occasional duties, should be performed after giving up possessiveness, attachment, and desire for results, and should be done solely as an act of worship to God. This is My firm and supreme conclusion. By using the words “tu” and “api,” the Lord includes all other scripturally prescribed bodily duties, in addition to sacrifice, austerity, and charity. Even if one gives up the desire for results in all actions, if possessiveness and attachment remain toward those actions, they become causes of bondage. When actions are performed without any desire for results, without identification with the body, without the sense of enjoyership, and without attachment, the qualities of rajas and tamas are destroyed from the mind, and the quality of sattva increases. With the increase of sattva-guṇa, righteous actions arise, leading to the attainment of self-knowledge, which becomes helpful for liberation. Attachment or connection to action is subtle, whereas the fruit of action is gross. The deep mental involvement with external objects and the world, while striving to fulfill strong personal desires, is called attachment. For example, food is required to remove hunger. However, when the mind, driven by craving of the tongue, insists on particular tasty foods, that is attachment. Nature and its products, including the body, do not truly belong to us. Yet we wrongly consider them as our own; therefore, this sense of ownership must be abandoned. Attachment arises from the association of the conscious self with perishable objects. Because of attachment, actions become causes of pleasure, pain, and bondage. By explaining the principle of tyāga, the Lord declares in this verse that giving up attachment and anxiety for the future results of present actions is the central essence of His conclusion.

**niyatasya tu sannyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate
mohāt tasya parityāgas tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ (18-7)**

Comm: Renouncing prescribed duties (niyata karma) by their very nature is not reasonable or proper. Lord Shri Krishna does not approve of failing to perform these regular (nitya) duties due to delusion, or completely abandoning prescribed duties in their essential form. Such renunciation is called tamasic—that is, motivated by ignorance. Arjuna wanted to abstain from fighting the war and thereby renounce action in its essential form. Therefore, by describing the three types of tyaga (renunciation),

the Lord has made Arjuna—and future human society—aware that if a person, keeping personal selfish interests in view, withdraws from actions meant for the welfare of the world, such renunciation of action is called tamasic tyaga. The actions that the scriptures have enjoined to be performed are called prescribed or vihitā karma. Among these prescribed actions, those duties which—according to one’s varṇa (social order), āśrama (stage of life), eligibility, and circumstances—are essential, such as taking responsibility for maintaining the family, are called niyata karma (obligatory duties) for that person. For example: among the four varṇas—Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śudra—the rules related to livelihood and bodily maintenance prescribed for each varṇa are niyata karma for that varṇa. Performing sacrifices like Bali-Vaiśvadeva; giving food, water, etc., to guests and visitors according to grihastha (householder) dharma; offering food and dakṣhiṇa (honorarium) to Brahmins on śrāddha-tarpana days; serving and caring for parents; performing necessary cleanliness and bathing for the body; and regularly studying scriptures and keeping good company for the welfare of the soul—these all fall under niyata karma. Abandoning all these obligatory duties out of laziness or negligence is an example of tamasic tyaga, which brings about sin and fault. People dominated by the tamasic guṇa fall into various delusions, give up scripturally ordained actions, and consequently suffer pain and torment in worldly life.

**duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāya-kleśa-bhayāt tyajet
sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam naiva tyāga-phalam labhet (18-8)**

Comm: Because people dominated by rajo-guṇa do not possess delusion, that is, inverted or wrong knowledge, they generally understand that the performance of obligatory duties purifies the mind. Even though they are able to understand their own qualification and position, they still fear obstacles and difficulties that may arise on the path of performing action. It is natural that righteous actions appear difficult at the beginning. However, giving up daily obligatory duties out of the fear that “all action causes bodily suffering” is improper. To renounce action with the feeling that “action itself is painful” is called rājasic renunciation. As soon as true self-knowledge arises, actions naturally fall away. The final fruit of renunciation is liberation (mokṣa). An ignorant person does not attain this, and even a person practicing rājasic renunciation is deprived of it. Lack of faith and trust in the next world, in scripturally prescribed actions, and in the fruits of action—together with attachment and possessiveness toward the body—are the main reasons why duty appears painful. As long as body-identification remains, a spiritual aspirant does not become truly qualified for complete renunciation of action. By abandoning necessary duties, one becomes a recipient of adverse consequences and suffers spiritual (ādhyātmika), divine (ādhidaivika), and material (ādhibhautika) afflictions. A person who earns wealth through a righteous profession or livelihood should not abandon action merely out of the fear that such work involves desire-motivated action. Arjuna himself hesitated to fight the war and turned away from his duty. Such renunciation on his part can be described as rājasic

renunciation. To give up personal physical comfort and convenience, and to perform one's duty with sincerity and steadfastness, is true and noble renunciation.

**kāryam ity eva yat karma niyataṁ kriyate'rjuna
saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalaṁ caiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ (18-9)**

Comm: O Arjuna! Renouncing the pride of doership and the desire for fruits—understanding that “duties must be performed”—one should perform the actions prescribed by the scriptures. When obligatory duties are performed with firm faith, the very renunciation of the sense of doership and desire for fruits is accepted as sattvic tyaga (pure renunciation). According to one's varṇa (social order), āśrama (stage of life), nature, eligibility, and circumstances, whatever actions the scriptures have declared as obligatory for certain people—those persons should certainly perform those prescribed (niyata) duties. Not performing them means violating the command of the Lord. Actions performed properly with faith, after renouncing doership and desire for fruits, for the sake of self-welfare and the welfare of the world—these are “duty-bound” actions. According to the Lord's teaching, renouncing selfish desires motivated by personal interest, attachment to actions, clinging, and so on—this is sattvic tyaga. When one performs actions only out of a sense of duty, after renouncing attachment and clinging, no bond is formed with the world, and that renunciation becomes sattvic. Even if one renounces actions in their essential form through rajasik or tamasic tyaga, the mind remains connected to desires for enjoyment and to delusion. In sattvic tyaga, there is no need to renounce actions in their essential form. Therefore, through sattvic tyaga, desires in the mind diminish, the inner being attains purity, and the path to obtaining the form of supreme bliss becomes open.

**na dveṣṭy akuśalaṁ karma kuśale nānuṣajjate
tyāgī sattva-samāviṣṭo medhāvī chinna-saṁśayaḥ (18-10)**

Comm: A sāttvic renouncer, who is intelligent, free from doubt, and endowed with pure sattva-guṇa, does not hate painful duties, nor does he become attached to pleasant or beneficial actions. In other words, being free from attraction and aversion, he performs actions solely out of a sense of duty. One who offers everything to God alone is truly a renouncer. In actions offered to God, the distinction between good and bad does not remain, because there is neither doership nor desire for results. The Lord has already said that one who perceives inaction within action, that is, who performs action while renouncing its fruits and attains inner actionlessness, is truly wise. Likewise, when doership, possessiveness, and attachment are absent, a person becomes completely purified by sattva. To remain unattached even while performing actions is a mark of extraordinary wisdom. It is attraction and aversion toward action that bind human beings. A yogi or wise person, having renounced both action and the fruits of action, welcomes all kinds of duties equally. He does not collapse in adverse circumstances, nor does he become elated by praise when performing pleasant actions. In every situation—whether favorable

or unfavorable—he performs his duty. A discerning person remains a witness of his own mind. One who is free from body-identification has a heart that is completely filled with sattva, that is, purity. Because there is no agitation arising from the urge to fulfill desires, his intellect remains steady and his mind remains peaceful. A person who has completely abandoned attachment naturally abides in his own true nature, the conscious spiritual principle. Therefore, he is described as “sattva-samāviṣṭa”—fully absorbed in sattva. On the path of spiritual practice, many doubts arise in the seeker’s mind—regarding the relationship between the Self, the individual soul, and the Supreme Self; regarding the identification of the Self with the body; regarding the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Lord; regarding liberation through the exhaustion of prārabdha, sañcita, and kriyamāṇa karmas; and regarding the true meaning of liberation itself. Through sāttvic renunciation, self-knowledge arises in the seeker’s inner being, and all doubts born of ignorance are destroyed. A truly wise person is one of steady wisdom (sthita-prajña). By practicing the fourfold spiritual discipline—discrimination (viveka), dispassion (vairāgya), the sixfold virtues (śama, dama, titikṣā, śraddhā, uparati, and samādhāna), and intense longing for liberation (mumukṣutva)—and by serving a scripture-knowing and Brahman-established guru and listening to the truth from him, all such doubts are cut asunder. The ability to understand something rationally and retain it firmly in memory is called medhā (intellectual clarity). One who possesses this capacity is called medhāvī. A medhāvī person is free from doubt, because doubt arises only from incomplete knowledge. Since the will of a thoroughly purified sāttvic renouncer becomes identical with the will of God, whatever he does is in accordance with the scriptures. For a sāttvic person, all fruits of action appear pure.

**na hi deha-bhṛtā śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ
yas tu karma-phala-tyāgī sa tyāgīty abhidhīyate (18-11)**

Comm : For an embodied being, it is never possible to completely renounce all actions. A person who performs the scripturally prescribed obligatory duties after renouncing attachment, clinging, and desire toward actions and their fruits is truly considered a tyagi (renunciate). The body functions through prakṛiti (nature), and prakṛiti is inherently active. As long as a human being is alive, they cannot remain even for a moment without performing action. Activity in the body is the very proof that a person is alive. Even when an embodied soul is sleeping, the process of inhalation and exhalation continues uninterrupted until death. Actions that have become part of the body’s nature cannot be accumulated (hoarded) nor renounced. Action is the symbol or characteristic of life. Where there is no action, life comes to an end. Even in the bodies of great souls who have transcended the gunas, activities take place. But because they have no identification with the body, those activities have no connection with them—meaning, they are not the doers of those actions. When the fruits of actions are offered to the Lord—that is, when actions are performed for the sake of God—by God’s grace, self-knowledge dawns. With

the dawning of self-knowledge, ignorance is removed, and along with it, the bondage of karma is also destroyed. Only the person who renounces craving for the fruits of actions is truly a tyagi. One who performs their prescribed duties after renouncing desire for fruits is called a tyagi, even while remaining engaged in action. When one considers actions and the instruments of action as “mine,” affection arises toward them. That affection is called attachment (asakti). Attachment to the performance of action in the present is called karma-asakti, and attachment to future fruits is called phala-asakti. All actions have a beginning and an end, and their fruits are also subject to birth and destruction. But the Self is ever unchanging, with neither beginning nor end. Through such discriminating knowledge, desire for fruits is very easily abandoned from the mind, and the actions one performs, instead of serving personal motives, become for the welfare of the world. In every sphere of life, our ancient rishis and munis have created vast and varied forms of action. Our dharma shastras are a complete science of action (karma shastra). By following this karma shastra, our ancestors took steps forward in every field of life and established such ideals that today stand as great pillars of glory.

**aniṣṭaṁ iṣṭaṁ miśraṁ ca trividhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam
bhavaty atyāgināṁ pretya na tu sannyāsināṁ kvacit (18-12)**

Comm: People who do not renounce the fruits of their actions have to experience three kinds of results after death, that is, in future births. These are: good results such as attaining heaven or divine states through righteous actions; bad results such as falling into lower births through sinful actions; and mixed results such as human birth, which contains both merit and sin. But those who are renouncers of action or self-realized persons, who perform actions in a sāttvic manner, never have to experience such results at any time. In other words, they become eternally free. When a person cuts off his connection with the fruits of action, he no longer becomes an enjoyer of those fruits but becomes a renouncer. Attaining liberation alone is the highest purpose of human life. Therefore, in this chapter, from the fourth to the twelfth verse, Lord Krishna has carefully explained the subtle obstacles on the path of liberation and their solutions, because the course of action is indeed very difficult to understand. This is why it is said: “The path of action is very mysterious.” (Gītā 4.17) Sri Ramakrishna said: “Why should you give up action? You must think of God, sing His glories, and perform your daily duties. Whatever you sow in the field will surely grow, so actions must be done without desire. If you can perform desireless action, love for God arises. Gradually, by His grace, you attain Him. You see God and speak with Him, just as I am speaking with you now.” Those who do not renounce attachment, possessiveness, and desire toward their actions and their results, and who perform all actions with expectation of reward, are referred to as ‘non-renouncers’. From good actions, such people obtain heaven or worldly pleasures. From sinful actions, they must suffer bad results such as birth as animals, birds, insects, plants, or lives filled with worldly pain and misery. From actions mixed with both merit and sin,

one gains human birth and experiences a mixture of physical pleasure and bodily and mental suffering. According to the purity or impurity of one's actions, impressions are formed in the inner mind. These impressions shape a person's nature and push him toward righteous or unrighteous actions. Such actions become the seed of future results. A self-controlled person who has renounced the sense of doership and enjoyership does not fall into bondage of action and its results. The world is made up of divine, human, and lower forms of life. Because of differences in action and its results, a soul is born as a god, a human being, or a lower creature like an insect. As long as a person does not renounce the fruits of action, actions produce results, and results again produce new actions. In this way, the soul remains bound and must experience repeated births and deaths. Therefore, one who does not understand the principle of renouncing desire for results remains bound to enjoyment and suffering. An ignorant person who considers himself to be the body can never truly give up attachment and desire for results. Such non-renouncers must inevitably experience the results of their actions in future births. Karmic results never get destroyed without being experienced. The Lord has called a person who has renounced the fruits of action a "yogi" and a "sannyāsi" at the beginning of the sixth chapter. Actions performed without dependence on results do not produce fruits, just like roasted seeds cannot sprout. By offering the fruits of action to God and performing sāt̥tvic actions, all previously accumulated good and bad karmas are destroyed. When Self-realization arises through renunciation of action's fruits, action no longer remains separate. A God-conscious person, who has no identification with the body, performs actions fearlessly after offering their fruits to God. True renunciation is the knowledge that one's real nature is non-doer, non-enjoyer, beyond the world, indivisible, and non-dual Brahman. Sannyāsa is thus a supreme and exalted state of body and mind.

**pañcaitāni mahābāho kārṇāṇi nibodha me
sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām (18-13)**

Comm: O Arjuna! Understand from Me the five fundamental causes mentioned in the Sankhya (Vedanta) scripture—which discriminates between the nature of the Self (atma) and the non-Self (anatma)—for the complete accomplishment of all actions. In this verse, clarity is needed regarding the word "Sankhya" and its qualifying term "kritanta." The word "Sankhya" is well-known in reference to the Sankhya philosophy propounded by Maharshi Kapila. A scripture in which the number or enumeration of things to be known is determined is called Sankhya shastra. From this perspective, since Vedanta enables the determination of objects to be known, Vedanta philosophy itself is called Sankhya. "Kritanta" means that which brings an end or conclusion to performed actions. In Vedanta, the conclusion or renunciation of actions is taught. Therefore, Vedanta alone is "kritanta." According to Vedanta, one who—through hearing (shravana), reflection (manana), and deep meditation (nididhyasana)—has directly realized the supreme truth no longer has any obligatory actions to perform, and such a person is called "kritanti" (one who has

reached the end of actions). This same meaning is inherent in the word “Vedanta.” “Veda” means knowledge. That in which, after attaining knowledge, nothing further remains to be known—that is the essence of Vedanta philosophy. Sri Shankaracharya has clarified that “Sankhya” means scripture in harmony with Vedanta, and the word “kritanta” is used as a qualifier of Vedanta. According to Ramanujacharya’s explanation, “Sankhya” comes from “sam” (properly) + “khyā” (intelligence), meaning proper or perfect intelligence. The word Sankhya denotes the highest form of intellect. The intelligence derived from the Vedas establishes the Supreme Lord as the doer of the entire universe, along with the instruments of body, senses, vital airs, and individual soul (jivatma). Vedanta, which teaches knowledge of the Self, is the conclusion or culmination of all actions. For the success of any action, there are five root causes. The Supreme Lord is not the cause of the accomplishment of actions. The Self (atma) is neither the material cause of action, nor its instrumental cause, nor even a co-operating factor in its success. Just as day and night manifest in the sky while the sun remains unattached, similarly, auspicious and inauspicious actions occur depending on the Self, yet the Self remains completely independent of them. Whether it be scripturally enjoined actions or prohibited actions, the Self is entirely free from both. At the conclusion of actions, an unseen force (adrishta) is generated for the purpose of experiencing their fruits. In accordance with this adrishta, a person encounters corresponding birth (yoni), body, qualities, and good or bad means of life. Even after being created, adrishta sometimes remains stored as accumulated karma for thousands of years without being experienced. It is experienced only when the appropriate time arrives. The fruit of extremely intense merit (punya) or sin (papa) is sometimes experienced immediately in this very body. The fruit of the most intense merit or sin is sometimes received within three years, three months, three fortnights, or even three days. In the Upanishads, the Lord has stated in the previous verses that these five factors are the root causes for the full accomplishment of all actions, the generation of adrishta, and the attainment of their fruits.

**adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca prthag-vidham
vividhāś ca prthak ceṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam (18-14)**

Comm: For the accomplishment or completion of all actions—whether they are in accordance with scripture or opposed to scripture—there are five causes. The first cause is Adhiṣṭhāna, that upon which action depends. Here, Adhiṣṭhāna means the gross physical body. The second cause is the sense of doership, the feeling “I am the doer.” The third cause consists of the mind, intellect, and all the sense organs and organs of action, each functioning separately as instruments. The fourth cause is the various efforts and activities of the vital airs such as prāṇa, and the movements of the organs like eyes and ears. The fifth cause is called Daiva (the divine factor). In the Sāṅkhya philosophy also it is stated that for the performance of any action, five main causes are involved: the body or place, the doer, the sense organs, effort, and above all, the Supreme Self. Without the body, no

action can be performed. This body is the dwelling place of the three states—waking, dream, and deep sleep. Because the individual soul is confined within the body, it comes into contact with objects and experiences pleasure and pain. Primarily, the body serves as the field and support for instruments and actions, and therefore it is called ‘Adhiṣṭhāna’. In the Mānas it is said: Kakabhushundi tells Garuda that although he can give up his body at will, he does not do so because devotion brings him immense joy. In this very body he attained devotion to Lord Rama, so the body is dear to him. Thus, this body itself becomes the cause of both bondage and liberation. When a person does not have the knowledge of the distinction between matter and consciousness, and believes that he himself performs actions that are actually done by nature and its qualities, he becomes the doer and the enjoyer. In other words, ego, which is the knot between matter and consciousness, is another cause in the accomplishment of action. The doer is the embodied soul situated in nature, who is called the enjoyer in Chapter 13 (Gita 13.21). In the performance of action, the role of the sense organs as instruments is extremely important. Although the power of knowing is one, it manifests in different forms through external organs such as the ears and eyes. Here, the mind, intellect, and sense organs are referred to as karaṇa (instruments), because without these instruments the soul cannot gain knowledge of objects. This distinct functioning of the instruments is the third cause of action. Swami Adgadanandji, in his Yathārtha Gītā, states that if the action is virtuous, then discrimination, dispassion, self-control, restraint, renunciation, and constant remembrance of God become the instruments. If the action is sinful, then desire, anger, attachment, hatred, and greed become the instruments of action. Movement from one place to another, movement of hands and feet, inhalation and exhalation, contraction and expansion of organs with the help of vital air, concentration of the mind, and discriminative thinking of the intellect—all such forms of effort together constitute the fourth cause of action. When a person has noble intentions and makes suitable efforts, yet the action does not succeed, some reason must be accepted for this. That reason is called Daiva. Thus, Daiva is the fifth cause in the accomplishment of action. Some commentators accept Daiva as the will of God, while others describe it as the accumulated impressions from past births. Some explain Daiva as destiny, while others say it is the controller of action in the form of human effort itself. Those who consider Daiva as God’s will believe that deities like the Sun and Indra preside over the sense organs such as eyes and hands. The word Daiva means the inner motivator, the indwelling guide. The Supreme Lord is the ultimate cause. He appoints each being to specific actions. Dwelling within as the all-seeing witness, He inspires actions, and according to His guidance, humans perform various actions with the help of the senses. Even the power to act is granted by God alone. According to this view, Daiva means the all-inspiring inner controller. Therefore, all actions are performed according to the will of the Supreme Soul who resides in the hearts of all beings as their well-wisher. Other commentators say that Daivam refers to the impressions of good and bad actions from previous births, which are also called destiny. Prārabdha karma is included within these

impressions. Whatever actions a person has performed through countless births leave corresponding impressions within. Good actions create good impressions, and bad actions create bad impressions. According to these impressions, impulses to perform good or bad actions arise in the mind. Those who identify Daiva with human effort believe that past karmic impressions bear fruit according to divine will. Daiva governs action through human effort, and by relying on effort, Daiva grants results. Just as rice alone cannot produce food without fire, similarly, actions bear fruit only through the combined support of Daiva and human effort. A person's capacity for effort and action is also governed by impressions from past lives. Thus, for the completion and fruitfulness of action, these five causes are essential. Among these five, when a person acts with the egoistic feeling "I am the doer," he must experience the fruits of action either in this life or in future births. Only then is action considered complete. Performing action after renouncing the sense of doership is called Yoga. Actions performed without attachment do not produce results, just as roasted seeds cannot sprout. Thus, a person does not become bound by either good or bad actions. By giving up the egoistic feeling of "I am the doer", the accumulated past actions (sañcita karma) are destroyed through true knowledge of reality. The prārabdha karma is destroyed only by being experienced and exhausted. Since no new result-producing actions are created, a person becomes completely free from all bondage of karma. Among the five causes of action mentioned earlier, if even one cause other than the ego of doership is absent, then the action cannot be completed or perfected. Therefore, by constantly keeping alive in the heart the thought "I am not the doer; Hari (God) is the doer," and by remaining engaged in action with this attitude, a person can cross the ocean of worldly existence (saṁsāra). However, abandoning all personal effort, merely repeating "Everything is fate, everything is fate," and sitting idle while turning away from one's duty, is always blameworthy. By examining one's own shortcomings while performing one's duty, and then engaging in action with trust in divine support, a person attains inner satisfaction and peace of mind.

**śarīra-vāñ-mano-bhir yat karma prārabhate narah
nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ (18-15)**

Comm: All actions—whether in accordance with the scriptures or contrary to them—that are initiated by a human being through mind, speech, and body have five causes: the locus (adhisthana), the doer (karta), the instruments (karana), the effort (cheshta), and the divine (daiva). The mind is the cause behind the resolve or determination to perform an action. No matter what action is performed, the contribution of one among the body, speech, or mind is always more prominent and occupies the primary position compared to the other causes. The expression or manifestation of action occurs only through body, speech, and mind. All the meritorious (punya) or sinful (papa) actions performed by a human being are classified by the authors of the scriptures into three categories: physical (kayika), verbal (vachika), and mental (manasika). Similarly, the fruits of actions are also

experienced through the body, speech, and mind, and in that experience, one of these three always holds predominance. The conscious Self (chaitanya-svarupa atma), identifying itself with limiting adjuncts like the body, becomes the individual soul (jiva) and, driven by various desires, performs proper and improper actions. All the sinful and meritorious actions performed through mind, speech, and body cause the jiva to experience their fruits in this life as well as in future lives. Only in the human body can the jiva perform new meritorious and sinful actions. Other species (yoni) are merely for experiencing (bhoga-yoni); in them, the fruits of previously performed actions are experienced. In those species, there is no authority or capacity to perform new actions.

**tatraivam sati kartāram ātmānam kevalam tu yaḥ
paśyaty akṛta-buddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatih (18-16)**

Comm: All actions—whether physical, verbal, or mental—are performed only through five causes: the base or support (the body), the doer, the instruments, effort, and the divine factor (Daiva). Actions are not performed by the true Self. The ignorant person, due to impure understanding, believes that the pure, unattached, attributeless Self is the doer of all actions. Such a person does not truly understand the real nature of the Self. The Self is always non-doer. It is unattached like space. In its true nature, there is neither doership nor enjoyership. Doership and enjoyership are not created by God, nor are they created by Nature alone. They are created by the individual soul itself. Doership exists only in chidābhāsa (the reflected consciousness). The true Self is only the seer and witness of that reflected consciousness. Even chidābhāsa itself is imaginary. Therefore, doership present in it is also imaginary. That is why it can be renounced. In reality, there is no real doer at all. Just as a magnet remains still and yet causes iron filings to move around it, the Self always remains non-doer, yet, as a silent witness, it causes the functioning of the mind, intellect, senses, and all activities of the body. Just as the sun does not itself take any form, and does not become involved in objects, yet reveals the forms of the eyes and all visible objects, in the same way the Self does not act, yet makes all actions manifest. The sun itself is neither day nor night, but it is the cause of both. Similarly, the Self is neither the doer nor the action, yet it illuminates both the doer and the action. A narrow-minded, egoistic person, due to lack of scriptural knowledge and guidance of a teacher, mistakenly sees the pure, absolute Self as the doer. As long as a sleeping person does not wake up, he believes the dream to be real. A person suffering from jaundice sees the moon as yellow. In the same way, a body-identified person superimposes the body upon the Self. Connecting the unattached Self with actions, and believing the Self to be the doer of those actions, is extreme ignorance. The Lord calls such a person “durmatih”—one of perverted understanding. One whose intellect has not been purified by holy association, study of scriptures, obedience to the guru’s teachings, and spiritual disciplines such as discrimination, inquiry, control of mind and senses—is here described as “akṛta-buddhi”, a person with undeveloped understanding. In the practice of Karma Yoga and Sāṅkhya Yoga,

discrimination between Prakṛti (nature) and Puruṣa (Self) is most important. According to Karma Yoga, all actions are performed by the body, mind, intellect, and senses. But one does not establish attachment with them, that is, one has no sense of ownership toward them. A person whose inner being is deluded by ego considers himself to be the doer. When discrimination awakens, delusion is destroyed. When delusion is destroyed, the person no longer considers himself the doer. In other words, he experiences his pure Self-nature. As long as the seeker remains within the limits of Nature and performs actions under the compulsion of the guṇas, God does not intervene. Even though He is very near, He remains only as the witness. But when one takes complete refuge in the chosen Lord with exclusive devotion, God becomes the inner guide of the devotee's heart. The seeker then goes beyond the limits of Nature and enters the domain of God. For such an exclusive devotee, God is always present as the doer on his behalf.

**yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvāpi sa imāṁś lokān na hanti na nibadhyate (18-17)**

Comm: A wise person or a yogī, in whom the feeling “I am the doer” or “I am doing” does not exist, and whose intellect is free from selfishness, desire for results, and possessiveness, even if he performs his duty, such as fighting a righteous war, and outwardly kills many people, in reality he neither kills anyone nor becomes bound by sin. Actions performed without the ego of doership are, in truth, non-action. When one performs one's duty without attachment, selfish motive, or ego, even if some form of violence appears to occur before the eyes of the world, it is not real violence. Although no action is possible without the presence of existence itself, consciousness never becomes the doer of action, nor does it become the enjoyer of the results. When a person understands that “all activities of Nature are ever-changing, and the Self is only their illuminator,” and remains established in one's true nature, the egoistic feeling “I am doing” does not arise, nor does desire for results appear. In reality, it is only the sense of “I” (ego) that separates a human being from the Supreme Self and gives rise to the desire to enjoy and to seek results. Because of desire, attachment, and selfishness, the intellect becomes tainted. Not becoming attached to action or its results, understanding that sense-objects are dream-like, perishable, and momentary, and allowing no impressions of them to accumulate in the inner mind— this is what it means for the intellect to remain untainted. Through self-knowledge, the sense of ego is destroyed, and through desireless action, the impurity of the intellect is removed. When selfishness and ego-sense are destroyed, and the feeling “I am the doer” no longer remains, desires, latent tendencies, and personal gains automatically disappear from the mind. At that time, no action can become a cause of bondage for the person. Just as God, though He creates, sustains, and dissolves the entire universe, is in reality not a doer and has no attachment to those actions, in the same way, the knower of the Self and the Karma Yogī has no connection with the actions performed by the mind, intellect, and senses. When an object comes into contact with fire, it takes on the nature of fire. Similarly, a

person who has realized the reality of the Self no longer sees sense-objects as separate from the Self. Once one becomes completely non-different from the Self (Brahman), the sense of body and object no longer remains. Ego automatically disappears. The will of a self-realized person becomes united with the will of God. Therefore, whatever he does is actually done by God alone. There remains no separate personal will of his own. Śrī Rāmānujācārya has said, “All activities in the world take place only by the inspiration of the Supreme Lord.” Arjuna feared that killing revered elders in battle would bring sin upon him. To remove this doubt, the Lord says here: “Fight the war. But do not bring into your mind the egoistic thought, ‘I am fighting to defeat my enemies.’ Instead, accept that this action is taking place by the will of the Supreme Being. Then, the fear that killing Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and others will bring sin upon you— not only will that fear disappear, but even if you were to kill all living beings, not even the slightest sin would touch you.”

**jñānam jñeyam pariñātā trividha karma-codanā
karaṇam karma karteti trividhaḥ karma-saṅgrahaḥ (18-18)**

Comm: Knowledge (jnana), the object of knowledge (jneya), and the knower (parijnata)—these three are the motivators or impulses of action. The instruments (karana, i.e., the group of senses), the action (karma, i.e., activity), and the doer (karta, i.e., the one who employs the instruments)—these three are the basis or support for the performance of action. The combination of knowledge, knower, and object of knowledge is what impels a person toward mental, verbal, and physical actions. In Vedic literature, this is called the “triputi” (triad). Only when knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower come together does the performance of action become possible—for acquiring something or for rejecting it. For example: before drinking water, there arises the knowledge of thirst. The one who has this knowledge is the knower (jnata). Knowing about the water that is necessary to quench thirst is the object of knowledge (jneya). The combination of this triad gives rise to the desire to drink water, which acts as the motivator for the act of drinking. The one who collects the water is the “doer” (karta); the senses and other means through which water is obtained are the “instruments” (karana); and the act of drinking water is the “action” (karma). In reality, the faith and conviction required to perform an action is “knowledge” (jnana). In brief, it can also be said that the natural experience in the waking and dream states is “knowledge” (jnana). The living being who experiences is the “knower” (jnata), and whatever is experienced—according to what is desirable or undesirable—is the “object of knowledge” (jneya). Sound, form, taste, smell, and touch are the characteristics of the object of knowledge. Even if the object of knowledge is one, it manifests differently through different sense organs. Depending on whether the object is pleasant or unpleasant, the impulse to acquire or reject it arises. Knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower—these are the root of all motivation for action. The knower becomes the doer, transforming knowledge into the “instrument” (karana) and the object of knowledge into the “action” (karma). The instruments, action, and doer—

these three form the basis of action, and with their cooperation, action becomes complete. The activity performed with the cooperation of mind, intellect, senses, etc., is “action” (karma), and the senses etc. are the “instruments” (karana). According to Lokamanya Tilak’s view: knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower are the subtle activities of a person’s inner being, from which the impulse for action arises; and in accordance with this inner activity, gross actions are performed—which are indicated as the basis of action. Sri Shankaracharya has explained that the word “parijnata” (knower) means the “enjoyer” (bhokta) imagined due to ignorance in the form of limiting adjuncts (upadhi). According to his commentary, when knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower come together, all actions begin from the perspective of what is to be avoided (heya) and what is to be attained (upadeya). In all these views, the Self (atma) is completely independent of the doer. Without the sense of “I am the doer” (ahamkrita bhava), the performance of action is not complete—meaning, it does not produce fruits. From this, it is established that the Self is neither the motivator nor the support of any action.

**jñānam karma ca kartā ca tridhāiva guṇa-bhedaṭaḥ
procyate guṇa-saṅkhyāne yathāvac chrṇu tāny api (18-19)**

Comm : By explaining the motivation behind action and the accumulation of karma through the principles of Sāṅkhya Yoga, the Lord further teaches that one should adopt the sāt̥tvic attitude, which supports true spiritual knowledge, and abandon the tāmasic attitude. For this purpose, He clearly explains the qualitative divisions of knowledge, action, the doer, intellect (buddhi), determination (dhṛti), and happiness (sukha). In the Sāṅkhya philosophy of Kapila, knowledge, action, and the doer are described as being of three kinds, according to the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas. In human life, action, knowledge, and the ego arising from identification with the body have special importance. Therefore, the Lord instructs Arjuna to listen carefully and attentively to this teaching. These three qualities of material nature bind all living beings in bondage. Even the sattva-guṇa, though pure, also binds a person. In the acquisition of knowledge and the performance of action, the role of the doer is most important. Among all the instruments involved in action, the intellect (buddhi) and its supporting power, determination (dhṛti), play a special role in the accumulation of karma. Similarly, the attainment of happiness is the fundamental objective behind all human actions. Therefore, the Lord further explains three kinds of knowable happiness—sāt̥tvic, rājasic, and tāmasic. Along with this, He clearly explains in the following verses how sāt̥tvic intellect and sāt̥tvic determination become the chief aids in the attainment of true spiritual knowledge.

**sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikaṁ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate
avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu taj jñānam viddhi sāt̥tvikam (18-20)**

Comm: That knowledge by which the wise person and the yogi see the one eternal Supreme Self (Paramatma) as indivisible and equally present in all beings situated

in diverse names and forms—know that non-dual vision of the Self, which is perfect knowledge, to be sattvic. The knowledge that is illuminated by sattva has no differentiation of qualities (gunas). The knowledge that is united with the nature of the Lord (Ishvara) is beyond the gunas. That knowledge is direct experience, after attaining which the influence of the gunas comes to an end. It is the mature state of knowledge. The sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic distinctions that the Lord describes here as differences in knowledge are essentially the means (sadhana) to knowledge. Even though the seeker knows various objects, persons, etc., as separate and uses them appropriately, he experiences in those changing objects the self-established, unchanging principle. Acharya Shankara has mentioned in his commentary: “Although the Self appears as if separate in each body while remaining undivided in its nature, that Self is one and continuous, like space. This non-dual vision alone is perfect vision, and know it to be sattvic.” “Sattvic knowledge is pure knowledge, in which the knower, the known, and knowledge become one, and the undivided, indivisible divine nature is seen everywhere.” The person who sees one divine Self in all beings is qualified for sattvic knowledge. There is no difference in the Self due to differences in bodies. That Supreme Self exists as one and undivided in all bodies. A person with divine vision sees that one all-pervading, indestructible principle in all things. Even though there are hundreds of pots of different colours and shapes, the all-pervading space within them is “one” and undivided. Seeing unity in all diversity, the One in the many, and the whole in the One—this is the essence of knowledge of Brahman (Brahma-jnana). This knowledge alone illuminates all things that are divided, subject to change, and perishable, while itself remaining pure and unchanging. In the Madhava commentary, it is said that the intent of seeing oneness in all divided beings is to see Lord Vishnu everywhere.

**pr̥thaktvena tu yat jñānaṁ nānā-bhāvān pr̥thag-vidhān
veti sarveṣu bhūteṣu taj jñānaṁ viddhi rājasam (18-21)**

Comm: That knowledge according to which the Self or conscious principle present in living beings is considered to be separate from one another, and according to which different souls are believed to exist in different bodies, is called rājasic knowledge. Through this kind of knowledge, such ideas arise as: “This material body itself is the living being, and when the body is destroyed, consciousness also comes to an end.” That knowledge by which names, forms, and limiting attributes are known, but non-dual (Advaita) knowledge remains far away, is rājasic knowledge. Because difference is perceived among living beings, this knowledge inevitably creates attachment and affection toward some, and hatred or aversion toward others, in the human heart. Due to the predominance of rajo-guṇa, a person sees distinctions among living beings. A person endowed with rājasic knowledge fails to perceive the Brahman-principle, which is the one Self residing in all beings, and instead sees only diversity in names, forms, and attributes. In the worldly state, objects are experienced only as separate and distinct. Difference is accepted as the

nature of creation, and unity is accepted as the state of dissolution. Objects are different in form and in utility, but the Self-principle that has entered into them is one everywhere and at all times. To give special importance to differences among perceptible objects and, on that basis, to regard the Self itself as different, is not true knowledge. By relying on this kind of knowledge, even a Sāṅkhya aspirant cannot realize the Brahman-principle. The vision of a person endowed with rājasic knowledge does not reach the indwelling Self that transcends the body and abides within all beings. The imagination of diversity alone becomes the cause of all kinds of desires.

**yat tu kṛtsna-vad ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam
atattvārtha-vad alpaṁ ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam (18-22)**

Comm: That knowledge by which a person considers the body—which is solely an instrument for activities like bathing, eating, drinking, etc.—to be the complete or entire self, and remains attached to it, becomes as insignificant as the knowledge of animals. In this, no meaning or realization of the true nature of the Self (atma-tattva) is attained. Such knowledge is improper and devoid of reason—that is, it appears contrary to the scriptures. Because this knowledge is related to the fleeting physical pleasures of the body, mind, and senses, it is called tamasic knowledge. Sri Shankaracharya has said: “Accepting the fullness of the Self in one’s own body or in an idol, etc., and not acknowledging the existence of God beyond the body or idol—this is tamasic knowledge. Accepting the body itself as the Self also falls under tamasic knowledge. Believing that the idol alone is God and that all desires will be fulfilled through its worship—performing worship in an unregulated manner with attachment to fruits—this too is tamasic tendency. God is all-pervading and also present in this idol. Through devoted worship with bhakti, He manifests and grants darshan. Worship performed with this understanding falls under the sattvic category.” Not acknowledging the awareness of the individual soul (jivatma) within the body or the separate existence of the Self beyond the body—this is tamasic knowledge, which is always opposed to spiritual practice.

**niyataṁ saṅga-rahitam arāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtam
aphala-prepsunā karma yat tat sātṭvikam ucyate (18-23)**

Comm: That action which is performed as a sense of duty, according to one’s varṇa and āśrama, circumstances, and personal capacity, remaining above attachment and aversion, without desire for results, and for the pleasure of the Lord, is called sātṭvic action. The action performed by a person who does not have egoistic pride of doership and does not desire the fruit, is niškāma karma. To perform one’s prescribed duty without neglecting scriptural injunctions, accepting them as the command of the Lord, is called yajña-karma. Through yajña-karma, both the welfare of the world and one’s own spiritual welfare are achieved. To act without attachment and aversion means that it is improper to perform bodily actions merely for sense pleasure or excessive self-centered affection,

and it is equally improper to abandon action out of hatred or aversion. When action is performed for the welfare of the world as an offering to the Lord, there is no place at all for attachment or aversion. Prescribed duty performed in this spirit becomes equal to the worship of the Lord and constant remembrance of Him, and leads the seeker toward union with the Supreme Self.

**yat tu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ
kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ tad rājasam udāhṛtam (18-24)**

Comm: Even if an action is in accordance with the scriptures, if it is performed with attachment to its fruits, that action is rajasic. Performing sacrifices (yajna) and similar rituals according to rules with the hope of attaining heavenly pleasures is also rajasic. A person dominated by the rajo guna invests body, mind, and wealth for the fulfillment of desire-motivated actions (kamyā-karma). Even if various desires for enjoyment are fulfilled, the end of craving does not occur. With the hope of future fruits, no matter how difficult an action may be, such a person feels no hesitation in performing it. This person performs even their prescribed (niyata) duties. But the only inner difference is that desire for fruits and the sense of ego remain attached to their actions. The person who proclaims after performing an action, “I have accomplished such a difficult task,” and feels pride—that egoistic and fruit-desiring person’s action is rajasic. Performing actions with ego due to a sense of one’s own specialness, or keeping an eye on future fruits—if even one of these two attitudes arises, the action becomes rajasic. Sri Ramakrishna’s words are: “Rajasic actions make one forget God and give rise to the desire to gain fame among people. Therefore, rajasic actions are opposed to the attainment of knowledge or liberation. In rajo guna, there is ostentation. Without devotion, discernment, detachment, and compassion, one cannot attain God.” In rajasic actions, much futile effort has to be expended, and due to intense attachment to fruits, the person pays no attention even to bodily suffering. The doer of rajasic actions, motivated by attachment and desires, starts new actions every day. As a result, their actions become greatly expanded. Even if one considers desire-motivated actions for enjoyment to be superior compared to inaction or engagement in sinful acts, there is no spiritual fruit in them, nor is self-peace attained.

**anubandhaṁ kṣayaṁ hiṁsāṁ anapekṣya ca pauraṣaṁ
mohād ārabhyate karma yat tat tāmāsam ucyate (18-25)**

Comm: That action which is begun blindly and recklessly, with the thought “Whatever happens, let it happen—we shall see later,” without thoughtful discrimination regarding the future consequences of action, the resources, strength, and moral decline involved, the physical and mental suffering caused to oneself or others, and the capacity of the performer to complete the action, is called tāmasic action. A person dominated by tamas, due to ignorance and delusion, does not consider before beginning an action the auspicious or inauspicious results, the suffering inflicted on others, or the disturbance

caused to social peace and order. From the above explanation it becomes clear that any action which is not prescribed by the scriptures as obligatory duty is tāmasic action. All prohibited actions are tāmasic actions. For example, drinking alcohol, gambling, corruption, and similar acts are tāmasic actions. The painful results of tāmasic actions are experienced immediately. Through tāmasic action, none of the four puruṣārthas of human life—kāma (pleasure), artha (wealth), dharma (righteousness), and mokṣa (liberation)—are attained. The meaning of the term “anubandha” is as follows: (1) Eligibility for action, (2) The nature of the action, (3) One’s relationship with the action, and (4) The necessity or purpose of the action. These four together constitute the fourfold anubandha of action. By carefully contemplating these aspects in detail before beginning any action, one can obtain proper understanding of the consequences of action.

**mukta-saṅgo’ nahaṅkāri dhṛty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ
siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate (18-26)**

Comm: The doer who performs actions with patience and enthusiasm, while remaining free from attachment and ego, and who remains unaffected by joy or sorrow in success or failure—such a person is called a sattvic karta (doer). A sattvic person remains above both the sense of doership and enjoyership, and performs their prescribed duties wholeheartedly, without any personal selfish interest. The meaning of the word “mukta-saṅgaḥ” is: in whatever actions are performed through mind, speech, and body, there is no desire, clinging, or attachment. When actions are offered to the Lord, whether the result is favorable or unfavorable, the sattvic person neither becomes elated nor disturbed. They remain established in equanimity of mind. Accepting the fruit of action as the Lord’s will, they again exert effort according to the situation. Actions aimed at self-welfare and the welfare of the world are always obligatory (niyata) duties, in which there is no attachment to the action or its fruit. The sattvic doer alone is the “karma yogi” described in the Gita. Even the present opportunity to perform beneficial actions is the fruit of some merit (punya karma) earned in the past. Therefore, the fruit of daily and occasional (nitya-naimittika) duties never goes in vain. A seeker should hold this attitude in the mind: “Even if ‘I’ do not perform this action, this work will certainly be done. By the infinite grace of the Lord, I have received the opportunity to perform this beneficial action.” By keeping this thought in the mind, ego is destroyed. It is said in the science of ethics: “aṅgīkṛtaḥ sukr̥tinaḥ paripālayanti” — meaning, a person of patience never leaves an undertaken action incomplete. No matter how many obstacles arise, without violating scriptural rules, they face them with patience and enthusiasm and strive to complete the work. By renouncing identification with the body and becoming established in the Self, attention does not go toward physical suffering. As soon as the sense of objects departs and the sense of body is removed, the joy of performing action becomes doubled. The above-mentioned sattvic attitude helps in manifesting knowledge of the Supreme Self. Therefore, a seeker desiring liberation should become a sattvic doer.

**rāgī karma-phala-prepsur lubdho himsātmako’śuciḥ
harṣa-śokānvitaḥ kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ (18-27)**

Comm: A person who performs actions with attachment to sense objects, desire for the fruits of action, greed, inclination toward violence, lack of purity, and who is subject to joy and sorrow, is called a rājasic doer. Being strongly attracted to a particular type of sense enjoyment or action, and developing excessive liking for it, is called attachment (rāga). Similarly, when obstacles arise in the fulfillment of desires, a rājasic person blames others. A rājasic person is driven by the modifications of attachment and aversion. He never performs any action without expectation of result. Keeping the desire for results foremost, a person dominated by rajo-guṇa begins every action. His mind does not incline toward self-reflection and other noble practices, because no immediate worldly benefit is seen in them. No matter how much he gains, a rājasic doer is never satisfied. As stated in the Mānas: “The more one gains, the more greed increases.” Wealth, land, enjoyments, honor, respect, praise—the craving for ‘more and more’ keeps increasing endlessly. He performs actions with a mentality of unjustly seizing the property of others. His desire to accumulate wealth becomes so intense that, without considering right and wrong, he does not hesitate to resort to violence toward others. Ignoring the suffering and pain of others, he uses violence to fulfill his selfish interests. A rājasic doer remains impure. Being constantly occupied with the accumulation of wealth, he gives no importance to bodily health or cleanliness. When the mind and intellect are always filled with desire, anger, greed, delusion, and ego, it is called inner impurity. Because of the absence of sāttvic qualities such as detachment, compassion, and forgiveness, at every action and in every situation, he is sometimes elated and sometimes sorrowful. Therefore, his mind and consciousness never remain in a state of peace.

**ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko’lasah
viṣādī dīrgha-sūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyaṭe (18-28)**

Comm: A person who exhibits eight characteristics—restless mind, foolishness or unrefined intellect, lack of humility or courtesy, deceitfulness, ingratitude, laziness, being overwhelmed by despair, and procrastination—even if only some of these are present in their thoughts or actions—is called a tamasic karta (doer). A tamasic person lacks resolute intelligence. The mind always remains uncontrolled. Due to the absence of intellect and discriminative power, the mind and senses always remain in a state of disorder. Having fallen under the control of prakṛti (material nature), a tamasic doer has no discernment between what should be done and what should not. A person without good impressions (saṃskaras) cannot be discerning. Just as feeding milk to a serpent only increases its venom, teaching scriptural knowledge to a tamasic person causes them to fall into deep sleep (ignorance). Because the heart of a person dominated by tamo guṇa is filled with ego, they never bow their head before elders by varṇa or āśrama, or before mother,

father, guru, acharya, etc. They never behave simply and humbly through mind, speech, or body. Due to ignorance, they stubbornly insist on their own opinions. The word “shatha” means dishonest or deceitful. A tamasic doer hides their own motives and deceives others by resorting to falsehood, performing various actions for that purpose. Even if they obtain a guru equal to Brahma, knowledge does not dawn in the heart of a deceitful person. Even if thousands of people explain, a person of this nature does not understand. Instead of showing gratitude to a benefactor, such a person feels no hesitation in causing harm to them. Due to wicked intellect, creating obstacles in others’ work, quarrels, and discord becomes their natural habit. A lazy person pays no attention even to their own body. Overcome by laziness, they prefer indulging in many futile imaginations or spending most of their time in sleep. They want to enjoy fruits without effort. When desired enjoyments beyond their capacity are not fulfilled, they remain depressed all the time. Due to the absence of cheerfulness, the face of such a doer always appears gloomy. Procrastinating obligatory actions by saying “today or tomorrow” and wasting time is called being “dirgha-sutri” (procrastinator). They cannot complete even a simple task that could be done in a short time, even after a long period. The nature of action depends on the guna that the doer accepts. The practice (sadhana) that the doer follows becomes their very form. If the doer is sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic, then actions etc. also become sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, the doer is also described as three types according to sattvic and other distinctions. “sāttvikaḥ kārako’saṅgī rāgāndho rājasah smṛtaḥ | tāmasah smṛti vibhraṣṭo nirguṇo madapāśrayaḥ” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11/25/26): That is, the unattached doer is sattvic; the doer extremely attached to action and its fruits is rajasic; and the doer devoid of discernment is tamasic. The devotee who has taken refuge in Me (the Supreme Lord) is beyond the gunas (nirguna).

**buddher bhedaṁ dhṛteś caiva guṇatas trividhaṁ śṛṇu
procyamānam aśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya (18-29)**

Comm: O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), intellect (buddhi) and the power of firmness or determination (dhṛti) are also of three kinds, according to the differences of the three guṇas. Hear from Me clearly and separately about their distinctions. All objects that exist in this world are divided into three categories, due to the combination of the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas. In worldly conduct as well as in all means adopted for the attainment of the Supreme Self, the role of intellect and determination is of primary importance. The flow of intellect itself is also threefold. Just as there are three kinds of intellect, determination too is of three kinds. All living and non-living beings of the world are bound within the limits of the three guṇas. Some people believe that even without fully knowing all scriptural rules and regulations, one can attain success in life by acting according to one’s intellect. Whatever a person may do, if the intellect is pure, the desired success is surely attained. That faculty by which a person is able to understand duty in action and surrounding circumstances is called intellect (buddhi). The faculty which

works through doubt, alternatives, and indecision is called the mind (manas), and the faculty which functions through certainty and decisive understanding is called intellect (buddhi). The general power of understanding is called intellect, and the special power of firm retention and perseverance is called determination (dhr̥ti). Since determination or holding power depends upon the doer, it is also necessary to know its three divisions. Until the distinctions between intellect and determination are clearly understood, progress on the spiritual path becomes difficult. Intellect and determination are closely connected to each other. Determination may also be considered a quality of intellect. Through intellect, one clearly understands one's goal, and through determination, the doer remains firmly established in that goal. The power that does not allow one to deviate from one's chosen aim is called determination (dhr̥ti).

**pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca kāryākārye bhayābhaye
bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā veti buddhis sāttvikī pārtha(18-30)**

Comm: O Arjuna! That intellect by which one gains proper knowledge of the paths of engagement in action (pravṛtti) and withdrawal from action (nivṛtti), of what should be done and what should not be done, of fear and fearlessness, and of bondage and liberation—know that intellect to be sattvic, that is, predominantly influenced by sattva. In this verse, the path of action (karma marga) and the path of knowledge (jñāna marga) are indicated respectively by the words “pravṛtti” and “nivṛtti.” While following the duties of a householder, renouncing attachment to actions and their fruits, and performing actions solely with the attitude of offering to the Lord for the welfare of the self and the world—like King Janaka—this is called the path of “pravṛtti.” Renouncing identification with the body, practicing restraint (śama), sense control (dama), forbearance (titikṣha), and other disciplines, and constantly remaining established only in the one Supreme Self who is existence-consciousness-bliss absolute—wandering like Sri Shukadeva and the Śanakadi sages—this is called the path of “nivṛtti.” Sri Śaṅkarācārya has described nivṛtti as the path of sannyāsa. In the practical field of worldly life, there should be a definite boundary regarding one's lifestyle and spiritual practice between pravṛtti and nivṛtti. Considering factors like country, time, and person, the proper knowledge of which scripturally prescribed actions are to be performed and which are to be avoided resides in sattvic intellect. Actions performed in accordance with the scriptures, varṇa, and āśrama duties are “kārya” (what should be done), while actions contrary to scriptural limits are “akārya” (what should not be done). In a given situation, what is proper to do and what is not—only pure intellect is capable of determining this. When one deviates from duty, fear naturally arises in the human mind. Remaining absorbed in the Supreme Lord without deviating from the path of duty is “abhaya” (fearlessness). This fearlessness alone leads the seeker to direct realization of the Supreme Lord, who bestows complete fearlessness. The knowledge of fear and fearlessness is reflected in sattvic intellect. In the world, attachment to death and to transient objects of enjoyment like wife, children, wealth, etc.,

causes fear in a person. With the dawn of self-knowledge and discernment through sattvic intellect, this fear is removed. Sattvic intellect provides the power to truly understand the nature of worldly bondage and liberation. Ignorance is the cause of bondage, and through attainment of knowledge of the reality, a person becomes free from the cycle of birth and death. A person endowed with sattvic intellect, even while living in the world, receives the inspiration to remain unattached to sense enjoyments. Due to impressions from auspicious and inauspicious actions, the jiva becomes subject to prakriti and has to revolve in the cycle of birth and death—this is “karma bandhana” (bondage of action). Through yoga practice and by the Lord’s grace, when all accumulated karma is destroyed and no new actions are initiated to create further impressions—this is jivanmukti or moksha (liberation while living or ultimate liberation). The discernment present in sattvic intellect transforms into knowledge of the reality, which helps in severing the bonds of the world.

**yayā dharmam adharmaṁ ca kāryaṁ cākāryam eva ca
ayathāvat prajānāti buddhis sā rājasī pārtha (18-31)**

Comm: O Pārtha (Arjuna), that intellect by which a person is unable to clearly know what is righteous and unrighteous, and what is duty and non-duty, or knows them only in an incomplete and confused manner, is called rājasic intellect. That which is prescribed by the scriptures and leads to the welfare of the living being is called dharma, and that which is forbidden by the scriptures and binds the soul is called adharma. According to varna (social order), āśrama (stage of life), one’s nature, capacity, circumstances, as well as place and time, whatever actions are prescribed by the scriptures for a person are called duty (kartavya). Those actions which the scriptures declare to be prohibited and not to be performed for a person are called non-duty (akartavya). The decisions regarding dharma and adharma, and duty and non-duty, made through rājasic intellect, are always doubtful, wavering between what is right and what is wrong. Because of this uncertainty, a rājasic person remains surrounded by doubt in every sphere of life. Rājasic intellect fails to correctly discriminate between what is proper and what is improper. Due to attachment, self-interest, bias, partiality, and inequality enter into rājasic intellect. Because of the influence of attachment and aversion, rājasic intellect fails to recognize that worldly objects—being subject to creation and destruction—are momentary and ever-changing. Due to strong attraction, the power of discrimination remains clouded in rājasic intellect. Therefore, a person who seeks true welfare should, through holy association (sat-saṅga), self-study, and right reflection, renounce the rājasic tendencies present in the intellect and endeavor to cultivate the growth of sātṭvic qualities.

**adharmaṁ dharmam iti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā
sarvārthān viparītāṁś ca buddhis sā pārtha tāmasī (18-32)**

Comm: O Arjuna, son of Pṛthā, that intellect which is covered by ignorance born of tamoguṇa, and which accepts adharma as “this is dharma”, and which understands all

that is truly beneficial—both in the spiritual and practical spheres—in the opposite way, that intellect is called tāmasic. Not accepting the soul as one’s real self and considering the body alone to be the self, not showing faith in God and instead accepting worldly objects and materials as real and eternal, considering others as insignificant while thinking oneself to be learned and superior, and accepting sense pleasure as lasting peace—all these are examples of perverted and opposite thinking. To a person endowed with tāmasic intellect, the good instructions of the scriptures, as well as the beneficial advice of parents and teachers, appear to be harmful. A person dominated by tamoguṇa, due to ignorance, looks at reality through a distorted viewpoint. As a result, a person with tāmasic intellect is unable to understand the true nature and special characteristics of objects or events. Tāmasic intellect itself is evil or destructive intellect, which becomes the cause of one’s own downfall and of causing suffering to others. Some people hold the belief that without making effort to examine life on the basis of scriptural rules and valid authority, and by following only one’s own reasoning, conducting daily life in this way alone is the best path. But the scriptural injunctions and authorities, established through the tireless spiritual practices of our ancient sages and seers, which for ages have purified and enriched the moral values, conduct, and lifestyle of people at every level of society, are not something to be ignored. Rather, keeping scriptural discipline in the forefront, and then examining every matter properly through one’s intellect and discrimination, one should make decisions in such a way that the intellect does not get pulled toward rājasic or tāmasic tendencies. In today’s society, due to the decline of scripturally taught moral values, animal slaughter is being labeled as “meat production.” Abortion is being presented as family welfare, and in the name of women’s freedom, crossing all limits of restraint and dignity and becoming morally directionless is being described as progress, thereby confusing the younger generation. Religiousness is being portrayed as communalism, and opposition to religion is being given the name of secularism, thus creating questions and doubts about national unity. When the time of destruction approaches, such opposite and tāmasic intellect becomes prevalent.

**dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥ-prāṇendriya-kriyāḥ
yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī (18-33)**

Comm: O Partha! That steadfast determination (dhṛiti), achieved through the practice of yoga, by which a person becomes capable of firmly controlling the activities of the mind, vital energies (prana), and senses with resolute focus—that dhṛiti is sattvic. The meaning of dhṛiti is “holding” or “retention,” by which a seeker firmly holds the principles, thoughts, or goals determined by their own intellect with unwavering strength. The root of all success is dhṛiti—that is, the power of retention or patience. Through the strength of yoga, the determination directed solely toward the Supreme Self, established in equanimity of intellect, is called sattvic dhṛiti. The organs of action (karmendriyas) and organs of knowledge (jñanendriyas) are naturally inclined toward sense objects.

Only the mind is capable of restraining them. When unwavering (ekaniṣṭha) dhṛiti awakens in the mind through continuous inquiry into the indivisible Self, the activities of the mind, prana, and senses come under control. When dhṛiti becomes fully integrated with yoga—that is, when the mind merges with patience—attainment of success becomes certain. Those who remain dedicated to contemplation of the Lord and do not deviate from their path of goal due to any worldly temptation—they are qualified for unwavering (avyabhicharāṇi) or unbroken dhṛiti. Connecting the mind with any worldly object other than contemplation of the Lord is the fault of “vyabhicharāṇi” (unfaithfulness). Refraining from this is “avyabhicharāṇi” holding power. In equanimity of intellect, continuously engaging the mind, prana, and senses in practices for attaining the Lord—such as worship (bhajana), meditation, and selfless service—this is sattvic holding power. That is, turning the mind, prana, and senses toward the Beloved Lord alone is sattvic patience. According to Sri Shankaracharya, the meaning of “yoga” is samadhi (absorption). Samadhi itself is the supreme state of dhṛiti. The holding power that is always connected with that samadhi is avyabhicharāṇi dhṛiti. In another sense, the holding power that desires attainment of the Supreme Self is sattvic dhṛiti. Through the strength of yoga, inspiration arises to hold meditation steadfastly in the lotus of the heart in solitude. Due to the mind and senses, no sudden impulse toward action arises, nor does the mind force engagement in any activity contrary to the scriptures. Lokamanya Tilak has mentioned that renunciation of the fruits of action indicates the usefulness of yoga in dhṛiti. According to his view, the word “yoga” means non-attachment to actions and their fruits, which is the main foundation of sattvic dhṛiti.

**yayā tu dharma-kāmārthān dhṛtyā dhārayate’rjuna
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājāsī (18-34)**

Comm: O Pārtha, O Arjuna, that steadfastness or power of endurance by which a person, under the influence of attachment and with desire for results, necessarily pursues dharma, kāma, and artha as objects to be served and enjoyed, is called rājasic steadfastness. A person endowed with rājasic dhṛti firmly holds on, due to intense attachment, to wealth and material possessions, and to the enjoyments obtained through them, considering them to be the goal of life. Such a person performs duties with the hope of gaining merit, remains constantly engaged in actions meant for acquiring wealth, and becomes deeply involved in collecting objects of enjoyment and pleasure. Among the four human goals (puruṣārthas) in life, a rājasic person remains satisfied with only three—dharma, artha, and kāma. He has no interest in liberation (mokṣa). A rājasic person believes that peace in life is attained only through sense enjoyment. Therefore, he keeps searching for activities that fulfill dharma, artha, and kāma. A person dominated by the rājasic quality performs religious and other virtuous acts only for specific purposes or for the fulfilment of desires. By practicing dharma with the aim of fulfilling desires, one does not attain liberation. Such dharma merely produces temporary enjoyment and then comes to an end. However, a person endowed

with sāttvic steadfastness, even in adverse circumstances, never deviates even slightly from righteous actions, by nature. When dharma is practiced without desire for results, wealth naturally arises from dharma. In other words, when wealth is spent for the sake of dharma, there is a mutual growth of both dharma and wealth— dharma increases wealth, and wealth strengthens dharma. But when dharma is practiced and wealth is spent only for fulfilling personal desires, that dharma produces its result and then gets destroyed. Here, by the word “artha”, are indicated wealth and property, house, family, household necessities, physical capability, and favorable conditions for material comforts and pleasures. The word “kāma” means sense-born pleasure, which arises from the contact of the senses with their objects and ends in the very next moment. Thinking that “life is meaningless without enjoyment,” and remaining absorbed in fulfilling desires for enjoyable objects— this is called holding on to kāma. Rājasic steadfastness binds a person through action (karma). Therefore, a person who seeks true welfare and spiritual good should not allow his power of endurance to become rājasic, but should strive to make it sāttvic.

**yayā svapnaṁ bhayaṁ śokaṁ viṣādaṁ madaṁ eva ca
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī (18-35)**

Comm: O Partha! That holding power (dhṛiti) by which a person lacking discernment and having a wicked intellect cannot renounce sleep, fear, worry, despair, and the ego arising from sense enjoyment—that is, continues to hold onto them—that holding power is tamasic. A person who lacks resolute intellect, being full of ignorance and delusion, cannot easily abandon sleep, fear, grief, and their own arrogance. As long as a person accepts identification with the body, they naturally remain attached to these defects. The word “durmedha” here refers to a person who has firmly concluded that “these defects cannot possibly be removed.” A person of wicked intellect becomes lazy and dreams of luxuries and enjoyments. A person excessively overtaken by sleep behaves as if asleep even in the waking state. A tamasic person may abandon daily obligatory duties, but cannot abandon sleep. Due to lack of awakened discernment, they always remain engaged in faulty actions and suffer physical and mental pain. A person dominated by tamo guna remains engaged in sinful actions due to attachment to body and wealth. Consequently, they live in fear of death, old age, disease, disgrace, humiliation, etc. The various negative thoughts arising in the mind are called “śoka” (grief). The despair seen in the mind and senses due to grief is “vishada” (depression). Due to attachment to vain hopes and futile actions, the heart always remains dissatisfied. Due to ignorance, a person endowed with tamasic guna becomes full of false pride (atma-abhimani). Being extremely cruel and arrogant by nature, they always remain immersed in sense pleasures and luxuries. Because discernment is inactive, the above-mentioned faulty tendencies naturally remain firmly rooted in the inner being of a person with tamasic dhṛiti. A person endowed with tamasic dhṛiti, under the influence of the illusion of ignorance (avidya maya), never even thinks of becoming free from these defects.

**sukhaṁ tv idānīm trividhaṁ śṛṇu me bharataṣabha
abhyāsād ramate yatra duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati (18-36)**

Comm: Because Arjuna has become steadfast by giving up desire for pleasure (kāma) and desire for wealth (artha), the Lord addresses him here as “Bharata-śreṣṭha” (the best of the Bharata lineage). The Lord says: “O best of the Bharatas, now listen from Me about the three kinds of happiness—sāttvic, rājasic, and tāmasic.” That happiness by which a spiritual seeker, through the practice of devotion, meditation, and selfless service, gradually attains joy, and by attaining which all sorrows come to an end, is called sāttvic happiness. Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower—these three inspire human beings to act. After explaining knowledge, action, the doer, intellect, and steadfastness in terms of the three qualities—sattva, rajas, and tamas, the Lord now presents happiness here as that very object of knowledge. For all living beings, the object to be known is one—happiness. Knowledge about happiness is something that every human being should understand. It is for the sake of happiness that a person engages in action; in other words, the desire for happiness is the main cause of all actions. Every human being acts under the influence of the natural tendency to seek happiness. Although attaining happiness is the common goal of everyone, the paths to happiness differ according to differences in knowledge, the doer, action, intellect, and steadfastness. People endowed with sāttvic, rājasic, or tāmasic qualities seek their happiness through different kinds of actions. Sāttvic happiness helps one turn toward the Supreme Self, whereas rājasic and tāmasic happiness bind one to worldly life and become causes of spiritual downfall. Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa said about happiness: “Just as steadfastness and intellect are of three kinds, happiness is also of three kinds—sense pleasure (viśayānanda), devotional joy (bhajanānanda), and bliss of Brahman (brahmānanda). The pleasure of desire for enjoyment and wealth, which is the main obstacle to the realization of the Supreme Truth, is called sense pleasure. The joy experienced in singing the name and glories of God is called devotional joy. And the joy experienced through direct realization of the Supreme Self is called the bliss of Brahman.” After realization of the Self through constant practice, sāttvic happiness arises within the heart. Sāttvic happiness is a reflection of true happiness. The Self itself is the very nature of true happiness. Without the practice of yoga and discipline, this happiness cannot be experienced. For attaining rājasic and tāmasic happiness, no special practice is required. The senses are naturally attracted to sense objects and pleasures. Removing rājasic and tāmasic tendencies also comes through the practice-based experience of sāttvic happiness. As attachment to sāttvic happiness increases through practice, the pain of worldly suffering gradually becomes lighter. Peace, happiness, and joy begin to increase within the inner being of a person. Taking refuge in this happiness, a person gradually forgets even great sorrows. Just as the world is a place of suffering and impermanence, in the same world true happiness also exists everywhere, which

is eternal and everlasting. Supported by this happiness, a person endures even great sufferings and through spiritual practice finally attains unbroken and eternal bliss.

**yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme'mṛtopamam
tat sukhaṁ sāttvikam proktam ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam (18-37)**

Comm: Acharya Shankara has mentioned in his commentary: “In the beginning stages of knowledge, detachment, meditation, and samadhi, one has to accept great effort, which at first appears to be painful like suffering. But in the end, when knowledge and detachment mature, it feels like nectar. The learned call that very happiness sattvic happiness.” That kind of happiness which arises from the purity of intellect focused on the Self, from self-restraint, and from self-discipline—this is sattvic happiness. Restraining the senses and mind feels painful in the beginning. The intellect absorbed in the nature of the Self through self-inquiry is called “ātma-buddhi” (Self-intellect). This is realized from the serenity or clarity (prasada) of the intellect. When the intellect becomes calm, pure, and steady, the happiness experienced is the sattvic happiness of ātma-buddhi. When a person understands sense-born pleasures as transient, renounces attachment to them, and continuously practices contemplation of the Supreme Self—then the experience of this sattvic happiness arises. Turning away from sense enjoyments and becoming oriented toward spiritual practice with discernment, detachment, inner restraint (shama), sense control (dama), and forbearance (titiksha)—at first, this seems extremely laborious and difficult. Restraining the senses is also extremely hard. In the beginning of practice, because rajasic tendencies are present in the intellect, it feels like poison—painful. Gradually, as the person turns inward from being outward-oriented, they realize the reflection of the happiness of the Self. Just as a dog, while chewing a bone, mistakes the blood flowing from its own wounded mouth as the taste of the bone and enjoys it—so is the state of worldly life. The jiva assumes that happiness comes from enjoying sense objects. In reality, happiness resides in a person’s inner Self. Sattvic happiness arises from the serenity of the intellect focused on the Self. Through spiritual practice, as sattva guna increases, purity, clarity, knowledge, radiance, peace, changelessness, and other good qualities and virtues grow in the senses and inner being. The manifestation of these good qualities itself is like attaining nectar as the fruit. In this state, the seeker—not enjoying sattvic happiness but transcending it—becomes capable of attaining imperishable happiness like direct realization of the Supreme Self. If there is an attitude of enjoyment even in sattvic happiness, it becomes a cause of bondage. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, pointing out the specialty of this verse, has said that the intellect is such an element in a person’s nature that, by making it the means, direct realization even of the Supreme Brahman as the Self becomes possible, and the world is also experienced. It is equally pervading in all beings. When this intellect turns toward the path of the Self, the serenity attained becomes the root source of sattvic happiness.

**viṣayendriya-saṁyogād yat tad agre'mṛtopamam
pariṇāme viṣam iva tat sukhaṁ rājasam smṛtam (18-38)**

Comm: That happiness which arises from the contact between sense objects and the senses appears like nectar at first, that is, at the time of enjoyment, but in the end it becomes like poison. herefore, this happiness is called rājasic happiness. The happiness that is produced when the senses come in contact with enjoyable objects ultimately becomes a cause of loss of strength, vitality, intelligence, wealth, enthusiasm, and also causes suffering in this world and the next. Pleasures of the five sense objects—sound, touch, form, taste, and smell— are available to all living beings, such as animals, birds, insects, and worms. Therefore, whichever body a living being attains, appiness born of sense-object contact is inevitably experienced. In the case of human beings, fear and attachment are always associated with sense pleasure. Thus, enjoyment of sense objects gives rise to sorrow, fear, and sin. Because resources are required for enjoyment, a person becomes involved in sinful actions. As a result, one attains lower births and suffers pain and misery birth after birth. Sense objects are changeable and impermanent, and the human mind is also restless and unstable. Therefore, permanent happiness is impossible through a lasting connection between these two. Pleasure born of sense objects can never give deep inner satisfaction. Whatever happiness is obtained from enjoyment, the desire to obtain more than that continues to increase. Out of fear that the enjoyed pleasure may pass away, a person constantly remains troubled by worry and anxiety. When the power of the senses to enjoy gradually weakens, disinterest in sense pleasures also arises. As a result, the mind does not remain cheerful, sorrow and regret arise, and life begins to feel meaningless. Poison takes away a person's life in one birth, but the poison-like attachment to worldly pleasure has to be endured for many lifetimes. A person dominated by rājasic tendencies chases temporary sense pleasure without considering the consequences. When one looks only at the beginning, enjoyment appears pleasant; but when one looks at the result, true happiness is found only through yoga (spiritual discipline).

**yad agre cānubandhe ca sukhaṁ mohanam ātmanah
nidrālasyapramādotthaṁ tat tāmasam udāhṛtam (18-39)**

Comm: That happiness which, both at the time of enjoyment and in its aftermath, deludes the self and the intellect—arising from excessive sleep, laziness, negligence, and similar states that appear as pleasure—is called tamasic happiness. Excessive attachment to sense enjoyments takes the form of tamo guna. In other words, delusion (moha) is a person's foolishness or ignorance. person dominated by tamasic guna, due to ignorance, mistakenly considers difficult or harmful situations as pleasurable, in a reversed manner. Sri Ramanujacharya has said: "The word 'moha' means the absence of discrimination between the Self and non-Self, or between the real and the unreal. Due to being overcome by delusion, the true nature of any object, substance, or situation is not properly known.

The true nature of things is known only through the light of the Self. Tamasic happiness covers the Self with the veil of ignorance. As a result, the intellect becomes perverted, and a person's spiritual consciousness is destroyed. According to Vedānta philosophy, sleep is a state of ignorance of one's own true nature. The lack of awakened spiritual consciousness is the sleeping state of the jiva. Sleep arising from rest is not binding. But excessive sleep makes a person prone to laziness. The state of drowsiness (not deep sleep) is called "tandra." In drowsiness and dreams, much time of a tamasic person is wasted. A person excessively overtaken by sleep behaves as if asleep even in the waking state. Intoxicated by vices, a person dominated by tamo guna forgets the world and considers it (the intoxication) as happiness. Slackness in the effort of the senses is laziness, due to which the sharpness of intellect for attaining true knowledge is absent. A lazy person becomes parasitic—that is, dependent on others for their own survival. "Pramada" (negligence) is a tamasic tendency that covers and suppresses the manifestation of sattva guna. The easy pleasure felt in abandoning obligatory duties is "pramada." Remaining engaged in evil conduct is also active pramada. Due to the intellect being deluded, discernment does not awaken, and what should be done and what should not be done is not properly understood. Laziness is more degrading than sleep. Pramada is even more degrading than laziness. The happiness obtained from the world through discernment is sattvic happiness. The temporary happiness obtained from enjoying sense objects is rajasic happiness. The happiness arising from sleep, laziness, and futile efforts due to ignorance is tamasic happiness. But when all connection with objects born of prakṛiti is completely severed, true happiness is experienced. A seeker aiming for the supreme spiritual goal transcends these three types of happiness and attains imperishable, eternal happiness.

**na tad asti pṛthivyāṁ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ
sattvaṁ prakṛti-jair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ (18-40)**

Comm: On this earth, in the sky, or in heaven, among humans, gods, animals, birds, insects, worms, and trees, there is no living being or object anywhere that is free from the three qualities of nature: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Even the gods in heaven are not free from these qualities of nature. From Brahmā down to insects, the entire world is perishable, governed by the law of birth and death, creation and destruction. There is no being that exists beyond the limits of the three gunas. In other words, the influence of the three qualities of nature pervades the entire universe. The whole world is a creation of the three gunas. Every object is under the influence of the three-guna maya. Without the three gunas, creation cannot function. From these three gunas alone, God manifests in three forms—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Mahēśvara—and creates heaven, humans, patāla (netherworld), and the four varṇāśramas. Nature itself is three-guna (trigunātmak), which is called Māyā in Vedānta. A living being is only a body-bearer. That body is the instrument of the three gunas. Nature and all its functions are three-guna and ever-changing. When one remains attached to them, one becomes bound; when one detaches from them, one attains liberation.

The reason is that the Self (ātman) is beyond all qualities and unattached. To detach from nature, one needs sattvic discipline, because sattvic illumination awakens intelligence, which helps the soul reach a nirguṇa (quality-less) state. Among the qualities of nature, one must abandon rajas and tamas and increase sattva. Everything related to devotion—the Lord, the devotee, bhakti (devotion), service, self-reflection, and desirelessness—is nirguṇa (free from guṇas). Without relying on these, a being cannot attain well-being. Sattvic intelligence, actions, knowledge, and objects are instruments that help free one from bondage and lead to liberation. Only a being who has gained self-knowledge—a liberated soul, yogi, or rishi— can transcend the three guṇas and achieve freedom from the bondage of actions.

**brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viśāṃ śūdrāṇāṃ ca parantapa
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāva-prabhavair guṇaiḥ (18-41)**

Comm: The Lord has already said earlier (Gita 4.13) that the four varnas were created by Him according to the division of qualities (guṇas) and actions (karma). In this verse, He again explains the same four varnas. “O Arjuna, the destroyer of enemies, the duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras have been clearly divided by the scriptures according to the qualities born of their own nature.” The word nature means the special inner tendencies and impressions present in the mind of each person. These tendencies are influenced by the predominance of a particular quality (guṇa). Whatever actions a person performs leave impressions (samskaras) on the inner mind. According to these impressions, a person’s nature is formed. In this way, based on the accumulated impressions of actions from many previous births, a person develops a particular nature. According to that nature, the tendencies of sattva, rajas, and tamas arise in that person. Based on the difference in these tendencies of the three guṇas, the duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras have been divided. A person acts according to the qualities that dominate within him. Whether male or female, everyone is born with his or her own inherent nature. According to a person’s natural inclination toward certain actions, corresponding qualities develop within that person. Therefore, actions suitable to those inner qualities naturally arise in that person. The duties that are clearly divided according to qualities born of nature are prescribed as obligations for people of each varna. Living beings who are governed by the three guṇas worship the Supreme Lord through their own prescribed duties and thus make their lives meaningful. Which duties are suitable for whom has been explained in detail in the scriptures according to qualities born of nature. A person should act according to those scriptural guidelines. The nature of Brahmanas is dominated by the quality of sattva. The nature of Kshatriyas is made of sattva in a secondary way and rajas in a dominant way. The nature of Vaishyas is formed mainly by rajas mixed with tamas. The nature of Shudras is formed by a weak presence of rajas and a strong dominance of tamas. As a result, Brahmanas are calm and peaceful. Kshatriyas are powerful and inclined toward authority and leadership. Vaishyas are full of

desires and ambitions. Shudras have a greater tendency toward ignorance and dullness. In the present social condition of India, the true meaning of the four-varna system has almost disappeared. Today, caste and sub-caste divisions are created mainly on the basis of birth, heredity, and external physical differences. The pure varna system was meant to uplift human beings step by step from a lower state of the three gunas to higher levels of spiritual development. Such a system was very useful, beneficial, and scientific for human life. Over time, due to group selfishness, rigid traditions, caste discrimination, and inequality, people lost faith in the so-called varna-ashrama system. As a result, many kinds of social disorder began to arise. Even today, blame is often placed on the varna system. It is said that because of varna-dharma, India suffered social, political, and economic decline. It is also said that Indians became backward compared to other nations of the world. But in reality, this is not true. The main cause of the decline of social and moral values is the neglect of Indian culture due to blind imitation of Western civilization.

**śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca
jñānaṁ vijñānaṁ āstikyam brahma-karma svabhāva-jam (18-42)**

Comm: Calmness, self-control, austerity, purity, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, realized wisdom, and faith in God— all these are the natural duties born of the nature of a Brahmin. A Brahmin should necessarily be adorned with these nine essential qualities. Śama (calmness): Control of the mind, that is, a peaceful and tranquil state of mind, is called śama. When the mind is calm, all duties and virtuous actions are performed with steadiness and dedication. Dama (self-restraint): Control of the external senses is called dama. It means having complete control over the senses of knowledge and action, turning the mind and intellect away from sense pleasures, and directing them toward God. For other varnas, effort is required to develop śama and dama, but for a Brahmin these qualities arise naturally. Tapa (austerity): “Practice of one’s own duty is austerity.” Performing one’s prescribed duties and scriptural actions firmly, while willingly enduring physical hardship, is called tapa. According to the path of renunciation, giving up bodily identification and constantly remembering God inwardly is austerity. In the path of Karma Yoga, selflessly engaging the body, mind, and senses for the welfare of the world is also called tapa. Śauca (purity): Cleanliness and good health help greatly in yogic practice. A pure surrounding environment and sattvic thoughts purify the inner being. When the body is healthy and thoughts are pure, the mind remains cheerful. Kṣānti / Kṣamā (forgiveness): Even when one has the power to punish, not seeking revenge for others’ faults or offenses, and forgiving gladly without being asked, is called kṣānti. Being free from hatred and having the forbearance of the earth itself is called kṣamā. Ārjava (simplicity): Simplicity is expressed through the body, mind, and senses. Like a child, having no deceit or hypocrisy and being straightforward is the mark of simplicity. Honesty in action and impartiality in conduct are its main aspects. Jñāna (knowledge): The knowledge gained through studying and teaching the Vedas, scriptures, and Upanishads is true jñāna. The

ultimate goal of human life is attaining God, and knowledge is extremely helpful for this. Through knowledge, one understands truth and falsehood, duty and non-duty, and the difference between the Self and the non-Self. This knowledge is obtained through hearing about God’s divine deeds, scriptural authority, the words of the Guru, and self-reflection. Such knowledge is beyond mere logic and debate. Vijñāna (realized wisdom): The direct realization of the truth of the Self and the Supreme Self, attained through yogic practice with the support of scripture and the Guru’s teachings, is called vijñāna. This realization becomes visible in the seeker’s conduct and nature. The culmination of knowledge and realized wisdom enables a seeker to reach the state of liberation while living. Āstikya (faith): Having a positive outlook and firm faith in the Vedas, scriptures, God, and the life beyond this world is called theistic attitude. Establishing trust, reverence, and belief in all these is āstikya. In addition to these nine qualities, giving and receiving charity, performing and conducting sacrifices according to scriptural rules, studying and teaching scriptures, chanting, Sandhyā worship, and other daily prescribed duties are the natural actions of a Brahmin. When the varna system is properly maintained, these virtue-born duties are naturally seen in Brahmins. However, when varna confusion arises, these qualities do not appear naturally, and deficiencies arise instead. If a Brahmin abandons prescribed duties and becomes inclined toward sense enjoyment, there is a fall from Brahminhood. As a result, all sections of society deviate from their duties and move toward moral decline.

**śauryaṁ tejo dhṛtir dākṣyaṁ yuddhe cāpy apalāyanam
dānam īśvara-bhāvaś ca kṣātraṁ karma svabhāva-jam (18-43)**

Comm: Valor, radiance, patience, skill in action, not retreating in battle, generous giving, and a sense of leadership or authority – these are the natural duties or dharma of a Kshatriya. Enthusiasm in battle, heroism, brilliance, sacrifice, control over the mind, forgiveness, devotion to Brahmins, compassion, and attention to the protection of subjects – these are the characteristics of Kshatriya duties. Bravery: Being always eager for a just war is the valor of a Kshatriya. Facing the enemy with courage, using all one’s strength without fearing death in a righteous war, is true heroism. The life of Bhishma Pitamah is a shining example of this. Radiance (Tejas): Not bowing down before injustice and influencing others through firm duty and moral conduct – these are the special qualities of a radiant person. Due to the radiance of a king or head of state, subjects stay away from misconduct and sinful actions. Patience (Dhairya): Holding firmly to one’s goal with determination despite all obstacles on the path to achievement – this is called ‘dhṛiti’ or steadfastness. Skill (Dakshya): The ability to immediately put decisions into action in any situation, and achieving goals by behaving appropriately with friends, enemies, and neutrals – this is efficiency or skill. Not fleeing (Apalayana): Whether in the struggle of life or on the battlefield, facing any difficult situation fearlessly is the dharma of a Kshatriya. By nature, a true Kshatriya does not accept defeat until the very end of life. Generosity (Dana): In Indian culture, the giving of Kshatriyas – like the great hero Karna or King

Harishchandra – meaning complete surrender of everything, is immeasurable. Kshatriyas are known as great donors. Giving to a worthy recipient according to their wish is the dharma of a Kshatriya. Divine attitude (Ishwarbhav): “Kshatat trayate iti Kshatriyah” – meaning, one who protects subjects from suffering and pain is a Kshatriya. Through this kind of divine attitude, no sense of personal pride remains in the heart of a king or leader; instead, the desire to rule subjects according to ethics and dharma becomes strong. Excellent leadership or authority is also included in this divine attitude. In addition to the above qualities, achieving the welfare of subjects through good governance, dispensing justice, giving proper punishment to wrongdoers, and taking responsibility for the protection and nourishment of subjects – all these are part of Kshatriya dharma and duties.

**kr̥ṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyaṁ vaiśya-karma svabhāva-jam
paricaryātmakaṁ karma sūdrasyāpi svabhāva-jam (18-44)**

Comm: Agriculture, animal husbandry, cow protection, and trade are the natural duties of the Vaishya. Service-oriented work, that is, serving people of the other varnas, is the natural duty of the Shudra. Agriculture or farming means sowing seeds to produce food grains and other useful and sacred items required by humans, gods, and animals. Agriculture and animal husbandry, especially cow rearing, are the main foundations for the survival of human society. Agriculture and cow rearing support each other. Each one helps and strengthens the other. Cow rearing and cow protection are approved by the scriptures as occupations that help achieve the four aims of human life—dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Selfless service of cows leads to liberation. Here, in the word “go-raksha,” the word “go” refers to animals in general. In ancient times, special care was given to the protection and nurturing of animals like cows and horses. Trade means collecting goods according to need and honestly supplying them to others through buying and selling as a livelihood. Falsehood, cheating, theft, excessive profit, and middlemanship are defects found in trade. Doing business with truth and justice is the natural profession of the Vaishyas. The merchant Tuladhara of Kashi is described as a great ascetic and righteous person because he followed truth and justice in buying and selling. In the Manusmriti, besides the above duties, yajna, study of scriptures, charity, and money lending are also prescribed for the Vaishya. In the scriptures, only one natural duty is prescribed for the Shudra. That duty is to selflessly serve the other twice-born varnas without finding fault in them. Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are called twice-born (dvija). After the sacred thread ceremony, they are considered to have taken a second birth. Serving others with an attitude of service through intelligence, skill, and physical labor is the natural duty of the Shudra. The responsibility of their maintenance and livelihood is borne by society. In service work, personal judgment is not primary; obedience is more important. The Brahmana is described as the mouth of the Cosmic Form of God, the Kshatriya as the arms, the Vaishya as the thighs, and the Shudra as the feet. These four varnas are the four essential organs of the body in the

form of society. Calling the Shudra the feet means that the feet bear the weight of the body and serve the entire body. Similarly, the other three varnas depend on the service of the Shudra in society. For a healthy, prosperous society and a pure environment, the service work of this varna is essential. Among the four varnas, no one is meant to be hated or insulted. The main goal of varna-dharma is the welfare of one another. In the varna system established by ancient Indian society, both birth and action are given importance. In the Srimad Bhagavata Purana (7.11.35), it is said that if the qualities of a particular varna are found in a person belonging to another varna, that person should be considered as belonging to that varna. Even if such a person is born in a so-called lower family, it is improper to regard him as inferior. The meaning of this scriptural statement is that even an ordinary person of a lower varna can attain spiritual progress. A devotee of God, even if born in a low caste, is superior like a wise and learned person. Kabir, Vidura, and the devotee Salabega are shining examples of this truth.

**sve sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ
sva-karma-nirataḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tac chr̥ṇu (18-45)**

Comm: Because qualities determine nature, and nature determines duties, people in each varna (caste) class naturally feel inclined toward their own specific duties. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra – these four varnas’ people, when they give up selfish pride and perform their natural duties with a selfless attitude for the welfare of the world, that becomes ‘yoga’ for them. By performing actions without desiring their fruits, a person’s inner desires gradually decrease, and in the end, they attain complete fulfilment – that is, they reach the supreme success of realizing God. When someone performs their natural duties with good intention, eagerness, and enthusiasm, the inner joy that arises in the mind is called ‘abhirati’ (deep satisfaction). Deep satisfaction in work leads to welfare, while attachment to it leads to bondage. The action itself is not the main thing; the inner attitude is what matters most. No matter which varna a person belongs to, if their attitude is pure, it will surely bring good results. In this verse, the Lord establishes that to attain the Supreme Soul, there is no need to abandon one’s inherent prescribed duties. Prescribed duties are approved by God’s will. Performing them certainly leads to attaining God. Therefore, one should accept duty-bound work as an offering in the worship of God. Whatever is a person’s natural duty, performing it brings welfare to them. Sri Shankaracharya has said that by performing duties prescribed by the scriptures according to one’s nature, all the impurities accumulated from past lives or earned in this life come to an end. That impurity alone is the obstacle to attaining perfection or knowledge. When the impurity is reduced, the perfection in the form of knowledge is attained. The chaturvarnya (four-varna) social system of Indian Aryan culture, meant for human development, is not only for India but is applicable to the entire world. How a person devoted to their prescribed duties attains perfection – that is, realization of God – is explained by the Lord in the next verse.

**yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ (18-46)**

Comm: From whom all living beings originate, and by whom the entire universe is pervaded, by worshipping that Supreme Soul, the all-pervading Lord, through actions that arise from one's own nature, a human being attains the highest perfection. In this path of prescribed duties, there is a rule of moving forward step by step according to one's capacity. Performance of prescribed duties does not create bondage. It should be understood as obedience to the will of God. To please that all-pervading, inner-dwelling Lord, who is the ultimate cause of the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the three worlds, it is the duty of every human being to worship Him with the flowers of one's natural duties born of one's own nature. By performing one's duties, a person should feel fulfilled by carrying out the divine purpose of that Supreme Lord who is the cause of the origin of all creation. The visible restlessness of nature in this world and the efforts of living beings in action are inspired by the Supreme Lord, the inner controller. Just as ice is pervaded by water, so the entire universe is pervaded by the Supreme Lord, who is pure existence, consciousness, and bliss. He is the illuminator of all and fully present in everyone. Performing all actions with supreme faith and trust, completely giving up ego, attachment, and desire for results, and obeying the command of God while doing one's natural duties, is service to the manifest form of the Supreme Lord. This world itself is His form. A person who works with total self-surrender, keeping God as the center, is the greatest worshipper of the Creator. By faithfully performing one's duties, the inner mind becomes pure, self-knowledge arises, and the seeker becomes fit for the path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga). Being extremely pleased, God showers His grace and grants the devotee the attainments of knowledge and detachment. When action itself becomes worship of God, the individual soul becomes an exclusive devotee of the Lord. The Gita firmly declares that the person who regards service to the universe, the Universal Soul, as service to God, attains this supreme perfection. On the battlefield, Grandfather Bhishma offered proper reverence to Lord Krishna, who stood as Arjuna's charioteer, by releasing arrows at Him, because on the battlefield, shooting arrows is the natural duty of a Kshatriya. At the end of his life, lying on a bed of arrows, Grandfather Bhishma meditated in this way: "O Lord! May my mind and intellect remain fixed on Lord Krishna, whose armor was torn apart by sharp arrows, whose skin was pierced, and whose face was adorned with drops of sweat—the Lord who was thus ornamented by arrows." The meaning of this is that a person who worships the Supreme Lord through actions born of one's own nature becomes free from bondage to material nature and naturally abides in one's true Self. All actions of a person who stands before God are accepted by the Lord as His worship, and He becomes pleased.

**śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam (18-47)**

Comm: According to one's birth and actions, the varna (caste) and ashrama (stage of life) that a person identifies with – even if the duties of that varna or ashrama are inferior or have some flaws – are still better than the duties of another's dharma, which may appear superior outwardly. The reason is that by performing duties according to one's own nature, a person does not incur sin. The special duties of a Brahmin, such as non-violence and other good qualities, are more filled with virtues compared to the natural duties of Vaishya, Kshatriya, etc. Similarly, the duties of the sannyasa (renunciate) stage of life show more abundance of good qualities than those of the grihastha (householder) stage. The natural duties of Vaishya and Kshatriya are endowed with higher qualities compared to the duties of a Shudra. Even though one's own dharma may seem to have fewer qualities in the above ways, it is still superior to another's dharma. One's own dharma, even if lacking in qualities, is better than another's dharma. When one properly follows one's own natural dharma, any incidental violence or sin that arises from it does not make the person share in that sin. But when following another's dharma, even if there is no sin from the action itself, sins like abandoning one's own duty attach to the person. Just as serving one's own husband is beneficial for a wife, even if he appears ugly and lacks good qualities, similarly, the duty prescribed for a person is what brings welfare to them. Here, prohibited actions or optional (kamya) actions are not counted as part of one's own dharma. Those means of livelihood that are not forbidden by the scriptures are considered one's own dharma for everyone, especially in times of distress. A person who works only to maintain the body does not incur sin from it either. No matter which varna a person belongs to, if the action is done with God as the aim, then no action is contemptible. Devotion to God, speaking the truth, control of the senses, observing celibacy, serving parents, and other good qualities arising from divine wealth, along with good conduct – these are one's own dharma for everyone. God has given the human body so that by performing prescribed duties of one's own dharma, a soul can be liberated. Therefore, by purifying one's own nature, everyone is independent, strong, capable, and competent to achieve their own liberation. No person's nature is harmful to themselves. Every being or person has their own importance. Even if one's own dharma is difficult, it should be followed, and in the end, it will be fruitful. By performing one's prescribed duties, a person becomes free from bondage.

**sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sa-doṣam api na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ (18-48)**

Comm: O son of Kunti, even if actions born of one's own nature appear to be defective, they should not be abandoned. Just as fire is always covered by smoke, in the same way, whether it is one's own duty or another's duty, every action is associated with

some defect because it arises from the three gunas. “Saha jāyate iti sahajah” means that which is born together with one’s very birth; therefore such action is called natural or inherent action. For life after birth, the scriptures have prescribed specific duties for each varna according to one’s qualities and actions, and those scripturally ordained duties are called natural duties. In all duties related to the varna-ashrama system, some defect or limitation is always present. “Nirdosham hi samam Brahma” — only Brahman alone is completely free from all defects. When a Brahmana performs sacrifices, defects such as animal killing are seen. A Kshatriya has to engage in violence on the battlefield. A Vaishya sometimes has to conceal profit in business. A Shudra may at times have to serve an unjust or wicked master. In spite of these defects, a person should not abandon his prescribed duty. Therefore, performing one’s own duty with the attitude of worship toward God is beneficial for a human being. Smoke is always produced along with fire. Although fire is pure, the presence of smoke at its origin is unavoidable. But smoke has neither the power to give heat nor the ability to give light. Smoke also cannot pollute fire. Smoke merely remains as a covering in the form of a defect. When fire burns brightly, the smoke disappears. In this way, even though fire is associated with smoke, it is still accepted as the purest substance. At the beginning of every sattvic action, defects such as physical hardship are certainly present. Just as one ignores the smoke and makes use of the heat and light of fire to remove darkness and cold, in the same way, one should reject the defective part of action and accept its virtuous aspect for purification of sattva. After attaining the higher result of action, those defects appear insignificant. Until self-realization is attained, defects in action will continue to be perceived. Defects come to an end only when ignorance is removed by self-knowledge, and at that point, action itself dissolves by merging into Brahman. By giving the example of fire and smoke, the Lord explains that even though natural duties generally involve defects such as violence, because they are scripturally prescribed and righteous, they are not truly defective, even if they appear so. Through this, the Lord instructs Arjuna: “O Arjuna, the act of war which you consider terrible and sinful is your natural duty. Fighting a righteous war is the duty of a Kshatriya. There is no other means of spiritual welfare for a Kshatriya apart from this.” Actions performed for the service of God may appear defective, but they are pure, and their results are also pure. In the Gita, the welfare of the world is given supreme importance. The Lord repeatedly emphasizes that renunciation does not mean giving up action, but giving up attachment to results and performing one’s own duty selflessly.

**asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigata-sprhaḥ
naiṣkarmya-siddhiṁ paramāṁ sannyāsenādhigacchati (18-49)**

Comm: In this verse, the Lord explains what kind of fruit or result is obtained by performing prescribed duties with determination and steadfastness, even if they have flaws, and by coordinating it with the practice of Sankhya (knowledge path). When performing actions, if the intellect remains free from attachment, there is no desire for

results, affection for son, wife, etc., is removed, the inner self becomes undisturbed, the craving for bodily pleasures calms down, and the mind turns inward toward the Supreme Soul – in this state, through the renunciation of actions (karma sannyasa), a person attains the supreme perfection. The two main defects of action are: the sense of doership arising from identification with the body, and the sense of enjoyership arising from attachment to actions and their fruits. By abandoning these defects and continuing to perform actions, the inner self becomes purified, and the mind becomes fully filled with discernment and detachment. After achieving this fullness, a person's attachments become weak, and sensual desires can no longer hold them. This is the first stage of the dharma of sannyasa (renunciation). In this state, meeting a true and noble guru becomes easy for the person. Through the grace of the guru, self-knowledge is attained, ignorance is destroyed, and actions come to an end. Over time, when the practice of sannyasa matures, the seeker reaches the state of being established in yoga (yogarudha) and naturally abandons actions altogether. That means no action remains necessary for them anymore. This mental state is called the 'yogarudha' state – the final stage of yoga. The intellect that remains completely unattached and unaffected – neither clinging to nor being influenced by the favorable or unfavorable aspects of perishable objects like wife, son, body, wealth, or material things – is called 'asakta' (unattached) intellect. One who has conquered the body and whose senses are fully under control is qualified as 'jitatma' (self-conquered). One who feels not even the slightest excitement toward the pleasures of Brahmaloka (highest heaven) and constantly holds the conviction that all actions happen only by the will of the Supreme Lord, the controller of everything – this is called 'vigataspriha' (free from desire). A person endowed with these three qualities can attain true knowledge of the Supreme Soul through Sankhya Yoga. Sri Shankaracharya has said that in this mental state, a yogarudha person gains perfect vision or right understanding. Perfect vision itself is sannyasa. Through that perfect vision, supreme perfection is attained. As long as actions continue, the enjoyment of their good and bad fruits remains inevitable. The absence of action is called 'naishkarmya'. When actions are completely abandoned, there is no longer any question of enjoying their fruits. The complete absence of activity in the nature of Brahman is true 'nishkarma' (actionlessness). Perfection is attained through the performance of actions, but that is not the supreme perfection. However, when the sense of doership and enjoyership is fully abandoned with respect to actions and their fruits, supreme perfection or liberation is attained. In reality, when perfection reaches its ultimate state, it is called 'naishkarmya siddhi'. When, through karma yoga, the inner self is purified and the feelings of non-doership and non-enjoyership arise in life, then naishkarmya siddhi – that is, the perfection of freedom from the bondage of action – is attained. Karma yoga is the earlier stage, and sannyasa is the later stage. That which, once attained, leaves nothing else to be attained – that is naishkarmya siddhi. It is the state where there is not even the slightest connection with doer, action, fruit of action, or instruments of action. According to Vedantins, this state is sadyomukti (immediate liberation) or kaivalya moksha (absolute liberation).

**siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me
samāsenaiḥ kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā (18-50)**

Comm: O son of Kuntī, listen from Me briefly to the means by which a seeker, whose inner instrument has become pure, attains the state of Brahman, which is the highest establishment of knowledge. Here, the word “siddhiṁ” means the complete perfection of the inner mind that is attained through Karma Yoga practiced as a spiritual discipline. Only that seeker in whose inner mind there does not remain even the slightest trace of desire, possessiveness, or attachment, attains Brahman. After attaining this perfection, the seeker, according to his own tendencies and impressions, follows either the path of knowledge or the path of devotion and seeks that non-dual Brahman. Although Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga are different as spiritual practices, their goal is one and the same. The attainment of Brahman-consciousness is described by the Lord as the highest state of knowledge or the supreme condition. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has explained the word “niṣṭhā” to mean the state where knowledge reaches its final completion. After attaining Brahman-consciousness, nothing remains to be known. The entire discipline of Jnana Yoga is called Jnana-niṣṭhā, and the knowledge of Reality obtained as its fruit is called the supreme culmination of knowledge. This supreme culmination of knowledge is that perfection by which the individual soul realizes the Self and becomes one with the Supreme Person, the Supreme Lord. Pure God-consciousness alone is the final state of knowledge. In this state, through intense dispassion and by the grace of the true Guru, the seed of discrimination arises within, and one abides as Brahman itself, one with Brahman. Direct realization of the truth of Brahman is the highest steadfastness of knowledge, in which the non-difference between the individual self and Brahman is directly perceived. The experiential realization of the truth, “Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal, and the individual soul is none other than Brahman,” is the supreme state of the Sāṅkhya yogi, beyond which there is nothing further. In the explanation of Śrī Vallabhācārya, it is said that the supreme perfection of knowledge is attained while living, by the process through which the soul reaches Akṣara Brahman. That very process has been explained by the Lord to Arjuna in the next verse.

**buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyātmānaṁ niyamy ca
śabdādīn viṣayāṁs tyaktvā rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca (18-51)**

**vivikta-sevī laghv-āśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ
dhyāna-yoga-paro nityaṁ vairāgyaṁ samupāśritaḥ (18-52)**

**ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigrahaṁ
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahma-bhūyāya kalpate (18-53)**

Comm : A seeker who has a pure intellect, eats simple and sattvic (pure) food in moderation, renounces enjoyment of sense objects like sound and touch, lives in a secluded and clean place, controls the mind and senses through sattvic steadfastness, keeps mind,

speech, and body under control, completely destroys attachment and aversion, takes refuge in firm detachment, gives up ego, pride, arrogance, desire, anger, and possessiveness, remains constantly absorbed in meditation yoga, and is free from possessiveness with a peaceful mind – such a seeker is fit for oneness with the Supreme Brahman, meaning to abide in complete identity with it. Pure intellect: An intellect free from desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, arrogance, body-identification, doubt, and confusion is called sattva or pure intellect. A pure intellect is itself like Brahman. A pure intellect very easily merges into Brahman. Dharma, knowledge, detachment, and spiritual power – these are the sattvic forms of the intellect. A pure intellect abandons the sense of duality and remains absorbed in contemplation of the Self. Steadfastness or holding power (Dhriti): The seeker purifies the senses through the power of patience. Not deviating from the path of spiritual practice despite physical obstacles is firm sattvic steadfastness. Control of the mind: Remembrance of previously experienced pleasures through the mind destroys the seeker's inner equanimity and peaceful state. The mind is a flow of thoughts. The mind can never remain without support. The only way to block the mind's outward tendency toward objects is through yoga practice combined with detachment. When the outward-going tendency of the senses is fully subdued, the mind gradually becomes established in the Self. Renunciation of sense enjoyments like sound: By restraining the senses, the mind is withdrawn from objects like form, taste, smell, sound, and touch, and through the practice of Self-contemplation, the senses become inactive. Through discernment, realizing that material pleasures are momentary, attachment to the desire for enjoyment gradually disappears in the inner self, and detachment arises. Free from attachment and aversion: Victory over attachment and aversion is achieved through non-attachment and pure love. By adopting a simple life and giving up even some essential items, the seeker has no remaining attachment or aversion toward other objects of enjoyment or luxury. By becoming free from attachment and aversion, inner distortions like ego, arrogance, and false pride are destroyed. Living in seclusion (Viviktasevi): For a seeker desiring liberation, residing in a pure environment with fresh moving air, a clean and secluded place free from crowds, riverbanks, forests, or mountain caves – which are naturally solitary – helps progress in spiritual practice. Moderate eater (Laghvasi): Food should be suitable for the body, neither too much nor too little, and taken only to satisfy hunger and maintain health. Taking pure sattvic food in the required amount removes sleepiness and laziness. Controlled in body, speech, and mind (Yata-vak-kaya-manasa): Controlling body, speech, and mind means coordinating action, activity, and knowledge. Through firm bodily control, the practice of sitting in meditation posture for long periods develops. Through control of speech, sense restraint and growth of good qualities occur. By abandoning all desires and plans, control of the mind comes. Control of body, speech, and mind helps the seeker bring both the inner and outer worlds under their own control. Constant meditation yoga: Through uninterrupted chanting and meditation practice, complete control over body, speech, mind, and senses is achieved. 'Meditation' means concentration of the mind, and

‘yoga’ means turning that concentrated mind inward and establishing it in the Self. The state where meditator, object of meditation, and meditation become one is the condition just before samadhi (absorption). Detachment (Vairagya): Until the mind’s tendencies merge into Brahman for attaining liberation, detachment must remain with the seeker. Complete freedom from the influence of attachment and aversion is true detachment. By practicing knowledge along with detachment, the seeker becomes fit for attaining Self-knowledge. In intense detachment, the seeker does not move away from objects; rather, objects lose interest in the seeker, and no residual duty-bound actions remain for them. Ego, strength, arrogance, desire, anger: False ego, animal-like strength, pride, thirst for desire, anger, etc., arise from identification with the body. Body-identification is such a tendency that it does not leave an ordinary person even until death. Ego increases the sense of identity with the body, and tamasic strength motivates it. Only upon attaining Self-knowledge does the seeker’s body-identification get destroyed. When Self-realization occurs through karma yoga or Sankhya practice for the soul’s liberation, the illusion caused by the difference between body and Self is removed. Ego dissolves, and the impulses of desire and anger become fully controlled. If ego is not subdued, arrogance or pride arises. During spiritual practice, thoughts like “I am a high-level seeker – I am a renouncer – no one has self-control and detachment like me” arise in the seeker’s mind, and that blocks the path to attaining perfection. Jealousy, attachment, aversion, anger, and other faults are created. Therefore, ego is the root cause of all troubles and a major obstacle on the spiritual path. Pride causes the seeker to fall from the path of dharma. Possessiveness (Parigraha): The tendency to accumulate more enjoyable objects than needed is possessiveness. The urge to gather more and more wealth and enjoyable things belongs to a person attached to sense objects. This turns a person away from God. Attachment to consuming enjoyable items received as gifts or donations from religious practices or specific persons is also possessiveness. Getting involved in collecting resources, establishing monasteries, ashrams, temples, etc., and increasing the number of disciples – instead of liberation, it again motivates enjoyment and leads to bondage. Even sannyasis and high-level seekers fall into its grip. Free from possessiveness (Nirmama): Not wishing to keep things permanently by considering them as one’s own forever for worldly use – this is being ‘nirmama’. Whatever minimal items, living beings, body, senses, etc., are with the seeker, there should be no attachment or sense of mine toward them. Because they are all perishable. When the seeker becomes free from all concepts of material life sustenance, the mind becomes peaceful and does not become disturbed or agitated. A seeker desiring liberation who possesses the above qualities, after attaining Self-realization, gives up the scriptures of spiritual practice. Once oneness with Brahman is achieved, no spiritual practice remains. Even without becoming Brahman itself, the experience of Brahman-nature is the qualification for oneness with Brahman. In reality, the fruit obtained through renunciation of actions (Sankhya practice) is also obtained by performing prescribed duties while remaining unattached and fully renouncing desire for results. Therefore, in the Gita, the Lord here explains the process

of attaining the state of Brahman by performing prescribed duties according to one's own nature and characteristics.

**brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām (18-54)**

Comm: That joyful seeker, who has become one with Brahman and has attained the required spiritual maturity, does not grieve over the loss of anything, nor does he desire to obtain anything that he has not attained. He remains equal-minded toward all living beings and abides in the highest state of devotion. When possessiveness, the sense of pleasure, and the desire for enjoyment are destroyed from the inner mind, peace naturally arises within the heart. In that state, the seeker rises above the unreal and the non-Self and abides indivisibly in Brahman, which is compact existence, consciousness, and bliss. In his vision, apart from the one Brahman of existence-consciousness-bliss, nothing else has any independent reality. According to the great statements such as “Aham Brahmāsmi — I am Brahman” and “Soham asmi — I am That Brahman,” he remains eternally and firmly established in non-difference with the Supreme Self. Such a seeker is indicated here as one who has attained the Brahmabhūta state. He does not perceive any being or object as separate from Brahman, and thus he becomes fully fulfilled. Therefore, he has no desire for any material object, and his mind always remains cheerful. For no reason whatsoever does his mind become disturbed. When the importance of unreal objects disappears, natural joy remains in the seeker's mind. The seeker who longs for liberation attains above all the bliss of Self-knowledge. Because there is no sense of attraction or possessiveness toward any inert or living object, the Brahmabhūta yogi is not shaken by union or separation with anyone in temporary, changing, and perishable situations, nor does he express sorrow. In the Brahmabhūta state, the diversity of the visible world disappears before the seeker. Seeing unity everywhere, he becomes one who sees equally. Free from dualities such as joy and sorrow, he sees all beings in his own Self, and sees that same Self in all beings. For him, from an ant to Brahmā, Brahman alone exists equally everywhere. He does not see any inequality between wife, son, spouse, or others. When the seeker attains equal vision everywhere, an ever-increasing, divine attraction, love, and affection toward the Supreme Lord arise within him at every moment. When, on the path of pure devotion, he completely merges himself in the Supreme Lord, an intimate relationship arises between the individual soul and God. That state of totally surrendered, loving service is also called the Brahmabhūta state. That intimacy or non-difference itself is para-bhakti, that is, the attainment of unbroken divine love. In the Brahmabhūta state or in Brahman-consciousness, there is no distinction between the one who is served and the one who serves. God is complete. Therefore, when the seeker becomes fully surrendered on the path of devotion and remains engaged in the service of God, he too becomes complete. That is the highest culmination of devotion.

**bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram (18-55)**

Comm: The kind of divine glories that belong to Me and My essential nature – a seeker can truly know these only through para bhakti, that is, pure devotion. After gaining true knowledge of My entire manifest and unmanifest form, the seeker abides in complete divine consciousness. Becoming free from attachment and possessiveness, the seeker withdraws from worldly likes and dislikes, joy and sorrow, and other dualities. As a result, the seeker attains equal vision (samadarshi). Even in this brahmabhuta state (state of realization of Brahman), where worldly bonds are cut off, a subtle ego remains in the form of ‘I-ness’ – such as “I am a seeker of liberation,” “I am peaceful,” “I am undisturbed.” When fully attracted to the Supreme Soul and completely surrendered, the seeker no longer feels any independent existence. Even the extremely subtle part of ego arising from body-identification is destroyed. When this sense of ego is destroyed, true understanding of reality arises. As long as all material limitations are not completely dissolved along with the acquired knowledge, an obstacle remains to entering the world of pure consciousness. Complete surrender and remaining united with God through unwavering, steadfast devotion – this is para bhakti. The ultimate result of exclusive (ananya) devotion is para bhakti. Para bhakti and knowledge are like the two wings of a bird. Supreme love for the Supreme Soul – that is, complete oneness – is para bhakti, through which the devotee gains direct knowledge of God’s entire nature. Sri Shankaracharya has said that the word ‘yavan’ refers to God’s conditioned, saguna (with attributes) form, and the word ‘yah’ indicates His unconditioned, pure consciousness form without limitations. The truth of God is extremely mysterious. Even if one understands this mysterious truth through scriptural knowledge, scholarship, or reasoning, guidance from a realized guru who truly sees the truth is essential for the seeker. The Supreme Person, the Lord, is all-pervading, pure consciousness, unborn, indestructible, beyond cause, self-luminous, and unchanging. He is the support, source, and cause of origin of all things, and the controller of maya – knowing the essence of truth about the Supreme Soul in this way, the devotee becomes one with Him. In that state, the devotee himself becomes the embodiment of knowledge. Whether the Supreme Soul is with form or formless, with attributes or without attributes, limited or all-pervading – truly knowing this is possible only through para bhakti. Just as darkness is instantly destroyed when a lamp is lit, the moment true understanding of the Supreme Soul arises, the soul immediately enters the world of pure consciousness. There is a doha from the Manas (7/49/3): “Prema bhagati jala raghurai – abhiantara mala kabanhu na jai ” that means : “Without the water of loving devotion, O Lord of the Raghus, the inner dirt never goes away.” Truly knowing the nature of God and becoming one with pure consciousness is possible only through loving devotion. Since God is the very Self, He is not unattainable for anyone. Therefore, the moment understanding of His nature arises, He is attained. Entering the truth of God means receiving His indescribable love.

This love is without attributes, without desire, uninterrupted, subtler than the subtlest, and of the nature of pure awareness. In the Narada Bhakti Sutra, it is described as increasing every moment. In that unbroken flow of love's essence, both the lover and the beloved become one, inseparable, and fully absorbed in each other. Only for the sake of divine play (lila) do the lover and beloved appear separate. Every soul is a special part of the Supreme Lord. It is said in the Srimad Bhagavatam that the true liberation of the soul is its re-establishment in its own nature – that is, returning to its original state. Therefore, entering the kingdom of God means liberation from ignorance or the dissolution of the darkness of nescience. After knowledge arises, no other fruit remains to be attained. Sri Ramanujacharya has said: “The way I (the Supreme Lord) am by nature and essence all-pervading in My qualities and glories – that is known only through proper devotion. After knowing this truth, through that para bhakti, the devotee causes My qualities to manifest in himself – that is, he remains fully absorbed in My unbroken nature of bliss.” The Lord shows in this verse that there is oneness in the true fruit of knowledge among all practices like jnana yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, etc. Divine love is present in all three paths of practice. For the Sankhya practitioner, this love is delight in the Self; for the yogi, it is “abhiratah in one's own duty”; and in bhakti yoga, this love is called “delight in God.” The devotee becomes inseparably connected with God, like thread and cloth woven together. Through perfect exclusive devotion, the devotee sees only God in everything.

**sarva-karmāṇy api sadā kurvāṇo mad-vyapāśrayaḥ
mat-prasādād avāpnoti śāśvataṁ padam avyayam (18-56)**

Comm: In this verse, the Lord explains the path to liberation for a devotee who worships Him through performing their own prescribed duties. The devotee who has taken complete refuge in Me—that is, who depends entirely on Me in every way—and performs all daily and occasional duties appropriate to their stage of life (ashrama), such as a fully surrendered devotee (sharanagata bhakta), by the power of My causeless grace, attains the supreme, eternal, and imperishable Vaishnava abode that is above everything. By using the phrase “all actions” (sarva karmani), the Lord wants to say that even a person who performs desire-driven (kamyā) or prohibited actions, if they come to My refuge, still reaches that supreme abode. As stated in Gita 9.30: “Even if a person of very bad conduct worships Me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered a saint.” Even a great sinner, if he takes refuge in Me with exclusive devotion, has all his sins washed away by the power of My grace. Rescuing the soul from the ocean of material existence is My supreme duty. Therefore, O Arjuna, always accept that My grace and favor toward living beings are beyond all logic and reasoning. This verse describes the special qualities of a true devotee and true devotion. A seeker gradually purifies the mind and attains knowledge through selfless actions offered to God, and only when he becomes fully surrendered to Me does he become capable of knowing My true nature. But My exclusive devotee, taking refuge in unwavering, single-pointed devotion, attains that supreme abode in any condition through

My causeless compassion. For the one who holds Me alone in his heart, all his good and bad actions become equal (he transcends their effects). Even if he loses everything by taking refuge in Me, he still ascends to the state of eternal union (sayujya) with Me. O Arjuna! For such a devotee, because of My full satisfaction with him, nothing remains unattainable. Surrender (sharanagati) is the highest yoga. Sri Ramakrishna Deva said regarding surrender: “For true devotees, exclusive surrender is not merely the final stage of spiritual practice; it is itself the attainment of the supreme abode. By the Lord’s causeless grace, the devotee, after giving up all sense of dharma-adharma and action-inaction in life, comes to surrender. Offer everything at His lotus feet. Hand over all responsibility to Him. Let Him do whatever He wishes...” The Lord protects the surrendered devotee in every possible way. The devotee who depends solely on God—God always holds his hand and protects him. The Lord showers grace on everyone, but the person who turns away from God remains deprived of experiencing that compassion. According to Lord Sri Krishna’s teaching in the Gita, merely withdrawing from sense objects and living in Self-realization does not make life complete. Even after Self-realization, the knower must renounce the sense of doership and enjoyership, and through actions performed only to please God, establish complete oneness with the Supreme Soul—this is the devotee drinking the unbroken nectar of divine bliss. Only through the attitude of offering everything to God can one give up the pride of doership and truly take refuge in Him. The Lord’s boundless mercy and compassion toward all souls is His personal nature. God Himself is the incarnation of His own grace, and His grace is none other than Himself.

**cetasā sarva-karmāṇi mayi sannyasya mat-parah
buddhi-yogam upāśritya mac-cittaḥ satataṁ bhava (18-57)**

Comm: In this verse, the Lord speaks of two means of practice. In the first part, He teaches the renunciation of worldly attachment, and in the second part, He teaches establishing a relationship with God. By taking refuge in Buddhi-yoga and becoming devoted to bhakti, the Lord shows an easy path of spiritual practice by which one can constantly remember Him. With a pure mind, one should offer all duties and actions appropriate to one’s stage of life to God and become a selfless devotee. Taking shelter of Buddhi-yoga in the form of equanimity, one should remain continuously united with God in all situations. The seeker must firmly accept that all persons, objects, events, and situations of the world, and even one’s own body, mind, and senses, all belong to God alone. God alone is the true owner of everything. Whatever actions are performed through the individual are happening only by the will of God. Attachment to objects, money, gold, wife, children, family, body, education, status, and titles arises due to ignorance-born delusion. When one firmly accepts that all these things have been given by God only for the service of the world, attachment and possessiveness are destroyed. All worldly objects are material in nature and are constantly changing, and they are different from the Self. Having attachment toward them means remaining under their

control. In reality, the living being is always separate from the ever-changing world. Only due to delusion does a person believe that he is united with the world. The living being has a naturally established and eternal relationship with God. But by maintaining relationship with the world, that eternal relationship is forgotten. When one accepts that realization of God is the goal of life, the feeling of surrender to God naturally arises. Thoughts such as: “God alone is my supreme refuge,” “Other than Him, I have no one,” “I need nothing and have nothing to do,” “I have nothing to take from the world and nothing to give,” must remain constantly awake in the mind. Likewise, having the firm feeling that “I have no dependence at all on place, time, objects, people, events, or situations” is called remaining exclusively devoted to God. “Samatvam yoga ucyate” (Gita 2.48) — equanimity itself is called Yoga. When equanimity of intellect is established, pleasure and pain, favorable and unfavorable situations continue to come and go, but when the mind and intellect remain established in the Self, they do not produce any disturbance. For this purpose, the mind must be deeply engaged in japa (chanting), meditation, kirtan, holy company, and self-study. When the seeker becomes completely surrendered to God, eternal union and divine love are attained. In that state, God Himself becomes the servant of the lover. That divine love continuously increases every moment in the form of blissful nectar.

**mac-cittaḥ sarva-durgāṇi mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi
atha cet tvam ahaṅkāraṇ na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi (18-58)**

Comm: O Arjuna! If you always remember Me in your mind and become fully surrendered to Me, you will effortlessly cross over this insurmountable ocean of worldly suffering and misery. The fruits of your good and bad actions will no longer bind you. On the other hand, if out of ego you do not act according to My instructions, then your downfall is certain – that is, you will stray from the path of attaining God. This world is a terrifying battlefield where escaping the power of maya is extremely difficult. All actions in this world are expressions of the Supreme Consciousness through the individual soul. As long as the soul possesses body, mind, and intellect, it should consider itself a representative of the Lord and remain engaged in action. Without Him, no action is possible at all. Therefore, in every action, a person should keep their attention fixed on the Supreme Lord. Even the slightest sense of ego (doership) in the mind becomes an obstacle to receiving divine grace. The one who turns away from nature and its activities and faces the Lord – that is, takes refuge in Him – divine grace automatically flows fully toward them. When the mind and intellect become absorbed in the nature of the Supreme Soul, the result obtained is called ‘divine grace’. During the course of life, despite all worldly obstacles and hindrances, because of taking refuge in divine grace, a devotee never becomes disturbed or wavered. The power contained in divine grace cannot be achieved through any other spiritual practice. In this verse, through addressing Arjuna, the Lord warns all human beings that if anyone, out of

ego, considers themselves wise and capable and acts according to their own will in opposition to God’s command, then they deviate from their prescribed duty and become ruined and fallen. Ego means arrogance of the intellect. In the war, great warriors like Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Jayadratha, and others – each stood like an impregnable fortress. If Arjuna had not followed the Lord’s command and had fought according to his own will, thinking “I am the greatest archer on earth,” then victory for the Pandavas would never have been possible. For a person who desires success on the path of this world, performing prescribed duties with a desireless attitude as worship of God, in accordance with the Lord’s teachings, is obligatory. This brings about the welfare of the human being.

**yad ahañkāram āśritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyas te prakṛtis tvāṁ niyokṣyati(18-59)**

Comm: O Arjuna! The resolve you have fixed in your mind— “I will not fight,” which is based on ego, will prove to be groundless and false. This determination of yours will not remain firm for long. Because, under the influence of the rajasic force of Nature’s māyā, you will not be able to escape from battle. Even though, due to ego, you have formed the resolve to renounce fighting, your own Kshatriya nature will act against that resolve. For a Kshatriya, fighting against injustice is an inborn and established nature. That very nature will compel you to engage in battle. A person’s nature is stronger than his ego. Even from a worldly point of view— such as honour and reputation— Arjuna’s resolve not to fight was not practically justified. Considering himself wise, the pointless arguments Arjuna put forward before Lord Krishna in order to withdraw from battle were born of ignorance-based ego. Thinking himself a great warrior, and remaining ignorant of the true divine nature of Lord Krishna, who was acting merely as his charioteer, Arjuna neglected His instructions— this was a second sign of ego. To assume independence in deciding one’s own good and bad is nothing but arrogance of intellect. Therefore, the guidance of scripture or the words of a true Guru are indispensable. The harm caused by merely doing or not doing an action is far less than the harm caused by performing one’s duties with an ego-filled mind that resists the divine order. Here a question arises: If a person is compelled to act according to his nature, then why did Lord Krishna repeatedly urge Arjuna to engage in battle? The answer is this: Actions performed under the compulsion of Nature become a cause of bondage because they lack a sense of duty. On the other hand, when one performs one’s natural duties with a sense of duty and with the attitude of worship of God, there is neither ego of doership nor sense of enjoyership, and therefore such action does not become bondage. Even while engaging in action, the doer remains unattached, like a lotus leaf in water. Therefore, a person should, without hesitation, accept his nature-born duties as the command of the Supreme Lord and perform all actions accordingly, without attachment and without obstruction.

**svabhāva-jena kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā
kartuṁ necchasi yan mohāt kariṣyasi avaśo’pi tat (18-60)**

Comm: O son of Kunti, Arjuna! The action of engaging in this war that you wish to abandon – you will inevitably be compelled to perform it due to the impulse arising from your own nature. Your nature as a Kshatriya – which is not to flee from the battlefield – will forcefully make you engage in the war. There is no other path for you except fighting. Here, the Lord addresses Arjuna as ‘son of Kunti’ to signify that Kunti was a heroic woman. To free the earth from the burden of sin caused by adharma, she encouraged her Pandava sons to fight instead of going into exile again. Arjuna is the son of that great mother and himself a valiant hero. Therefore, he cannot remain without fighting. The thought of abandoning one’s natural duties lacks true discernment and is filled with delusion; it is temporary. On the other hand, one’s nature always remains with the being across many lifetimes. Therefore, any resolve made under the influence of ego to act against one’s nature has to be changed later. As stated in the Gita (3.33): “All beings follow their nature; what can restraint do?” Even a wise person acts according to their own nature. What can forceful restraint accomplish in this? The impulses from actions and qualities of past lives, the impressions from parents in this life, and the education and training received since birth – the combination of all these that gives rise to an inner urge to act is called ‘svabhava’ (nature). The Lord calls this ‘one’s own natural duty’ – it has earlier been referred to in the Gita as ‘svadharma’. A person who takes refuge in yoga practice with the understanding that “everything happens by God’s will,” rises above nature, and continues performing the perfected natural duties appropriate to their stage of life – such a person becomes free from the bondage of action, transcends nature, and attains the Supreme Soul. The nature of liberated great souls (jivanmuktas) is completely pure. A person cannot abandon their nature suited to their varna (caste/class), but with the aim of attaining God, they can purify it by removing attachment and aversion. The effort to abandon the tendency toward forbidden actions and strive to perform prescribed actions is itself yoga practice. In karma yoga, by performing actions without attachment or aversion and with detachment; in jnana yoga, by completely abandoning identification with the body and remaining established in the Self; and in the path of bhakti, by becoming fully surrendered – through these, one’s nature becomes purified.

**īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe’rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā (18-61)**

Comm : O Arjuna, the Supreme Lord who dwells within all beings lives in the hearts of all embodied creatures. By His power of Māyā, He makes all living beings move according to their past actions, like dolls mounted on a machine. Every living being, as a result of the actions done in previous births, is compelled in this birth by nature and the three qualities to perform particular actions. In this matter, the individual soul has no

independent freedom. The Supreme Lord is the inner ruler of the entire moving and non-moving universe. He knows the past, present, and future of every living being and remains in the heart as the witness of all their actions. The Supreme Person, Bhagavān, is the Lord of all. He is the supreme controller of everything, living and non-living. The Vedic statement says that whatever is visible, whatever exists in space in manifest or unmanifest form, and whatever is within or outside the universe, all are pervaded by Śrī Nārāyaṇa. He is all-pervading and the supreme controller. Just as the space inside a pot and the vast outer space are essentially one, in the same way the individual soul and the Supreme Self are one reality, though they appear as two. The entire universe is the stage of the Supreme Lord. On this stage, He makes all beings—from Brahmā down to tiny insects, numbering eighty-four lakh species—move like shadow figures. As stated in the Rāmcharitmānas: just as a trainer makes a monkey dance, God makes all beings dance. Kākabhūṣuṇḍi says to Garuḍa that, holding the rope of Māyā, the Lord makes living beings dance in this way. A living being who has turned away from God receives gross and subtle bodies according to beginningless impressions of past actions, through Māyā. The body of the living being itself is like a machine or a stage. Bound by the thread of karma held by God, the body of the living being remains controlled. Therefore, all actions of the living being take place only by the inspiration of God. According to one's own actions, the living being attains different destinations. Here, God does not directly force the bound soul to act. The bound soul also does not wish to completely give up its independence and be fully guided by God in every way. For such God-turned-away beings, God remains only as a witness. According to the good and bad actions born of one's nature, God gives the fruits meant to be experienced by the soul. God is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe. He is the clay as the material cause, and He Himself is the potter as the efficient cause. Because the living being is under the control of ignorance, even though God is so near, the soul cannot know Him. As long as a person maintains the sense of "I" and "mine" with the body, which is like a machine, God operates that person according to his nature. When all connection with the body is completely broken, one's nature becomes pure. Then the living being rises above dependence on material nature. The human body is obtained for one's own spiritual upliftment. Therefore, a human being has full right and freedom to strive to purify one's nature.

**tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha sarva-bhāvena bhārata
tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntiṁ sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam (18-62)**

Comm: O descendant of the Bharata dynasty, Arjuna! In every way—with mind, body, and speech—go and take complete refuge in that Supreme Controller of the universe who resides in your heart, with exclusive devotion. By the grace of that Supreme Soul dwelling in the heart, you will attain supreme peace and the divine eternal abode. The heart of a living being is the dwelling place of God. Therefore, surrender to that God who resides in the heart. Abandon fear, honor, pride, and attachment. Remove possessiveness

toward the body and the world. Consider the Supreme Soul alone as your sole refuge and everything. With exclusive feeling, constantly remember God with faith, devotion, and love. Perform your prescribed duties selflessly according to His commands. This is complete surrender in every way. By the influence of this exclusive surrender, the Supreme Lord becomes pleased. Through His boundless grace, one attains supreme peace and the imperishable divine realms like Vaikuntha and Goloka. Sri Ramakrishna Deva says: “This world is a field of action. Hold the lotus feet of God with one hand, and work with the other hand. When you get leisure from work, then hold the lotus feet of God with both hands and surrender.” To make a soul inclined toward devotion and endowed with good deeds gracious, the Lord has given advice to Arjuna for surrendering to the external initiation guru and the inner Chaitya Guru (the indwelling Supreme Person). When one comes to the refuge of God, an unlimited stream of the Supreme Merciful and Best Friend’s boundless compassion flows upon the devotee. As a result, the devotee understands whatever happens by God’s ordinance as His grace. The devotee always remains content and experiences peace. Purification of the mind and realization of the self are indeed the grace of God. Abandoning pride and attachment to fruits, remembering God—who directs actions and bestows their results—while performing actions is ‘purification of the mind’. Abandoning identification with all non-self attributes and experiencing oneness with the Supreme Soul in one’s true self-nature is ‘realization of the self’. In self-realization, the surrendered devotee delights in the bliss of the self in their own true form. Here, the meaning of the word ‘param shanti’ (supreme peace) is complete detachment from the world forever. The meaning of ‘eternal place’ is the supreme abode. “The enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Great Lord of all worlds, the well-wishing friend of all beings—knowing Me thus, one attains peace.” (Gita 5.29) God is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all worlds, and the friend of all creatures. Accepting this, one attains supreme peace. This gross body is the field or place. The subtle body is the temple. The Supreme Soul resides there as the adored deity (Adhiyajna). The senses are engaged in serving that deity. Holding this attitude, the seeker proceeds toward the refuge of the Supreme Soul in the heart.

**iti te jñānam ākhyātām guhyād guhyataram mayā
vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa yathēcchasi tathā kuru (18-63)**

Comm: O Arjuna, up to this point I have explained to you this scripture, the Gītā, which gives knowledge that is more secret than all secrets. After fully reflecting on this mysterious knowledge in the best possible way, do whatever you consider to be right. In this verse, by using the word “iti”, which indicates the conclusion of a statement or quotation, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa signals the beginning of the conclusion of the Gītā. The Lord explained Sāṅkhya Yoga and Karma Yoga in detail according to Arjuna’s questions. Finally, He described the greatness of devotion-centered Karma Yoga and advised Arjuna to take refuge in Him. While completing the presentation of this scripture filled

with spiritual wisdom, the Lord, not yet hearing Arjuna’s clear acceptance to engage in battle, again cautioned him to reflect carefully. Therefore, He advised Arjuna to calmly and thoughtfully consider which path he wishes to follow by his own free will and then accept it. The main aim of the Gītā is the attainment of self-knowledge (ātma-jñāna), through which the true nature of God can be known. This knowledge is the essence of the Vedas and the hidden treasure of God. Because it is beyond the reach of the senses, this knowledge is deeper than all worldly secrets. In the light of this self-knowledge, even the atoms and sub-atoms of the universe shine forth. Though this knowledge may be unknown to many, it is not unknowable. Spiritual progress cannot be achieved through compulsion or force. A person should strive for the attainment of God according to one’s own nature. For this purpose, under the direct guidance of a true Guru, spiritual practice with faith and trust is necessary to purify one’s nature. Accordingly, a seeker should reflect upon and examine all principles, goals, and paths of life. Then, according to one’s own nature and inclination, one should make a proper decision. Out of love, compassion, and goodwill toward Arjuna, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke such cautionary words to draw him toward Himself, that is, toward the personal, manifest form of God. Therefore, even without Arjuna asking further questions, in the next verse the Lord speaks the highest and most secret teaching. He urges Arjuna to take refuge in the Supreme Self who resides in the heart.

**sarva-guhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
iṣṭo’si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam (18-64)**

Comm: Listen again to My most secret of all secrets, the supreme word. The meaning of “supreme” here is: after this, there is nothing more left to say, nor anything left to ask. O Arjuna! Even after hearing all the teachings of the scriptures, fully reflecting on them, and trying to decide your duty in the present situation, you are unable to do so. Up to now, the Lord has given many beneficial teachings that were secret and more secret. The deepest essence of all those teachings is this most secret truth, which the Lord has not yet fully presented to Arjuna. Seeing Arjuna’s inability to decide his path and his inner anxiety, the Lord is now ready to fearlessly speak this most secret word and encourage him to follow it. Although the Lord has already explained many principles related to Sankhya, Karma, and Bhakti several times according to Arjuna’s questions, He now resolves to speak this supreme most secret truth so that it leaves a deep impression on Arjuna’s mind. Arjuna is the Lord’s dearest friend, companion, and close relative. Therefore, the Lord shows special personal interest in giving this teaching for Arjuna’s welfare. The beloved Lord always remains alert to guide His devotee on the path, because the devotee is extremely dear to Him. In many places in the Gita, it is clearly stated that Arjuna represents all living beings. Here, the meaning of the word “Ishta” (beloved deity) is: when a devotee firmly accepts the Lord as his own chosen deity—“As people surrender to Me, I reward them accordingly” (Gita 4.11)—then, in return, the Lord accepts the devotee as His own beloved. When one becomes favorable to God, everything becomes possible. This secret

knowledge is such that the soul abandons the feeling of duality and attains the grace of non-duality. Because the soul is a part and a reflection of God, the soul always exists within the Lord. This is the eternal relationship between the soul and the Supreme Lord. Therefore, the Lord is madly in love with His exclusive devotee—He is ready to do anything for him. When the devotee, without any sense of difference, becomes anxious to become one with his beloved Lord, how can the Lord then hide any beneficial secret from him? The Lord says: Dear Arjuna! Just as you love Me, I also love you. Pure love is never one-sided. It always comes from both sides—the lover and the beloved. Therefore, overwhelmed by the devotee’s selfless love, the Lord takes all the devotee’s responsibilities upon His own shoulders. The Gita is the essence of the Vedas and Upanishads. Without the Lord’s grace, it is impossible to understand His deepest teaching through one’s own intellect alone, or through a jnani or karmayogi who considers the Lord’s form as illusory or as the source of worldly prosperity. Arjuna is the exclusive surrendered devotee of Lord Sri Krishna, and he knows that Krishna alone is the Supreme Brahman—eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss. Therefore, as a pure devotee, by the power of divine grace, Arjuna is the worthy recipient to understand this mysterious truth.

**man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo’si me (18-65)**

Comm: O Arjuna, fix your mind constantly on Me with your whole heart and become fully absorbed in the remembrance of Me. Become My exclusive devotee and remain immersed in divine joy by hearing and chanting My name, form, divine acts, and qualities. Become one who worships Me. That is, see Me alone present in all beings and, with a selfless spirit of devotion to God, engage yourself in serving the world through your prescribed duties. Giving up all feelings of violence toward any being, see Me alone in all creatures with the eye of true knowledge and bow to My supreme greatness. Accept Me alone as your highest goal and ultimate refuge, and bow to Me again and again. By following any one or all of these four simple spiritual paths, you will surely attain Me through devotion-mixed knowledge granted by My grace. This is absolutely certain; there is not the slightest doubt in it. I say this to you with an oath to Truth itself, because you are very dear to Me. I Myself stand before you as the embodiment of Truth. There can be no deception or falsehood toward one who is dear. In this verse, the Supreme Brahman nature of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the teacher of the Gītā, is clearly revealed. Such a promise of absorbing the soul into Himself can be given only by God alone, and only He is capable of doing so. Understanding Arjuna’s condition, the Lord had promised in the previous verse to speak the most secret and profound truth of the Gītā. This verse and the next verse together contain that highest and most confidential knowledge. The way Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks this supreme secret with an open heart and overflowing love shows the deep bond of love and devotion between the chosen Lord, the Guru, and the disciple. These four spiritual paths are as follows. (1) Man-manā (Path of Knowledge / Meditation) One must continuously

practice withdrawing the mind from sense objects and fixing it firmly on the chosen Lord. For developing concentration, the mind must remain attached to the blissful Supreme Self. The state of becoming one with the Supreme Brahman is the condition in which body-identification, along with name, form, and limitations, completely disappears. In that state, the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Brahman is realized. A person whose mind is fully restrained in this way is called *man-manā*. Under the influence of ignorance and *Māyā*, the soul considers the ever-changing world to be permanent and real, and thus turns away from God. After attaining self-knowledge, even a moment's forgetfulness of God becomes unbearable, and devotion naturally awakens in the heart. The meaning of *man-manā* is explained in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, where Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava: "O dear Uddhava, the minds of the *Gopīs* are always absorbed in Me. I alone am their life and soul. For My sake, the *Gopīs* gave up home, husband, children, relatives, social honor, and even religious conventions. They remain constantly absorbed in Me alone. Trusting only My simple words, 'I will come,' they endure all suffering with faith and sustain their lives. This is the highest example of *man-manā*." In truth, when the mind becomes filled with God alone, all other thoughts automatically disappear from the inner being. (2) *Mad-bhakta* (Path of Devotion) First of all, the seeker should transform the ego and sincerely accept in the heart, "I belong to God." When ego changes, possessiveness disappears and spiritual practice becomes natural and easy. When God is regarded as one's own, love for God naturally increases at every moment. By performing selfless duties such as sacrifice with God as the aim, devotion to God awakens in the heart. To accept God as one's only Lord, Master, Protector, Supreme Goal, and Ultimate Refuge, to remain fully dependent on Him, to stay content with all His arrangements, to obey His commands at all times, and to love Him with exclusive devotion—these are the true marks of one-pointed devotion to God. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Prahlāda Mahārāja* explains nine forms of devotion: hearing God's names and deeds, chanting, remembering, serving His feet, worship, offering prayers, servitude, friendship, and complete self-surrender. Through these nine forms of devotion, practiced with surrender, divine love is attained. Devotees like *Prahlāda*, *King Ambarīṣa*, and *Vidura* are examples of such devotees of God. (3) *Mad-yājī* (Path of Action / Sacrifice) Offer all your actions to Me. If you accept Me alone as your highest goal and refuge, you will surely attain Me. To be worshipful toward Me means understanding that service to humanity is service to God. Performing all duties selflessly for the welfare of the world is true worship of God. Performing one's own prescribed duties is itself a sacrificial act. When actions are offered to God, the bond with Him becomes firm and the inner being becomes purified. Any action done for God purifies the heart. With a pure heart, love for God arises easily, and that love helps one realize the true nature of God. (4) *Namaḥ Kuru* (Surrender through Reverence) Offering full prostration to any form of God, His sacred feet, or to scriptures that describe His qualities and truth is offering reverence to God. Seeing God dwelling in the hearts of all beings, or recognizing all beings as manifestations of God, and bowing to them is also reverence to God. Whether one is rich

or poor, humbly bowing with folded hands before God’s form while acknowledging His supremacy is an easy practice for everyone. To cultivate divine qualities, the seeker must possess humility, faith, devotion, and love. For a devotee, God is Brahman in knowledge, devotion in worship and chanting, and equanimity in action. Through these four spiritual disciplines, merit is gained, the path of duty and true knowledge opens, and this leads to the soul’s ultimate welfare. No living being is disliked by God. Therefore God says, “Truly, I promise you, O Arjuna.” I swear to you that by taking refuge in these simple practices, you will surely attain Me. All delusions born of ignorance regarding sin and merit will be destroyed. If anyone surrenders to Me and sincerely says even once from the heart, “O Lord, I am Yours,” I grant that person complete fearlessness and protection. This is My vow. God may send the soul through eighty-four lakh forms of life, but His only purpose is to uplift and liberate the soul. This compassion toward all beings is the sign of God’s unconditional love. This is God’s true promise, meant to inspire complete trust in His words. According to the Ānandagiri commentary, the Lord says: “O Arjuna, completely offer your mind to Me. If the restless nature of the mind makes this difficult, then become My devotee. Store a treasure of unbroken love for Me in your heart. If attachment to wife, children, or wealth prevents exclusive love for Me, then outwardly fulfill those relations, but inwardly practice My worship and remembrance. If due to lack of means or energy you cannot perform ritual worship, then simply bow to Me again and again. Maintain humility toward Me in mind, body, and action. By adopting even one of these paths, you will receive true knowledge through My grace and attain Me in your heart.” To remove any doubt that this might be misleading, the Lord assures that because Arjuna is very dear to Him, there is no deception or falsehood in His words. Therefore, there is no untruth in these teachings, and this is His absolute and truthful promise.

**sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ (18-66)**

Comm : O Arjuna! Completely abandon all dharmas—that is, give up the idea of “I” as a Brahmin, or Kshatriya, or Vaishya, or Shudra; “I” as a householder, “I” as a yogi, “I” as a sannyasi—and come to My exclusive refuge alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve—this fearless assurance I am giving you. Lord Sri Krishna, after teaching in the previous verse the most secret pure devotion of the Gita, in this verse explains that to become qualified for such pure devotion, one must first become exclusively surrendered to the Lord. Here, “all dharmas” refers to the concepts of varna (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, etc.) and ashrama, along with physical and mental duties related to karma, jnana, yoga, and worship of other deities. Any practice that by itself cannot grant the supreme fruit—whether it is dharma or not—should be disregarded. Accordingly, without considering any varnashrama or spiritual practice, no matter at what level one may be, if one abandons all the above dharmas and comes to My refuge with exclusive feeling, I take upon Myself the responsibility for his gradual elevation, change of varna,

rise, and complete liberation from all sins—that is, moksha—in My form as the beloved Lord or true Guru. Every person has respect for his own dharma or spiritual practice, but dharma or sadhana is not the direct cause of moksha—this the Lord has established. However, the qualification to attain the Lord’s refuge is obtained only through observance of dharma and spiritual practice. Therefore, in the beginning, there is a need to build one’s worthiness through dharma and sadhana. Taking refuge in God is the main goal of all scriptural injunctions. Even sannyasa cannot give its fruit without the refuge of the Lord. Sri Madhusudana Saraswati has said: Abandon the support of dharma that thinks “My welfare will come by faithfully observing brahmacharya dharma, grihastha dharma, vanaprastha dharma, and sannyasa dharma.” Sri Shankaracharya has said: Descriptions of abandoning adharma appear everywhere, but speaking of abandoning dharma is unprecedented, and this arises in the context of establishing Sri Krishna’s pure Supreme Soul nature. Here, the meaning of abandoning all dharmas is: Become free from the connection with dharma and adharma. If one does not abandon both dharma and adharma, the renunciation remains incomplete and doership persists. In reality, wherever there is dharma, there is also adharma. Dharma and adharma are a pair of opposites, coupled like day and night. Without dharma, knowledge of adharma would not arise, and without adharma, the importance of dharma would not remain. Dharma and adharma arise together, remain together, and when knowledge of the Supreme Soul dawns, both dissolve. Dharma has two derivations: causal dharma and functional dharma. Giving charity, observing vows, helping others, etc., are functional dharmas. What is obtained by nature and disposition is causal dharma. All dharma and adharma actions cause bondage and obstruct the path to moksha. Through self-knowledge, these two types of dharma must be abandoned. The meaning of abandoning dharma and adharma is: Renounce all actions and take refuge in that Parabrahman who is beyond dharma and adharma. When the ignorance that creates the duality of dharma and adharma within the mind is removed, abandonment of all dharmas naturally occurs. In the same way, if one proceeds to the Lord’s refuge with non-dual feeling, dharma and adharma cannot touch him. The Self is eternal. Its abandonment is never possible. As for the non-self, which has no real existence and no eternal relation with the Self, how can its abandonment even arise? The solution is: The non-self is eternally abandoned. However, the delusive acceptance in the form of “this is mine” or “I am this”—that must be renounced. In truth, neither is the Self bound in the non-self, nor is the non-self bound in the Self. This is only the effect of the three qualities of maya. After removing mind, intellect, and ego from the word “I,” whatever eternal Brahman remains—take refuge in That and become certain that “there is nothing besides the Self.” When you adopt this understanding by renouncing action, then from all the bondages of dharma and adharma, I will liberate you. The Lord Himself is knowledge incarnate. In the light of knowledge, the darkness of ignorance automatically disappears. Just as the sun does not see darkness, and a waking person does not see dreams, similarly, upon attaining My true nature, nothing except the Lord will be seen. Regarding “sarva-

dharman parityajya,” Sri Ramanujacharya’s explanation is: According to one’s eligibility, practise karma yoga, jnana yoga, and bhakti yoga, but abandon desire for their fruits. There, removing the intellect of doership and inwardly removing the sense of being the agent—this is the intended meaning here of “abandoning all dharmas.” The bondage of actions from many past lives is the obstacle to the growth of loving devotion, and one lifetime of sadhana is not sufficient for its atonement. Seeing Arjuna’s helplessness in following the path of bhakti with this line of thought, the Lord says: Abandon all these practices and dharmas and simply become Mine. I will liberate you from all sins, due to which you have become overwhelmed with grief. According to Sri Vallabhacharya’s explanation: The dharma that consists of taking refuge in other deities and worshipping them is prohibited here. According to the Vallabha philosophy, Arjuna is currently following the path of Maryada (regulated devotion). By speaking of abandoning other dharmas, the Lord is advising him to accept the Pushti Marg (the path of divine grace). Therefore, by leaving the support of dharma and taking the Lord’s refuge, there is no longer any need to decide one’s own duty. To become free from the pair of dharma and adharma and to place the responsibility of deciding dharma upon the Lord Himself—this is the abandonment of all dharmas. By promising to free from sins, the Lord has revealed His Purushottama (Supreme Person) form according to the Pushti Marg. Regarding “all dharmas,” Sri Nilakantha has said: Abandon the dharmas of happiness, suffering, etc., related to varna, ashrama, body, senses, mind, intellect, and rituals like agnihotra. Take refuge in that Parabrahman who is endowed with all powers, with and without attributes, undivided, uniform, and full of bliss. By coming to His refuge, He, as the indwelling Purusha, will free you from all ignorance, afflictions, accumulated past sins, and sins done in this life. Therefore, O Arjuna! Become fearless regarding the sin and hell you fear from killing your revered relatives. Sri Lokamanya Tilak has written: Although worship of the nirguna (formless) is discussed in many places in the Gita, pure devotion to the Lord’s saguna sakara (with form and qualities) form requires a pure mind and intellect. This purity is obtained by humans through good actions and inner purification. In the conclusion of the Gita, giving importance to saguna sakara worship, the Lord Himself, using Arjuna as the medium, has spoken this for all living beings. The Lord’s message to all beings is: Abandon all paths of supporting dharma and, with desireless feeling, become engaged in My service and remain in My refuge. By taking My shelter in this way, no fear from the world remains. Not having complete trust and faith in the Lord after surrendering is an offence toward Him. What has happened was inevitable. What is not to happen can never happen. And what is happening now is rightly happening. Knowing this auspicious ordinance of the Lord, the surrendered devotee has no reason to grieve over past events. Even in extremely adverse situations, the cheerfulness of a loving devotee increases more and more, because the nature of love is ever-growing. The Lord sees the devotee’s intimacy; He does not see virtues or faults. That is, the devotee’s faults are not seen by the Lord—only intimacy is seen. From the essential viewpoint, the devotee always belongs to the

Lord. Just as a devoted wife is dedicated to her husband, merges her gotra (lineage) into his, lives in his house, and takes care of her body only for his sake, in the same way, the surrendered devotee offers his accepted gotra, caste, name, etc., from the bodily viewpoint at the Lord's feet. He becomes fearless, without sorrow, without worry, without doubt, and attains divine bliss. The realization of that divine bliss by a soul in this world is extremely rare. To become free from worldly pain and suffering and to seek that divine bliss, there is no other path except surrender to the Lord. Based on the word "ekam" (sole) in the verse, the Lord wishes to say here: Among all the practices like Sankhya yoga, Karma yoga, etc., for attaining God, "sharanagati" (surrender) alone is the chief and supreme practice. For that, one must offer one's mind to the Lord in such a way that the wick remains constantly united with the oil to keep the lamp's flame burning continuously. When the mind is fully surrendered, attaining oneness with the Lord ends all sins and brings freedom from all pain and suffering. This is the Lord's causeless grace toward the soul. The Lord wishes to establish here: No special practice is needed to attain Me. In the chapter on Universal Vision, it is clearly stated that yajna, charity, austerity, scriptures, study, etc., do not directly help in realizing the Supreme Lord. But only through devotion can the vision of the Supreme Lord's form be obtained. Knowledge of the Lord's true nature is possible only through devotion, which is His grace—this is also said in the Shruti and Smriti. The attraction of a soul toward taking the Lord's refuge always remains. The soul's relation with the world is only imagined. But the relation with the Lord is real. That worldly relation makes a person dependent and servant-like. But the relation with the Supreme Soul makes a person free, full of consciousness, and even makes him master of the Lord. For a surrendered devotee, refuge in both the Lord and His bliss-giving power is supreme. The Lord is full of supreme bliss. There is no second to Him. He is intimate because the soul is His eternal part and His own form. Therefore, when one surrenders to the Lord, how can there be fear? Sri Ramakrishna Deva has beautifully explained the state of surrender through the story of a bird. The bird, extremely tired, was about to fall in the middle of the ocean. Feeling great distress, it flew in all four directions—east, west, south, north—but could not find any shore. Finally, becoming calm, it sat motionless on the ship's mast. Without any effort on its part, it would certainly reach the shore with the ship. Similarly, when a person becomes tired and disappointed after performing various religious practices, at that time, losing reliance on his own strength, he adopts surrender. The meaning of surrender to the Lord is complete self-surrender. With both hands folded, if one says from the heart, "O Lord! I am Yours, and You alone are mine," the Lord cannot remain still. He extends His hands to the devotee, embraces him, and takes him into His lap. He protects him from all blows and counter-blows. He makes him His own intimate. Regarding surrender, Lord Sri Rama has said: "To one who even once, with complete surrender, prays and says 'I am Yours,' I grant complete fearlessness from all beings. This is My vow." Its meaning is: If anyone, with full surrender, even once expresses the feeling "Tavasmi—I am Yours," I grant him ultimate fearlessness among all beings. This is My

vow. “I belong to the Lord” means: The Lord is the ocean, and the soul, in His refuge, is like a wave in it. To stubbornly hold on and say “The Lord is mine” is another characteristic of surrender. During childhood play, when Lord Sri Krishna let go of someone’s hand, the devotee, expressing his firm devotion, says: “You can let go of my hand—there is nothing surprising in that. But I will understand Your power only when You can leave my heart.” For the jnani devotee, “I am He”—this is the third type of surrender, which is also the highest point of the path of knowledge. This entire world and “I” are none other than the Supreme Person, Lord Purushottama. The thought that anything exists beyond the Lord completely disappears. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, the Lord says: “O Uddhava! Give up all injunctions and prohibitions. Give up both engagement and renunciation. Give up whatever you have heard so far and whatever remains to be heard. Come to My exclusive refuge alone. I am the Self of all, and becoming one with Me, become fearless. I, manifesting as the ‘I’ within you, will free you from all sins, from the root of sin—doership and enjoyership—from all-sinful ignorance and from the delusion full of sin. Therefore, do not grieve. One who desires neither enjoyment nor yoga is very rare. He transcends even the desire for liberation.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.12.14-15) “One who abandons identification as the doer with all souls and takes refuge in the feet of Mukunda worthy of refuge, he becomes free from debts to gods, rishis, living beings, relatives, and ancestors.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.5.41) “When a person abandons all actions and surrenders his self to Me, then, by My will, he becomes more accomplished than yogis and jnanis. He soon attains immortality (liberation) and becomes qualified for equal opulence with Me.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.34) “Until detachment from sense objects arises and faith in My stories is born, one should properly perform daily and occasional duties.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.20.9) “One who, knowing the merits and demerits in following the swadharma prescribed by Me in the Vedas and scriptures, abandons all dharmas and serves Me—he is considered the best sadhu.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.11.32) All the teachings that Lord Sri Krishna has given to Arjuna in the Gita scripture up to now include secret knowledge. In brief, they are as follows: A sage united in yoga very quickly attains the Supreme Soul. By renouncing the fruits of action, one attains steadfast peace. The equanimity achieved through perfection in karma yoga is itself the attributeless Brahman. Through all these teachings, karma yoga has been established as an independent means to attain the Supreme Soul. This karma yoga is called secret (guhya). Severing connection with inert matter and taking refuge in the formless Supreme Soul is more important than karma yoga, so it is called more secret (guhyatara). The entire world is pervaded by Me. I am death, I am immortality, I am both being and non-being, I am beyond the perishable and superior to the imperishable—the Purushottama. The places in the Gita where the Lord has emphasized the greatness of devotion are: My surrendered devotee crosses over Maya. (7.14) I am very easily attained through exclusive devotion. (8.14) Through exclusive devotion, one can attain the Supreme Person. (8.22) I carry the burden of yoga-kshema (maintenance and protection) of the exclusive devotee. (9.22) I accept with love

a leaf, flower, fruit, water, etc., offered by a devotee. (9.26) I remove the ignorance of devotees who are fully absorbed in Me in every way, and as a result, they attain Me. (10.11) Through exclusive devotion, one obtains My vision, knows Me truly, and enters into Me. (11.54) The devotee who worships Me is the best yogi. (12.2) Through unwavering bhakti yoga, a person transcends the gunas. (14.26) The devotee who worships Me in every way is all-knowing. (15.19) All these are fruits of causeless grace obtained through exclusive loving devotion to the Lord. For karma yogis, there is an eternal relationship with the Lord, and temporary worldly relationships are abandoned. For jnana yogis, there is an essential relationship with the Lord, and oneness with Him (knowledge of truth) is attained. But on the path of exclusive devotion, there is an intimate relationship with the Lord, and identity with Him in love is achieved. In eternal relationship, shanta rasa is experienced. In essential relationship, undivided rasa is experienced. In intimate relationship, infinite rasa is experienced. For this reason, surrender is the most secret of all and the supreme practice. Considering and analyzing all the above teachings from Srimad Bhagavatam and Gita scripture, the conclusion is: In the conclusion of the Gita scripture, the Lord is giving Arjuna the final teaching of surrender to His form with attributes. In the verse “Go to Him alone for refuge with all your being, O Bharata” (Gita 18.62), the Lord speaks of surrender to the attributeless and formless. Here, by saying “Come to My sole refuge,” He gives the teaching of surrender to the form with attributes and qualities. By surrender to the formless, liberation is attained. But by surrender to the form with attributes, a liberated state with loving bliss is attained. The Lord, who is the liberator of infinite souls, became submissive to Mother Yashoda. He gave Himself completely to her. Therefore, accepting surrender to the form with attributes is the “most secret of all.” Hence, without taking refuge in dharma, knowledge, yoga, or other deities, take My sole refuge. “This exclusive devotion is attainable only by My causeless grace toward My exclusive devotee due to great fortune”—Breaking this rule, now with extreme mercy, I am granting you the qualification for exclusive devotion, just as I broke My own vow for Bhishma. By abandoning daily and occasional duties according to My command, you will not have to suffer adverse results. I Myself, in the form of the Vedas, have commanded the performance of eternal duties. Now I Myself am commanding their abandonment. So how can the question of sin arise from abandoning eternal duties? If someone surrenders to another, like an animal sold for a price, he must remain under the owner’s control. He must do whatever the owner commands, stay wherever the owner keeps him, and eat whatever the owner gives. All these are characteristics of taking refuge—this is the essence of the dharma of surrender. In the Vayu Purana, it is said that surrender (sharanagati) has six types. (1) Resolve to act favorably: In the scriptures of devotion, having a liking and tendency toward one’s own chosen deity is called anukulya (favorable attitude). (2) Avoidance of unfavorable attitude: Negative feelings, disbelief, lack of faith, etc., toward that same chosen deity are called pratikulya (unfavorable). (3) “Rakshyati” – the firm belief that the Lord will protect me, and there is no protector for

me other than Him. This meaning of “He will protect” is like the strong faith shown by Gajendra, Draupadi, and others. (4) Varan: Accepting the Lord as one’s maintainer (bhartritva), acknowledging dependence on Him, and expressing gratitude. (5) Nikshepana or self-surrender: Completely offering one’s gross and subtle body and using it only for the Lord’s purpose. (6) Akarpanya: Not expressing one’s helplessness or poverty to anyone except the Lord. Where these six practices are performed for the Lord, that is surrender. It is often seen that one who has taken refuge in the Lord has to endure worldly suffering and pain in great measure. At that time, a common question arises: Being a devotee of the Lord, how did suffering come to him? Why did his son die? Why did his wealth go away? Why did disgrace and disrespect spread for him in the world? And so on. The answer is: In reality, when one becomes fully dependent on the Lord, there remains no dependence on the world or the body at all. At that time, the hope to live, fear of death, desire to do something, and greed to get something—these four are completely cut off. The vision of a surrendered devotee remains fixed only on “The Lord exists and I exist.” The meaning is: Leaving the Lord aside, how can attention go anywhere else? As long as one’s attention remains on whether worldly things will happen or not, until then, the abandonment of all dharmas is incomplete, and one has not truly surrendered. When there is no feeling of wanting to gain anything, the Lord naturally feels dear and sweet. Where there is no desire at all, that is the dwelling place of the Lord, and remaining constantly united with Him there is complete surrender. After hearing all this, a doubt arises in Arjuna’s mind: Very well. If from this very moment I surrender to You alone, then whatever You have said—whether auspicious or inauspicious—whatever happens, surrender itself is my final duty. If You make me do only dharma, there is no reason for worry. But if, because You are the unrestricted Lord, You make me engage in adharma, then what will happen to me? Addressing this imagined doubt of Arjuna, the Lord says: All the accumulated sins you have from ancient and recent times, or whatever sins you commit following My instruction— I will free you from all those sins. Unlike other refuges, I am not incapable of removing sins. Addressing you, I am giving this teaching to all people. Do not grieve for yourself or for anyone else. Just as you, any living being who becomes absorbed in thinking of Me, abandons all kinds of “mine” and “duties toward others,” surrenders to Me, and lives happily— for him, I am bound by vow to take the responsibility of removing his sins, freeing him from the world, and the means to attain Me. What more can I say? I am even ready to take the responsibility of maintaining his body. “Oh! I have placed such a heavy burden on my Lord”—do not grieve thinking this. As one who is affectionate toward devotees and true to His resolve, there is not even the slightest effort for Me in accepting this burden. In explaining this verse, all translators, philosophers, commentators, critics, and sub-commentators have presented the original essence of the Gita scripture in different ways according to their own viewpoints. This verse is the Lord’s final teaching—His last word. It was not meant only for Arjuna; it is for all humanity: “O human! Abandon all efforts and practices of dharma and take refuge solely in Sri Bhagavan with your entire

being.” From “You are grieving for those who should not be grieved for” (Gita 2.11), the Gita teaching began with the words “Do not grieve,” and here with “ma shuchah” (do not grieve), the Lord has spoken the final message of the Gita scripture. Therefore, the ultimate meaning of the Gita is “removal of grief.” Surrender alone is the essence of the Gita. This the Lord has said with special grace. Only through this surrender does the teaching of the Gita reach fulfillment. Without it, the Gita remains incomplete. According to the acharyas of the devotional scriptures: Even before the Gita began, Arjuna had said, “I am Your disciple; I have taken refuge in You—please tell me what is certainly beneficial” (Gita 2.7), and had already surrendered. Later, when Arjuna says “I will do as You say” and accepts surrender, the Lord says nothing more after that. There is no justification for giving further teaching after that. In this way, having concluded the Gita teaching, the Lord next speaks about the glory of teaching and studying the Gita scripture, and the characteristics of those unqualified to hear it.

**idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana
ancāśuśrūṣave vācyaṁ na ca mām yo’bhyasūyati (18-67)**

Comm. A person who lacks self-control and the discipline of performing one’s own duty as austerity, who is without faith and trust and has turned away from God, who is ignorant and has no desire or interest to hear this teaching, and who finds faults in Me and criticizes My human-like divine acts, qualities, and powers— the Gītā scripture should never be taught to or recited before such a person at any time. Thus, while deciding who is qualified to hear this confidential teaching of the Gītā, the Lord here forbids giving this instruction to people who possess these four kinds of defects. Controlling the mind and senses and faithfully performing one’s duties, while cheerfully tolerating the natural hardships and unfavorable situations that arise, is called tapas (austerity). Without the practice of austerity, the process of inner purification does not begin. To apply the teachings of the Gītā in life, patience and forbearance are essential. A person who lacks self-control and austerity does not have the mental and intellectual capacity to receive this knowledge. A person who is attached to sense pleasures, who lacks control over the senses, and who is engaged in sinful actions, is also not considered fit to hear this teaching. Similarly, a person who has no faith, love, reverence, or devotion toward God, and who is full of ego and possesses demonic qualities, should not be taught this message of the Gītā. A person who has no interest in the spiritual path cannot understand its principles, nor are they capable of retaining this knowledge. Some people may practice austerity through duty, but if they lack faith and interest in the teachings of the Gītā, this scripture should also not be taught to them. Such people, merely by hearing it, tend to look down upon it and consider it unnecessary. Those who point out illogical faults in the Lord’s divine plays, qualities, power, and majesty, and constantly criticize God, must never be given this scriptural teaching. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of Yoga and the true Guru, was a great divine personality, before whom there were both devotees who praised Him

and some critics who condemned Him. When critics hear such teachings, they develop even stronger fault-finding tendencies and become more sinful than before. Knowledge given to those who are not qualified for scriptural discipline becomes meaningless or even harmful when the listener has an opposing attitude. However, if a person lacks austerity to some extent but does not possess the other three defects, this scripture may be taught to them. This is because their mind and intellect can change, and for them, this teaching becomes beneficial and uplifting.

**ya idaṁ paramaṁ guhyaṁ mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati
bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām evaiṣyaty asaṁśayaḥ (18-68)**

Comm: In the verse under discussion, Lord Sri Krishna has spoken about the fruits of devotion obtained by those who propagate the Gita without desire, as well as by the true speaker and listener. O Arjuna! Whoever, with faith in Me, explains this supreme secret knowledge among My devotees or spreads and propagates it, all their doubts will be removed, and in the end, they will attain Me alone. This holy Gita scripture, which has come from the mouth of Sri Bhagavan, is similar to the universal form that is the collective embodiment of the Lord's various forms. Those devotees who concentrate on the way of life taught in the Gita, or who listen with interest from others, and try to shape their own lives accordingly—they are the qualified recipients of this knowledge. In the Upanishads also, importance is given to the glory of spreading spiritual knowledge. According to the guru-disciple tradition, if the disciple is endowed with sadhana and devotion, then the guru must be firmly established in Brahman with supreme devotion. Such Brahmanishtha acharyas who impart true knowledge to worthy disciples undoubtedly become extremely dear to Me and attain Me. Without any worldly desire for honor, pride, etc., and only with the aspiration for devotion to God and love for God, to propagate and spread this Gita knowledge among My devotees and to create a firm desire in them to follow the Gita's teachings—this is a form of exclusive sadhana to attain Me. Merely having verbal knowledge of the Gita scripture and giving teachings without practice yields no beneficial result to the listener. Taking one's own realized experience of Gita-yoga sadhana, resolving the doubts of listeners, and making the Gita's teachings heartfelt to them—this is exclusive service to the direct representative of Lord Sri Krishna, the "Gita scripture" (which is none other than Lord Sri Krishna Himself).

**na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyaḥ priyataraḥ bhuvi (18-69)**

Comm: One who selflessly teaches and spreads this message of the Gītā that has come from My own lips among devotees, and encourages them to walk on the prescribed path of Yoga, is My most beloved servant. On this earth, no one is dearer to Me than such a person, and no one will ever be dearer to Me in the future either. The teaching and spread of the knowledge of the Gītā is the sole source of welfare for the world. Therefore,

spreading and propagating this Gītā scripture is the duty of a pure devotee. A devotee who distributes this priceless nectar of divine knowledge among human society is truly an object of God’s special love. Among all spiritual practices such as sacrifice, austerity, charity, service, worship, chanting, and meditation, the act of awakening devotion to God in people’s hearts through this divine teaching is the greatest of all. Sanātana Dharma is the symbol of universal human values accepted by all religions. “Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam” — “the whole world is one family” — this great Upanishadic statement is the seed-mantra of Sanātana Dharma. The Gītā is the true representative of this Sanātana Dharma. Therefore, for the welfare of the entire world, explaining and spreading the teachings of the Gītā is certainly a sacred duty. The Gītā does not preach changing one’s dress, stage of life, condition, actions, or even one’s religion. Rather, the Gītā gives beneficial guidance to purify and refine all these aspects of life. In all forms of birth — animals, birds, worms, insects, plants, creepers, and others — one gets the chance to fulfill desires. But the opportunity to renounce desires and attain the Supreme Lord is possible only in the human body. Through the teachings of the Gītā, every human being can attain welfare and upliftment in every situation of life. Therefore, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has declared the special greatness of spreading this divine teaching.

**adhyeṣyate ca ya imāṁ dharmyaṁ saṁvādam āvayoḥ
jñāna-yajñena tenāham iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ (18-70)**

Comm: Whoever among My devotees’ studies or deeply contemplates this sacred Gita scripture—which is the dialogue between us filled with dharma—that is equal to performing a knowledge sacrifice (jnana yajna). Through that, I am worshipped by him through the knowledge sacrifice—this is My firm opinion. Whenever, for some reason, a person falls into confusion about determining his duty, nothing in the world—objects, events, situations, etc.—feels good without its resolution. No path to one’s own welfare is visible, and under the pressure of helplessness, the mind becomes anxious to take refuge in someone else. In that weak mental state, the Gita’s knowledge-nectar acts like a great medicine. It directly grants the grace of surrender to Lord Sri Krishna Himself. For a Gita sadhaka (practitioner), daily reading the Gita scripture, and in leisure time contemplating the meaning of memorized verses until becoming overwhelmed with emotion—this is a unique experience similar to the direct vision of Lord Sri Krishna Himself. Through reading, contemplating, and deeply meditating on the Gita scripture, offering one’s attachments to sense objects, ego, and other desires as oblations into the blazing fire of knowledge, and striving to purify the inner self—this is the knowledge sacrifice. The Lord has earlier said: “Knowledge sacrifice is superior to material sacrifice, O Parantapa” (Gita 4.33)— the practice in the form of knowledge sacrifice is far better than practices involving material offerings. Perfect understanding of the truth of God—both with attributes and without, with form and formless—is the ultimate fruit of all spiritual practices. The Lord here firmly states that this fruit is obtained through the knowledge sacrifice in the form of studying the

Gita. The effort to demonstrate the Gita’s knowledge-teachings in one’s lifestyle is that knowledge sacrifice, in which the Lord becomes extremely pleased. This is an easy path to worship the Creator. The Gita scripture has such a mysterious attraction— if one turns the mind even a little toward it, the book somehow comes into one’s hands through some medium. In the beginning, it remains limited to reading and discussion, but gradually, the one who obtains the book enters into its deepest knowledge. By continuing the practice steadily, unknowingly, self-knowledge is attained as the fruit of the knowledge sacrifice. The best way to spread the Gita among people is to oneself put the Gita’s teachings into practice in life. There can be many teachers or propagators of the Gita, but a person who follows the teachings and applies them in conduct is very rare.

**śraddhāvān anasūyaś ca śṛṇuyād api yo narah
so’pi muktaḥ śubhāml lokān prāpnuyāt puṇya-karmaṇām (18-71)**

Comm: A person who has faith and is free from hatred, even if he only hears this teaching of the Gītā from others, after the end of the body becomes completely free from all sins and attains the same higher worlds that are gained by performing virtuous deeds. The Gītā scripture is the direct speech of God Himself. Therefore, one who is unable to study or teach the Gītā should at least listen to it. Accepting with firm faith that everything said in the Gītā is true and useful for life, and listening to it with this conviction, is called faith in the Gītā. After hearing it, not searching for faults in God’s teachings, not arguing against them, and not showing any disrespect to the Gītā scripture in any way, is what it means to be free from envy or fault-finding. When there is deep devotion along with strong faith and trust in God, the defect of envy — that is, finding faults in others — does not remain. “Listening” (śravaṇa) is one of the nine forms of devotion and is an easy and accessible path for awakening devotion. During one’s lifetime, a qualified listener experiences the highest joy by hearing explanations of the Gītā. A faithful person, by listening to the guru’s instruction, can understand its subtle truths, can retain them, and can also fully absorb them into one’s own life. After death, such a pure listener becomes free from all sins and attains superior worlds, ranging from Indra’s heaven up to Vaikuṇṭha, according to one’s love and faith. Not only studying or listening to the Gītā, even the mere presence of the Gītā book in a place produces a divine and extraordinary influence. By keeping the Gītā book near oneself while performing actions, the mind and intellect do not take shelter in falsehood, and ghosts, spirits, and people with demonic qualities are unable to come near.

**kaccid etac chr̥taṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā
kaccid ajñāna-sammohaḥ pranaṣṭas te dhanañjaya(18-72)**

Comm: Lord Sri Krishna, the teacher of the Gita, wants to know from Arjuna how useful this Gita teaching given by Him is for Arjuna’s welfare and for the welfare of the world. The Lord is asking: O Partha! Have you listened with full concentration to this

secret knowledge-teaching that I have been giving so far? O Dhananjaya! By properly understanding that knowledge-truth from Me, has your delusion born of ignorance been destroyed? Explaining the scripture teachings to the disciple and sadhaka and making him capable of attaining the supreme goal of life—moksha—is the duty of a spiritual guru. The guru also becomes aware whether the disciple has fully grasped all that in his heart and acts accordingly. Therefore, Lord Sri Krishna is asking this question so that, if Arjuna still has any remaining curiosity, it can be resolved. Until one properly hears the Gita knowledge from Sri Gurudeva or a knower of truth and it becomes heartfelt, one should repeatedly hear the truth through service to them and loving inquiry. Concentration of the mind is the measure of the full capacity to grasp any message. A fully concentrated mind can give a perfect reflection and reveal the truth about an object from the objective viewpoint. Knowledge always shows an object in its true form; ignorance distorts it in various ways. On reaching the battlefield, Arjuna, overcome by delusion born of ignorance, made a faulty evaluation of the entire situation and wanted to withdraw from the war. He himself said he was bewildered regarding dharma. He considered following his own dharma as sinful. Being a Kshatriya, out of fear of killing relatives, he thought it better to abandon the war and live by begging. Due to ignorance of his true nature, many illusory ideas become firmly rooted in a person's mind, and the reality of the world appears opposite to what it is. Conclusions drawn from those illusory ideas also become faulty. Whether Arjuna has become free from all this delusion born of ignorance or not—this Lord Sri Krishna clearly wants to hear from Arjuna himself. The Gita itself is the divine speech coming from the sacred mouth of the Supreme Person, the Lord. Only fortunate persons, by the boundless grace of the Lord, properly grasp the Gita's knowledge in their heart from a qualified guru and come out of the darkness in the form of ignorance.

Arjuna Uvācha

**naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat-prasādān mayācyuta
sthito'smi gata-sandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava (18-73)**

Comm: After knowing the Lord's opinion in the previous verse, Arjuna, very pleased, expresses gratitude and says: O Achyuta! By giving me this divine teaching, You have shown extreme kindness to me. By Your boundless grace, I have regained the memory of my true self-nature, and the delusion born of ignorance has been destroyed. The meaning of addressing the Lord here as “Achyuta” is: Arjuna, after seeing the universal form, has understood that Lord Sri Krishna is that form full of eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss, who never falls from His own nature. He is always complete and present in His own form. Sri Krishna is the universal guru, the unchanging Parabrahman, the Supreme Soul, all-powerful, indestructible Supreme Lord. With direct knowledge of the Lord's qualities, influence, opulence, and nature, Arjuna has fully regained his memory, and the covering of

Maya has been torn away. Memory (smriti) is a function of the inner self. When the covering is removed, the memory that was dormant due to false connections becomes awake and manifests. In the opposite process, the Lord has said (Gita 2.63): Due to delusion, memory is lost, intellect is destroyed, and the soul falls—that is, instability comes to mind and intellect. In this verse, in the ascending order, memory is regained, delusion is destroyed, intellect becomes free from doubt and attains a steady state. The ever-existing truth becoming manifest is called “smriti,” and the removal of the covering is called “labdha” (obtained). In karma yoga, attachment is forgotten and memory of desireless action is gained. In jnana yoga, body-identification is forgotten and memory of connection with the self is gained. In the path of bhakti, worldly connections are forgotten and memory of connection with God is gained. The essence is: Separating from the world and body and experiencing one’s own true nature is “smriti.” Memory of one’s own nature happens by itself—there is no need for senses or anything else in it. Memory is self-proven through experience. Therefore, once memory awakens, it does not need to be repeated again. Because the true nature never changes. Memory in the self awakens by the grace of God. Arjuna says: I am experiencing the manifestation of self-knowledge in my inner self. When the soul abandons attachment and turns toward the Supreme Soul, delusion born of ignorance is removed, and memory awakens in the inner self. Arjuna says: As soon as delusion was destroyed, with decisive intellect, all my doubts have been removed. I have no doubt at all about what should be done or not done, dharma or adharma. There is no more confusion about fighting or not fighting. I am now established in my true reality and experiencing mental stability. Whatever command You give now, I accept it fully. In all these matters, only You are visible to me. I am merely Your servant. I am completely taking refuge at Your feet. Whatever You command, I will do exactly that. When Arjuna was inspecting the armies, seeing elders and relatives in both armies, he became overwhelmed. Considering dharma-adharma and sin-virtue, he presented many worldly ethical reasons. For example: How can we gain happiness by killing our own relatives? By destroying relatives, eternal family dharma will be lost. Pinda and water rituals will cease. Adharma will increase, family women will become corrupted, and mixed castes will arise. Being knowing persons, why should we not avoid such sinful action? Rather than this, living by begging is better. Let the armed Kauravas kill me unarmed in battle—that would be very beneficial for me. Therefore, O Govinda! Saying “I will not fight,” grief-stricken Arjuna threw down his Gandiva bow along with arrows and sat down in the middle of the chariot on the battlefield. When Lord Sri Krishna saw Arjuna’s sorrowful and weak mental state and began giving the Gita teaching, Arjuna raised one question after another to remove his doubts. Those questions of Arjuna in the Gita were: Which is certainly better for us—fighting or not fighting? Please tell me. (2.6-7) O Keshava! What are the characteristics of a person of steady wisdom? (2.54) O Janardana! If You consider this knowledge with intellect superior to action, then why are You engaging me in this terrible action like war? (3.1) O Varshneya! Even unwillingly, impelled by what does a person commit sin as if forcibly? (3.36) Your birth is now, yet You taught this yoga to the sun at the beginning

of creation—how is this possible? (4.4) O Krishna! You praise renunciation of action in essence and again praise karma yoga—which of these two practices is certainly better? (5.1) O Madhusudana! The mind is so restless, turbulent, and strong that controlling it is as difficult as stopping the wind—how then is yoga practice with equanimity possible? (6.33-34) O Krishna! One who falls from yoga—what path does he attain without achieving yoga perfection? (6.37) O Purushottama! What is that Brahman? What is karma? What is called adhibhuta? What is called adhidaiva? Who is adhiyajna here and how does He reside in this body? O Madhusudana! How are You known at the time of death by a person with controlled inner self? —seven questions (8.1-2) O Bhagavan! In what ways should I contemplate You—that is, in what ways should I think of You? (10.17) O Best of gods! I want to know You, the primal form, in truth—Your manifestations I do not know—please tell me who You are in this fierce form? (11.31) Between devotees attached to You who worship Your saguna-sakara form and those who worship the imperishable nirguna-nirakara—which have better knowledge of yoga? (12.1) O Lord! What characteristics does a person beyond the three gunas have and how can this be transcended? (14.21) O Krishna! Those who, disregarding scriptural injunctions, worship gods etc. with faith—what kind of faith do they have among the three gunas? (17.1) O Mahabahu! What is the true nature of sannyasa and tyaga separately—I want to know that. (18.1) All the questions asked by Arjuna with curiosity—the answers Lord Sri Krishna has given through teachings—are especially useful for solving problems of all classes of people in practical worldly life, for sadhana on the spiritual path, and for removing doubts. Finally, the secret of surrender that Arjuna could not ask about—the Lord Himself has revealed. As soon as memory was regained, all of Arjuna’s delusion and confusion was destroyed. What to do and what not to do, and all doubts about the soul, world, and God’s existence were removed. The meaning is: At one moment, by the power of divine grace, memory is gained, delusion is destroyed, the inner self becomes free from doubt, and mind-intellect become established in their true nature. Therefore, Arjuna no longer asks questions but says: O Govinda! “I will do as You say”—I will only follow Your command. This is surrender. With this final acceptance of Arjuna, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna concludes. The Krishna-Arjuna dialogue in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata, or Srimad Bhagavad Gita, is complete.

Saṅjaya Uvācha

**ity ahaṁ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanah
saṁvādam imam aśrauṣam adbhutaṁ roma-harṣaṇam (18-74)**

Comm: After this, Sanjaya said to King Dhritarashtra: “O King, in this way I heard this extraordinary, thrilling, and wonderful dialogue between Lord Vasudeva and the great-souled Arjuna, the son of Pritha. In Sanjaya’s vision, Arjuna no longer appeared as a warrior standing ready to kill with his bow. Instead, he appeared as a great yogi,

fully alert and eager to carry out the command of the Lord. This dialogue is wonderful because such a unique conversation between opposing sides on a battlefield has never happened before, nor will it ever happen again in the future. A person who performs one's duty with detachment, without anger or hatred toward circumstances, attains liberation peacefully. This is the true wonder of this dialogue. The Lord Himself took birth as an incarnation, performed human-like divine acts, revealed His true nature, and even spoke the most secret instruction, "Take refuge in Me alone." This is what makes the dialogue thrilling, joyful, and deeply blissful. After understanding the essence of all the most secret scriptures, the joy that arises is beyond description. Although the physical forms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were different, in truth they were one and indivisible. Arjuna began to see himself within Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa began to see Himself within Arjuna. The sense of duality completely disappeared. While experiencing this state of non-duality, Sanjaya lost awareness of his own body. His body trembled with spiritual ecstasy, and his throat choked due to overwhelming joy. According to the spiritual symbolic meaning, the word "Vasudeva" means the all-pervading consciousness that is the true Self. The word "Partha" means Arjuna, who identifies himself with material limitations. When a living being gives up this false identification, one directly realizes one's pure true Self. The discrimination between the Self and the non-Self is the central teaching of the Gītā. The philosophical wisdom of the Gītā is divine, unique, and unparalleled.

**vyāsa-prasādāc chrutavān etad guhyam ahaṁ param
yogaṁ yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt sāksāt kathayataḥ svayam (18-75)**

Comm: Sanjaya here explains how this dialogue in the form of yoga scripture spoken on the battlefield could be heard and who experienced it. Sanjaya says: By the grace of Vyasa Deva, I obtained divine eyes and divine hearing. Even though I was not present on the battlefield, I had the great fortune of directly hearing this supernatural supreme secret yoga truth spoken between Yogeshwara Sri Krishna Himself and Arjuna. This yoga scripture, which is not even mentioned in the Upanishads, by fully hearing and understanding it, I have attained direct vision of Brahman. The eternal relationship of the soul with God is called "yoga." This dialogue is named yoga scripture for that reason, because it shows the path for a sadhaka to attain union with the Supreme Soul. To introduce that eternal yoga, descriptions of karma yoga, jnana yoga, and other yogas have been given. The meaning of Sanjaya addressing Sri Krishna as Yogeshwara is: One who Himself is a yogi and is capable of granting yoga to others—He is Yogeshwara. Without the grace of a guru, it is impossible to understand the truth of the Gita or the truth of God. Dvaipayana Vyasa Deva was the guru of Sanjaya. Like the faithful devotee and servant Sanjaya, by knowing the truth of God from knowers of truth like Vyasa Deva, one becomes fulfilled.

**rājan saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya saṁvādam imam adbhutam
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyaṁ hr̥ṣyāmi ca muhur muhuḥ (18-76)**

**tac ca saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rūpam aty-adbhutaṁ hareḥ
vismayo me mahān rājan hr̥ṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ(18-77)**

Comm: Through this, Sanjaya describes the joy that has arisen in his own heart and explains before King Dhritarashtra the importance of remembering the truths taught in the Gītā. He says: “O King, by repeatedly remembering this supremely beneficial and divine dialogue between Keshava and Arjuna, which itself destroys sin merely by being heard, I become joyful again and again. O Maharaja, whenever I repeatedly remember the extremely wonderful and vast cosmic form of Lord Hari, who removes all actions of both righteousness and unrighteousness and alone remains supreme, my heart becomes filled with great wonder and I am again and again overwhelmed with joy. By remembering this, my mind always feels peaceful and happy. One who hears the Bhagavad Gītā from a properly qualified teacher attains complete God-consciousness and becomes illumined by the light of true knowledge. Each time this remembrance arises in the mind, that eternal bliss is experienced again. By the grace of Vyasa, Sanjaya was also able to see the universal form of Lord Krishna that He had shown to Arjuna. When any kind of relationship is established with God, He removes all sins, ignorance, and sorrow of the soul. Therefore, His name is “Hari,” because He takes away all suffering. Here, the word “remembering” means that after studying or hearing the teachings of the Gītā, one should constantly reflect, contemplate, meditate, and mentally visualize this spiritual knowledge and the blissful form of the Lord. The fruit of true knowledge is the removal of great fear, including the fear of death, and for a devotee, it becomes supremely blissful. The mind naturally runs again and again toward what it loves most. In that divine state of loving devotion, the incomparable and infinite form of God is seen in all moving and non-moving beings of the world, and this vision becomes deeply imprinted in the heart. The dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna was more wonderful than all scriptures, and even more wonderful than the dialogue was the vision of the vast universal form. If the dialogue and the divine form themselves are so full of marvel and wonder, then what can be said about the greatness of living according to these teachings? Such divine teachings about action, knowledge, and devotion are not heard anywhere else. Therefore, by studying, hearing, and practicing these teachings, the soul becomes immersed in an ocean of infinite bliss and remains liberated in union with the supremely blissful Supreme Lord.

**yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanur-dharaḥ
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama (18-78)**

Comm: This is the final verse of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, which has seven hundred and one verses. Wherever Yogeshwara Krishna and the archer Arjuna are present, there will surely be prosperity, victory, abundance, and firm righteousness. This is my firm

conviction—Sanjaya says this to King Dhritarashtra. Here, an undeniable truth has been established. Lakshmi (wealth), beauty, and possessions—these three are included in the word “Sri” (prosperity). Wherever Sri-pati (Lord of Lakshmi) Bhagavan Sri Krishna is present, “Sri” will surely be there. Arjuna’s name also means “victory,” and valor is also called “victory.” Wherever Arjuna, in the form of victory, is present, there will surely be heroic valor, enthusiasm, and other Kshatriya opulences. Similarly, wherever Lord Sri Krishna is present, there will surely be divine qualities like opulence, greatness, influence, and power. Wherever the righteous Arjuna is present, there will surely be unwavering policy, justice, and dharma. Wherever both Yogeshwara Krishna and the archer Arjuna are present, the perfected beings (siddhas) naturally take refuge in that side. There will surely be infinite opulence, infinite sweetness, infinite good conduct, infinite courtesy, and infinite beauty—such divine qualities. On the tenth day of the war, after Grandfather Bhishma lay on the bed of arrows, King Dhritarashtra had asked Sanjaya in the first verse of the Gita: “My sons and the Pandavas—what are they thinking about the war now?” The question Dhritarashtra asked Sanjaya, which started the Gita scripture—its answer, “certain victory for the Pandavas,” has been told by Sanjaya to King Dhritarashtra, concluding this scripture. Even at that time, hoping for a ceasefire, Sanjaya informs Dhritarashtra that there is still time to save his sons’ lives. By taking refuge in Lord Sri Krishna and stopping the war, as a minister, he advises King Dhritarashtra about the final outcome of the ongoing war and suggests the proper course of action. Some commentators on the Gita point out that the first word of the opening verse is “dharma” and the last word of the final verse is “mama” (my). Their opinion is that the main subject of the Gita is “mama dharma”—that is, My dharma. Between these two words, this garland-like beautiful teaching of human dharma with seven hundred verses is contained. The meaning of “mama dharma” is: When a person’s essential nature and worldly duties are perfectly harmonized, human birth becomes meaningful. Wherever Yogeshwara Sri Krishna in the form of realization is present and the loving great soul Arjuna is present, there alone prosperity, victory, firmness, and righteousness remain unshakable. The policy of creation is always changing, but the only unchanging one is the Supreme Soul. The policy that leads into the Supreme Soul is also unchanging. Krishna and Arjuna are eternal. Lord Sri Krishna has said about His own nature: Though I am unmanifest, in the form I have taken, that Ishwara resides in the hearts of all. He always exists and will always exist. The attachment of the soul’s inner self toward the beloved Lord is called “anuraga” (deep love). That deep love itself is Arjuna. When a water-filled clay pot is floating in the ocean, shaken by waves, the water inside tries to break the clay covering and merge with the ocean— this is similar to the soul’s loving attachment toward the Lord. In a devotee with such deep love, there will always be true victory of the soul and unshakable state—that is, unchanging righteousness. As long as the Supreme Soul resides in the soul’s heart and deep love arises in him to attain that Supreme Soul, that person himself is the archer Arjuna. The Lord of all yogas, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, as the inspirer, and the command-

following archer Arjuna as the inspired one, are present in all souls. Completely taking refuge in Sri Krishna is the highest perfection or fulfilment. This is the essence of the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. Throughout the entire Gita, Sri Krishna is the symbol of the conscious Self. In this scripture, the son of Pritha (Arjuna) is the symbol of a deluded, limited, and afflicted individual soul. Lord Sri Krishna is the master of all yoga powers. Through yoga power, in a moment, He can create, maintain, and destroy the entire world. When the direct Narayana Himself is the helper of a surrendered devotee, what more could he need in the world? Besides this, Arjuna is also an incarnation of Nara Rishi. He is the dear friend of the Lord and a great heroic person wielding the Gandiva bow. Just as sun rays are not different from the sun, the individual soul is not different from the Supreme Soul. For the liberation of this individual soul, the Lord is always eager, and all His ordinances are aimed at that. Therefore, for the soul, the final conclusion is only to abandon everything and take refuge in the Lord. Since this chapter mainly describes the Lord's statement where even liberation involves renunciation, the name of this chapter is "Moksha Sannyasa Yoga." Commentator Jayadayal Goyandka, in his Tattva Vivechana, has written about this final verse of the Gita scripture: "The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is the divine speech of the blissful, conscious, full of six opulences, worshipped by all moving and non-moving beings, Supreme Purushottama, the direct Lord Sri Krishna. It is extremely full of mysteries. By the grace of the supremely merciful Lord Sri Krishna, some part of its mystery can be understood. Only those who fill their hearts with supreme faith and pure loving devotion and contemplate the Bhagavad Gita— they alone can directly experience divine grace and, to some extent, have vision of the true nature of the Gita. Therefore, it is proper for men and women who desire their own welfare to follow the ideal of the great devotee Arjuna, acquire divine qualities like him, and with faith and devotion, listen to, contemplate, and study the Gita, and engage in sadhana with proper effort according to the Lord's command. Those who do this will constantly experience new and incomparable divine feelings that bring supreme bliss in their inner self. Becoming completely pure in heart, they will taste the nectar of the Lord's supernatural grace and soon attain the Lord.

|| Om Tat Sat ||

**iti śrīmad bhagavad-gītāsūpaniṣatsu brahma-vidyāyām yoga-śāstre
śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde—"Moksa Sannyasa Yoga namno Astadasodhyayah.**

Thus, with the utterance of the sacred words "Om, Tat, Sat," the Eighteenth Chapter, called "Moksa Sannyasa Yoga" of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which is the essence of Brahma-vidyā (the knowledge of the Absolute) and Yoga, and which is in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna, comes to an end.



Śrī Gītā Māhātmya

**Gītāsāstram idaṁ puṇyaṁ Yaḥ paṭhet prayataḥ pumān
Viṣṇoḥ padaṁ avāpnoti Bhayā-śoka-ādi-varjitaḥ (1)**

Gist : *The Bhagavad Gītā is a very holy book. A sincere person who reads it with purity and discipline reaches the divine abode of Lord Viṣṇu and becomes free from fear, sorrow, and suffering.*

**Gītā-dhyayana-śīlasya Prāṇāyāma-parasya ca
Naiva santi hi pāpāni Pūrva-janma-kṛtāni ca (2)**

Gist : *A person who regularly studies the Gītā and lives with self-control and discipline is freed from sins of this life as well as sins from past lives.*

**Mala-nirmocanaṁ puṁsāṁ Jala-snānaṁ dine dine
Sakṛd gītāmbhasi snānaṁ Saṁsāra-mala-nāśanam (3)**

Gist : *Daily bathing cleans only the outer body. But even reading the Gītā once cleans the deep inner dirt of worldly attachment and removes the bondage of repeated birth and death.*

**Gītā su-gītā kartavyā Kim anyaiḥ śāstra-vistaraiḥ
Yā svayaṁ padmanābhasya Mukha-padmad viniḥsṛtā (4)**

Gist: *The Gītā should be studied with love and care. There is no need to read many other scriptures in detail, because the Gītā came directly from the divine mouth of Lord Kṛṣṇa.*

**Bhāratāmṛta-sarvasvaṁ Viṣṇu-vaktrād viniḥsṛtam
Gītā-gaṅgodakaṁ pītvā Punar-janma na vidyate (5)**

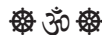
Gist: *The Gītā is the very essence of the nectar of the Mahābhārata and has flowed from the mouth of Lord Viṣṇu. One who drinks the sacred water of the Gītā-Gaṅgā does not take birth again.*

**Sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopāla-nandanah
Pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīr bhoktā dugdhaṁ gītāmṛtaṁ mahat (6)**

Gist: *The teachings of the Upaniṣads are like cows. Lord Kṛṣṇa draws their wisdom like milk. Arjuna received it first, and wise people drink this nectar called the Gītā.*

**Ekaṁ śāstraṁ devakī-putra-gītam Eko devo devakī-putra eva
Eko mantras tasya nāmāni yāni Karmāpy ekaṁ tasya devasya sevā (7)**

Gist: *There is one supreme scripture — the Gītā spoken by Kṛṣṇa. There is one supreme God — Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is one sacred practice — remembering His names. There is one true duty — loving service to Him.*



SPECIAL NOTE

(Declaration)

In explaining the meaning of the verses of the Gita, profound insights, quotes, and examples from the following revered commentators' Gita texts and discourse series have been translated and simplified for the benefit of spiritual seekers and devotees of the Lord. I offer countless salutations at the feet of these great souls and seek their blessings.

Sl. No.	Name of the Book	Commentator
1	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita	Swami Apurbananda
2	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Ashtadasha Prabachan	Shrimat Swami Vidyanandagiri, Kailash Ashram
3	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Sadhak Sanjivani Tika	Swami Ramsukhdas
4	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Tattva Vivechani	Jaydayal Goyandka
5	Gita Prabachan (GitaVyakhyan Mala)	Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Giridhari Sharma
6	Gita Darshan	Swami Shri Akhandananda Saraswati
7	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita (Yathartha Gita)	Swami Adgadanandji Maharaj
8	Shri Gita Ras-Ratnakar	Swami Shri Akhandananda Saraswati
9	Gita Rahasya	Bal Gangadhar Tilak
10	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita (Original Form)	Krishna Kripashri Murti A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada
11	Holy Gita	Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati
12	Bhagavad Gita	Swami Shivananda Maharaj
13	The Bhagavad Gita	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
14	Bhagavad Gita (Shankara Bhashya)	Swami Gambhiranandji

15	Bhagavad Gita	Ramanujacharya Bhashya Edited by: V. Bhe. Shri Ramaramanuj Acharya
16	Bhagavad Gita	Swami Nikhilananda
17	Shrimad Bhagavad Gita	Swami Chidbhavananda
18	The Essence of Bhagavad Gita	ParamahansaYogananda Compiled by: Swami Kriyananda
19	Bhagavad Gita Bhashya	Shri Madhvacharya (Translated by: Dr. B.N.K. Sharma)
20	Talks on Gita	Vinoba
21	Essays On the Gita	Sri Aravinda
Gita for daily Enrichment		Chaitanya Charana Das
Gita Bhasya Chakrabartti Thakur		Srimada Biswanatha Thakur Chakrabartti-Goudiya Sampradaya
Gita Gyaneshwari		Sathna Gyaneshwarra Odiya Translate by Gorachanad Mishra

With the boundless mercy and grace of the Lord, this Gita granthi will be used for the welfare of the world. May the Lord's will be fulfilled. May the entire world be blessed with prosperity.





Smt. Manorama Padhi and Sri Jyotirmaya Padhi

Sri Jyotirmaya Padhi was born on 01-07-1951 in Ranjhali village of Ganjam district. After completing his postgraduate education in Physics from Berhampur University, he served as an officer in the Odisha Finance Service (OFS) and has retired after a distinguished career. At present, he resides at Swarnamayee Nagar in Brahmapur. With his wife Manorama and two sons, Anshuman and Bibaswan, he fulfilled all the responsibilities of the household stage of life. Thereafter, he has taken refuge at the feet of the Supreme Lord, the embodiment of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, with a resolve to spend his days in constant remembrance of God. So far, his published works include the short-story collections “Galpa Ghosha,” “Galpa Bata,” “Galpatalpa,” and “Apabarga” and the poetry collection “Muhurta Mandakini.” The original Odia work “Biswadharm Samanwaya Gita Hrudayam,” consisting of the three Volumes along with its English translation, has been compiled with his tireless effort and inspiration. No number of words is sufficient to adequately describe his relentless dedication and motivating guidance in this endeavor. By the boundless grace of God, it is humbly prayed that this scripture may prove useful to spiritual seekers, devotees of God, and aspirants, and become beneficial for the welfare of the world. Sri Padhi is at once a friend, a companion in spiritual discourse, and a well-wisher. At the same time, he is a collaborator and patron of the Odia publication of “Biswadharm Samanwaya Gita Hrudayam” consisting three volumes: Karma Tattva, Bhakti Tattva and Jnana-Vijnana Tattva. His constant encouragement and the wise application of his intellectual insight in compiling this work have greatly enhanced the usefulness of this book for the welfare of humanity. I express my heartfelt gratitude to that revered and learned soul and pray for the welfare of the entire world. Om Tat Sat.

In the service of Gurudev

– Sudarshan



Dedicated to
Swami Sivachidananda Saraswati as my ‘Marga Pradarshaka’