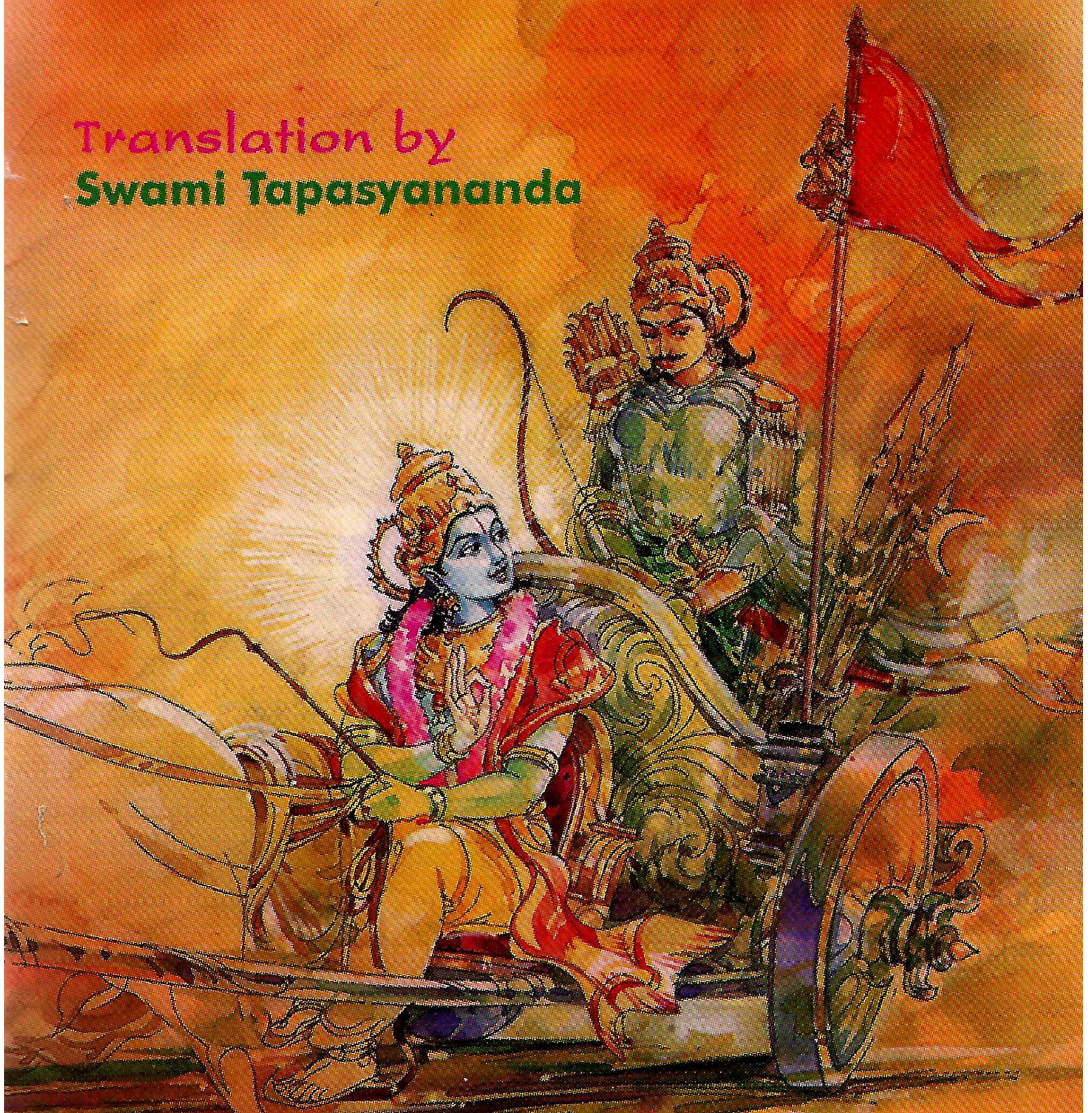
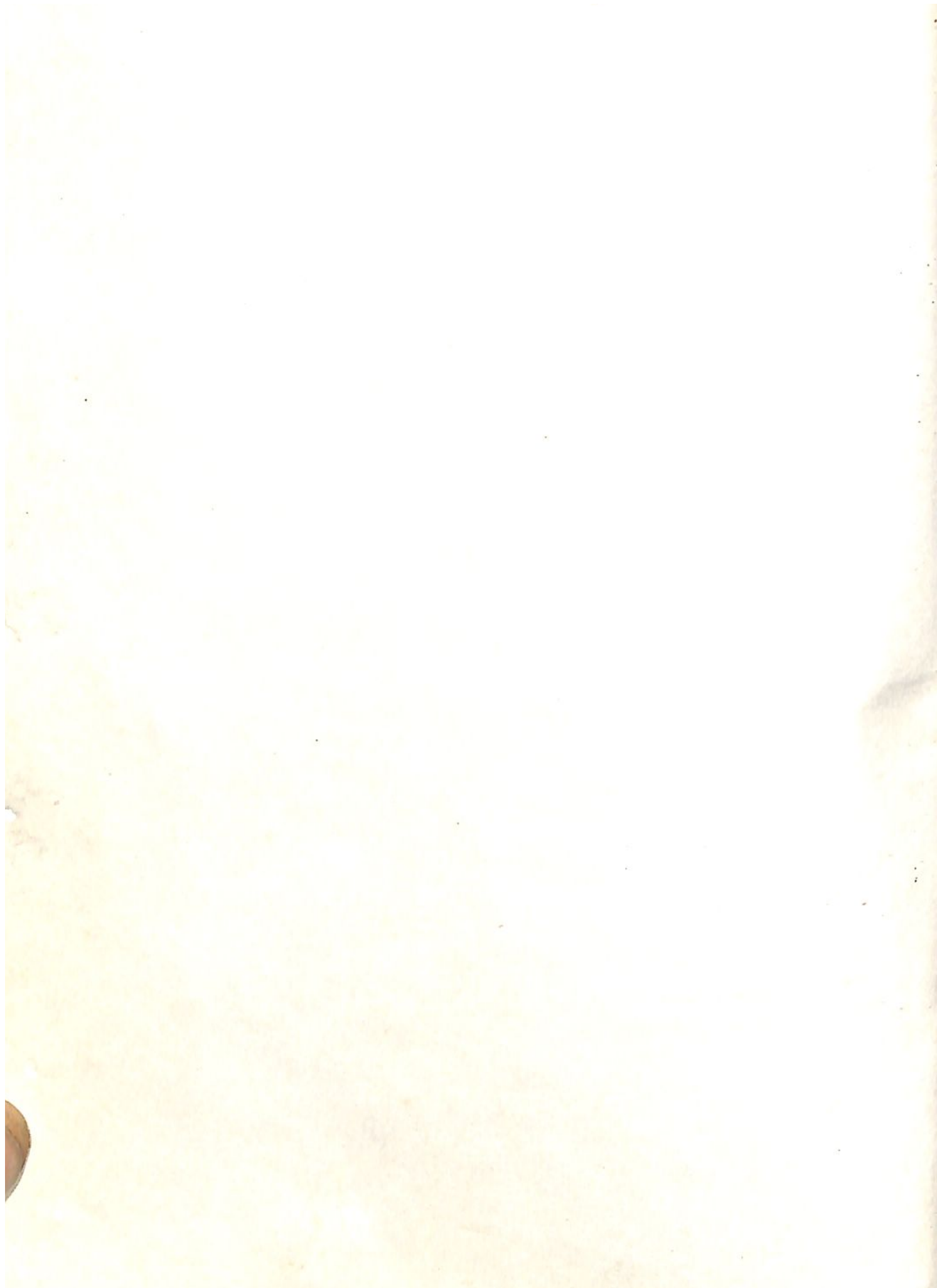


Bhagavad Gita

THE SCRIPTURE OF MANKIND

Translation by
Swami Tapasyananda





SRIMAD-BHAGAVAD-GITA

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Preface

Ever since Sri Śankaracharya's time, the *Bhagavad Gītā* has been recognised as one of the three authoritative and basic source books (*prasthāna-traya*) of Vedic religion. Though Sri Śankara's Introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā* bemoans the misinterpretation of this Text by others, we have no extant commentary or any kind of writing on the *Gītā* that precedes him. So it is reasonable to surmise that it was Sri Śankara who for the first time lifted it up from the vast ocean of Mahābhārata literature, and fixing its verse-contents at seven hundred, wrote an authoritative commentary on it, which is still studied with respect even by those who do not subscribe to his interpretation of it. We may also surmise that it must be he who gave recognition to it as an Upaniṣad and as Brahma-Vidya—a scripture that shatters ignorance and gives the knowledge of Brahman—, as it calls itself in the colophon.

It is customary to discuss the date and authorship of Hindu texts in their modern publications. We are not doing so here, as it is a futile exercise—a veritable counting of the leaves in place of eating mangoes after entering a mango garden. Discussing all the numerous modern views on these questions, Robert N. Minor, a learned and impartial modern exegetical commentator on the *Gītā*, concludes: "In summary, then, in the current state of *Gītā* studies there is no solid evidence to show that the *Gītā* is other than a basic unity. On the other hand, as many such as Edgerton and Zaehner have shown, the *Gītā* when understood in its own terms, is quite consistent and its parts on further study are inter-related. However, it is also not possible to identify the *Gītā*'s author with any probability, and then another question in the introductory matter remains unsolved." And regarding the date of the *Gītā* from the modern point of view, he concludes after taking into account all existing speculative theories: "We must tentatively

date the *Gītā* to 150 B.C. *without much evidence.*" Under the circumstances, the Indian tradition on these subjects remains intact, and it consists in this: the *Gītā* is a revelation given by Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Pūrṇāvatāra, to humanity through his friend and disciple Arjuna at a critical moment of his life, and it has been put into its present form by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. As the well-known Sanskrit couplet says: "The *Gītā* is the most excellent nectarine milk, drawn by the cowherd's son Kṛṣṇa as its milker, from the cow of the *Upaniṣads*, using Arjuna as the calf. All men of purified intellect are the consumers of that milk."

Presenting as it does a credible world-view and a faith that is both broad and inspiring, its appeal is to the conscience of spiritually sensitive sections of humanity everywhere, irrespective of their religious affiliations. We have therefore described it as the Scripture of Mankind. It is for this reason that it has become one of the most oft-translated works, English itself having more than fifty translations, besides others in all the Indian languages and in some of the other foreign languages as well. A recognition of this universality of the *Gītā* is made in a slightly garbled form by Farquhar, the well-known Christian missionary-scholar of conservative views, when he says that 'Jesus is the reality of which the *Gītā* gives an imaginative picture' and that 'the author of the *Gītā* would have been a Christian, had he known Jesus.'¹ Far more correct it would have been to say that had the author of the *Gītā* and the deliverer of the Sermon on the Mount met, they would have recognised in each other a kindred spirit teaching an identical message, only with modifications as necessitated by variations in time and place.

The *Gītā* teaches man the goal to be attained by him and the means for attaining it. The goal is the Supreme Personal-Impersonal Brahman and the means, the paths of knowledge, work, psychic control and devotion. Differences in the interpretations of the *Gītā* among the Ācāryas, both ancient and modern, have arisen due to their varying perceptions on the relations between Brahman and the Jīva and on the relative importance of the four paths.

¹As quoted by Geoffrey Parrinder in his *Avatār and Incarnation*.

Critics may find in this a vein of inconsistency and unreliability that stands in the way of recognising the value of the *Gītā* as a guide to man and as a universal scripture. It is, however, forgotten by such critics that a universal scripture must contain in it several strands of teachings suited to men of different stages of development. These varying strands are not mutually contradictory or incompatible. They are the visions of the same Reality from the points of view of *Jīvas* at different stages of development, dominated by different dispositions. The presence of this feature, in place of being a disqualification, is a proof of the genuineness of the inspiration behind this Text. For, God's gifts are not for a few only but for all who have need of them, and everyone can understand something from them provided one has spiritual sensitivity. That is why the *Gītā* has several interpretations coming from *Ācāryas* representing different spiritual traditions. In spite of their differences, they have to be accepted as embodying the varied views included in the inspired literature that is the *Gītā*.

In the annotations given in the present volume, comments have been confined to technically important verses for limiting the size of the volume. The comments have got only the Text as such in view, without identification with any particular school of thought. But help has been sought from classical interpretations as well as from the modern exegetical commentators like Zaehner and Minor. The overall point of view adopted is what is contained in Swami Vivekānanda's famous restatement of the Vedānta in the following aphoristic dictum:

Every soul is potentially Divine.

The goal of life is to manifest this Divine within by controlling Nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship, or by psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free.

This is the whole of Religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.

Amidst the numerous extant translations of the *Gītā*, a new edition of it like the present one may not in any way look very significant. It has, however, this much significance: it provides

an *economy edition* of the Text, with all facilities for serious students to study the verses—these facilities being introductory summary of each chapter, the Text in Devanagari, its transliteration into Roman script, the prose order with word for word meaning in Roman script, running translation and annotations wherever necessary. It is hoped that this edition will meet the need of a large cross section of spiritual enquirers who want to study the Gītā in the original.

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Meditation on the Gītā

पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्येमहाभारतम् ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनी-
मम्ब त्वामनुसंदधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

*Om pārthāya pratibodhitām bhagavatā Nārāyaṇena svayam
vyāseṇa grathitām purāṇamuninā madhyemahābhāratam :
advaitāmṛta varṣiṇīm bhagavatīm aṣṭādaśā'dhyāyinīm
amba tvām anusandadhāmi bhagavad-gīte bhavadveṣiṇīm.*

*Om : Om Nārāyaṇena svayam : by Nārāyaṇa Himself Pār-
thāya : to Pārtha or Arjuna pratibodhitām : imparted purāṇa-
muninā : by the ancient sage Vyāseṇa : by Vyāsa madhyemahā-
bhāratam : in the middle of Mahābhārata grathitām : recorded
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm : showering the nectar of Advaita bhagavatīm :
Goddess aṣṭādaśā'dhyāyinīm : consisting of eighteen chapters
bhavadveṣiṇīm : destroyer of Samsāra amba : Mother, bhagavad-
Gīte: O Bhagavad-Gītā tvām : Thee anusandadhāmi : I meditate upon.*

Om! O Blessed Mother Bhagavad-Gītā, Thou Goddess! Who was imparted to Arjuna by Nārāyaṇa Himself, who was recorded amidst the Mahābhārata by Vyāsa the ancient sage, who showers the nectar of Advaita, who is composed of eighteen chapters—I meditate on Thee, the destroyer of Samsāra!

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥

*Namo'stu te Vyāsa viśāla-buddhe
phullāravindā'yata-patra-netra;
yena tvayā bhārata-taila-pūrṇaḥ
prajvālito jñāna-mayaḥ pradīpaḥ.*

Viśālabuddhe : Of gigantic intellect *phullāravindā'yata-patra-netra* : having large eyes resembling the petals of a blossoming lotus *Vyāsa* : O Sage Vyāsa! *yena tvayā* : Thee by whom *bhārata-taila-pūrṇaḥ* : brimming with the oil of Mahābhārata *jñāna-mayaḥ* : of the nature of wisdom *pradīpaḥ* : lamp *prajvālitaḥ* : was lit *te* : to Thee *namaḥ* : salutations.

Salutations to Thee, O Vyāsa of mighty intellect, Thou whose eyes are large like the petals of a full-blown lotus! It was Thou who lit the wisdom-lamp which brims with the oil that is the Mahābhārata.

प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।

ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥

*Prapanna-pārijātāya totra-vetra'ika-pāṇaye ;
jñāna-mudrāya Kṛṣṇāya gītāmṛta duhe namaḥ.*

Prapanna-pārijātāya : Who is a wish-yielding tree to the surrendered ones *totra-vetra'ika pāṇaye* : holding a cane for driving cattle in one hand *jñāna-mudrāya* : showing the sign of wisdom with the other *Gītā'mṛta-duhe* : milker of the nectarine milk of Gītā *Kṛṣṇāya* : to Kṛṣṇa, *namaḥ* : salutations.

Salutations to Thee Kṛṣṇa, who art a veritable wish-yielding tree to all surrendered ones, whose one hand holds a cane to drive cattle while the other is held in the Jñāna-pose, and who is famous as the milker of the nectarine milk that is the Bhagavad-Gītā.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

*Sarvo'paniṣado gāvo dogdhā Gopāla-nandanah ;
pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīr-bhoktā dugdham gītāmṛtam mahat.*

Sarvopaniṣadaḥ : All the Upaniṣads *gāvaḥ* : cows; *gopāla-nandanaḥ* : the cowherd's son i.e. Kṛṣṇa *dogdhā* : milker; *Pārthaḥ* : Arjuna *vatsaḥ* : calf; *sudhīḥ* : men of pure mind *bhoktāḥ* : drinkers; *mahat* : great *amṛtam dugdham* : nectarine milk *gītā* : the Gītā.

All the Upaniṣads are the cows; the cowherd's son Kṛṣṇa is the milker; Pārtha (Arjuna) is the calf; the nectarine Gītā is the milk; and the pure-minded are the drinkers of it.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।

देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

Vasudeva-sutam devam Kamsa-Cāṇūra-mardanam;
Devakī-paramānandam Kṛṣṇam vande jagadgurum.

Vasudevasutam : The son of Vasudeva *Kamsa-Cāṇūra-mardanam* : The destroyer of Kamsa and Cāṇūra *Devakī-paramānandam* the bestower of supreme delight to Devaki *jagadgurum* : the world-teacher *devam Kṛṣṇam* : Lord Kṛṣṇa *vande* : I salute.

I salute Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, the bestower of supreme delight to Devaki, the destroyer of Kamsa and Cāṇūra, and the teacher of the world.

भीष्मद्रोणतटा जयद्रथजला गांधारनीलोत्पला

शल्यग्राहवती कृपेण वहनी कर्णेन वेलाकुला ।

अश्वत्थामविकर्णघोरमकरा दुर्योधनावर्तिनी

सोचीर्णा खलु पांडवै रणनदी कैवर्तकः केशवः ॥

Bhīṣma-droṇa-taṭā jayadratha-jalā Gāndhāra-nīlotpalā
Śalya-grāhavatī Kṛpeṇa vahanī Karṇena velākulā;
Aśvatthāma-vikarṇa-ghora-makarā Duryodhanā vartinī
s'ottirṇā khalu paṇḍavai raṇa-nadī kaivartakaḥ Keśavaḥ

Bhīṣma-droṇa-taṭā : With Bhīṣma and Droṇa as banks *Jayadratha-jalā* : with Jayadratha as water *Gāndhāra-nīlotpalā* : with the prince of Gāndhāra as the blue lotus *Śalya-grāhavatī* : with Śalya as the crocodile *Kṛpeṇa* : with Kṛpa *vahanī* : as current *Karṇena* : with Karṇa *velākulā* : as high waves *Aśvatthāma-*

Vikarṇa-ghora-makarā : with *Aśvatthāma* and *Vikarṇa* as terrible sharks *Duryodhanāvartīnī* : with *Duryodhana* as the whirl-pool *sā* : that *raṇa-nadī* : battle-river *Pāṇḍavaiḥ* : by the sons of *Pāṇḍu* *uttīrṇā* : was crossed *khalu* : lo! *kaivartakaḥ Keśavaḥ* : (with) *Keśava* as ferry-man.

Lo! The battle-river of *Kurukṣetra*, with *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa* as the banks; with *Jayadratha* as the water; with the prince of *Gāndhāra* as the blue water lily; with *Śalya* as the crocodile; with *Kṛpā* as the current; with *Karṇa* as the high wave; with *Aśvatthāma* and *Vikarṇa* as terrible sharks; and with *Duryodhana* as the whirl-pool—was crossed by the *Pāṇḍavas* because they had *Kṛṣṇa* as the ferry-man.

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजममलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कटं

नानाख्यानककेसरं हरिकथासम्बोधनावोधितम् ।

लोके सज्जनषट्पदैरहरहः पेपीयमानं मुदा

भूयाद्भारतपङ्कजं कलिमलप्रध्वंसिनः श्रेयसे ॥

Pārāśarya-vacaḥ-sarojam amalam gītārtha-gandhotkaṭam
nānā'khyānaka-kesaram Harikathā-sambodhanā-bodhitam;
loke sajjana-ṣaṭpadair aharahaḥ pepīyamānaṁ mudā
bhūyād bhārata-paṅkajaṁ kalimala-pradhvaṁsinaḥ śreyase.

Amalam : Stainless *Pārāśaryavachaḥ-sarojam* : born on the water of the words of the son of *Parāśara* *bhārata-paṅkajam* : the lotus of *Mahābhārata* *gītārtha-gandhotkaṭam* : having the message of the *Gītā* as its overpowering fragrance *Harikathā-sambodhanā-bodhitam* : which proclaims the glory of *Śrī Hari* *nānā'khyānaka-kesaram* : numerous narratives for its stamens *loke* : in the world *sajjana-ṣaṭpadaiḥ* : by honey-suckers constituted of virtuous men *mudā* : in great joy *aharahaḥ* : every day *pepīyamānam* : drunk again and again *kalimala-pradhvaṁsinaḥ* : of all who want to be free from the taint of the age of *Kali* *śreyase* : for the good of *bhūvāt* : may prevail.

May the stainless lotus of *Mahābhārata*, which was born on the waters of the words of *Vyāsa*, the son of *Parāśara*, which has the message of the *Gītā* for its overpowering fragrance, which contains numerous narratives proclaiming the glory of *Hari* as its stamens,

and which is sucked again and again in great joy every day by the honey-suckers of virtuous men—may it prevail for the good of all who want to be cleansed of the taint of the age of Kali!

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।

यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवम् ॥

*Mūkam karoti vācālam paṅgum laṅghayate girim;
yat kṛpā tam aham vande paramānanda-mādhavam.*

Yat : Whose *kṛpā* : grace *mūkam* : the dumb *vācālam* : eloquent *karoti* : makes, *paṅgum* : the lame *girim* : mountain *laṅghayate* : enables to cross, *tam* : Him *paramā'nandam* : supremely blissful *Mādhavam* : Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa) *aham* : I *vande* : salute.

I salute Mādhava (Lord Kṛṣṇa), the Supremely Blissful One, by whose grace a dumb man can become eloquent, and a lame person cross over mountains.

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवै-

र्वेदैः साङ्गपदक्रमोपनिषदैर्गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।

ध्यानावस्थिततद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनो

यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणा देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥

*Yam Brahmā-Varuṇe'ndra-Rudra-Marutaḥ stunvanti divyaiḥ
stavaiḥ*

*vedaiḥ sāṅga-pada-kramo'paniṣadaiḥ gāyanti yam sāmagāḥ:
dhyānā'vasthita-tad-gatena manasā paśyanti yam yogino
yasyāntam na viduḥ surāsura-gaṇā devāya tasmai namaḥ.*

Yam : Whom *Brahmā* : the creator *Brahmā Varuṇaḥ* : Varuṇa *Indraḥ* : Indra *Rudraḥ* : Rudra *Marutaḥ* : the Maruts *stunvanti* : glorify *divyaiḥ* : by divine *stavaiḥ* : by hymns; *yam* : whom *sāmagāḥ* : singers of *Sāman sāṅga-pada-kramo'paniṣadaiḥ* : with complementary parts, sections and Upaniṣads *Vedaiḥ* : by Veda *gāyanti* : praise by chanting; *yam* : whom *yoginaḥ* : Yogins *dhyānā'vasthita-tad-gatena* : (with minds) concentrated in the state

paśyanti : intuit; *yasya* : whose *antam* : limit *surāsura-gaṇāḥ* : the hosts of Devas and Asuras *na viduḥ* : do not know *tasmai* : to that *devāya* to the Deva (the Supreme Being) *namaḥ* : my salutation.

My salutations to that Supreme Being, whom Brahmā, Varuṇa, Indra and Rudra glorify by divine hymns; whom singers of Sāman praise by chanting the Veda with all the complementary parts, sections and Upaniṣads; whom Yogins intuit with minds concentrated in meditation; and whose limit neither the hosts of Devas nor of Asuras know.

INTRODUCTION

A Bird's-Eye View of the Gita Teachings

The Appeal of the Gītā

Among the world's scriptures, the *Bhagavad Gītā* is one of the most popular texts. Its popularity is demonstrated by the fact that next to the Bible it is perhaps the most widely translated of scriptural texts, and in several languages, both Indian and foreign, its translations are to be counted in dozens. This tremendous general appeal of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* was voiced forth in prophetic words by Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India (1773-85)—a personality one would least expect to deal with such a subject. In his Introduction to the first-ever English translation of the scripture by Charles Wilkins (1784), Hastings has remarked that “works as the *Gītā* would live long after the British dominion in India has ceased to exist” and that it contains passages “elevated to a track of sublimity into which our habits of judgement will find it difficult to pursue.”

In India it has attracted the attention of all the Ācāryas (teachers) of the Vedānta philosophy, of which it is recognised as one of the three source books, ever since the great Sankarācārya wrote his commentary on it. Following Sankara, all the Ācāryas of the different schools of Vedānta wrote commentaries on this great text, each interpreting it in support of his own thesis. It has been given the status of an Upanishad, a revealed scripture embodying the quintessence of the Vedic revelation, as enunciated in the following oft-quoted verse: “All the Upanishads are the cows, the cowherd boy Krishna is the milker, Arjuna is the

calf, the pure-minded are the consumers, and the ambrosial *Gītā* is the delicious milk”.

It is not the ancient Indian thinkers alone, but also the leaders of modern times, that have taken it as a text for the exposition of their highest thoughts. Thus we have got in modern times Tilak's *Gītā Rahasya*, Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gītā* and Mahatma Gandhi's *Anāsakti Yoga* as examples of the continuing preference and admiration of the Indian mind for this great scriptural text of seven hundred verses.

What is the secret of this tremendous appeal of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*? Probably it consists in the fact that it deals with a practical problem of life, namely, how a man could discharge his duties as a member of an imperfect social order and at the same time realise his highest spiritual destiny envisaged by the sublime metaphysics and theology enshrined in the Vedic revelation. The *Gītā*, therefore, begins with an ethical problem, and in solving this problem, a noble devotional philosophy is expounded.

The Ethical Problem in the Gītā

The ethical problem is graphically depicted at the outset through the predicament of Arjuna. Arjuna is the leader of the Pāṇḍava host, and his whole life has been a preparation to meet his cousins, the Kauravas, in battle, defeat them, and wrest from them the kingdom they had usurped from himself and his brothers. The *Gītā* scene is cast in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra where the armies of both the sides have gathered, and Arjuna is called upon to fulfil his historic mission by leading his men against the army of the Kauravas. Arjuna realises at this critical moment that it is a fratricidal war, and that its consequence will be the destruction of the very friends and relatives for the sake of whom men usually seek wealth and kingdom, as well as the social chaos consequent on the holocaust of the flower of Kaurava and Pāṇḍava chivalry. A war-weariness and a world-weariness together come upon him with dramatic suddenness. Under their impact he forgets all his social and family obligations, and wants to take to an ascetic life instead of indulging in what he conceives to be a senseless carnage under the guise of duty

(Swadharma). He becomes a pacifist and a quietist all of a sudden.

The conflict here is between a sudden and purely personal inclination bursting on one's mind and a social duty, the avoidance of which under that inclination would have meant ruin to a whole community that had laid its trust in one. Sri Kṛṣṇa, though God incarnate, is Arjuna's friend, charioteer and spiritual counsellor, and he is called upon to resolve the conflict in Arjuna's mind and restore him to a sense of moral equilibrium by finding a new sanction for action.

Inevitability of Action in Life

In the protracted dialogue between the teacher and the disciple, the final answer to the problem is given only at the end, but the mind of Arjuna is prepared for it by a series of talks on the inexorable nature of work in the life of man and on the utter futility of Arjuna's resolve to withdraw from a life of action. Man's body and mind are parts of Prakṛti (Nature) which is dynamic in its constitution. As a product of Prakṛti, action is the law of life for the mind and the body, and the very process of living is impossible without it. And so its elimination can only mean practice of idleness according to one's convenience, and he who attempts it under a false impression of his spiritual greatness, will end in rank hypocrisy and spiritual stagnation. Only one, who has overcome the body idea completely and is established in the sense that he is not the body but the immortal, ever-conscious and ever-blissful Atman, can be actionless; for, he no longer identifies himself with the body, the product of Nature.

Besides, from the ethical point of view, every one with body-consciousness has to remember that he is living in a community of similar beings governed by a cyclic law of mutual exchange of services and commodities. If he does not contribute his share to it by means of work but enjoys the benefits of others' work for the maintenance and comfort of his own body, he lives the life of an exploiter and a thief. He has no moral basis and hence no spiritual progress.

Even in the case of a person who has been emancipated from identification with the body, it is better that he works. He has

not the compulsion of duty as in the case of the ignorant man, but he may feel the compulsion of love, which makes one work for *lokasamgraha* or world-welfare. His actions are not self-centred and so have no binding effect on him. Work therefore is the law of life for the ignorant, and an expression of love for the enlightened, the work of the former being self-centred and of the latter God-centred.

Doctrine of Niskama-Karma as the Panacea for the moral Conflict

But the two questions still remain: Actions like leading men in war have many evil consequences, though they may be part of one's duty. Is not avoidance of such duties better than doing them and incurring sin? How can their performance promote spiritual life at all? The ideal of the *Sthitaprajña* depicted in the *Gītā*—the ideal of a person who is absolutely indrawn and unperturbed, who is the master of the senses and mind—is so far removed from that of a soldier engaged in a form of dreadful action like war, that it looks incredible that *Swadharma* of that type can ever lead a man to that state of spiritual excellence. This doubt persists continually in Arjuna's mind in spite of Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to action.

In answer to this Sri Kṛṣṇa propounds the doctrine of *Nishkāma-Karma*—the doctrine of actions done with detachment and in dedication to the Lord. Works in themselves are amoral, if we eliminate the self-centred agent from them. Nature's cataclysms with their terribly destructive effect cannot be classified as moral or immoral. They are amoral. All works are a mixture of beneficence and destructiveness as far as their effects are concerned. They are like the brilliance of fire, always accompanied by the obscuring cloudiness of smoke.

Work at the human level has various ramifications. There is work done under compulsion like slave labour, which may be characterised as sub-moral in its effect on the worker. Higher than that is work prompted by the profit motive (*kāmya-karma*), on which human civilisation as constituted today is based. *Kāmya-karma* can take two forms: On the one hand there is anti-social work which is technically denoted as *Vikarma* or

Adharma or *Niṣiddha-Karma*; on the other hand there is socially oriented action which is termed *Dharma*. Anti-social work is done by persons with demoniac nature. Everything they do is for ostentation and self-aggrandisement and no form of cruel exploitation and selfish indulgences is repugnant to them; provided their pleasure, profit and ambition are promoted thereby. Such anti-social beings are endowed with *Āsuri-sampat* (demoniac nature) characterised by pride, greed, passion and cruelty. Moral and spiritual degradation is the wage for their sins. In contrast are men with *Daivī-sampat* (divine nature), who follow *Dharma* or socially oriented action. They too are self-centred and seek pleasure and power, the good things of life, but their pursuit of these is socially oriented and is regulated by norms that take others and their needs too into consideration. In return for what they seek and take, they are prepared to give away what is due from them. They observe the law of *Yajna*. They are *Dhārmikas*, men who too pursue pleasure and power but always subordinate such pursuit to a code of give and take based on a sense of collective good and of moral responsibility. When their sense of obligation to society dominates overwhelmingly over the demand for individual fulfilment, they become elevated into patriots, philanthropists, and votaries of similar other noble values of a collective nature.

Arjuna was in his early life a *Dhārmika* of this type, when he found himself all of a sudden in the predicament described earlier, wherein the old sanctions for action like *Swadharma* (or discharge of one's duty), socially approved pursuit of power and pleasure, communal welfare, patriotism etc., became meaningless as inducements for action. A new sanction had to be found if Arjuna were to take part in action, and this sanction, different even from the one applicable to the *Dhārmikas*, is expounded by the *Bhagavān*. It is the doctrine of *Niṣkāma-karma*, the doctrine of work without desire, applicable to men who seek only liberation (*Mumukshu*). In expounding it, a sublime theology and a devotional metaphysics are propounded as the spiritual rationale of such desireless action. For, then only the 'how' and the 'why' of desireless action will become clear. Without this spiritual basis, desireless action will only be an incomprehensible and a puzzling concept, as we cannot think of any action devoid of the

prompting of some desire or other. The main thoughts of the *Gītā* in these respects are as follows :

The Metaphysics and Theology of the Gītā

All Jīvas (individual spiritual centres) are sparks from the fire that is the Divine Vāsudeva. Not the Jīvas only but all other categories too. So Vāsudeva is the 'All' (*Vāsudevaḥ sarva-miti*). How could that one Being be all and yet be Himself, His identity unimpaired? The *Gītā* theology answers this by the theory that the Supreme Being has two Prakṛtis or Powers of manifestation, which are aspects of Him, non-different yet distinct from Him. Power and Power-holder, though distinct, are not different. It is His Prakṛti that changes, not Himself. Speaking on this mystery of the Supreme Being manifesting as the universe of living and non-living beings, without himself undergoing any change, the *Gītā* says; "Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism — this is Prakṛti. Different from this, O mighty armed one, know that higher Prakṛti of Mine in the form of the individual soul (Jīva) for whose growth and salvation this world cycle is sustained. Know that all beings have these two for their origin. I am the origin of the entire universe as also its destroyer. Higher than Myself there is nothing else, O Dhanañjaya. In Me all this is strung like gems on a string" (VII 4-7).

Again adverting to the non-involvement of the Lord in the universe, in spite of His being its material and efficient cause, the *Gītā* says, "All this is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form; all beings are in Me, but I am not in them. Nor are the beings in Me. Behold My divine mystery; though the sustainer and the protector of beings, I am Myself not in these beings. As the vast wind blowing everywhere ever abides in space, know that even so do all beings abide in Me. At the end of a cycle all beings, O son of Kānti, attain My Prakṛti, and at the beginning of the next cycle I again send them forth. Presiding over My Prakṛti, I again and again send forth this entire aggregate completely under the dominance of Prakṛti. These acts of creation etc., O Arjuna, do not bind Me, who remain unattached to them like one unconcerned" (IX 4-9).

While such is the cosmic stature of this Divine as depicted in the *Gītā*, He is also an intensely Personal Being, loving and beneficent, easily approachable through service and surrender. He is the same to all, and none is specially dear to Him or inimical. Those who cling to Him in adoration, they dwell in Him and He in them. Nor is He a far off being, a deistic God isolated from men and the world. He is the nearest of the near, being ever present in the hearts of all, vitalising their intellect, mind and body. "I am the father of this world," declares the God of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, "the mother, the protector, the grandsire, the one object to be known, the supreme purifier, the sacred sound symbol Om and the Vedas. I am the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the source, the destroyer, the support, the repository and the eternal seed. I give heat, I restrain and release rain. I am immortality as also death. I am both Being and Becoming (IX 17-19)"; "In whatever way a man adores Me, that way I bless him. The paths men adopt everywhere are paths leading to Me (IV. 11)"; "He who with devotion offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that devout offering of the pure-minded, I accept. Whatever you do, or eat, or sacrifice or give—whatever austerity you perform—that O son of Kunti, you do offer unto Me. Thus you will be rid of the bondage of action resulting in good and evil; being free and with your mind endowed with the Yoga of renunciation, you will attain Me. I am the same to all beings, there is no one hateful or dear to Me. But they who worship Me with devotion are in Me, and I also am in them. Even if a very wicked man happens to worship Me in deep devotion excluding all other loves, he should be regarded as righteous; for he has rightly resolved. He soon becomes righteous-minded and attains eternal peace. O son of Kunti, proclaim that my devotee never perishes." (IX 26-31)

The Theophany of the Lord

The God of love of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* is also the dispenser of death and destruction. For, creation, preservation, destruction and redemption go side by side. His theophany as Time the destroyer, of which Arjuna had the vision, is described as "Having many mouths and eyes, and containing many a wonder-

ful sight, with many heavenly ornaments, wielding many heavenly uplifted weapons, wearing celestial garland and apparel, anointed with heavenly perfumes, wondrous, resplendent, infinite and having faces on every side. If the effulgence of a thousand suns were to flash in the skies simultaneously, it might compare somewhat with the splendour of that great form. There the son of Pāṇdu saw the entire universe with its manifold divisions united in the body of the God of gods. Then awed and wonderstruck, Arjuna said, adoring the Lord with joined palms: 'In Thy body, O Lord, I see the Devas, as also all the hosts of various beings, Brahma, the ruler seated on his lotus-seat, all the heavenly sages and serpents. I see Thee with many hands, bellies, mouths and eyes possessing infinite forms on every side. O Lord of the Universe, O Thou of universal form! I see, however, neither Thy end, nor middle, nor beginning...O Viṣṇu! Seeing Thee touching the sky, blazing, of many hues, with open mouth and fiery eyes, I am frightened at heart. All these sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra along with the hosts of kings, Bhīṣma, Drona, as also the charioteer's son (Karna) together with the principal warriors on our side are entering with a rush into Thy terrible jaws set with fearful teeth...As moths enter a blazing fire in a great hurry only to be destroyed, even so are these people also entering into Thy mouths with great speed just to be destroyed.'

Overpowered, awe-struck and exalted, Arjuna asks that 'Ferocious Form' to reveal His identity, and the Lord replies, "I am terrible Time (Kāla), the destroyer of peoples, and am here proceeding to destroy them. Even without you, all these warriors in every division shall cease to be...By Me alone all these have been killed already; be you merely an instrument."

Arjuna's Attainment of a Cosmic World-view and Resolution of Conflict

The experience of the above described Cosmic Form of the Lord opens up a new dimension before Arjuna. It resolves the difficulty he is faced with. Till now his life has been like that of an individual cell in a body which thinks, out of ignorance, that it is an independent entity, functioning on its own, while in truth it has been only a part of a whole, for whose energy it has been but a conduit and in fulfilment of whose purpose it has been functioning. In the human body such a cell

functioning apart from the life of the whole becomes a cancerous cell. Arjuna now feels that he has till now been such a cancerous cell in a spiritual sense, his outlook being based on self-centredness. He realises now that he is neither a solitary individual, nor merely a member of a society, but a cell in the mighty being of the Lord, with an apportioned piece of work to perform, not for his own sake, nor even for his community or country, but for the sake of Him to whom everything and everyone ultimately belongs — realises also that, residing within the hearts of all, He is turning the wheel of Time with all beings poised on it, and that to be in communion with this Cosmic Spirit with undivided devotion and to be discharging one's allotted functions without egotistic sense and in resignation to the Supreme Will, is the way to the peace of salvation.

In the light of this enlightened and enlarged world-view, work gains a new sanction and a new significance. Neither self-aggrandizement, nor even the service of any worldly cause is its ultimate purpose. The purpose is the spiritual development of man—to be freed from the hold of the body and realise one's kinship or unity with the Divine. For he, the Jīva, is a spark from the great Divine Fire, but identification with the body has effaced the sense of his inherent Divinity. This predicament of man, called ignorance, must be due to the will of the Divine, and only by the will or Grace of the Divine can he be redeemed from it. This grace descends on him who resigns himself to Him with his entire being—body, mind and soul. Discharge of the works that devolve on one as duty without any self-centred motive, but as an offering unto the Divine—to start with, of all results, and finally of agency too—is the way of this total resignation leading to enlightenment.

Works, too, cannot be accepted or shunned by any mere momentary considerations of their being good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable. All works, however good at first sight, carry some bad effects too, just as fire is always accompanied by smoke. In the Divine dispensation there are four character types, and the work appropriate to each of these types is called its Swadharma (natural duty). The four character types are called in the Indian tradition—Brāhmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. It has to

be emphasised again and again that these are not castes as they are unfortunately looked upon today, but character types evolved according to the Divine dispensation, having nothing to do with caste and community based on mere birth in certain families. The Brāhmana is the introvert type, reflective, intellectual and self-restrained and with the dominance of the Sattva element of Nature. The Kshatriya is the extrovert, flamboyant, lordly, pugnacious, chivalrous and possessed of qualities of leadership and having the dominance of Rajas in him. The Vaisya is the acquisitive type, industrious, organising, enterprising and conserving, with the elements of Rajas and Tamas in him. And the Sudra is the dull type, without enterprise or initiative, requiring direction from others, and fit only for routine subordinate work, mental and physical. The element of Tamas dominates him.

Works and ways of living, suited to these natures and in the line of their evolution, are their Swadharma, irrespective of what some may consider good or bad elements in them. For, as already pointed out, every work in this world will have these two elements of favourableness or unfavourableness to some one or other, but irrespective of that, they fall within the scope of Swadharma, provided they have social acceptability and are in the line of one's nature dictated by one's stage of evolution. For one who accepts and contemplates on the Divine world-view and the destiny of man as presented in the Gītā, the performance of such Swadharma with detachment and as an offering to the Divine is a potent means to spiritual evolution. By the offering of the fruits of his works man's sinful tendencies born of physical nature are effaced, and when he is able to resign his sense of agency too to Him, he realises the Whole as the Divine, in which His will alone is functioning through all individual centres of consciousness (Jīvas) spread in His being.

This supra-ethical vision of life is stated thus in thrilling language in the Gītā: "From whom proceeds the activity of all beings, and by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him through one's Swadharma, a man attains perfection. Better is one's Swadharma, though defective, than another's duty, apparently well performed. Doing the duty ordained by one's nature,

one incurs no sin. One should not, O son of Kunti, relinquish the duty born of one's nature, although it may be attended with evil; for all undertakings are covered by defects, as fire by smoke. He whose undertakings are unattached everywhere, whose mind is under control, who is bereft of desires, attains by renunciation that supreme state of freedom from action...Resigning mentally all actions, regarding Me as the supreme goal, and resorting to communion with your whole being, ever fix your mind on Me. Fixing your mind on Me, you will overcome all difficulties through My grace. But if from self-conceit you do not listen to Me, you will perish. If, indulging in self-conceit, you think, 'I will not fight', vain is that resolve of yours. Your nature will compel you to fight. O son of Kunti, what out of delusion you do not wish to do, you will do in spite of yourself, fettered by your own duty born of your nature. In the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, resides the Lord, whirling all of them by His Maya as if they were mounted on a machine. Take refuge in Him alone with all your heart, O descendant of Bharata. By His grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal abode... Fix your mind in Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; bow down to Me. Then you shall come to Me. Truly do I promise you, for you are dear to Me. Giving up all other Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve."

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

<i>Sounds like</i>	<i>Sounds like</i>
अ a-o in son	ट t̥ -t in ten
आ ā-a in master	ठ ṭh -th in ant-hill
इ i-i in if	ड ḍ -d in den
ई ī-ee in feel	ढ ḍh-dh in godhood
उ u-u in full	ण ṇ -n in under
ऊ ū-oo in boot	त t -t in French
ऋ r-somewhat between r and ri	थ ṭh -th in thumb
ए e -ay in May	द ḍ -th in then
ऐ ai-y in my	ध ḍh-theh in breathe
ओ o-o in oh	न n -n in not
औ au-ow in now	प p -p in pen
क k -k in keen	फ ph-ph in loop-hole
ख kh -ckh in blockhead	ब b -b in bag
ग g -g (hard) in go	भ bh-bh in abhor
घ gh -gh in log-hut	म m -m in mother
ङ ṅ-ng in singer	य y -y in yard
च c -ch (not k) chain	र r -r in run
छ ch-chh in catch him	ल l -l in luck
ज j -j in judge	व v -v in avert
झ jh-dgeh in hedgehog	श s̥ -sh in reich (German)
ञ ñ -n (somewhat) as in French	ष ṣ̥ -sh in show
	स s -in sun
	ह h -in hot
	m-m in sum
	: h -h in half

Chapter I

अर्जुन-विषाद-योगः

ARJUNA'S SPIRITUAL CONVERSION THROUGH SORROW

SUMMARY

The Significance of the Opening Chapter: The first chapter, depicting Arjuna's grief, is meant to show under what conditions man opens himself to the voice of the Spirit. A crisis is often required to make him turn his eyes to the spiritual reality. Often it is the impact of death, loss, disease, faithlessness of man, or any other such bitter experience of life that causes the awakening.

In the case of Arjuna, the hero who forms the central figure in this philosophical poem, it is not any of these but the naked display of man's cupidity and heartlessness that brings about the change of outlook. Trained to the profession of arms, and accustomed to the pursuit of power and pleasure, Arjuna has till now led the life of a respectable man of the world, seeking the good things of life and doing his ordained religious duties. Now when he is called upon to perform his historic duty of leading the armies of his clan against the usurping Kauravas, the moment of disillusionment comes to him on reflecting on the consequences of the fratricidal war and on the sordid and bloodstained prizes for which it is fought. He seeks shelter in his Divine Teacher Kṛṣṇa, who has been for him a friend and counsellor till now.

Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra: (1-47) The scene is laid on the battle-field of Kurukṣetra, also described as Dharma

Kṣetra, where the armies of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas are arrayed in battle formations to settle finally by the might of arms their respective claims to the common ancestral kingdom. After the first few verses, wherein a brief review of the leaders on both sides is made by Duryodhana, Arjuna appears on the scene in a chariot driven by Kṛṣṇa. Stationed in his chariot between the two armies, he finds on both sides close kith and kin and venerated persons like teachers and grandfathers standing ready to kill one another for the sake of power and pelf. The frightful consequences of a fratricidal war dawn on him in all vividness, and he feels it better to eat a beggar's food than enjoy wealth stained with the blood of persons related to him as sons, fathers, uncles, brothers-in-law, friends, grandfathers and teachers. Shocked at the prospect of a senseless carnage in which his own near and dear ones are going to be the victims, Arjuna decides to lay down arms, surrender the kingdom to the Kauravas, and even to court death at their hands, or, if he were to survive, to become an ascetic. He drops his weapons in a mood of depression caused by utter confusion as to what his duty is under such circumstances.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच—

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

Dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca :

Dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ ।

māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kim akurvata, sañjaya ॥ 1 ॥

Sañjaya : O Sañjaya! *dharmakṣetre :* in the sacred field *kurukṣetre :* in Kurukṣetra *yuyutsavaḥ :* eager to fight *samavetāḥ :* assembled *māmakāḥ :* my people *pāṇḍavāḥ ca :* and the followers of the Pāṇḍavas *eva :* indeed *kim akurvata :* what did they do?

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

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

सञ्जय उवाच—

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ 2 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca:

*Dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā ।
ācāryam upasaṅgamy rājā vacanam abravīt ॥ 2 ॥*

Tadā : Then *pāṇḍavānīkaṁ* : the army of the Pāṇḍavas *vyūḍ-*
ham : arrayed for battle *dr̥ṣṭvā* : having seen *rājā duryodhanaḥ* : king
Duryodhana *tu* : indeed (for his part) *ācāryam* : the teacher (Droṇa)
upasaṅgamy : having approached *vacanam* : word *abravīt* : said.

Sañjaya said:

2. Then seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas arrayed in battle order, king Duryodhana for his part approached the teacher Droṇa and spoke to him the following words:

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणां माचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ 3 ॥

*Paśyitām pāṇḍu-putrāṇām ācārya mahatīm camūm ।
vyūḍhām drupada-putreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā ॥ 3 ॥*

Ācārya : O teacher *dhīmatā* : talented *tava* : your *śiṣyeṇa* : by
disciple *drupadaputreṇa* : by the son of Drupada *vyūḍhām* :
drawn for battle *pāṇḍuputrāṇām* : of the sons of Pāṇḍu *etām* :
this *mahatīm camūm* : great army *paśya* : behold.

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

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ 4 ॥

*Atra śūrā maheṣvāsā Bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi ।
Yuyudhāno Virāṭas ca Drupadaś ca mahā-rathāḥ ॥ 4 ॥*

Atra : Here *śūrāḥ maheṣvāsāḥ* : valiant bow-men *yudhi* : in battle *Bhīmārjuna samāḥ* : equal to Bhīma and Arjuna *mahārathāḥ* : great car-warriors *Yuyudhānaḥ* : Yuyudhāna *Virāṭaḥ ca* : and Virāta *Drupadaḥ ca* : and Drupada;

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

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ 5 ॥

*Dhr̥ṣṭaketuś Cekitānaḥ Kāśi-rājaś ca vīryavān ।
Purujit Kuntibhojaś ca Śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ ॥ 5 ॥*

Dhr̥ṣṭaketuḥ Dhr̥ṣṭaketu Cekitānaḥ ca : and Chekitāna *vīryavān Kāśirājaḥ ca* : and the brave king of Kāśi *Purujit* : Purujit *Kuntibhojaḥ ca* : and Kuntibhoja *nara-puṅgavaḥ saibyaḥ ca* : and Śaibya the best of men.

5. Dhr̥ṣṭaketu, Cekitāna and the brave king of Kāśi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Śaibya the best of men;

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौमद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ 6 ॥

*Yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta Uttamaujāś ca vīryavān ।
Saubhadro Draupadeyāś ca, sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ ॥ 6 ॥*

Vikrāntaḥ : Powerful *Yudhāmanyuḥ* : Yudhāmanyu *vīryavān Uttamaujāḥ ca* : and the brave Uttamauja *Saubhadraḥ* : the son of Subhadra *Draupadeyāḥ ca* : and the sons of Draupadi *sarve* : all *eva* : indeed *mahārathāḥ* : great car-warriors.

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

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥ 7 ॥

*Asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tān nibodha dvij'ottama ।
nāyakā mama sāinyasya saṁjñā'ārtham tān
bravīmi te ॥ 7 ॥*

Dvijottama : O best of Brāhmaṇās *asmākaṁ tu* : regarding our side *ye* : (those) who *viśiṣṭāḥ* : distinguished *mama* : my *sāinyasya* : of the army *nāyakāḥ* : leaders *tān* : them *nibodha* : know. *Samjñārtham* : for your information *tān* : them *bravīmi* : I speak.

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

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिर्जयद्रथः ॥ 8 ॥

*Bhavān Bhīṣmaś ca Karṇaś ca Kṛpaś ca samitiñ-jayaḥ ।
Aśvatthāmā Vikarṇaś ca Saumadattir Jayadrathaḥ ॥ 8 ॥*

Bhavān : Yourself *Bhīṣmaś ca* : and Bhīṣma *Karṇaś ca* : and Karṇa *samitiñ-jayaḥ* : victorious *Kṛpaś* : Kṛpa *Aśvatthāmā* : Asvatthāmā *Vikarṇaś ca* : and Vikarṇa *Saumadattir* : the son of Somadatta *Jayadrathaḥ ca* : and Jayadratha

8. Yourself, Bhīṣma and Karṇa, the victorious Kṛpa, Asvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and Jayadratha, the son of Somadatta.

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्ध-विशारदाः ॥ 9 ॥

*Anye ca bahavaḥ sūrā mad-arthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ ।
nānā-śastra praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha-viśāradaḥ ॥ 9 ॥*

Madarthe : For my sake *tyakta-jīvitāḥ* : who are ready to give up their lives *nānā-śastra - praharaṇāḥ* : who fight with various types of weapons *anye ca bahavaḥ* : also many other *sūrāḥ* : brave men (*santi* : there are). *Sarve* : all of them *yuddha-viśāradaḥ* : skilled in war.

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

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ 10 ॥

*Aparyāptam tad asmākaṁ balam Bhīsm'ābhirakṣitam ।
paryāptam tv idam eteṣāṁ balam Bhīm'ābhi rakṣitam ॥ 10 ॥*

Bhīsmābhirakṣitam : Defended by Bhīṣma *tad* : that *asmākaṁ* : our *balam* : army *aparyāptam* : inadequate; *Bhīmābhi rakṣitam* : defended by Bhīma *eteṣāṁ* : their *balam* : army *tu* : while *paryāptam* : adequate.

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

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

*Ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ ।
Bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi ॥ 11 ॥*

Bhavantaḥ sarve : All of you *eva hi* : even indeed *sarveṣu* : in all *ayaneṣu ca* : in divisions *yathā-bhāgam* : appropriate positions

avasthitāḥ : remaining *Bhīṣmam eva* : Bhīṣma *abhirakṣantu* : protect.

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

तस्य सञ्जनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ 12 ॥

Tasya sañjanayan harṣam Kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ ।
simha-nādaṁ vinady'uccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratā-
pavān ॥ 12 ॥

Tasya : His (Duryodhana) *harṣam* : cheer *sañjanayan* : causing *kuruṣṛddhaḥ* : oldest of the Kurus *pratāpavān* : valiant *pitāmahaḥ* : grand father *uccaiḥ* : aloud *simhanādam* : lion roar *vinadya* having sounded *śaṅkham* : conch *dadhmau* : blew

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

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।

सहस्रैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ 13 ॥

Tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca paṇav'ānaka-gomukhāḥ ।
sahas'aiv'ābhyahanyanta sa śabdas tumulo' bhavat ॥ 13 ॥

Tataḥ : Thereupon *sahasā eva* : suddenly *śaṅkhāḥ* : conchs *bheryaḥ* : kettle-drums *paṇavānaka gomukhāḥ ca* : and tabors, military drums and cowhorns *abhyahanyanta ca* : blared forth *saḥ* : that *śabdaḥ* : sound *tumulaḥ* : tremendous *abhavat* : was.

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

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दनं स्थितौ ।

माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदधमतुः ॥ 14 ॥

Tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau ।

Mādhavaḥ Pāṇdavaś c'aiva divyau śaṅkhau

pradadhmatuḥ ॥ 14 ॥

Tataḥ : Then *svetaiḥ* : with white *hayaiḥ* : horses *yukte* : yoked
mahati : in the great *syandane* : chariot *sthitau* : seated
Mādhavaḥ : Sri Kṛṣṇa *Pāṇdavaḥ ca eva* : also the son of Pāṇḍu
(Arjuna) *divyau* : celestial *śaṅkhau* : conchs *pradadhmatuḥ* : blew.

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

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।

पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ 15 ॥

Pāñcajanyaṁ Hrṣīkeśo Devadattaṁ Dhanañjayaḥ ।

Paundram dadhmau mahā-śaṅkhaṁ bhīma-karmā

Vṛk'odaraḥ ॥ 15 ॥

Hrṣīkeśaḥ : Sri Kṛṣṇa *Pāñcajanyaṁ* : Pāñcajanya *Dhanañjayaḥ* :
Arjuna *Devadattaṁ* : Devadatta *bhīma-karmā* : one of terrible
deeds *Vṛkodaraḥ* : Bhīmasena *mahāśaṅkham* : great conch *Paundram* :
Paundra dadhmau : blew.

15. Sri Kṛṣṇa blew his conch Pāñcajanya, Arjuna blew Devadatta, and Bhīma of terrible deeds sounded his great conch Paundra.

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ 16 ॥

*Anantavijayaṁ rājā Kuntī-putro Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ ।
Nakulaḥ Sahadevaś ca Sughoṣa-Manipuṣpakau ॥ 16 ॥*

Kuntīputraḥ rājā Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ : King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kunti *Anantavijayaṁ* : Anantavijaya *Nakulaḥ* : Nakula *Sahadevaḥ ca* : and Sahadeva *Sughoṣa-Manipuṣpakau* : Sughoṣa and Manipuṣpaka.

16. Raja Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kunti, blew his conch Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva, Sughoṣa and Manipuṣpaka respectively.

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ 17 ॥

*Kāśyaś ca param'eṣvāsaḥ Śikhaṇḍī ca mahā-rathaḥ ।
Dhr̥ṣṭadyumno Virāṭaś ca Sātyakiś c'āparājitaḥ ॥ 17 ॥*

Param'eṣvāsaḥ : Great archer *Kāśyaś ca* : and the king of Kāśi *mahārathaḥ* : mighty car-warrior *Śikhaṇḍī ca* : and Śikhaṇḍī *Dhr̥ṣṭadyumnaḥ* : Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna *Virāṭaś ca* : and Virāṭa *aparā-jitaḥ* : invincible *Sātyakiś ca* : and Sātyaki.

17. The great archer, king of Kāśi, the mighty car-warrior Śikhaṇḍī and Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna and invincible Sātyaki,

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौमद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥ 18 ॥

*Drupado Draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ pr̥thivī-pate ।
Saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pr̥thak-
pr̥thak ॥ 18 ॥*

Drupadaḥ : The king of Drupada *draupadeyāś ca* : and the sons of Draupadī *mahābāhuḥ* : strong armed *Saubhadraś ca* : and the

son of Subhadrā *sarvaśaḥ* : on all sides *prthivīpate* ; O King *prthak prthak* : again and again *śaṅkhān* : conches *dadhmauḥ* : blew.

18. The King of Drupada, the sons of Draupadī, the mighty-armed son of Subhadrā—all these, O king, sounded their conch-shell horns again and again everywhere.

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥ 19 ॥

*Sa ghoṣo Dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṃ hrdayāni vyadārayat ।
nabhaś ca prthivīm c'aiva tumulo vyanunādayan ॥ 19 ॥*

Tumulaḥ : Tumultuous *śaḥ* : that *ghoṣaḥ* : uproar *nabhaś ca* : and sky *prthivīm ca* : and earth *eva vyanunādayan* : resounding *dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṃ* : of the followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *hrdayāni* : hearts *vyadārayat* : pierced.

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

अथ व्यवस्थितान् दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुर्द्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ 20 ॥

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह मनीपते ।

*Atha vyavasthitān dr̥ṣṭvā Dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajaḥ
pravṛtte śastra-sampāte dhanur udyamya Pāṇḍavaḥ ।*

Hṛṣīkeśaṃ tadā vākyaṃ idam āha mahīpate ॥ 20-21 ॥

Mahīpate : O King *atha* : then *Kapīdhvajaḥ* : one with the monkey as the crest of his banner (Arjuna) *Pāṇḍavaḥ* : the son of Pāṇḍu *Dhārtarāṣṭrān* : the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *vyavasthitān* : drawn up in battle *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *śastrasampāte pravṛtte* : as the clash of weapons began *dhanuḥ* : bow *udyamya* : holding *tadā* :

then *Hṛṣīkeṣam* : *Srī Kṛṣṇa idam vākyam* : following words
āha : said.

20-21. O King! Arjuna, the Pāṇḍava-leader with the banner
 crest of a monkey, on seeing the followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra arrayed
 for battle and the clash of weapons about to start, held up his
 bow and said the following words to Sri Kṛṣṇa ;

अर्जुन उवाच—

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ 21 ॥

यावदेतानिरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ 22 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me' cyuta
yāvad etān nirīkṣe' haṁ yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān ।

kair mayā saha yoddhavyaṁ asmin raṇa-samudyame ॥21-22॥

Acyuta: Acyuta! *me*: my *ratham*: chariot *ubhayoḥ*: of both *senayoḥ*:
 armies *madhye*: in the middle *sthāpaya*: station. *Yoddhukāmān*:
 desirous of fighting *avasthitān*: standing *etān*: these *yāvad*: while
aham: I *nirīkṣe*: behold *asmin*: in this *raṇasamudyame*: eve of
 battle *mayā*: by me *kaiḥ saha*: with whom *yoddhavyam*: the
 battle should be fought.

Arjuna said :

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

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ 23 ॥

Yotsyamānān avekṣe' ham ya ete'tra samāgatāḥ |
Dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ || 23 ||

Durbuddheḥ : of the evil-minded *Dhārtarāṣṭrasya* : of the son of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* *yuddhe* : in war *priyacikīrṣavaḥ* : desirous of favouring *ye ete* : all those *atra* : here *samāgatāḥ* : have arrived *tān* : them *yotsyamānān* : ready to fight *aham* : I *avekṣe* : let me see.

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

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
 सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ 24 ॥

भीष्म-द्रोण-प्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
 उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरुनिति ॥ 25 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca:

Evam ukto Hṛṣīkeṣo Guḍākeśena Bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rath'ottamam || 24 ||

Bhīṣma-Droṇa pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṃ ca mahī-kṣitām
uvāca Pārtha paśy'aitān samavetān Kurūn iti || 25 ||

Bhārata : O Bhārata (O King Dhṛtarāṣṭra) *Guḍākeśena* : by *Guḍākeśa*, conqueror of sloth (Arjuna) *evam* : thus *uktaḥ* : told *Hṛṣīkeṣaḥ* : Hṛṣīkeśa, the conqueror of the senses (*Kṛṣṇa*) *ubhayor* : of both *senayor* : armies *madhye* in the middle *Bhīṣma-Droṇa-pramukhataḥ* : in front of Bhīṣma and Droṇa *sarveṣāṃ* of all *mahīkṣitām* *ca* : kings *rathottamam* : the best of chariots *sthāpayitvā* : having stationed *iti* : thus *uvāca* : spoke *Pārtha* : O Arjuna *samavetān* : assembled *etān* : these *Kurūn* : Kurus *paśya* : see.

Sanjaya said :

24-25. O King Dhṛtarāṣṭra! Sri Kṛṣṇa, to whom Arjuna addressed these words, stationed that most splendid of chariots at a place between the two armies, confronting Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all those chiefs, and said: "O Arjuna! See these men of the Kuru horde assembled for battle."

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृन्थ पितामहान् ।

आचार्यान् मातुलान् भ्रातृन् पुत्रान् पौत्रान् सखींस्तथा ॥ 26 ॥

श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धून्वस्थितान् ॥ 27 ॥

कृपया पर्याविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

*Tatrāpaśyat sthitān Pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pitāmahān
ācāryān mātulān bhrātrn putrān pautrān sakhīmstathā ॥26॥*

*Śvaśurān suhṛdaś caiva senayor ubhayor api
tān samīkṣya sa Kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān ॥27॥*

kṛpayā parayā'viṣṭo viṣīdann idam abravīt

Tatra : there *ubhayor* : of both *senayor* : armies *api* : also *sthitān* : stationed *pitṛn atha* : and fathers *pitāmahān* : grandfathers *ācāryān* : teachers *mātulān* : uncles *bhrātrn* : brothers *putrān* : sons *pautrān* : grandsons *sakhīn* : comrades *tathā* : and *śvaśurān* : fathers-in-law *suhṛdaḥ* : friends, *ca iva* : and *Pārthaḥ* : Arjuna *apaśyat* : saw *avasthitān* : stationed; *sarvān* : all *bandhūn* : relatives *samīkṣya* : having seen *saḥ* that *Kaunteyaḥ* : son of Kunti *parayā* : supreme *kṛpayā* : pity *āviṣṭaḥ* : filled *viṣīdan* : sorrowing *idam* : thus *abravīt* : said.

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

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ 28 ॥

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ 29 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Dr̥ṣṭv'emaṁ svajanam Kṛṣṇa yuyutsum samupasthitam

sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukham ca pariśuṣyati

vepathuś ca śarīre me roma-harṣaś ca jāyate ॥28-29॥

Kṛṣṇa : O *Kṛṣṇa yuyutsum* : eager to fight *samupasthitam* : standing *imam* : this *svajanam* : groups of relatives *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *mam* : my *gātrāṇi* : limbs *sīdanti* : give way *ca* : and *mukham* : mouth *pariśuṣyati* : is parching, *me* : my *śarīre* : in the body *vepathuḥ* : trembling *ca* : and *romaharṣaḥ* : horripilation *ca* : and *jāyate* : arises.

Arjuna said:

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

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ 30 ॥

Gāṇḍivam sraṁsate hastāt tvak c'aiva paridahyate

na ca śaknomy avasthātum bhramati' va ca me manaḥ

॥ 30 ॥

Gāṇḍivam : the bow *Gāṇḍiva hastāt* : from the hand *sraṁsate* : is slipping *tvak ca eva* : skin too *paridahyate* : is burning *avasthātum* : to stand firm *na śaknomy* : not possible *me* : my *manaḥ* : mind *bhramati* : as it were, *iva* : as it were.

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

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ 31 ॥

Nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni Keśava

na ca śreya' nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave ॥ 31 ॥

Keśava : O Keśava! *viparītāni* : adverse *nimittāni ca* : omens *paśyāmi* : I see *āhave* : in the war *svajanam* : one's own men (relatives) *hatvā* : having killed *anu* : afterwards *śreyaḥ* : good *na paśyāmi* : I do not see.

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

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ 32 ॥

Na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ Kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca

kiṁ no rājyena Govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā ॥ 32 ॥

Kṛṣṇa : O Kṛṣṇa! *vijayam* : victory *na kāṅkṣe* : I do not desire *rājyaṁ ca* : neither the kingdom *sukhāni ca* : nor the enjoyments. *Govinda* : O Govinda *naḥ* : for us *rājyena* : with the kingdom *kiṁ* what (is to be achieved)? *bhogaiḥ* : by enjoyments *jīvitena vā* : by even life *kiṁ* : what (accrues)?

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

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा घनानि च ॥ 33 ॥

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः स्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥ 34 ॥

*Yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitam no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca
ta ime' vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāms tyaktvā dhanāni ca*
॥ 33 ॥

*Ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ putrāḥ tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ syālāḥ sambandhinas tathā*
॥ 34 ॥

Yeṣām arthe : For whose sake *naḥ* : by us *rājyam* : kingdom *bhogāḥ* : enjoyments *sukhāni ca* : and pleasures *kāṅkṣitam* : are desired, *te* : those *ācāryāḥ* : teachers *pitaraḥ* : fathers *putrāḥ* : sons *tatha eva ca* : and also *pitāmahāḥ* : grandfathers *mātulāḥ* : uncles *śvaśurāḥ* : fathers-in-law *pautrāḥ* : grandchildren *syālāḥ* : brothers-in-law *tathā sambandhinaḥ* : as well as relatives *ime* : these *prāṇān* : life *dhanāni ca* : and wealth *tyaktvā* : abandoning *yuddhe* : in battle *avasthitāḥ* : are stationed.

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

एतां न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्य-राज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ 35 ॥

*Etān na hantum icchāmi ghnatopi Madhusūdana
api trailokya-rājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahī-kṛte* ॥ 35 ॥

Madhusūdana : O Madhusudana *ghnataḥ api* : even if killed (by them) *etān* : them *trailokyārājyasya* : for the three worlds *hetoḥ api* : even for the sake of *hantum* to kill *na icchāmi* : do not desire *mahī-kṛte kiṁ nu* : much less for this earth.

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

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान् का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ 36 ॥

*Nihatya Dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj Janārdana
pāpam ev'āśrayed asmān hatv'aitān ātatāyinaḥ ॥ 36 ॥*

Janārdana : O Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa) *Dhārtarāṣṭrān* : the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *nihatya* : having killed *naḥ* : for us *kā* : what *prītiḥ* : joy *syāt* : there would be? *Ātatāyinaḥ* : murderous felons *hatvā* : by killing *asmān* : for us *pāpam* : sin *eva* : only *āśrayet* : will accrue.

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

तस्मान्नाहं वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् स्वबान्धवान्
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ 37 ॥

*Tasmān n'ārḥā vyaṁ hantum Dhārtarāṣṭrān
svabāndhavān
svajanaṁ hi katham hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma Mādhava
॥ 37 ॥*

Tasmāt : Therefore *Mādhava* : O Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa)! *vyaṁ* : we *svabāndhavān* : own relations *Dhārtarāṣṭrān* : sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *hantum* : to kill *na arḥāḥ* : not justified : *svajanaṁ* : relations *hatvā* : having killed *katham hi* : how *sukhinaḥ syāma* : could we be happy persons.

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

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

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ 39 ॥

*Yady apy ete na paśyanti lobh'opahata-cetasah
kula-kṣaya-kṛtam doṣam mitra-drohe ca pātakam*

*katham na jñeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum
kula-kṣaya-kṛtam doṣam prapaśyadbhir Janārdana
॥ 38-39 ॥*

Janārdana : O Janārdana *lobhopahata cetasaḥ* : with the understanding destroyed by greed *ete* : these people *kulakṣa-yakṛtam* : due to the decay of families *doṣam* evil *mitradrohe* : in the persecution of friends *pātakam ca* : sin also *yadyapi* : though *na paśyanti* : do not see, *kulakṣayakṛtam* : done by the decay of families *doṣam* : evil *prapaśyadbhiḥ* : seeing well *asmābhiḥ* : by us *asmāt pāpāt* : from this sin *nivartitum* : to abstain from *katham* : why *na jñeyam* : not learn.

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

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।

धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ 40 ॥

*Kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnam adharmo' bhibhavatyuta
॥ 40 ॥*

Kulakṣaye : By the decay of clans *sanātanāḥ* : ancient *kuladharmāḥ* traditions of the clan *praṇaśyanti* : perish; *dharme naṣṭe* : when tradition perishes *kṛtsnam* : entire *kulam* clan *adharmāḥ* : lawlessness *abhibhavati* : overcomes *uta* : indeed.

40. When a clan becomes decadent, its ancient traditions (laws) perish. When traditions perish, the entire clan is indeed overcome by lawlessness.

अधर्माभिभवत् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ 41 ॥

*Adharmābhibhavāt Kṛṣṇa pradusyanti kula-striyaḥ
striṣu duṣṭāsu Vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ ॥41॥*

Kṛṣṇa : O *Kṛṣṇa adharmābhibhavāt* : by the prevalence of lawlessness *kula-striyaḥ* : the women of the clans *pradusyanti* : become corrupt. *Vārṣṇeya* : O scion of the Vṛṣṇi! *striṣu duṣṭāsu* : when women become corrupt *varṇa saṅkaraḥ* : mixture of classes (promiscuity) *jāyate* : arises.

41. O *Kṛṣṇa*! When lawlessness prevails, the women of the clans become corrupt. O Scion of the Vṛṣṇi! When women are corrupted, mixture of classes (promiscuity) prevails.

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ 42 ॥

*Saṅkaro narakāy'aiva kula-ghnānām kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hy eṣām luṭṭa-piṇḍ'odaka-kriyāḥ ॥42॥*

Saṅkaraḥ : Admixture of classes (promiscuity) *kulaghñānām* : of the destroyers of the clan *kulasya ca* : also of clans *narakāya eva* : for hell only. *Hi* : For *eṣām* : of these *pitarāḥ* : ancestors *luṭṭapiṇḍ'odaka-kriyāḥ* : being deprived of Pindas or offerings of rice balls and water *patanti* : fall.

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

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।

उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ 43 ॥

*Doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānām varṇa-saṅkara-kāraṅkaiḥ
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ*

॥ 43 ॥

Kulaghnānām : Of the ruiners of clans *varṇasaṅkarakāraṅkaiḥ* : causing promiscuity *etaiḥ doṣaiḥ* : by these misdeeds *śāśvatāḥ* : immemorial *jātidharmāḥ* : laws or traditions of communities *kuladharmāḥ* laws of the clans *ca* : and *utsādyante* : are destroyed.

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

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।

नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुश्रुम ॥ 44 ॥

*Utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām Janārdana
narake niyatam vāso bhavatīty anuśuśruma* ॥ 44 ॥

Janārdana : O Janārdana! *utsannakuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām* : for men who have lost all their family traditions (ancestral religion) *narake* : in hell *vāsaḥ* : residence *niyatam* : sure *bhavati* : is *iti* : thus *anuśuśruma* : we have heard.

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

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।

यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ 45 ॥

*Aho bata mahat pāpam kartum vyavasitā vayam
yad rājya-sukha-lobhena hantum svajānam udyatāḥ*

॥ 45 ॥

Aho : Alas! *vayam* : we *mahat* : great *pāpam* : sin *kartum* : to commit *vyavasitāḥ* : resolved *yat* : that *rājyasukha* *lobhena* : by greed for the pleasures of kingdom *svajanam* : kinsmen *hantum* : to destroy *udyatāḥ* : prepared *bata* : also.

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

यदि मामप्रतीकार-मशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ 46 ॥

Yadi mām apratikāram aśastram śastra-pāṇayaḥ
Dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyus tan me kṣemataram bhavet

Aśastram : Without arms *apratikāram* : unresisting *mām* : me *śastrapāṇayaḥ* : armed with weapons *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* : the sons of Dhārtarāṣṭra *raṇe* : in battle *hanyuḥ* *yadi* if they kill *tat* : that *kṣemataram* : far better *bhavet* : would be *me* : for me.

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

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोक-संविग्न-मानसः ॥ 47 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca:

Evam ukto'arjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
visrjya saśaram cāpam śoka-saṁvigna-mānasaḥ ॥47॥

Evam ukto : So saying *sokasaṁvignamānasaḥ* : with mind overwhelmed by grief *Arjunaḥ* : Arjuna *saśaram cāpam* : bow along with arrows *visrjya* : abandoning *rathopasthaḥ* : in the car seat *upāviśat* : sat down.

Sanjaya said:

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

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम
प्रथमोऽध्यायः ।

*Iti Śrīmad bhagavdgītās 'ūpanisatsu brahma-vidyāyām
yogaśāstre Sri Kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde
Arjuna-viṣāda-yogo nāma prathamo'dhyāyaḥ*

In the Bhagavad Gītā, which is an Upaniṣad, a text on Brahman-knowledge, a scripture of spiritual communion, and a dialogue between Sri Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, here ends the first chapter named *Arjunaviṣādayoga* (Arjuna's spiritual conversion through sorrow).

NOTES

All the great Indian commentators of the past have taken the background events of the Gītā and the personalities involved in it as historical. The Kurukṣetra war is supposed to have been fought in about 1400 B.C. according to the latest archaeological evidence as against the traditional date ascribing it to a time just before the beginning of Kali Era in 3102 B.C.

In modern times, however, there is a swing towards a symbolical interpretation of the background events. The most noteworthy among the modern upholders of this view is Mahatma Gandhi who opines: "The Gītā is not a historical discourse. A physical illustration is often needed to drive home a spiritual

truth. It is the description not of war between cousins but between two natures in us—the good and the evil.”

The Mahatma could not but take this view, as he was a total pacifist, and believed that love and suffering undergone by oneself should be the only means of converting the enemy, and never violence. However noble this view might be, there will always be another section of thinkers who will hold that a surgical treatment is necessary where medical therapy is found ineffective, that there are cancerous developments in the body politic which will carry the disease all over the organism unless removed from the system by radical measures. Sri Kṛṣṇa, and in fact most of the Divine Incarnations of the Hindus, are on the side of this view. From the practical point of view also Kṛṣṇa was not a war-monger. He tried to settle the dispute between the two factions through the arts of diplomacy and conciliation, to the best of his abilities, and only when the doors of justice were completely closed, did he allow the issue to be settled by the might of arms.

The symbolical interpretation is not, however, in any way opposed or contradictory to the acceptance of historical validity. If we accept a Divine mind behind the great developments of history, there is no harm in reading divine purposes into the great incidents of life. When the events are gone with the ebbing away of time, it is only the lessons learnt from them and the interpreted understanding of these events that last in the mind of man. These surviving ideological contents of events alone belong to the realm of eternal values, while the events themselves are their temporal and fleeting forms. So the Mahābhārata war of history may very well be interpreted as the illustration in space and time of the eternal idea of a struggle between the Good and the Evil, which the Cosmic Mind conceives as the pattern of human evolution. Symbolism and history can therefore be complementary and not conflicting.

There have been other symbolical explanations of the context of the Gītā. One popular explanation is that it is an extension of the symbolism of the chariot described in the Kathopaniṣad. The human body is compared to the chariot, in which the soul of man is seated as the master of the chariot with the Buddhi as the

charioteer. The mind constitutes the reins, and the senses, the horses. The chariot is coursing through the battle-field of life, the Kurukṣetra. Stationed in that battle-field, the bewildered spirit of man represented by Arjuna occupying the chariot of the body, looks to the charioteer, the higher mind or the Buddhi, here represented by Kṛṣṇa, for advice, guidance and inspiration. The Gītā is the eternal dialogue going on between the ego and the higher mind in the personality of man struggling on the battle-field of life. There have been scholastic interpreters who give symbolic meaning to many of the principal interlocutors like Sañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana etc.

The significance of the chapter from the Vedāntic point of view, namely, that a thorough disillusionment with life as constituted in Nature is necessary for spiritual instruction to take effect, has been discussed in the summary at the beginning of the next chapter and in the general introduction.

Chapter II

संख्ययोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

SUMMARY

Arjuna Seeking Refuge in Kṛṣṇa : (1-16) : To Arjuna thus overcome with pity for his doomed kith and kin, Śrī Kṛṣṇa administers a strong dose of reprimand, saying that his attitude befits only a eunuch and not a hero. But Arjuna's sorrow and confusion are so deep-rooted that the reprimand has no effect on him, and he continues in his attitude of self-pity, and finally takes refuge in Kṛṣṇa as a disciple, seeking solace and instruction.

The Immortal Atman : (17-25) : Śrī Kṛṣṇa recognises that Arjuna's recoiling from his duty of leading his forces stems from two presumptions in his mind. First, the people threatened with destruction are his own nearest kith and kin. This in turn has its basis in his blindness to the essential spiritual nature of man. Ignorance makes him equate man with his visible body, which in turn makes him think of death as total destruction. But the truth is that man's spirit is indestructible. Until man lives by this truth, there can be no abiding virtue in him. In order to bring this home to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa, at the very start of his discourse, expounds the high philosophy of Ātman in the following words : You pretend to be a wise man in speech, but your behaviour is like that of the most ignorant. Your sorrow is for persons who are not in need of it. A wise man takes death as a trifle. For, he knows that the Essence in man is the Ātman, the birthless, the deathless, the eternal Spirit, whom weapons cannot

cleave, fire burn, or air dry. Birth and death are only of the body and not of the Ātman, and the body in relation to the Ātman is like clothes one puts on and throws away; or like the passing stages of life like childhood, boyhood, youth and old age. Pleasant and painful experiences of life are passing episodes. A man who knows this and is never moved by pleasure and pain, by life and death, is alone wise and fit for spiritual freedom.

Death from the worldly Point of View: (26-39): Even from the point of view of a worldly wise man, you need not feel sorry for these men. Death is natural to all embodied beings, and there is no use in sorrowing for this unavoidable occurrence. From the Unknown, life comes; for a short time it remains in the field of the known; and to the Unknown it goes back again. Of what use is man's wailing over this eternal process? On the other hand, if you avoid your responsibilities in this righteous war—a veritable portal to heaven for the valiant Kṣatriyas—every one will say that you have tucked tail for fear of death and fled away for life like a coward. To survive with the stigma of cowardice is worse than a hundred deaths. Dead in the field of battle, you will attain heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the earth. So arise and fight! And if you can practise even-mindedness in pain and pleasure, in success and failure, you shall not incur any sin by slaughter in battle.

The Gospel of Dedicated Work: (40-53): Having reminded Arjuna of the real nature of man as the eternal Spirit, Sri Kṛṣṇa now proceeds to declare the disciplines by which one could gradually realise this Divinity inherent in oneself. For, it is a matter of realisation, and not mere talk. Sri Kṛṣṇa therefore teaches further as follows: "I taught you till now about the philosophy of the Ātman. Now hear from me about the doctrine of communion through work. This path is free from dangers and is easy to perform. It seeks to secure the one-pointedness of mind through detachment in work. Man is generally after many worldly enjoyments and ambitions, and, hearing that they could be secured through Vedic ritualism, he performs various ritualistic works, one after another, hoping for success. Though they may look like acts of piety, they are only expressions of pure worldliness. They make the mind restless and scattered. But if

you can work without an eye on their fruits, your mind will get more and more ingathered and concentrated gradually. The more we are motivated by selfish gains in our work, the more we get steeped in worldliness; and the more we work in a spirit of duty without caring for gains, the more shall we get spiritually oriented. You have therefore got the right only to work as a matter of duty, and not to expect any selfish gain from it, if you want to evolve spiritually. But lack of interest in selfish returns should never make you lethargic or slipshod in work. For, communion through work (Karma Yoga) consists in maximum efficiency combined with detachment. It is for this reason that Karma Yoga is described as 'skill in action.' A man who discharges his duty in the manner described, acquires neither merit nor demerit, but evolves spiritually and becomes fit to realise his real nature as the immortal and impervious Ātman. He attains to liberation from the trammels of ignorance. When one is free from longings for worldly enjoyments, one gains spiritual conviction and one's intelligence is established in steadiness."

The Man of Steady Wisdom: (54-72): Arjuna thereupon asks Kṛṣṇa how he could recognise a man who has attained to the state of 'steadiness of intelligence.' Kṛṣṇa replies: "Such a person, having abandoned all desires from his heart, is ever satisfied with the bliss that is in his higher self. Nothing external attracts him. He is unperturbed in misery and happiness alike. He is free from all attachments, fear and anger. He has such control over his senses that he can withdraw them inward in the presence of the objects that excite them, as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell. The hold of the senses on an ordinary man is very powerful. As a ship on the high seas is at the mercy of the winds, so is the intelligence of man at the mercy of sense objects. One who thinks longingly of sense objects develops attachment for them. Attachments, in turn, grow into strong desires and infatuation. Infatuation effaces man's sense of distinction between the proper and the improper, and he becomes a slave of his animal instincts—in fact he loses his rationality. So the control of the senses is the pathway to spiritual advancement, and the lack of it, to spiritual ruin. And he who is the absolute master of the senses—into whom the stimuli from sense objects

can enter without causing any perturbation, as rivers into the brimming ocean—he attains to the peace that passeth understanding. This is what is meant by being established in Brahman-consciousness. Attaining to it a man is never reborn.”

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाऽऽविष्ट-मश्रुपूर्णाकुलेश्णम् ।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १ ॥

Sañjaya uvāca

*Tam tathā kṛpayā'viṣṭam aśru-pūrṇākul'ekṣaṇam
viṣīdantam idam vākyaṁ uvāca Madhusūdanaḥ ॥ १ ॥*

Tathā : Thus *Kṛpayā* : by pity *āviṣṭam* : one overcome with *aśru-pūrṇākulekṣaṇam* : with eyes full of tears and with a bewildered look *viṣīdantam* : sorrowing *tam* : him *Madhusūdanaḥ* : Sri Kṛṣṇa *idam* : this *vākyaṁ* : word *uvāca* : said.

Sañjaya said:

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

श्री भागवानुवाच—

कुतस्त्वा कश्मल-मिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्ट-मस्वर्ग्यं मकीर्तिकर-मर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca

*Kutas tvā kaśmalam idam viṣame samupasthitam
anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram Arjuna ॥ २ ॥*

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *anāryajuṣṭam* : entertained by worthless men *asvargyam* : a bar to heaven *akīrtikaram* : bringing disrepute *idam* : this *kaśmalam* : loathsome stupidity *viṣame* : in this crisis *tvā* : you *kutaḥ samupasthitam* : whence come upon.

The Blessed Lord said

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

क्लैव्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ 3 ॥

*Klaibyam mā sma gamah Pārtha naitat tvayy
upapadyate ।
kṣudram hr̥daya-daurbalyam tyaktv'ottisṭha
paramtapa ॥ 3 ॥*

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *klaibyam* : state of impotency, unmanliness *mā sma gamah* : do not attain to. *Etat*: This *tvayi*: in thee *na upapadyate* : is not fitting. *Kṣudram* : Base *hr̥dayadaurbalyam* : faintness of heart *tyaktvā* : abandoning *paramtapa* : O dreaded hero *uttisṭha* : rise up.

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

अर्जुन उवाच—

कथं भीष्म-महं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ 4 ॥

Arjuna uvāca :

*Katham Bhiṣmam aham saṁkhye Droṇam cā
Madhusūdana ।
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi puḥj'ārhaṁ arisūdana ॥ 4 ॥*

Madhusūdana : O Madhusūdana *Bhiṣmam Droṇam ca* : Bhīṣma and Droṇa *saṁkhye* : in battle *aham* : I *iṣubhiḥ* : with arrows *katham pratiyotsyāmi* : how shall attack, *tau* : they two *puḥj'arhaṁ* : are worthy of worship *arisūdana* : O destroyer of foes!

Arjuna said

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

गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्य-मपीह लोके ।
हत्वाऽर्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहिव
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ 5 ॥

*Gurūn ahatvā hi mahā'nubhāvān śreya bhoktum
bhaikṣyam apī' ha loka
hatvā'rtha kāmāṁs tu gurūn ih'aiva bhuñjīya
bhogān rudhira-pradigdhān ॥ 5 ॥*

Mahānubhāvān : Venerable *gurūn* : teachers *ahatvā* : without killing *iha loka* : in this world *bhaikṣyam* : food got by begging *apī* : even: *bhoktum* : to eat *śreyaḥ* : leading to one's good. *Gurūn* : Teachers *hatvā tu* : if killing *iha eva* : here itself *rudhirapradigdhān* : blood-smeared *arthakāmān* : power and pleasure *bhogān* : enjoyments *eva* : even *bhuñjīya* : enjoy (will have to enjoy).

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

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ 6 ॥

*Na c'aitad vidmaḥ kataran no gariyo yad vā jayema
yadi vā no jayeyuḥ ।
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas te' vasthitāḥ pramukhe
Dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ ॥ 6 ॥*

Yad vā : Whether *jayema* : we should conquer *yadī vā* : or that *naḥ* : us *jayeyuḥ* : they should conquer *katarat* : which of the two *naḥ* : for us *gariyaḥ* : better *etat* : this *na vidmaḥ* : we do not know. *Yān* : whom *hatvā* : having killed *na jijīviṣāmaḥ eva* : we shall not care to live at all *te dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* : these men on the side of Dṛtarāṣṭra *pramukhe* : in front (arrayed against) *avasthitāḥ* : stand.

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

कार्पण्यदोषोपहत-स्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शशि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ 7 ॥

kārpanya-doṣ'opahata-svabhāvaḥ prcchāmi tvām

dharma-saṁmūḍha-cetāḥ

yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi taṁ me śiṣyas te'

haṁ śādhī māṁ tvām prapannam ॥ 7 ॥

kārpanyadoṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ : One whose natural disposition has been vitiated by the sense of pity *dharmasaṁmūḍhacetaḥ* : one with a mind in utter confusion regarding one's duty (*aham* : I) *tvām* : you *prcchāmi* : ask. *Yat* : whatever *me* : my *śreyaḥ* : good *syāt* : is *tat* : that *niścitaṁ* : for certainty *brūhi* : tell. *Aham* : I *te* : thy *śiṣyaḥ* : disciple, *tvām* : Thee, *prapannam* : taken shelter *mām* : me *śādhī* : instruct.

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

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद् यच्छोक-मुच्छोषण-मिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ 8 ॥

na hi prapaśyāmi mam'āpanudyād yac chokam
ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām
avāpya bhūmāu asapatnam ṛddham rājyam surāṇām
api c'ādhipatyam ॥ 8 ॥

Bhūmau : In the world *asapatnam* : without enemies *ṛddham* : prosperous *rājyam* : kingdom *surāṇām* : of the Devas *ādhipatyam* : overlordship *avāpya api* : even attaining *indriyāṇām* : senses *ucchoṣaṇam* : drying up *mama* : my *śokam* : grief *yat* : what *apanudyāt* : can remove *tat* : that *na hi* : do not *prapaśyāmi* : I see.

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

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्द-मुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ 9 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca

Evam uktvā hrṣīkeśam guḍākeśaḥ paramtapah
na yotsya iti Govindam uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha ॥9॥

Gudākeśaḥ : Arjuna the conqueror of sleep *paramtapah* : the scorcher of foes *hrṣīkeśam govindam* : Kṛṣṇa the master of the senses *evam* : thus *uktvā* : having said, *na yotsye* : I will not fight *iti* thus *tūṣṇīm* : silent *babhūva ha* : became.

Sanjaya said

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

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयो-रुभयो-र्मध्ये विषीदन्त-मिदं वचः ॥ 10 ॥

*Tam uvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ prahasann iva Bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye viṣīdantam idaṁ vacaḥ ॥ 10 ॥*

Bhārata : O Dhritarāṣṭra *ubhayoḥ* : of both *senayor* : armies
madhye : middle *viṣīdantam* : sorrowing *tam* : him *hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ* :
Kṛṣṇa *prahaśan iva* : as if ridiculing *idaṁ vacaḥ* : this word
uvāca : said.

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

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अशोच्या-नन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासू-नगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ 11 ॥

Srī Bhagavān uvāca

*aśocyān anvaśocas tvam prajñā-vādānś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūnś ca n'ānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ ॥ 11 ॥*

Aśocyān : Those who should not be moaned for *tvam* : you *anva-
śocaḥ* : are moaning *Prajñāvādān* : words worthy of wise men
bhāṣase ca : you speak too. *Paṇḍitāḥ* : wise men *gatāsūn* : the
dead *agatāsūn* : living *ca* : and *nā anusocanti* : bewail not.

The Blessed Lord said

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

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ 12 ॥

*Na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvam n'eme jan'ādhipāḥ
nac'aiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayam atah param*

aham : I *jātu* : at any time *na tu āsam* : did not even exist (*iti*: this) *na eva* : not indeed; *tvam* : you *na (āsiḥ iti)* did not exist *na* : not; *ime janādhipāḥ na (āsan iti)* *na* : it is not that these kings ever did not exist; *ataḥparam* : hereafter *sarve vayam* : all of us *na bhaviṣyāmaḥ* : shall not exist (*iti ca na eva* : it is not at all so.)

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

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ 13 ॥

*Dehino' smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā
tathā dehā'ntara prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati* ॥13॥

Dehinaḥ : To the embodied soul *asmin dehe* : in this body *kaumāram* : childhood *yauvanam* : youth *jarā* : old age *tathā* : in the same way *dehāntaraprāptiḥ* change to another body. *Dhīraḥ* : A wise man *tatra* : by this *na muhyati* : is not deluded.

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

मात्रास्पर्शस्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्ण-सुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 14 ॥

*Mātrā-sparśās tu Kaunteya śīt'oṣṇa-sukha-
duḥkhadāḥ
āgam'āpāyino'nityās tāms titikṣasva Bhārata* ॥ 14 ॥

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī (Arjuna)! *mātrāsparśāḥ tu* : contact of the senses with their objects *śītoṣṇa sukha duḥkṣadāḥ* : producing cold and heat, pleasure and pain *āgamāpāyinaḥ* : now coming and now going *anityāḥ* : are impermanent. *Bhārata* : O Scion of the Bharata race! *tān* : them *titikṣasva* : bear patiently.

14. Contact of the senses with their objects generates cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They come and go, being impermanent. Bear with them patiently, O scion of the Bharata race!

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं ग्रीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ 15 ॥

Yaṁ hi na vyathayanty ete puruṣaṁ puruṣ'arṣabha
sama-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so'mṛtatvāya

kalpate ॥ 15 ॥

Puruṣarṣabha : O leader of men! *ete* : these *samaduḥkhasukham* : unperturbed alike in pleasure and pain *dhīraṁ yaṁ puruṣaṁ* : the enlightened one whom *na vyathayanti* : do not distress *saḥ* : he *amṛtatvāya* : for immortality : *kalpate hi* : is fit indeed.

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

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ 16 ॥

N'āsato vidyate bhāvo n'ābhāvo vidyate sataḥ

ubhayor api dr̥ṣṭo'ntas tv anayos tattva darśibhiḥ ॥ 16 ॥

Asataḥ : of the unreal *bhāvaḥ* : existence *na vidyate* : is not, *sataḥ* : of the real *abhāvaḥ* : non-existence *na vidyate* : is not. *Anayoḥ ubhayoḥ* : of these two *api antaḥ tu* the final end, (truth) *tattva-darśibhiḥ* : by philosophers *dr̥ṣṭaḥ* : seen.

16. The unreal can never come into existence, and the real can never cease to be. The wise philosophers have known the truth about these categories (of the real and the unreal).²

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाश-मव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥ 17 ॥

*Avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
vināśam avyayasy'āsyā na kaścit kartum arhati* ॥ 17 ॥

Yena : By what *sarvam idaṁ* : all this *tatam* : pervaded *tat tu* : that *avināśi* : indestructible *viddhi* : know. *Avyayasya asya* : of this immutable *vināśam* : destruction *kartum* : to effect *kaścit na arhati* : no one is able.

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

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ 18 ॥

*Antavanta ime dehā nityasyo'ktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ
anāśino'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva Bhārata* ॥ 18 ॥

Nityasya : Eternal *anāśinaḥ* : indestructible *aprameyasya* : immeasurable, unlimited *śarīriṇaḥ* : of the indweller of the body, spirit *ime dehāḥ* : these bodies *antavantaḥ* : with end, perishable *uktāḥ* : are said to be. *Tasmāt* : therefore *Bhārata* : scion of the Bharata race *yudhyasva* : do you fight.

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

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ 19 ॥

*Ya enam veti hantāraṁ yaśc'ainam manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate ॥ 19 ॥*

Yaḥ : Who *enam* : him *hantāraṁ veti* : know as the killer *yaḥ
enam* : who him *hatam* : killed *manyate* : knows as *tau ubhau*.
both of them *na vijānītaḥ* : do not know the real truth. *Ayam* : He
na hanti : does not kill *na hanyate* : is not killed.

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

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ 20 ॥

*Na jāyate mriyate vā kadācīn-nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā
na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne
śarīre ॥ 20 ॥*

Ayam : He, this Self *kadācit* : at any time *na jāyate* : is not born
na mriyate : does not die. *Ayam* : he, the Self, *bhūtvā* : once coming
into existence *bhūyaḥ* : again *na bhavitā vā na* : does not after-
words cease to be. *Ajaḥ* : Unborn *nityaḥ* : eternal *śāśvataḥ* per-
manent *purāṇaḥ* : primeval *śarīre* : body *hanyamāne* : when
killed *na hanyate* : is not killed.

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

वेदाऽविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।

कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ 21 ॥

*Ved' āvināśinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam
katham sa puruṣaḥ Pārtha kam ghātayati hanti kam ॥21॥*

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *enam* : this (Self) *nityam* : eternal *avyayam* : undecaying; *ajam* : birthless *avināśinam* : indestructible *yaḥ* : who *veda* : knows, *saḥ puruṣaḥ* : that person *katham* : how *kam* : whom *hanti* : kills *kam* : whom *ghātayati* : causes to slay.

21. O Arjuna! know this self to be eternal, undecaying, birthless and indestructible. A person who knows him to be so — how and whom can he kill, how and whom can he cause to be killed?

*वासंसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ 22 ॥*

*Vāsāmsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni grhṇāti naro'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī*

Naraḥ : Man *yathā* : as *jīrṇāni* : old *vāsāmsi* : garments *vihāya* : abandoning *navāni* : new *aparāṇi* : other (clothes) *grhṇāti* : takes, *tathā* : in the same way *dehī* : the embodied self *jīrṇāni* : decrepit *śarīrāṇi* : bodies *vihāya* : abandoning *navāni* : new *anyāni* : other bodies *saṁyāti* : enters, assumes.

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

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

*Nainam chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na c'ainam kledayanty āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ ॥ 23 ॥*

Enam : Him *śastrāṇi* : weapons *na chindanti* ; cut not; *enam* : Him *pāvakaḥ* : fire *na dahati* : burns not; *enam* : Him *āpaḥ* : waters *na kledayanti* : wet not; *mārutaḥ* : wind *na śoṣayati* : dries not.

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

अच्छेद्योऽय-मदाह्योऽय-मक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणु-रचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ 24 ॥

*Acched.yo'yam adāhyo'yam akledyo' soṣya eva ca
nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuḥ acalo'yam sanātanaḥ ॥ 24 ॥*

Ayam : He *acchedyaḥ* : is uncleavable; *ayam* : He *adāhyaḥ* is unburnable; *ayam* : He *akledyaḥ* : is unwettable; *asoṣyaḥ eva ca* : and also undriable; *ayam* : He (is) *nityaḥ* : everlasting, *sarvagataḥ* : all-prevading, *sthāṇuḥ* : immovable, *acalaḥ* motionless, *sanātanaḥ* : eternal.

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

अव्यक्तोऽय-मचिन्त्योऽय-मविकार्योऽय-मुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितु-मर्हसि ॥ 25 ॥

*Avyakto'yam acintyo'yam avikāryo'yam ucyate
tasmād evam viditvāinam n'ānuśocitum arhasi ॥ 25 ॥*

Ayam avyaktaḥ : He is unmanifest (to the senses), *ayam acintyaḥ* : He is inconceivable, *ayam avikāryaḥ* : He cannot be subjected to change *iti ucyate* : so it is said; *tasmāt* : therefore *enam* : Him *evam* : in this way *viditvā* : having known *anuśocitum* : to mourn for *na arhasi* : you are not fit (should not).

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

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।

तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितु-मर्हसि ॥ 26 ॥

*Atha c'etānam nitya-jātam nityam vā manyase mṛtam -
tathāpi tvam mahā-bāho n'ainam śocitum arhasi* ॥ 26 ॥

Athavā : In the alternative *enam* : Him (Self) *nityajātam* : frequently born *nityam mṛtam ca* : and frequently dying *tvam* : you *manyase* : think, *tathā api* : even then *mahābaho* : O mighty armed! *tvam* : you *evam* : like this *śocitum* : to mourn *na arhasi* : not proper.

26. In the alternative, even if you hold him (the Self) to be subject to constant births and deaths, there is no justification, O mighty armed, for your mourning for him. ³

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ 27 ॥

*Jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmād aparihārye'rthe na tvam śocitum arhasi* ॥ 27 ॥

Jātasya : For the born *mṛtyuḥ* : death *dhruvaḥ hi* : sure indeed, *mṛtasya* : for the dead *janma ca* : birth too *dhruvam* : sure; *tasmād* : therefore *aparihārye arthe* : in the inevitable matter or situation *tvam* : you *śocitum* : to sorrow for *na arhasi* : do not deserve. (should not).

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

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ 28 ॥

*Avyakt'ādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni Bhārata
avyakta-nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā* ॥ 28 ॥

Bhārata : O Arjuna! *bhūtāni* : beings *avyaktādīni* : mysterious in their origin, *vyakta madhyāni* : clear in their middle, *avyakta nidhanāni eva* : mysterious or unmanifested again in the end *tatra* : in this *kā* ; what *paridevanā* : grief.

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

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनं आश्चर्यवद्ब्रूति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैन-मन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥29॥

*Āścaryavat paśyati kaścit enam āścaryavad vadati tath'aiva
c'anyaḥ*

*āścaryavad c'ainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti śrutvā'py enam veda na
c'aiva kaścit ॥ 29 ॥*

Kaścit : Some one *enam* : Him *āścaryavat* : as a marvel *paśyati* : sees, *tathā eva ca* : in the same way *anyaḥ* : another *āścaryavat* : as a marvel *vadati* : speaks *anyaḥ ca* : still another *enam* : Him *āścaryavat* : as a marvel *śṛṇoti* : hears. *Śrutvā api ca* : Even on hearing *na kaścit* : no one *veda eva* : knows at all.

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

देही नित्य-मवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोन्नितुमर्हसि ॥ 30 ॥

*Dehī nityam avadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya Bhārata
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvam śocitum arhasi ॥ 30 ॥*

Sarvasya dehe : In the bodies of all *ayaṁ dehī* : this embodied spirit (the soul) *nityam* : always *avadhyaḥ* : indestructible. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *sarvāṇi bhūtāni* : all beings *tvam* : you *śocitum* : to mourn *na arhasi* : does not befit.

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

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ 31 ॥

*Svadharmam api c'āveksya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo'nyat kṣatriyasya na
vidyate ॥ 31 ॥*

Svadharmam : One's own Dharma (duty) *api ca* : further *aveksya* : considering *vikampitum* : to falter *na arhasi* : ought not *Kṣatriyasya* : for the Kṣatriya *dharmyāt yuddhāt* : than a righteous war *śreyaḥ* : good *anyat* : any other *na vidyate hi* : does not exist.

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

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्ध-मीदृशम् ॥ 32 ॥

*Yadṛcchayā c'opapannam svarga-dvāram apāvṛtam
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ Pārtha labhante yuddham
īdṛśam ॥ 32 ॥*

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *Yadṛcchayā* : by chance *upapannam* : come *apāvṛtam* : opened *svargadvāram* : gate of heaven *īdṛśam* : a battle like this (ye) *Kṣatriyāḥ* : whichever Kṣatriyas *labhante* : obtain (te : they) *sukhinaḥ* happy.

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

अथ चेत्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिञ्च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 33 ॥

*Atha cet tvam imam dharmyam saṁgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi
tataḥ svadharmam kīrtiṁ ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi ॥ 33 ॥*

Atha : But *dharmyam* : righteous *imam* : this *sangrāmam* : war *tvam* : you *na kariṣyasi* : do not engage in, *tataḥ* : by that *svadharmam* : one's own duty *kīrtim* : reputation *ca* : and *hitvā* : abandoning *pāpam* : sin *avāpsyasi* : shall incur.

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

अकीर्तिश्चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्ति-मरण-दतिरिच्यते ॥ 34 ॥

Akīrtim c'āpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te' vyayām sambhāvitasya c'ākīrtir. maraṇād atiricyate ॥ 34 ॥

Api ca : Besides *bhūtāni* : beings *te* : your *avyayam* : everlasting *akīrtim* : dishonour *kathayiṣyanti* : proclaim. *Sambhāvitasya* : for one honoured *akīrtiḥ* : dishonour *maraṇāt* : than death *atiricyate ca* : exceeds.

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

भयाद्रणा-दुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ 35 ॥

Bhayād raṇād uparataṁ maṁsyante tvāṁ mahā-rathāḥ yeṣāṁ ca tvāṁ bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam ॥ 35 ॥

Mahārathāḥ : Great car-warriors *tvām* : you *bhayāt* : out of fear *raṇāt* : from battle *uparatam* : turned back *maṁsyante* : will regard. *Tvam* : you *yeṣām* : whose *bahumataḥ bhūtvā* : having been the object of respect *lāghavam* : lightness, *yāsyasi* : will receive.

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

अवाच्य-वादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।

निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ 36 ॥

*Avācya-vādānś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tav' āhitāḥ
nindantas tava sāmāthyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim ॥ 36 ॥*

Tava : Your *ahitāḥ* : enemies *tava* : your *sāmāthyam* : ability, prowess *nindantaḥ* : slandering *bahūn* : many *avācya-vādān* : improper words *vadiṣyanti* : will speak; *tataḥ* : than that *duḥkhataram kim nu* : what is more painful?

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

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।

तस्मा-दुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ 37 ॥

*Hato vā prāpsyasi svargam jtvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha Kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ ॥ 37 ॥*

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *hataḥ vā* : if killed *svargam prāpsyasi* you will attain heaven, *jtvā vā* : if victorious *mahīm* : the kingdom *bhokṣyase* : you will enjoy. *Tasmāt* : therefore *yuddhāya* for battle *kṛtaniścayaḥ* : having resolved *uttiṣṭha* : arise.

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

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पाप-मवाप्स्यसि ॥ 38 ॥

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābh'ālābhau jay'ājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva n'aivam pāpam avāpsyasi ॥ 38 ॥*

Sukhaduḥkhe : Pleasure and pain *same kṛtvā* : considering alike *lābhālābhau* : gain and loss *jayājayau* : victory and defeat

(same *kṛtvā* : considering alike) *tataḥ* : afterwards *yuddhāya* : for battle *yujyasva* : be ready. *Evam* : Thus *pāpam* : sin *na avāpsyasi* : shall not incur.

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

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ 39 ॥

Eṣā te' bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tvimāṁ śṛṇu
buddhyā yukto yayā Pārtha karma-bandham prahāsyasi

Pārtha : O Pārtha! *te* : to you *abhihitā* : declared, imparted
eṣā : this *sāṅkhye buddhiḥ* : Truth according to the path of knowledge. *Yoge tu* : according to Yoga (the path of selfless action) *imāṁ* : this *śṛṇu* : hear. *Yayā* : By which *buddhyā yuktaḥ* : endowed with conviction *karmabandham* : bondage of works *prahāsyasi* : abandon.

39. O Arjuna! What has been declared to you is the Truth according to the Sāṅkhya (the path of knowledge). Listen now to the teaching of Yoga (the path of selfless action combined with devotion)⁵ by practising which the bondage of Karma is overcome.

नेहाभिक्रम-नाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ 40 ॥

n'eh'ābhikrama-nāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt ॥ 40 ॥

Iha : Here, in this path of Yoga *abhikramanātaḥ* : loss due to incomplete effort *na asti* : does not exist. *Pratyavāyaḥ* : sin due to failure *na vidyate* : does not accrue. *Asya dharmasya* : of this

Dharma *svalpam api* : even a little *mahataḥ* : from great *bhayāt* : fear *trāyate* : rescues.

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

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ 41 ॥

Vyavasāy'ātmikā buddhir ek'eha Kuru-nandana

bahu-śākhā hy anantāś-ca buddhayo'vyavasāyinām ॥ 41 ॥

Kurunandana : O Arjuna : *iha* : in this (path of selfless action) *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ* : the understanding or determinative faculty which produces conviction *eka* : rests in a single objective. *Avyavasāyinām* : In men without conviction (in the spiritual verity) *buddhayaḥ* : intelligence *bahuśākhāḥ* : many-branched *anantāḥ ca* : and endless.

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

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।

वेद्वादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति-वादिनः ॥ 42 ॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्म-फलप्रदाम् ।

क्रियाविशेष-बहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ 43 ॥

भोगैश्वर्य-प्रसक्तानां तयापहत-चेतसाम् ।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ 44 ॥

*Yām imām puṣpitām vācam pravadanty avipaścitaḥ
vedavāda-ratāḥ Pārtha nānyad astīti vādinah* || 42 ||

*Kām'ātmānaḥ svarga-parāḥ janma-karma-phalaprādām
kriyā-viśeṣa-bahulām bhog'aiśvarya-gatiṁ prati* || 43 ||

*Bhog'aiśvarya-prasaktānām tayā'pahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāy'ātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate* || 44 ||

Pārtha : O Arjuna *Vedavādaratāḥ* : those who delight in the eulogistic statements of the Vedas *na anyat asti* : there is nothing but that *iti vādinah* : who argue like this, *kāmātmānaḥ* : who have their mind full of desires, *svargaparāḥ* : who look upon heaven as the highest end, *avipaścitaḥ* : (those) foolish men, *bhogaiśvarya gatiṁ prati* : which are directed towards the attainment of enjoyments and power, *janmakarma phalaprādām* : which yield rebirth as the fruit of actions, *Kriyā viśeṣa bahulām* : which are full of descriptions of ritualistic works *puṣpitām yām imām vācam* : whichever florid texts *pravadanti* : expatiate upon *tayā* : by them *apahṛta-cetasām* : with their minds stolen away *bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām* : those who are full of cravings for enjoyments and power *samādhau* : in the mind *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ* : steadfast wisdom *na vidhīyate* : is not established.

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

त्रैगुण्य-विषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्य-सत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ 45 ॥

*Traigunya viṣayā vedā nistraigunyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattvastho niryogakṣema ātmavān ॥ 45 ॥*

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *vedāḥ* : the Vedas *traigunya viṣayāḥ* : deal with the three dispositions (Guṇas) of Nature—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, *Tvam* : you *nistraigunyaḥ* : beyond the influence of the three Guṇas *nirdvandvaḥ* : beyond the pair of opposites (like pain and pleasure, heat and cold etc). *nityasattvasthaḥ* : ever steady in purity *niryogakṣemaḥ* : unmindful of acquiring and preserving *ātmavān* : established in the spirit.

45. O Arjuna! The Vedas deal with material ends. But you be established in the Spirit, in the immutable purity of it, having abandoned all material values, attachment to possessions and concern with the contraries of life like pleasure and pain, heat and cold. ⁸

यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।

तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ 46 ॥

*Yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ sampluta'dake
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ ॥ 46 ॥*

Sarvataḥ : Everywhere *samplutodake* : flooded with water *udapāne* : in a small water receptacle (pond) *yāvān* : as much *arthaḥ* : use *vijānataḥ* : of the knowing *brāhmaṇasya* : for a Brāhmaṇa *sarveṣu Vedeṣu* : in all Vedas *tāvān* : that much.

46. What use a pond has got when a whole country is flooded, that much use only the Veda has got to a Brāhmaṇa who is full of wisdom. ⁹

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 47 ॥

*Karmany ev'ādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo'stv akarmaṇi* ||47||

Te : Your *adhikārah* : competence *karmaṇi eva* : in action only *kadācana* : ever *phaleṣu mā* : should not be in fruits. *Karma phala-hetuḥ* : with fruits of action as the motive force *mā bhūh* : should not be. *Akarmaṇi* : in inaction *te* : your *saṅgaḥ* : attachment *mā astu* : let not be.

47. To work alone you have competence, and not to claim their fruits. Let not the longing for fruits be the motive force of your action. At the same time let not this attitude confirm you in indolent inaction. ¹⁰

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ 48 ॥

*Yogasthah kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate* ||48||

Dhanañjaya : O Arjuna! *tvam* : you *yogasthah* : with mind steadfast in Yoga *saṅgam* : attachment *tyaktvā* : abandoning *siddhyasiddhyoḥ* : in success and failure *samaḥ bhūtvā* : being alike *karmāṇi kuru* do actions. *Samatvaṁ* : evenness of mind *yogaḥ (iti) ucyate* : is called Yoga.

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

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ 49 ॥

*Dūreṇa hy avaram karma buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpāṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ* ||49||

Dhanañjaya : O Arjuna! *buddhiyogāt* : than action done with the Buddhi (intellect, mind) held in Yoga (evenness) *karma* : mere action *dūreṇa* : far *avaram hi* : inferior indeed. *Buddhau* : In unperturbed sameness of mind *saraṇam* : refuge *anviccha* : seek. *Phalahetavaḥ* : One whose motive is the fruits of one's action *kṛpā-nāḥ* : pitiable.

49. O Arjuna, mere action (with attachment) is far inferior to action done with the mind poised in evenness. Seek shelter in this state of unperturbed evenness (which can arise only in a desireless mind in communion with the Divine). Those who work for selfish gains are indeed pitiable.

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥ 50 ॥

Buddhiyukto jahāti'ha ubhe sukrta-duṣkrte
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam ॥ 50 ॥

Buddhiyuktaḥ : One endowed with unperturbed evenness of mind *ubhe* : both *sukṛtaduṣkrte* : good and bad actions *iha* here *jahāti* : abandons. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *yogāya* : for this state of Yoga *yujyasva* : strive. *Yogaḥ* : Yoga *karmasu* : in action *kauśalam* : skill.

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

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ 51 ॥

Karmajam buddhi-yuktā hi phalam tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ
janma-bandha-vinirmuktāḥ padam gacchanty anām-
ayam ॥ 51 ॥

Buddhiyuktāḥ : Those endowed with unperturbed evenness of mind *manīṣiṇaḥ* : wise men *karmajam* : born of action *phalam* : fruits

tyaktvā : having abandoned *janmā bandha vinirmuktāḥ* : free from entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths *anāmayam* : free from sorrow *padam* : state *gacchanti* attain to.

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

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।

तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥ 52 ॥

Yadā te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati

tadā gantā'si nirvedam śrotavyasya śrutasya ca ॥ 52 ॥

Yadā : When : *te* your *buddhiḥ* : understanding *mohakalilam* : evil of delusion *vyatitarisyati* : crosses beyond, *tadā* : then *śrotavyasya* : what has yet to be heard (i. e. experiences yet to be had) *śrutasya ca* : what has already been heard (i.e. experiences already undergone) *nirvedam* : indifference *gantāsi* : will attain to.

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

श्रुति-विप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।

समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 53 ॥

Śrutivipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā

samādhāv acalā buddhiḥ tadā yogam avāpsyasi ॥ 53 ॥

Śrutivipratipannā : Distracted by various scriptural doctrines *te* : your *buddhiḥ* : intellect *yadā* : when *niścalā* : steady, firm *samādhau* : in Samadhi (introspection; Atman) *acalā* : unwavering *sthāsyati* : will remain *tadā* : then *yogam* : true Yoga *avāpsyasi* : will attain.

53. When your intellect, fed up with the bewildering scriptural doctrines and their interpretations, settles (finally) in steady and unwavering introspection (in the spirit), then you will attain to real Yoga.¹²

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥ 54 ॥

Arjuna uvāca

*Sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhi-sthasya Keśava
sthita-dhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kim āsita vrajeta kim ॥ 54 ॥*

Arjuna said:

Kesava : O Kesava! *sthitaprajñasya* : of a man of steady wisdom *samadhithasya* : of one of deep introspection *bhāṣā kā* : what is the description. *Sthitadhīḥ* : A man of steady wisdom *kim prabhāṣeta* : how does he speak? *Kim āsita* : how does he sit? *Kim vrajeta* : how does he walk?

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

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ 55 ॥

Srī Bhagavān uvāca

*Prajaḥāti yadā kāmān sarvān Pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tado'cyate ॥ 55 ॥*

The Blessed Lord Said

Pārtha : O Son of Prithā! *yadā* : when *manogatān* : contained in the mind *sarvān kāmān* : all desires *prajaḥāti* : abandons *yadā* : when

ātmanā : by the Atman *ātmani eva* : in the Atman only *tuṣṭaḥ* : satisfied, *tadā* : then *sthita-prajñāḥ* : a man of steady wisdom *ucyate* : one is spoken of as.

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

श्री भगवानुवाच—

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ 56 ॥

Duḥkheṣu anudvigna-manāḥ sukhēṣu vigata-spr̥hāḥ
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate ॥ 56 ॥

Duḥkheṣu : In suffering *anudvignamānāḥ* : with mind not agitated, *sukheṣu* : in pleasure *vigataspr̥hāḥ* : without desire, *vītarāga bhaya-krodhaḥ* : devoid of attachment, fear and anger, *munīḥ* : a sage *sthitadhiḥ* : steady-minded *ucyate* is called.

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

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 57 ॥

Yaḥ sarvatr'ānabhisnehas tat-tat prāpya śubh'āśubham
n'ābhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 57 ॥

Yaḥ : Who *sarvatra* : everywhere *anabhisnehaḥ* : without self-centred affections *tat tat* : whatever *śubhāśubham* : good and evil (favourable and unfavourable situations) *na abhinandati* : rejoices not *na dveṣṭi* : hates not *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom *pratiṣṭhitā* : is firmly set.

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

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 58 ॥

*Yadā samharate cāyam kūrmo'ṅgāni'va sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇi'ndriy'ārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 58 ॥*

Kūrmaḥ : Tortoise *sarvaśaḥ* : on all sides *aṅgāni iva* : like its limbs
ayam : he *indriyārthebhyas* : from objects of senses *indriyāṇi* : organs
yadā : when *samharate ca* : withdraws *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom
pratiṣṭhitā : is firmly set.

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

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ 59 ॥

*Viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjaṁ raso'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate ॥ 59 ॥*

Nirāhārasya : Of the abstinent *dehinaḥ* : embodied soul (Jīva)
rasavarjaṁ : barring the taste : *vinivartante* : fall away. *Asya* : His
rasaḥ api : even taste *param* : the Supreme Truth *dṛṣṭvā* : having
seen (known) *nivartate* : falls away.

59. From the abstinent soul sense objects fall away, but not the taste for them. When the Supreme Truth is realised, even the taste departs.¹³

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥ 60 ॥

*Yatato hy api Kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthini haranti prasabham manaḥ ॥ 60 ॥*

Hi : Indeed! *Kaunteya* : O Son of Kunti *yatataḥ* : the striving
vipaścitaḥ : the discerning *puruṣasya* : of the man *manaḥ* : mind *api* :
even *pramāthini* : turbulent *indriyāṇi* : senses *prasabham* : violently
haranti : draw away.

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

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।

वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 61 ॥

*Tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsita mat-parah
vaśe hi yas'yendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 61 ॥*

Tāni sarvāṇi : All of them *saṁyamya* : having controlled *yuktaḥ* : steadfast *matparah* : wholly devoted to Me *āsita* : should remain *yasya* : whose *indriyāṇi* : senses *vaśe hi* : are under control *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom *pratiṣṭhitā* : is firmly set.

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

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ 62 ॥

*Dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣū'pajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho' bhijāyate ॥ 62 ॥*

Viṣayān : Sense objects *dhyāyataḥ* : dwelling longingly in the mind *puṁsaḥ* : of one *teṣu* : for them *saṅgaḥ* : attachment, inclination towards *upajāyate* : arises, *saṅgāt* : out of inclination *kāmaḥ* : desire *sañjāyate* : is born, *kāmāt* : out of desire *krodhaḥ* : anger *abhijāyate* : grows.

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

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥ 63 ॥

*Krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ saṁmohāt smṛti-vibhramah
smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt pranaśyati ॥ 63 ॥*

Krodhāt : Out of anger *sammohaḥ* : delusion, *sammohat* : out of delusion *smṛti-vibhramah* : loss of memory, *smṛti-bhramśat* : from loss of memory *buddhi nāśaḥ* : ruin of the discriminative power, understanding *buddhināśāt* : from ruin of understanding *praṇaśyati* : one is destroyed.

63. Anger generates delusion, and delusion results in loss of memory. Loss of memory brings about the destruction of discriminative intelligence, and loss of discriminative intelligence spells ruin to a man. ¹⁴

रागद्वेष-वियुक्तैस्तु विषया-निन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसाद-मधिगच्छति ॥ 64 ॥

*Rāga-dveṣa-viyuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran
ātma-vaśyair vidhey'ātmā prasādam adhigacchati* ॥ 64 ॥

Tu : But *vidheyātmā* : one with a disciplined mind *rāga-dveṣa-viyuktaiḥ* : devoid of attachment and aversion *ātmavaśyaiḥ indriyaiḥ* : with senses under one's control *viṣayān caran* : approaching sense objects *prasādam adhigacchati* : attains serenity, tranquillity.

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

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानि-रस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्न-चेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥ 65 ॥

*Prasāde sarva-duḥkhānām hānir asyo'pajāyate
prasanna-cetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate* ॥ 65 ॥

Prasāde : On attaining tranquillity (serenity) *asya* : his *sarvaduḥkhānām* : of all sorrows *hāniḥ* : end, destruction *upajāyate* : takes place. *hi* : for *prasannacetasah* : of the man of tranquillity *buddhiḥ* : intellect *āśu* : quickly *paryavatiṣṭhate* : remains steady.

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

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्ति-रशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ 66 ॥

*Nāsti buddhir ayuktasya na c'ā yuktasya bhāvanā
na cā bhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutah sukham ॥ 66 ॥*

Ayuktasya : Of the uncontrolled *buddhiḥ na asti* : faith or spiritual comprehension does not exist, *ayuktasya* : of the uncontrolled *bhāvanā ca na* : there is no meditation also, *abhāvayataḥ* : for the unmeditative *śāntiḥ ca na* : there is no peace, *aśāntasya* : of the one without peace *kutah* : wherefrom *sukham* : happiness.

66. A man of uncontrolled senses has no spiritual comprehension. He has no capacity for meditation either. For the unmeditative there is no peace. And where is happiness for one without peace of mind? ¹⁵

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायु-र्नावमिवांभसि ॥ 67 ॥

*Indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām yan mano'nuvidhīyate
tad asya harati prajñāṃ vāyur nāvām ivāmbhasi ॥ 67 ॥*

Caratām : Moving, wandering *indriyāṇām* : among the senses *yaḥ* : whichever *manah* : mind *anuvidhīyate* : follows, *tat* : that *asya* : of that mind *prajñāṃ* : discriminative power *ambhasi* : upon the waters *nāvām* : ship *vāyur iva* : like wind *harati hi* : carries off.

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

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 68 ॥

*Tasmād yasya mahā-bāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśah
indriyāṇi'ndriy'arthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 68 ॥*

Mahābāho : O mighty Arjuna! *tasmāt* : therefore *yasya* : whose *indriyāṇi* : senses *sarvaśaḥ* : completely *indriyārthebhyaḥ* : from all sense objects *nigṛhitāni* : are restrained *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom *pratiṣṭhitā* : is firmly set.

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

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ 69 ॥

Yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ ॥ 69 ॥

Sarvabhūtānām : Of all beings *yā niśā* : what is night *tasyām* : in that *saṁyamī* : the self-controlled one *jāgarti* : is awake. *Yasyām* : In what *bhūtāni* : all beings *jāgrati* : are awake *sā* : that *paśyataḥ* : enlightened *muneḥ* : of the sage *niśā* : night.

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

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

Āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭham samudram āpaḥ
praviśanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti na
kāma-kāmī ॥ 70 ॥

Āpūryamāṇam : Ever being filled, *acala-pratiṣṭham* : immobile and steady *samudram* : sea *āpaḥ* : waters *yadvat* : in what way *praviśanti* : enter *tadvat* : in that way *sarve kāmāḥ* : all desires *yaṁ* : in whom *praviśanti* : enter *saḥ* : he *śāntim* : peace *āpnoti* : attains, *na* : not *kāmakāmī* : one who longs for objects of desire.

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

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

*Vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṁś carati niḥspṛhaḥ
nirmamo nirahamkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati ॥ 71 ॥*

Yaḥ : Whichever *pumān* : man *sarvān* : all *kāmān* : desires *vihāya* : abandoning *niḥspṛhaḥ* : without longing *nirmamaḥ* : without the feeling of 'mine' *nirahamkāraḥ* : without the sense of 'I' *carati* : goes about *saḥ* : he *śāntim* : peace *adhigacchati* : attains.

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

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्या मन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ 72 ॥

*Eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ Pārtha n'ainām prāpya vimuhyati
sthitvā'syām antakāle'pi brahma-nirvāṇam ṛcchati ॥ 72 ॥*

Pārtha : O son of Prithā *brāhmī sthitiḥ* : state of dwelling in Brahman *eṣā* : this is. *Enām prāpya* : Attaining to this state *na vimuhyati* : is not deluded; *antakāle api* : even at the end of one's life *asyām* therein *sthitvā* : abiding *brahmanirvāṇam* : oneness with Brahman *ṛcchati* : attains

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

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम
द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

NOTES

1. *Vr. 3*: This is an exhortation following the Gospel of Spiritual Strength based on the philosophy of the immortal Ātman as the Essence in man. So long as man feels he is the body and nothing but the body, he lives in fear and sorrow. He stands up in real strength, shaking off all fear and sorrow, when his sense of individuality is shifted from the body to the Spirit. This verse expresses concisely the practical consequences of accepting the doctrine of the Ātman expounded in the succeeding verses of the chapter.

2. *Vr. 16*: This and the verses preceding it up to the 12th and those succeeding up to the 25th, deal with the topic of the immortality of the Ātman, the Essence in man. A general principle in support of the doctrine is laid down in this verse. If we take the words Sat and Asat as real and unreal, and Bhāva and Abhāva as existence and non-existence literally as logical contradictions, the sentence will only involve repetition, adding nothing to the problem posed. The Asat or the unreal cannot be totally non-existent like the horn of a hare which is only a wordy figment incapable of being experienced and there is no meaning in the denial of the 'coming into being' of such an entity. So the coming into being of Asat or non-entity, means the changing forms of things we experience. These forms are experienced but they disappear immediately and give place to new forms, which too disappear. These changing forms are called Asat, non-existent, in the sense that they have no ultimacy in themselves. They come and go, and if all the forms cease, they leave no residue, except Sat or Essence, the changeless Being, the substratum on which all forms appear. The Sat or Essence is Changeless Being, Awareness or Witness of change.

Now while a general philosophy of Being and Becoming can be spun out of the verse, the context limits the meaning of the term Sat to the Ātman in the human personality and Asat to the body-mind. The former is the changeless Awareness or Witness, the Essence in man, while the latter is the changeful body which

the Ātman assumes when He is embodied. Now in the embodied state the Ātman appears to be one with the body, just as the light within several coloured glasses seem to be one with the glasses in spite of its distinct identity, or just as electricity appears as one with the field in which it manifests for the time being, in spite of its distinction from the field. After all man, when he thinks of himself, can do so only as a body-mind and nothing more. This is the state of ignorance, when man is not aware of his real nature as the Sat, the Ātman, but feels his self-hood entirely in the Asat, the body-mind. The *Tattvadarśī* (Truth-seer or philosopher) spoken of in the verse is the man of enlightenment who has succeeded in distinguishing between these and recognising his true identity with the immortal Ātman whose nature is graphically described in several passages as 'Him the weapons cleave not' etc. What is required of a *Tattvadarśī* is not a mere intellectual understanding but an intuitive conviction which is expressed in life as the capacity for detachment that is described in the section on Sthita-prajña or man of steady intelligence.

On the subject of the Asat or the body, one has to keep in mind the distinction between the Sūkṣma-śarīra (subtle body) and the Sthūlaśarīra (the gross body). The gross body is the one that changes from birth to birth. So it is compared to changing of dress. The analogy is used to show the absolute discontinuity, the catastrophic break that marks physical death. But the other body, the subtle body or Sūkṣma-śarīra in which the Prāṇas (vital forces), mind, intellect, and the ego are integrated, survives, carrying all the Karma-efficiencies created in one life to the next. It is because of the Sūkṣma-śarīra that re-embodiment becomes possible. So in respect of Sūkṣma-śarīra there is continuity from birth to birth. But when the enlightenment comes and the Jīva realises his real identity as the Ātman, the Sūkṣma-śarīra also perishes. This marks the real Death which is the door to Immortality. Death in this sense is also catastrophic in that it brings enlightenment, whereas in physical death it is catastrophic

at the physical level only; what follows is only another embodiment.

In these verses the Immortal Self and the Sūkṣma-śarīra continuing from body to body are indiscriminately alluded to, as they go together in the Jīva, the embodied being. Reference to this Immortal Self will be seen in verses such as 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 etc., and the references to the continuing Sūkṣma-śarīra in verses such as 13 and 22.

In this context, the analysis of the human personality according to the Vedānta may be stated. The human personality has three bodies consisting of five sheaths or Kośas. These Kośas are: Annamaya-kośa or Gross body; Prāṇamaya-kośa or Vitalistic sheath; Manomaya-kośa or mental sheath; Vijñānamaya-kośa or intellectual sheath; and Ānandamaya-kośa, or the sheath of bliss. The Ātman, the spiritual Self, which is by nature Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, is clothed in these sheaths. It is the Ātman that endows the sheaths with the light of consciousness. Now these five sheaths are organised into two bodies — the Sthula-Śarīra, or the gross physical body, and the subtle body also known as the Linga-śarīra. All the sheaths except the Annamaya-kośa, ensouled by the Ātman, constitute the Sūkṣma-Sarīra, which parts from the gross body at death, carrying along with it all the tendencies and the merits and demerits acquired in life until it gets another embodiment in this earth-sphere or in any of the higher or lower spheres according to the Karma of the Jīva. The Jīva can enjoy the fruits of his Karma only with a gross body pertaining to this or any other sphere. In itself it is a carrier of the tendencies and merits and demerits acquired in previous embodiments. When enlightenment comes and the Ātman realises his spiritual nature, as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, he is freed from the union with the Sūkṣma-śarīra, and the latter is dissolved into its elements. This is emancipation or Mukti.

3. V. 26-27: In these verses, the reference seems to be to some systems of philosophy like the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā which accepted an undying soul, the Ātman, but did not accept an ultimate Mukti or liberation for him. The Jīva acquires merits or demerits in this world, goes to heavenly or nether regions to enjoy their fruits and on the exhaustion of the merits or demerits comes again to the earth to acquire merits through Karma. He is never liberated. Enjoyment of heavenly felicities as a result of ritualistic and ethical actions done in life is the highest destiny of the Jīva. The continuity of the Jīva is accepted, as without it there will be nothing to conserve and enjoy the values generated by work. Arjuna is told that even if such a view of man different from that of the Vedantins is held, there is no cause for sorrow at death, as it will surely be followed by birth.

4. V. 28: This and the succeeding verse seem to refer to some school of naturalism, which accepts no immortal spirit. Death becomes a natural and no doubt a mysterious and unavoidable phenomenon.

5. V. 39. Sāṃkhya and Yoga are known in Indian philosophy as two allied systems having the same metaphysics but different methods of practice. Sāṃkhya is the intellectual analysis of the material categories, and the separating of Prakṛti from the Puruṣa, the spiritual monad. The system does not accept a God, a universal Being, who is the master of all spiritual monads and material categories. Salvation consists in the monad or Puruṣa getting isolation from the material categories with which it is integrated in the state of bondage. Intellectual analysis and reflection form the means for this. See Appendix for more information.

The Yoga has no metaphysics of its own but generally accepts the Sāṃkhya theory. But it concerns itself with various ways of inward concentration by which the ingathered mind can be made subtle enough to pierce the coverings of the spirit, and become aware of the spirit as distinct from its material vestments. Thus practically the Sāṃkhya, though having an identity of its own, is a metaphysics including the discipline of reflection or self-

analysis leading to realisation. Yoga is the systematic practice of concentration by which the realisation of that metaphysical truth is attained.

In the Gītā passage under discussion, though this Sāṁkhya and Yoga nomenclatures are used, the words practically mean what in modern Vedantic parlance we call Jñāna-Yoga and Bhakti-mixed-Karma Yoga. So the verse has to be understood as meaning: I have given you the understanding, the conviction, which enlightenment (Jñāna or Sāṁkhya) gives of the real nature of man — of his Essence, the Atman. Now I shall declare to you another way of attaining it, the Yoga or Karma-mixed Bhakti, which consists in performing all actions without attachments as devoted offering to the Divine, and in practising love of Him and getting one's mind absorbed in Him through concentration (Samādhi). The idea is to cultivate devotion to God and dedicate oneself and all one's actions to Him, as His servant and devotee. If one practises this discipline in life, the Supreme Being bestows the knowledge of the devotee's true relation with His being—the awareness of being part and parcel of the Sat-chidānanda. Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this by an analogy. A very faithful servant serves his Master for long and pleases him immensely by his love and loyalty. The master, out of intense love and consideration for him, puts him on his own seat, saying 'You are myself; sit on it.' Just like that, supreme knowledge of one's spiritual identity (or intimacy) is what comes out of the Lord's grace for a Jīva who serves and surrenders to Him through love and service.

This surrender in early stages consists in cultivating the feeling that one is the servant of God and that everything one does is on His behalf and what accrues from it is His. Thus the purely self-centred motivation in life is changed with the aid of devotion. In the maturity of spiritual understanding even the sense of agency is given up and one is established in the conviction that one is a mere instrument and He is the real agent too. When surrender is complete, the Supreme Being bestows that illumination which makes the Sāṁkhya or Jñāna doctrine of man's spirit-

ual identity as the Ātman, a real experience that one is the Spirit and not the body, and that death and all the infirmities of the body do not affect the Self. This experience may be interpreted as oneness with Him, or intimate kinship with Him.

5. V. 40: Spiritual practices may take a whole life-time or several lives to fructify as realisation. But an aspirant need not feel that the efforts he has put in this field are ever lost, unlike in agriculture and other such enterprises where one loses everything if failure occurs due to drought or other causes. In the spiritual field the competence that one has acquired remains as tendencies in the subtle body, and in the next life one begins from where one left in the previous life.

There is another kind of defect in fruit-oriented action, especially of a ritualistic nature for the attainment of earthly or heavenly felicities. If they are done wrongly, one not only loses the fruits, but suffers adverse consequences, which are referred to in the text as *pratyavṛtya*. In the path of devotion, there is no such adverse effects for mistakes; for there are no mistakes or spiritual offences at all except want of faith. So *Srīmad Bhāgavata* speaks of this path of devotion as a well-paved high road along which one can even run blindfolded without any fear of fall.

6. V. 41: This gives the contrast between one who wholeheartedly follows the spiritual path and a worldly minded man who follows wealth, sensual satisfaction and ambition. A man who has a spiritual world-view, a firm faith in a Divine Intelligence based on the instruction of the scripture and the Guru, has got a fixed goal that does not vary. He is like a man who has a correct idea of the destination and has selected the correct road to it. He is therefore at peace, knowing, that he is on the right road. A worldly-minded man, on the other hand, may not often have a fixed world-view. He cares only for gains, enjoyments, and pursuit of ambitions. So without any conviction about the nature of the universe and his own destiny in it, he pursues these diverse satisfactions, the objects of which change from time to

time. Hence the understanding of such a person gets many-branched, being engaged in the pursuit of several ends. His mental energies are thus dissipated, and he loses control of the mind and becomes a slave of the senses and their objects.

7. V. 42-44: The criticism offered here is intended to draw the distinction between the outlook of the new Gospel of Bhāgavata Dharma which Kṛṣṇa preached and the outlook of the Vedic fundamentalists who followed the philosophy of Vedic ritualism, which is known as the Purvamīmāṃsa system of thought. These ritualistic philosophers held that the purpose of the Veda is to induce man to perform rituals and fire sacrifices, which will gain him heavenly felicity. After death the Jīva will go to those heavenly regions where they will have the enjoyments of the fruits of the sacrifices they have performed. After the fruit-bearing effects of Karma are exhausted, the Jīva comes back to the earth to do more Karma enabling him to enjoy heavenly felicities again. Thus according to them, there is no salvation for the soul or getting out of Samsāra. The soul goes from embodiment to embodiment on earth and other spheres enjoying the fruits of his actions. Their outlook therefore multiplies man's desires and ambitions, and they justify this by quoting the Vedas as authority. In the nature of things, their mind becomes 'many branched' or divided by all kinds of passing desires. They have no conviction about the ultimate destiny of man beyond what has been stated. They are just like wanderers and vagabonds in the expansive field of life.

In contrast to them are the Sāṃkhyas and the Yogins. They have a spiritual world-view and a conviction regarding the ultimate destiny of man. They are free from desires. Their mind therefore gets unified following a single goal, unlike that of the ritualists whose mind becomes 'many-branched' because of their changing desires and objectives. That 'single goal' of the Sāṃkhyas and the Yogins is the realisation of one's spiritual nature as the Ātman and one's integral relation with the Supreme Being. The realisation of the truth puts an end to the transmigration of the Jīva and he becomes united with the Divine.

In this path of salvation also work as duty has a place. But all work, sacred or secular, has to be done as an offering to the Divine, and not for the attainment of heavenly felicities or any other type of enjoyments. The only result of it is purification of the mind and the dawn of the grace of God on the Jīva, by which he obtains illumination.

8. V. 45: In continuation of the thought of the previous verse the limitation of the philosophy of Vedic fundamentalists is again stated in the expression *traiguṇya viśayāḥ* — connected with the three Guṇas of Prakṛti or Root-matter. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas constitute Prakṛti or Root-matter. So the Veda as understood by the fundamentalists, deals only with matters material i.e. the life of the body, on earth and in heaven, as explained already. Arjuna is asked to accept the spiritual outlook *nīstrai-guṇya*, which sees in matter or Prakṛti, only the shadow of the Spirit. The implication of accepting the primacy of the Spirit is given in the second line of the verse.

It must be understood that these and similar verses are not a condemnation of the Veda but a criticism of it as understood and interpreted by the fundamentalists. Really the Bhāgavata Dharma which Kṛṣṇa teaches is included in the Vedānta, or the Upaniṣads, which teach the nature of Jīva and Brahman and the way for realising the Brahman and attaining release from Samsāra, which is identical with the teachings of Kṛṣṇa. But the fundamentalists reject the Upaniṣads or interpret them as subsidiary to the ritualistic philosophy. So Kṛṣṇa's criticism is directed against that way of thought, and his Bhāgavata Dharma is the correct re-statement of the Upaniṣadic thought with an emphasis on the practice of devotion and dedicated work as the royal road to God's grace and salvation.

9. V. 46: This a continuation of the criticism of Vedic fundamentalism. The bliss of Brahman attained through Jñāna and Bhakti, for which the Upaniṣads and the Bhāgavata Dharma stand, includes in itself all other fulfilments like those that Vedic fundamentalism has in view, just as the lights of a few candles are

all included in the sun's light, or the waters of all the tanks in a place are merged in the water of a flood. Both candles and tank-water lose their significance in such situations.

10. V. 47-52: In these verses the ideal of Yoga as contrasted with the Sāṃkhya and the Vedic fundamentalism is stated. Sāṃkhya eschews work. Vedic fundamentalism advocates work for selfish purposes — the attainment of heavenly felicities. From here till the verse 52 is discussed the fundamental doctrine of the Bhāgavata Dharma, namely that of taking part in activities of life that form one's duty without desiring their fruits. This is unlike the attitude of Vedic fundamentalists and worldly minded people towards work. At the lowest level of the animal and the slave, work is the result of force or compulsion. At the higher level of a free man, it springs from profit motive — profit here or in other spheres in the hereafter.

When man grows out of his self-centred outlook, he gets a still higher motivation in occupations involving work for the community, country or humanity. But those who have a devotional outlook and want higher evolution, will find a satisfactory scheme of work only when work is dedicated to God, whether its immediate inducement is an individual or social concern. From the beginning to the end the Gītā teaches this scheme of devotion-oriented-work without desire for fruits. The fruits of work are offered to the Divine in the first instance and the sense of agency too at the maturity of spiritual life.

In reading this and the succeeding verses of the Gītā, it should be remembered that the even-sightedness or unperturbed state of mind is not to be had for the mere asking or wishing. It is the result of prolonged discipline and maturity of mind. It is an ideal state towards which we have to strive in our own imperfect way. Like an infant learning to walk, we may fail in our effort, but one has to persist in it in spite of such failure. Success will depend on the genuineness of our desirelessness, our discriminative endeavours, our earnestness to find a spiritual sanction for life, and our devotional fervour. As no hard and fast distinction can be made in

spiritual life between the ideal and the actual, the end and the means, the ideal of Karma Yoga itself is stated at the beginning. The ideal of Yoga or absolutely unperturbed condition of mind can be actualised only when one has the realisation that one is the Ātman. This state and the state described by the Sāṃkhya — of being established in the Ātman that is not affected by any material change or impact — are identical. Thus it is seen how the Yoga shades off into the Sāṃkhya. Hence though they can be analysed into two disciplines, they are basically one. Their relation of mutual dependence is discussed in the 3rd chapter.

11. V. 52: This is the state of Vairāgya, the capacity to view objects of sense without any self-centred motives — capacity to view such objects suited for food, sex-enjoyment, possession etc., as they are in themselves, and not as objects catering to our needs. Unless we have this capacity to some extent at least, we shall be entirely under the grip of instinctive drives — a state of mind which is described here as delusion. To the extent we are free from this delusion or infatuation, to that extent our mind is fit for spiritual perceptions.

12. V. 53: Just as we should be free from the hold of the senses, we should be free from intellectual doubts of a dilettante nature, which result from casual reading and lack of a positive and serious intellectual attitude towards spiritual problems and scriptural study. Thus a moral and intellectual earnestness is the prime requisite for attaining that state of spiritual realisation described as the state of the Sthitaprajña or the perfect sage of steady understanding, described from verse 54 onwards.

13. V. 59: Keeping aloof scrupulously from objects of enjoyment is no ultimate remedy for the thirst for sensuous enjoyments. These instinctive urges and subtle hankerings continue to be in our mind and draw us away when they get the upper hand at some time or other. Only spiritual realisation, the experience that one is the Spirit and not the body, can uproot them completely. The word *Ahāra* also means food, and the passage can be interpreted to mean that a man who fasts may be

able to abstain from objects as the body becomes weak, but he cannot conquer the hankering for sense objects by such physical means. Spiritual enlightenment alone can do this.

14. V. 63: In this and the previous verses the cause of man's all-round degradation is pointed out. Giving oneself up to the cravings of the senses, without any effort to regulate, control and sublimates them, is that cause. Such a life reduces him to the level of animality, which is the meaning of *Buddhināśa* or loss of discriminative intelligence.

15. V. 66: Contrary to the popular view, sense control, and not sense indulgence, is the way to happiness. For, true happiness can be had only on a basis of peace, which one can have only through meditation on God or the Ātman. But meditation is impossible without control of the senses. For, sense indulgence strengthens the outward-going tendencies of the mind and prevents the mind from getting in-gathered and concentrated on the Ātman, who is the source of all joy.

Chapter III

कर्मयोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH ACTION

SUMMARY

Conflict between work and Contemplation (1-2): Hearing the discourse on 'The Ideal of the man of steady wisdom', Arjuna's confusion only increases. If that state of inwardness and serenity depicted in the above ideal is the end for man to seek, how could its pursuit be reconciled with the life of action to which Kṛṣṇa has been simultaneously exhorting him, especially when that action is participation in a terrible holocaust like a fratricidal war? He therefore poses this question before Kṛṣṇa, and the rest of the chapter is Kṛṣṇa's answer to it.

The two paths : (3-8): Sri Kṛṣṇa said: Two ways of spiritual fulfilment have been revealed by Me — the Path of Knowledge (the Sāṃkhya) and the Path of Devotion-cum-Action (Yoga). They appear different, but as will be shown later, the difference is only apparent and they can be reconciled. But it is the Path of Action that now forms the subject of discourse.

By merely abstaining from actions, man does not gain that serenity of spirit, the unperturbed state of the *Sthitaprajña*. He will only be relapsing into idleness thereby. For one thing, it is impossible for any man to live for even a minute without any action; for, man is physically a part of Nature, and Nature is ever active. He is therefore compelled to act. So sitting quiet and thinking that one has attained to that unperturbed state of the spirit, will be rank hypocrisy. For, such a person's mind will be

very busy thinking of the objects to which he is attached. So the way of spiritual development for him lies not in abstinence from action but only in action performed without attachments and under proper regulation of the senses.

The law of yajña: (9-18): God created man with the law of Yajña as the means for his worldly prosperity and for his higher spiritual evolution. Yajña means self-sacrifice — the offering of what one considers precious, for the service of God and one's fellow beings. If our fellow beings can be looked upon as the very tabernacle of the Divine — for God indwells everything and everything is, in that sense, the body of God — this service itself becomes the highest form of worship too. Yajña, at the lower levels, is one of give and take. Man lives in a community which can thrive only by the exchange of commodities and services among its members. Each gets certain services from others and gives back certain other services in return. One who fails to do his part of the work but insists on his getting his share of the good things of social life, is an exploiter and a thief. He violates the law of Yajña and gets morally degraded. Rights and duties therefore go together, and to claim the former without due insistence on the latter, begets corruption and decadence and leads to ruin ultimately. The Vedic fire sacrifice, where thanks-giving offerings are made to the Devas for the benefits that they have bestowed on man through Nature, is symbolic of this great law of life. Both the ritual Yajña, and Yajña in a social sense consisting in the discharge of one's duties to the body politic, are based on action. And one who gives up action will be abandoning Yajña too and thus violating the basic commandment of the Creator — the ethical law of a life of non-exploitation.

Enlightened Ones too should work: (19-26): There may, however, be some rare individuals who have risen above all personal wants. They may be able to withdraw themselves from society, and live a life of self-contentment without depending on the services of others. Even they should work without attachment or desire for the fruits of work. For, by so doing, one progresses spiritually and attains the Supreme Being. Just as socially-oriented work makes man ethical, work done without any thought of selfish gain, as an act of pure service of God and man, raises him

to spiritual heights. Purely unselfish action without any thought of returns or obligations, is the higher aspect of the law of Yajña. So Janaka and other great Rājārṣis continued to be in the field of action and attained perfection through a life of disinterested action.

There is also another reason why all, including men of higher spiritual attainment, should work; for, otherwise they will be setting a bad example for unenlightened men, who, without a proper understanding of their mental state, would surely imitate their external behaviour, and relapse into abandonment of their duties, ending in pure idleness. A leader has always to be careful about the example he sets. Again look at Isvara Himself. He has no wants; but He is ever engaged in works for the sake of the Jīvas in Samsāra. So an enlightened man, though he might have risen above all considerations of self-interest, should work unattached and without any return in view, but at the same time evincing just the same zeal and energy with which a man desirous of selfish returns works. Otherwise he will be creating conflict of ideas and ideals among common people.

Wisdom is not to be confused with Inactivity: (27-35): The difference between the wise man and the ignorant man consists in this: the former is established in the experience that all actions that are supposed to be his, are only the movements of Prakṛti and that the 'real he', the Self, is only the uninvolved witness. The ignorant man, on the other hand, being absolutely involved in, and identified with, the movements of Prakṛti, feels that *he* is acting and enjoying. The way to attain detachment is not by keeping quiet without doing anything, but by discharging all one's duties, surrendering their fruits and the sense of agency to the Supreme Divine. Non-attached work (Karma Yoga) and discriminative understanding of one's basic nature as the 'unattached self' (Jñāna Yoga) are not contradictory but complementary. For, non-attachment in work is impossible unless one practises simultaneously the understanding that one is basically the 'unattached self.' And, except in the case of a few rare aspirants, the practice of such discriminative understanding about the Self, without the support of unselfish work, will end only in pure idleness and failure to do one's duty. One who fails to do his duty and runs after ways of life

that are alien to his inherent nature and aptitude, only incurs sin. For, to do what one ought to do, is virtue, and avoiding it out of idleness, or cupidity, or base passions, is sin.

What is Sin: (36-48) Arjuna thereupon asks the question why man commits sins, even though he may not want to. And Sri Kṛṣṇa answers: It is desire (lust) and anger that appear as sin and compel man to undesirable action. The seats of these passions are the senses, mind and intellect. So to avoid sin man must learn to control the senses first, but this cannot be achieved merely by suppression. One has to bring to bear the light of the Self, the Divine spark in one, on the intellect, mind and senses. Thus should one conquer man's great enemy sin, the combination of lust and anger.

अर्जुन उवाच—

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvāca;

Jyāyasī cet karmanas te matā buddhir, janārdana

tat kim karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi, keśava ॥ १ ॥

Janārdana : O Kṛṣṇa! *karmanah* than action *buddhiḥ* : discriminative insight *jyāyasī* : superior *te* : by you *matā* : considered *cet* if, *tat kim* then why *Keśava*: O Keśava *ghore karmaṇi* : in this terrible action (like war) *mām* : me *niyojayasi* engage.

Arjuna said :

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

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ २ ॥

Vyāmiśṛṇ'aiva vākyaena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me

tad ekam vada niścitya yena śreyo'ham āpnuyām ॥ २ ॥

Vyāmiśreṇa : By conflicting *iva* seemingly *vākyaṇa* : by words *me* : my *buddhim* : intellect *mohayasi* : you confuse. *Teṇa* : by what *aham* : I *śreyah* : the highest good *āpnuyām* : attain to *tat* : that *ekam* alone *niścitya* : definitely *vada* : tell.

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

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया नय ।

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ 3 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca :

Loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayā' naga

iñāna-yogena sāmkhyanām krama-yogena yoginām ॥ 3 ॥

Anagha : O sinless one! *asmin loke* : in this world *sāmkhyanām* : for the sāmkhya (ascetic contemplatives) *jñānayogena* : by the path of knowledge *yoginām* : for Yogis (aspirants of an active nature) *karma-yogena* : by the path of action *dvividhā niṣṭhā* : twofold spiritual path *purā* : of yore *mayā* : by Me *proktā* : taught.

The Blessed Lord Said :

3. In times of yore a twofold spiritual path was taught by me, O sinless one — that of knowledge for Sāmkhya (who are pure contemplatives), and that of action for Yogis (who combine detached work with devotion).²

न कर्मणा-मनारम्भान्निष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ 4 ॥

Na karmanām anārambhān naiṣkarmyam puruṣo' śnute

na ca saṁnyasanād eva siddhim samadhigacchati ॥ 4 ॥

Puruṣaḥ : Man *karmanām* : of actions *anārambhāt* : by non-performance *naiṣkarmyam* : state of egoless actionlessness (spiritual

passivity) *na āśnute* : reaches not. *Saṁnyasanāḍ eva* : by mere external abandonment (by merely putting on the garb of renunciation) *siddhim* : spiritual perfection *na ca samadhigacchati* : does not attain.

4. By non-performance of action a man does not gain the state of spiritual passivity (or the state of egoless actionlessness called *Naiṣkarmya*). By mere external abandonment (*Saṁnyāsa*), he does not attain to perfection. ³

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ 5 ॥

Na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ ॥ 5 ॥

Jātu : Ever *kṣaṇam* : a moment *api* : even *akarmakṛt* : one without any action *na hi tiṣṭhati* : does not indeed remain *hi* for *prakṛtijaiḥ* born of Nature *guṇaiḥ* : by *Guṇas* (impulses) *avaśaḥ* : deprived of freedom *sarvaḥ* : all *karma* : action *kāryate* , are made to perform.

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

कर्मन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ 6 ॥

Karm'endriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran
indriy'arthān vimūḍhātmā mithy'ācāraḥ sa ucyate ॥ 6 ॥

Karmendriyāṇi : Organs of action *saṁyamya* : restraining *yaḥ* : who *manasā* : by mind *indriyārthān* : objects of senses *smaran* : thinking of *āste* : sits *vimūḍhātmā* : deluded person *saḥ* : he *mithyācāraḥ* : hypocrite *ucyate* : is called.

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

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कमेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ 7 ॥

Yas tv indriyāṇi manusā niyamy'ārabhate'rjuna /
karm, endriyaiḥ karma yogam asaktah sa viśiṣyate //7//

Yaḥ tu : But who *indriyāṇi* : sense organs *manusā* : by the mind
niyamyā : controlling *asaktah* : unattached *karmendriyaiḥ* : by
organs of action *Karma yogam* : communion through work
ārabhate : begins, *Arjuna* : O Arjuna *saḥ* : such a man *viśiṣyate* :
excels.

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

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ 8 ॥

Niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyāyo hy akarmanah /
śarīra-yatrā'pi ca te na prasiddhyed akarmanah //8//

Tvam : You *niyatam* : prescribed *karma* : actions *kuru* : perform;
hi : for *akarmanah* : to inaction *karma* : action *jyāyah* : superior.
Akarmanah : Of the inactive *te* : your *śarīrayātra api ca* : survival of
the body even *na prasiddhyet* : would not be possible.

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

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ 9 ॥

Yajñ'ārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṁ karma-bandhanah /
tad-artham karma Kaunteya mukta-saṅgah samācara //9//

Kaunteya : O son of Kunti! *ayam* : this *lokaḥ* : world *yajñārthāt*
for the sake of Yajña (God) *karmaṇah* : of action *anyatra* : in

respect of others *karmabandhanaḥ* : are bound by action. *Tadartham* : for the sake of God *muktasangāḥ* : without attachment *karma* : work *samācara* : perform.

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

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ 10 ॥

Saha yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā puro'vāca Prajāpatiḥ /
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo'stv iṣṭa-kāmadhuk //10//

Purā : In the beginning *prajāpatiḥ* : the creator (Brahma) *sahaya-jñāḥ* : together with Yajña *prajāḥ* : beings *sṛṣṭvā* : having created *uvāca* : said, *anena* : by this *prasaviṣyadhvam* : shall you multiply *eṣaḥ* : this *vaḥ* : to you *iṣṭakāmadhuk* : a cow yielding all your wants *astu* : let be.

10. In the beginning Prajāpati, having created men together with Yajña (selfless work dedicated to God or Vedic sacrifice) as their duty, declared: "By this shall you multiply. May this be to you the Cow of Plenty yielding all your wants!"⁴

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ 11 ॥

Devān bhāvayat'ānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ /
parasparam bhāvatyantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha //11//

Anena : With this *devān* : the Devās *bhāvayatu* : cherish, *te* : those *devān* : Devas *vaḥ* : you *bhāvayantu* : may cherish. *Parasparam* : Mutually *bhāvayantaḥ* : cherishing *param* : highest *śreyaḥ* : good *avāpsyatha* : shall attain to.

11. "You cherish the Devas with Yajña, and may the Dévas in turn bless you (with rain and other desired gifts)!

Thus, mutually cherishing, you shall attain the highest good."

इष्टान्भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ 12 ॥

Iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ /

tair dattān apradāy' aibhyo yo bhun̄kte stena eva saḥ //12//

Yajñabhāvitāḥ : Cherished by Yajna *devāḥ* : the Devas *vaḥ* : to you *iṣṭān bhogān* : desired enjoyments *dāsyante* : will bestow. *hi* : Therefore *taiḥ* : by them *dattān* : gifts given *ebhyaḥ* : to them *apradāya* : without giving *yaḥ* : who *bhun̄kte* : enjoys, *saḥ* : he *stena* : thief *eva* : verily.

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

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ 13 ॥

Yajña-śiṣṭ' āsināḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ /

bhun̄jate te tv agham̄ pāpā ye pacanty ātma kāraṇāt //13//

Yajñaśiṣṭāsināḥ : Those who eat what is left after sacrifice *santāḥ* : virtuous men *sarvakilbiṣaiḥ* : from all sins *mucyante* : are released. *Ye tu* : Whoever *ātmakāraṇāt* : for one's sake only *pacanti* : cook *te* : those *pāpāḥ* : degraded persons *agham̄* : sin *bhun̄jate* : eat.

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

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ 14 ॥

Annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaād anna-sambhavaḥ /

yajñād bhavati parjanyaḥ yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ //14//

Annāt : From food *bhūtāni* : creatures *bhavanti* : are born, *parjanyāt* : from rain *anna-sambhavaḥ* : the origin of food takes place *yajñāt* : from yajña *parjanyaḥ* : rain, *yajñaḥ* : Yajña *karma-samudbhavaḥ* : is born of Karma.

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

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ 15 ॥

Karma brahm'odbhavam viddhi brahmā'kṣara-samudbhavam / tasmāt sarvagatam brahma nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam //15//

Karma : Acts of sacrifice *brahm'odbhavam* : originate from Veda *brahma* : Veda *akṣara-samudbhavam* : arises from the Imperishable Being; *tasmāt* : thus *sarvagatam* : all-comprehending *brahma* : Veda *nityam* : eternally *yajñe* : in sacrifice *pratiṣṭhitam* : is established.

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

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।

अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ 16 ॥

Evam pravartitam cakram n'ānuvartayati'ha yaḥ / aghāyur indriy'ārāmo mogham Pārtha sa jīvati //16//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *evam* : thus *pravartitam* : set in motion *cakram* : wheel, cycle (i.e. the arrangement of mutual dependence and service) *yaḥ* : whoever *na anuvartayati* : does not follow *aghāyuh* : living in sin *indriyārāmaḥ* : delighting in the senses *saḥ* : that man *mogham jīvati* : lives in vain.

16. Vain is the life of that sinful and sense-indulgent person who fails to fulfil his obligations in this cycle of mutual

inter-dependence and service (which the law of sacrifice implies).

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ 17 ॥

*Yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād ātma-tṛptaś ca mānavaḥ /
ātmany eva ca saṁtuṣṭas tasya kāryam na vidyate* //17//

Tu : But yaḥ : whichever mānavaḥ : man ātmaratir eva : delights in the self alone ātmatṛptaś ca : and satisfied in the self ātmani eva : in the Ātman alone saṁtuṣṭaḥ : is content tasya : his kāryam : what ought to be done na vidyate : does not exist.

17. But whoever delights in the Self (Spirit) alone, and is content and satisfied in the Self, for such a person there is no obligatory duty to discharge.⁵

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ 18 ॥

*N'aiva tasya kṛten'ārtho n'ākṛten'eha kaścana /
na c'āsyā sarva-bhūteṣu kaścid artha-vyapāśrayaḥ* //18//

Tasya : For him iha : here, in this world kṛtena : by actions done arthaḥ : object na eva : does not exist at all akṛtena : by what is not done kaścana na : there is nothing to come by. Asya : For him sarvabhūteṣu : among all created beings kaścit : any artha-vyapāśrayaḥ : dependence for any object na : is not.

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

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्यचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ 19 ॥

*Tasmād asaktaḥ satatam kāryam karma samācara /
asukto hy ācaran karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ* //19//

Tasmāt : Therefore *asaktaḥ* : without attachment *satataṁ* : always *kāryam karma* : work that has to be done *samācara* : perform; *hi* : for *asaktaḥ* : without attachment *karma* : works *ācaran* : performing *pūruṣaḥ* : man *param* : the Supreme *āpnoti* attains to,

19. Therefore perform action always without attachment. For, by working without attachment a man attains the Supreme.⁶

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ 20 ॥

Karmaṇ'aiva hi saṁsiddhim āsthitā Janakādayaḥ /
loka-saṁgraham evā'pi sampaśyan kartum arhasi //20//

Janakādayaḥ : Men like Janaka *Karmaṇā eva* : by work alone *saṁsiddhim* : perfection *āsthitāḥ* : attained *hi* : verily. *Loka-saṁgraham* : Good of society *sampaśyan* : having in view. *kartum* : to work *arhasi* : you should.

20. Men like Janaka verily attained to perfection by work alone. You ought to work for the good of the world (having their example in view).⁷

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ 21 ॥

Yad-yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat-tad ev'etaro janaḥ /
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate //21//

Śreṣṭhaḥ : A noble person *yat yat* : whatever *ācarati* : does *tat tat* : that *eva* : only *itaraḥ* : other *janaḥ* : men. *Yat* : What *saḥ* : he *pramāṇam* : standard *kurute* : sets, *lokaḥ* : the world, ordinary men *tat* : that *anuvartate* : follows.

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

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नान्वाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ 22 ॥

*Na me Pārthā'sti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana /
nānavāptam avāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi* //22//

Pārtha : O Son of Prithā! *me* : for me *kartavyam* : duty *na asti* : does not exist. *Triṣu lokeṣu* : In the three worlds *avāptavyam* : to be attained *nānavāptam* : impossible to attain *kiṁcana* : anything *na* : does not exist. *Ca* : Still *karmaṇi* : in action *varte* : am engaged *eva* : verily.

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

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ 23 ॥

*Yadi hy ahaṁ na varteyam jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ /
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ Pārtha sarvaśaḥ* //23//

Pārtha : O son of Prithā! *aham* : I *jātu* : always *atandritaḥ* : unwearied *karmaṇi* : in action *na varteyam* : did not continue *yadi* : if, *manuṣyāḥ* : men *sarvaśaḥ* : all around *mama* : my *vartmā* : way *anuvartante* : would follow.

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

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्या कर्म चेदहम् ।
संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ 24 ॥

*Utsideyur ime lokā na kuryām karma ced aham /
saṁkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ* //24//

Aham : I *karma* : action *na kuryām* : do not work *cet* : if, *ime* : these *lokāḥ* : worlds *utsideyuh* : would perish; *saṁkarasya* : of confusion *kartā* : author *syām* : would be ; *imāḥ* : these *prajāḥ* : beings *upahanyām ca* : destroy also.

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

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ 25 ॥

*Saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso yathā kurvanti Bhārata /
kuryād vidvāṁs tathā'saktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṁgraham* //25//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata race! *Karmaṇi* : to action *saktāḥ* : attached *avidvāṁsaḥ* : ignorant people *yathā* : as *kurvanti* : act, *tathā* : in the same way *vidvān* : the enlightened man *asaktaḥ* : without attachment *lokasaṁgraham* : good of the world *cikīrṣuḥ* : desirous of *kuryāt* : should act.

25. O scion of the Bharata race! Just as ignorant men do action out of attachment, so let enlightened ones perform the same unattached, with the good of the world in view.⁸

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ 26 ॥

*Na buddhi-bhedaṁ janayed ajñānāṁ karma-saṅginām /
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran* //26//

Vidvān : Enlightened man *karmasaṅginām* : attached to action *ajñānām* : of the ignorant *na* : not *buddhibhedaṁ* : unsettlement of the mind *janayet* : should create; *yuktaḥ* : with equanimity *samācaran* : doing everything *sarvakarmāṇi* : all actions *joṣayet* : should make them interested in.

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

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ 27 ॥

Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |
ahamkāra-vimūḍh'ātmā kartā'ham iti manyate //27//

Prakṛteḥ : Of Prakṛti *guṇaiḥ* : by Gunas (dispositions) *sarvaśaḥ* : everywhere *karmāṇi* : actions *kriyamāṇāni* : are performed. *Ahamkāra-vimūḍh'ātmā* : man deluded by egoism *aham* : I am *kartā* : the doer *iti* : thus *manyate* : thinks.

27. Everywhere the dispositions (powers) of Nature perform all works. But deluded by egoism, man thinks, 'I am the doer.'⁹

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
 गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ 28 ॥

Tattva-vit tu mahā-bāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ |
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate //28//

Mahābāho : O mighty armed *guṇakarma-vibhāgayoḥ* : of the division of the dispositions of Nature and of actions springing from them *tattvavit tu* : knower of the real truth about them *guṇāḥ* : dispositions of Nature as organs *guṇeṣu* : in dispositions as objects *vartante* : remain, *iti* : thus *matvā* : knowing *na sajjate* : does not become attached.

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

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
 तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ 29 ॥

Prakṛter guṇa-sammūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu |
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet //29//

Prakṛteḥ : Of Prakṛti (Nature) *guṇasammūḍhāḥ* : deluded by the dispositions *guṇakarmasu* : in works prompted by these disposi-

tions *sajjante* : become attached; *akṛtsnavidaḥ* : who do not know the whole truth *mandān* : dull-witted *tān* : those *kṛtsnavid* : who know the whole truth *na vicālayet* : should not shake or unsettle.

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

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ 30 ॥

Mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi samnyasy'ādhyātma-cetasā /
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ //30//

Sarvāṇi : All *karmāṇi* : actions *mayi* : in Me *samnyasya* : offering or surrendering *adhyātma cetasa* : with mind in unison with the spirit *nirāśīḥ* : free from desire *nirmamaḥ* : devoid of egotism *vigatajvaraḥ* : with passion spent *bhūtvā* : becoming *yudhyasva* : fight.

30. Offering all your actions to Me, your mind in unison with the spirit and free from desires and egotism, you fight without the slightest touch of hatred or excitement.¹⁰

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ 31 ॥

Ye me matam idam nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ /
śraddhāvanto'anasūyanto mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ //31//

Ye : Whichever *mānavāḥ* : men *śraddhāvantaḥ* : having faith *anasūyantaḥ* : free from disparagement *me* : My *idam* : this *matam* : teaching *nityam* : always *anutiṣṭhanti* : follow, *te* : they *api* : also *karmabhiḥ* : by (from) Karma *mucyante* : are released.

31. Whoever follow this teaching of mine, with their minds full of faith and free from disparagement, they also are released from the bondage of Karma.

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।

सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ 32 ॥

Ye tv etad abhyasūyanto n'ānutiṣṭhanti me matam /

sarva-jñāna vimūḍhāṁs tān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ //32//

Ye tu : But whoever *me* : My *etat* : this *matam* : teaching *abhyasūyantaḥ* : disparaging *na anutiṣṭhanti* : do not follow *acetasaḥ* : senseless *sarvajñāna-vimūḍhān* : blind to all wisdom *tān* : them *naṣṭān viddhi* : know as lost.

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

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ 33 ॥

Sadr̥śam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api /

prakṛtim yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati //33//

Jñānavān api : Even a wise man *svasyāḥ* : of his own *prakṛteḥ* : nature *sadr̥śam* : in accordance with *ceṣṭate* : acts. *Bhūtāni* : Beings *prakṛtim* : nature *yānti* : follow; *nigrahaḥ* : repression *kim* : what *kariṣyati* : will do.

33. Even a wise man acts in accordance with his nature. All beings follow their nature. What can repression do? 11

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ 34 ॥

Indriyasy'endriyasy' arthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau /

tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau //34//

Indriyasya : Of the senses *indriyasya arthe* : in the object of the senses *rāgadveṣau* : attachment and aversion *vyavasthitau* : are naturally established. *Tayoḥ* : Of them *vaśam* : sway *na āgacchet* : let not come, *hi* : for *tau* : they *asya* : his *paripanthinau* : enemies.

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

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ 35 ॥

Śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt /
svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ //35//

Svanuṣṭhitāt : Well performed *paradharmāt* : than the duty of another *viguṇaḥ* : imperfect, not glamorous *svadharmāḥ* : one's own duty *śreyān* : leading to the good. *Svadharme* : in one's own duty *nidhanam* : death *śreyaḥ* : leading to one's good. *Paradharmaḥ* : Another's duty (duty alien to one's growth) *bhayāvahaḥ* : conveying fear.

35. One's own Dharma (duty), even though not glamorous, is better than duty alien to one's growth (Para-dharmaḥ), however well performed. For even death in doing one's duty leads to one's good, while a duty alien to one's growth is burdened with the fear of downfall.¹²

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ 36 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ /
anicchann api Vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ //36//

Vārṣṇeya : O scion of the Vṛṣṇi race! *atha* : then *ayaṁ pūruṣaḥ* : man *anicchan api* : even unwillingly *kena* : by what *prayuktaḥ* : prompted *balād* : by force *niyojitaḥ* : compelled to *iva* : as if *pāpam* : sin *carati* : indulges in.

Arjuna said:

36. What is that, O scion of the Vṛṣṇi race, prompted by which a man is forced, as it were, to indulge in sin even against his will?

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ 37 ॥

Srī Bhagavān uvāca:

Kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ |

mah'āśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam ||37||

Eṣaḥ : This *rajoguṇa-samudbhavaḥ* : born of Rajoguṇa *kāmaḥ* : lust, *eṣaḥ* : this *krodhaḥ* : anger *mahāśanaḥ* : insatiable *mahāpāpmā* : cause of great sin. *Enam* : This *iha* : in this matter (i.e. in man's spiritual life) *vairiṇam* as enemy *viddhi* : know.

The Blessed Lord said:

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

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ 38 ॥

Dhūmen'āvriyate vahnir yathā'darśo malena ca |

yath'olben'āvṛto garbhas tathā ten'edam āvṛtam ||38||

Vahniḥ : Fire *dhumena* : by smoke *ādarśaḥ malena ca* : and mirror by dirt *tathā* : so *āvriyate* : is enveloped *garbhaḥ* : embryo *ulbena* : by the placenta *yathā* : as *āvṛtaḥ* : covered, *tathā* : thus *idam* : this (knowledge) *tena* : by that (lust) *āvṛtam* : covered.

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

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणः ।

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणा नलेन च ॥ 39 ॥

Āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena jñānino nitya-vairiṇā |

kāma-rūpeṇa Kaunteya duṣpūreṇ'ānalena ca

||39||

Kaunteya : O son of Kunti *jñāninaḥ* : of the knowing one *nitya-vairiṇā* : by the eternal foe *duṣpūreṇa* : difficult to appease *kamarūpeṇa* : of the nature of lust *etena analena* : by this fire *jñānam* : knowledge *āvṛtam* : covered.

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

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ 40 ॥

Indriyāṇi mano buddhir asy'ādhiṣṭhānam ucyate /
etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam //40//

Indriyāṇi : Senses *manaḥ* : mind *buddhiḥ* : intellect *asya* : of it *adhiṣṭhānam* : seat *ucyate* : is spoken of as. *Eṣaḥ* : This (lust) *etair* : by these (organs) *jñānam* : knowledge *āvṛtya* : veiling *dehinam* : embodied spirit *vimohayati* : deludes.

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

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ 41 ॥

Tasmāt tvam indriyāṇy ādau niyamyā bharatarṣabha /
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hy enaṁ jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam //41//

Bharatarṣabha : O scion of the Bharata race! *tasmāt* : therefore *tvam* : you *ādau* : at the very beginning *indriyāṇi* : the senses *niyamyā* : controlling *jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam* : destroyer of knowledge and of special knowledge (realisation) *pāpmānam enaṁ* : this foul enemy *prajahi hi* : slay indeed.

41. Therefore, O scion of the Bharata race, controlling the senses at the beginning itself, slay this foul enemy, the destroyer of all knowledge and realisation.¹³

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ 42 ॥

*Indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manah /
manasās tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ* //42//

Indriyāṇi : The senses *parāṇi* : great *āhuḥ* : they say. *Indriyebhyaḥ* : *param* : Superior to the senses *manah* : is the mind, *manasah tu* : than even the mind *parā* : superior *buddhiḥ* : is the intellect. *Yah* : Who *tu* : even *buddheḥ* : than intellect *parataḥ* : superior *saḥ* : is He (the Ātman).

42. The senses are great, they say. Superior to the senses is the mind, and superior even to the mind is the intellect. What is superior even to the intellect is He, the Ātman.¹⁴

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ 43 ॥

*Evam buddheḥ param buddhvā samstabhy' ātmānam-ātmanā /
jahi śatrum mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam* //43//

Mahābāho : O mighty armed! *evam* : in this way *buddheḥ param* : what is superior to Buddhi *buddhvā* : having known *ātmanā* : by the higher self *ātmānam* : the lower self *samstabhya* : controlling, *kāmarūpaṁ* : in the form of lust *durāsadam* : difficult to conquer *śatrum* : enemy *jahi* : kill.

43. Thus knowing Him who is superior even to the Buddhi, and controlling the lower self with the higher, kill that tough enemy in the form of lust, O mighty-armed Arjuna!

ॐ तत्सविति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां

योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो

नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥ 3 ॥

NOTES

1. V.2: Arjuna's doubt would probably arise in the mind of every reader of the Gītā after going through the second chapter. The Lord is trying to prompt Arjuna to action as against his desire to give up an active life and become a pacifist and an ascetic. But beyond mentioning Karma Yoga and offering some criticism of the Vedic ritualism he gives no exposition of that theme, but speaks all through about the philosophy of the Ātman, about control of the senses and the self-satisfied state of a man of steady wisdom (*Sthitaprajña*). All this looks irrelevant and confusing, if the object of the earlier discourse is to prompt Arjuna to action. Hence Arjuna's query.

2. V.3: It would appear that the Lord accepts the validity of the criticism of Arjuna and, though not in so many words, he seems to suggest that in His first discourse, which is only preliminary, He has put all the issues together and that a clarification is therefore called for. He gives that clarification now in unambiguous language. He has promulgated two paths—the Sāṃkhya or the way of the contemplative philosophers, and Yoga or the way of the activists (Karma Yogins) for whom action performed with the proper attitude is a part of their spiritual discipline.

Much confusing controversy will be found in the writings of Vedāntic Ācharyas in the interpretation of this passage because of the difference in their basic views on the relation between action and pure contemplation. Two views are held on this question. One is Yoga—that work and contemplation should be combined all through one's spiritual life. The other is Sāṃkhya maintaining that action with devotional contemplation is applicable only up to a certain stage, i.e. till the aspirant gains *Chitta-suddhi* or purity of mind, which in practical life means the capacity to check the outward going tendency of the mind. Karma Yoga has no relevance afterwards and one should take to the life of a pure contemplative philosopher at that stage. The main reason given for this idea is that works of every kind go to emphasise the reality of multiplicity and the ego, whereas the pure contemplative's discipline consists in the denial of these and so at one stage work has to be abandoned. There is a clear support for this interpretation in the Gītā passage: 'For one desiring to attain to the state of equipoise (Yoga), work

is the means. But for one who has attained equipoise (*Yogārūḍhaḥ*), quietude (*Śama*) is the means" (6.3). Again: "But the man whose delight is in the Self alone, who is content with the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, for him there exists no work that needs be done as duty." (3.17).

The *Gītā* is equally clear in the passage under discussion that these two paths are distinct paths, and each independently takes one to a goal that is common to both. "The Status which is obtained by the *Sāṃkhyas* (contemplatives) is reached also by Yogis who combine action with contemplation. He who sees that *Sāṃkhya* and Yoga are one, he sees truly" (5.5.) It is also said towards the close of the *Gītā* in favour of Yoga: "Acts of sacrifice, gift, and austerity are not to be relinquished but should be performed. For, sacrifice, gift and austerity are purifiers for the wise. But even these works ought to be performed giving up attachment and desire for fruits. This, O Pārtha, is my decided and final view" (18.6). It is also said: "Though performing all kinds of action all through, the one who is resigned to Me attains to the eternal and undecaying state by My grace" (18.58).

Besides, the *Gītā* quotes the examples of royal sages like Janaka, Asvapati etc., who, even after being enlightened, continued to work with the attitude characteristic of the enlightened ones. Arjuna, too, is exhorted to follow their example (3.20). Those philosophers who hold to the doctrine of incompatibility of contemplativeness with activist devotion after a stage, look upon these royal sages as exceptions to the rule and not as a proof of the compatibility of the two disciplines. They attribute it to their *Prarabdha* or operative Karma. The *Gītā* text, however, does not say they are exceptions. On the other hand, in Chap. 4. 1-3, the Lord asserts that this tradition of Karma Yoga, was known to Rājārṣis from ancient times, but it has since become extinct and that He is reviving it through Arjuna.

In the light of the general teaching of the *Gītā*, the followers of the two ways may be held as two distinct types—the one discarding the combination at a certain stage, and the other continuing the combination till the end. The former, called in the *Gītā* as the *Sāṃkhyas*, following the path of knowledge, abandon all actions at the very start itself if they are qualified for it, or at a certain

later stage, after being purified by Yoga discipline, when they take to a purely contemplative life. Through that discipline, they come to the recognition of all **multiplicity** as mere appearance and realise the unity of all existence in Brahman. The latter, called the Yogins, pursuing the path of combining devotion, contemplation and dedicated action, surrender the fruits of all their actions in the first stage of spiritual life and finally surrender their sense of agency also, to that Universal Will, *Īśvara*, whose expression the world of multiplicity is. They also attain to the Divine. The former approach may be described as ontological in setting, and the latter, volitional. The end is the realisation of the unity of all existence as *Sat-cid-ānanda*.

3. V.4: *Naiṣkarmya* is not mere worklessness—external passivity or idleness. It is the state of establishment in the experience that one is the *Ātman*, the pure spirit, the uninvolved witness of passivity as well as of activity of the body-mind. Wilful worklessness which is tantamount to idleness is not the aim. 'True worklessness' has been compared to that of a man sitting in a train. The train may move or stop but the sitter in the train, being distinct from the train, is not affected by these states, but none the less moves with the train. When one's ego identifies itself with the body and feels 'I am the body', he becomes an actor, one involved in works. When he feels 'I am the *Ātman*', he remains as the spirit, the pure witness. That state is called *Naiṣkarmya*, or egoless passivity of the spirit. Spiritual perfection is never to be identified with self-willed passivity or idleness. So by mere external abandonment and adoption of the insignia of renunciation, perfection is not attained. Not only that, absolute passivity is an impossibility for any living being. That way even the process of living becomes impossible. One attempting it will turn a hypocrite. So what one is expected to do is to work controlling the senses by the mind and doing his duty in a dedicated way without caring for the fruits.

4. V.10: This and the succeeding verses up to V. 16 are put in the language of the Vedic sacrificial cult in which *Yajña*, the fire-sacrifice, is the central ritual. All old commentators comment on these in a literal sense, as Vedic ritualists conceived of a *Yajña*. Man can have a happy and prosperous life only if he lived in harmony with his environment, which consists of

Nature and the Divine agencies, the Devas, who control the forces of Nature. Man gets his progeny and his sustenance as the gifts of Nature and he has therefore got to be thankful to those Divine agencies whose expression these forces of Nature are. Man is required to make as offering of thanks-giving to the Devas, a share of the good things of Nature which he gets by their goodwill. This offering is made through fire which is the link between man and the Devas. So this thanks-giving takes the form of ritualistic fire sacrifices with offerings of commodities and utterance of Vedic hymns. Proper performance of these Yajnas by individuals and communities secures the goodwill of the Devas, and through that, worthy progeny and plentiful rain, on which man's survival and sustenance in this world depend. To partake of this gift of the Devas without being thankful to them and without making the offerings due to them is a form of theft, as the Gītā describes this, and a heinous sin. The relevancy of this in the Gītā context here is that such an essential duty imposed by the Veda on man in society as sacrifice will not be possible for one who abandons works and he will therefore be condemning himself to an unethical life, the life of a thief or exploiter.

While this simple ritualistic conception of Yajña is the plain meaning of these verses, it may be just a suggestion directed towards higher psychological and spiritual verities. Mahāviṣṇu, the Supreme Being, Himself is called Yajña and just as the Cosmos is His physical expression or body, the whole sacrificial set-up is considered a ritualistic form of His and the offerings to Devas and all adoration done are only the adoration of the One Supreme Being, whose parts all the Devas worshipped are. There is also the conception of the whole creative process as a sacrifice of Himself by the *Yajña-puruṣa*.

Besides, in Chapter 4 the Gītā itself speaks of Yajñas of several types, of which fire sacrifice described as *Dravya-yajña* or sacrifice of commodities, is only one. He describes Brahman-knowledge itself as Yajña and speaks of several forms of Yajña like sacrifice of commodities (*Dravya-yajña*), sacrifice of vital breath (*Prāṇāyāma-yajña*), sacrifice of austerity (*Tapo-yajña*), sacrifice of scriptural study (*Svādhyāya-yajña*), and sacrifice of knowledge (*Jñāna-yajña*). Thus fire-sacrifice, a ritual commonly known and practised, becomes

the symbol for all the moral and spiritual effort of man for his higher evolution.

Taking advantage of the symbolical value attached to the fire-ritual called Yajña in the Gītā, a modern student of the Gītā, who is a stranger to the fire-sacrifice as a ritual, can interpret these passages in terms of relevant factors of social life today. Production and distribution of consumable commodities is done through an exchange of services by capitalists, technocrats, labour, the distributor and the consumer. All these factors functioning with the good of the whole social order in view and contributing their respective services and receiving their due rewards without any party trying to take undue advantage of the others—may be called Yajña in the social sense. All this is based on work and a person who seeks all the benefits of society but keeps quiet and fails to contribute his share for social good can be described as an exploiter and a thief as the Gītā does. The difference in this interpretation is that, in place of the divine agencies, only the social environment is taken for mutual exchange of services and rewards. This explanation sublimates the ritualistic Yajña.

5. V.17: It is contended that a sage who remains fulfilled in his own higher Self and does not seek satisfaction from anything outside of him, and who has been described as a *sthitaprajña*, is free from the cycle of duties and obligations described earlier. He has no debt of any kind to pay to the Devas, as he has no interest even in the sustenance of the body. For he is fully satisfied with the Self in which he is absorbed. He has thus nothing to do (*Kāryam*) under moral compulsion. He is a free spirit. This is explained in the following verse.

6. V.19: The word 'therefore' here is very enigmatic, coming as it does after the description of a knowing one whose exclusive delight is in the Self, who is a free man without compulsion from any quarter to do anything. *Therefore* i.e. *for the above reason*, that he is free from the compulsion of duty, he should out of his free will work for the good of others, without any attachment for anything and without any sense of agency. This is the meaning of 'therefore' from the point of view of those who hold that a kind of Karma-Yoga which combines Bhakti, Karma, and Self-knowledge is the message of the Gītā.

Those who do not accept this combination of disciplines would interpret this '*therefore*' as follows: "As you, Arjuna, is not endowed with the above-mentioned Self-Knowledge, but are at a lower stage of evolution, you have to follow the discipline of Karma in which alone there can be a combination of action and contemplation. After you have evolved into the state in which you are fit for pure contemplation, you can abandon all work, but not till then. *Therefore* you now perform Karma without attachment." It is obvious that this is an interpretative assumption unjustified by the context provided by the next verse.

7. V. 20—24 : The example of sages like Janaka appears to be given here to prove the self-sufficiency of Karma Yoga and in support of combination of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga — contemplation and non-attached action—till perfection is reached and thereafter. But those who oppose such combination describe these examples as exceptions. There is, however, nothing in the Gītā text to prove them to be so. They may be rare examples of perfection through Karma Yoga. But so too are perfect ones who follow pure Sāṃkhya. Both are rarities. The point to be noted here is that Kṛṣṇa considers Karma Yoga (which means action, devotion and contemplation combined) to be a self-sufficient discipline for attaining spiritual perfection. Welfare of the world (*lokasamgraha*), and not any self-centred objective, becomes the purpose of the action of such enlightened ones. Much more important than any individual example, the Gītā holds forth śvara Himself as the most conspicuous example of such disinterested work. Man is exhorted to follow the Divine example. This is a conclusive argument in favour of Karma Yoga.

8. V. 25: The distinction between the work of the worldly-minded man and the enlightened Karma Yogi is clearly indicated. The former is self-centred, while the latter has overcome self-centredness and still works for the good of all. If Karma Yoga can take one to such a state of selflessness, that goal must be the same universal Self to which the Sāṃkhya attains by abandoning all desires and the ego. The ways of the two may be different but the ultimate goal is the same. It is the Self which embraces all selves.

The object of such work is the good of the world. Apart

from the good directly proceeding from such work, the example it sets is itself of immense good. If the best men in society practised quietism, lesser men may imitate their example and lapse into idleness. So they too should work but with a different motive.

9. V. 27-29 : The distinction between the ignorant man and the enlightened one, whether he has reached that state through Yoga or Sāṃkhya, is stated here. The enlightened man has no sense of agency and is therefore free from bondage. The ignorant man thinks he is the agent and he has therefore bondage arising from the good and bad fruits of his work.

10. V. 30: Till now Karma Yoga was described as work without attachment and without desire for the fruits of action. But a more complete description of Karma Yoga is given here, where it is taught that all actions should be resigned to the Lord. This resignation has two stages. First all the fruits of actions are resigned to the Lord. The Yogi has still the sense of agency—the feeling that he is doing the work. At a higher level of perfection, the sense of agency also is resigned. It has been already stated in 5.27 that a wise man understands that in work, the forces of Nature work on objects that are Nature's creations. The sense 'I am doing' on the part of the worker is superfluous, having no foundation. It is born of ignorance. But here it is pointed out that higher than Nature even, is the Nature's Lord, *Īśvara*. Nature is only His executive force or His will and so His will is the only agency that performs all works. The individual will is only a distortion of the Divine will by man's egoism. When this distortion is overcome through devotion and resignation to the Divine will, complete peace and perfection is attained even in the midst of all work. Thus it is Bhakti that completes the Gita doctrine of dedicated and detached work. The Bhakti element is here stressed in the text for the first time. The doctrine of Bhakti is elaborated especially from the 7th chapter onwards.

11. V. 33-34: Verse 33 looks like a fatalist's dictum. But it is not so when it is read with the next verse 34. *Prakṛti* or Nature here means the manifestation in the present life of the mental tendencies, the character potential etc. formed by the virtuous and vicious actions done in past lives. It operates even on the knowing one. *Prarabdha* can include good and bad elements, but

since knowledge can arise only in a pure mind, evil tendencies in a knowing one will be very few and inconsequential. That all creatures are subject to their nature is a truism which none will dispute. But the dispute and doubt come when it is said: "What can *nigraha* (control or repression) do?" This question may be taken merely as raising an issue and not as a denial of the possibility of overcoming natural tendencies: *Nigraha* can be equated with the modern psychological concept of repression. It means, to forcefully suppress a desire or to try to eliminate it by forgetting in a fit of violent fear or shame. In either case the desire or the tendency is not eliminated, but only driven underground from where it will work havoc on the body and mind of man. So the question is asked: to what extent repression can succeed in overcoming nature? The answer is: 'Very little'.

The next verse gives the correct way of controlling nature. It is by cultivating awareness. It is given in 2. 66-68, how man gets infatuated with sense objects. He dwells on them longingly; that develops attachment; attachment develops into desire; desire generates animosities and infatuation; and infatuation makes him forget his moral and spiritual foundation. So if natural impulses are to be controlled it must be done at the outset, when they are just beginning to hold one's interest. This is possible only if one cultivates awareness of things and moods that entice one's mind, and then overcome them by discrimination and counter-suggestion at the start itself. So in verse 34 man is asked to remember always that there is a natural attraction between the senses and their objects and he is therefore exhorted to avoid exposure to their influence. If unavoidably exposed, one should exercise discrimination to protect oneself. The best way is to invoke the Divine aid through prayer and self-surrender. If this is not done at the very early stage and infatuation thus combated, then man becomes a helpless entity before the pull of the senses like an object that has been sucked into the vortex of a whirlpool. He could have avoided getting into it but having got in, it is difficult for him to escape.

Or the two verses may be understood as directly connected with Karma Yoga without drawing any of those psychological implications elaborated above. It may be thus stated: The

Prakṛti or the nature of man is to engage himself in all forms of activities with the body and the mind. To resist all this forcefully and to sit quiet like a stock or stone without doing anything as Arjuna wanted is an impossibility for any human being. Even a knowing one i.e. one who has realised his Ātmanhood and thus got detached from the body has to follow Nature's impulses in the matter of eating, sleeping, speaking, moving about etc., which are unavoidable for his physical and social survival. In Vedantic terminology even a knowing one is subject to his *Prārabdha* or Karmas that have led to the present embodiment until death destroys the body. That being the case, none, even a knowing one, can remain workless.

What is possible for an ordinary person is to practise discrimination, taking into account the fact that there is natural attraction for the senses to their objects and that these senses, if allowed to dominate, will cause the downfall of a spiritual aspirant. When a person is thus convinced of the danger posed by this attraction of sense objects, he will guard himself against the dominance of their influence. Non-attached work, and not forced withdrawal from all work, is the way of progress for man. For, to work is implicit in the nature of man and suppressing it by forcible means will only have adverse effects on him.

12. V. 35: The word Svadharma means, as understood by medieval Hindus, the duties sacred and social, that devolved on people according to their hereditary affiliations as Brahmana, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra. People's birth in these different groups was supposed to be determined by their Karmas of the past marking the stage of their evolution. Each class had its own social functions and means of livelihood as laid down in the Smṛtis. That formed the Svadharma or one's own duty for each individual of that class or Varna. He was to follow it and not that of others, *Paradharma*.

This way of determining Svadharma is possible only in a society where class has become crystallised into castes based on birth. Where classes lose all rigidity and tend towards classlessness, determining Svadharma by birth becomes impossible. Svadharma will have to be described as work in line with one's mental constitution and higher development. While as a psychological criterion it is

acceptable, it is not possible to determine it in actual life, and even if determined, one may not have the facility to pick and choose one's duty. In practical life one has to take it as the work that devolves on one as duty.

But here in this context Svadharma and Paradharma can be interpreted in quite a different way also, which perhaps is more appropriate too. Svadharma, for the vast majority of men, is a life of action. Arjuna is being exhorted to adopt Karma Yoga as his way of spiritual development, because a life of activity is the Dharma or way of life born of his own nature. Sāṃkhya or workless contemplation will be Paradharma, work alien to his nature, and therefore harmful to him. Paradharma may look attractive and one may, to a certain extent, succeed in pursuing it, but in the long run, one is sure to break down. The threat of this break-down will be always a cause of an obsessive fear within him. Workless contemplation will easily degenerate into sheer idleness in unworthy hands, and result in spiritual ruin. Svadharma or Karma Yoga may not be so glamorous, but it is safe, and will be found contributive to one's ultimate good.

13. V. 41: An aspirant is again reminded of the importance of controlling the senses, especially of tackling passions like lust, anger etc., at their very outset. If they are allowed to gather force, man will be at their mercy, and no control will be possible.

14. V. 42-43: In these two verses a psychological analysis of the human personality is given as an aid to the practice of the control of the senses spoken of earlier.

The senses, the mind, the intellect, and the Spirit (Ātman) are the four layers of human personality. The Spirit which is the ultimate foundation of man, is pure consciousness and the uninvolved witness of the modifications of these three layers. He alone is the conscious entity, and the three layers associated with Him are inert in themselves, but become living and conscious when His light of consciousness percolates through them, just as the dull shades of a lamp are illumined when the rays of the central light passes through them.

Now these appendages of the Ātman form the instruments of perception and the storage space for the memories of experiences.

So the impressions of the countless experiences of past lives are in them. The impressions of experiences they contain and convey are derived from repeated contacts with external objects for the enhancement of bodily life. These impressions have made the senses prone to look at these objects, only from the point of view of instinctive satisfactions. Thus when a man's eyes see a tasty food, he can think of it only as something fine to eat; when a person sees one of the opposite sex, he often thinks of the other as an object of sensual enjoyment; when he sees a tiger, he looks at it exclusively as a dangerous creature; when he sees a cow, he sees it as a creature useful for getting milk. This outlook generated by the senses colour the mind and intellect too. It is this tendency that is described in verse 41 as the foul enemy destroying man's discrimination and knowledge. They prevent a dispassionate view of the object, the view of the witness. On the other hand, they give a biased interpretation of them from the point of view of the instinctive satisfactions they can give. This has been referred to in a less pointed and indirect way in 2.62 and 2.64. The purification of the intellect and the mind can be achieved only when their attention is drawn inward towards the Spirit, who is behind the intellect even, instead of being driven to external objects by the force of natural tendencies, causing attachment and entanglement.

Communion with the Spirit purifies the intellect, mind and senses. It liberates the senses from the earlier dominance of nature over them, and puts them in a position to view all sense objects from an impersonal point of view and thus gain mastery over them. That is why the practice of devotion is absolutely essential for success in the discipline of Karma Yoga. For, non-attachment can never arise until the mind is able to hold the attitude of the witness and not of one seeking enjoyment. This new capacity can develop only when the bias given to the mind and senses by nature or past experiences is eliminated. This in turn can be achieved only when through devotion and meditation, the immaculate purity of the Spirit is brought to bear on the psychic being of man.