

# The Bhagavad-Geeta

by Ramanand Prasad

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## CHAPTER 1 ARJUNA'S DILEMMA

Dhritaraashtra said: O Sanjaya, assembled in the holy field of Kurukshetra and eager to fight, what did my people and the Paandavas do? (1.01)

Sanjaya said: Seeing the battle formation of the Paandava's army, King Duryodhana approached his guru, Drona, and spoke these words: (1.02)

O master, behold this mighty army of the sons of Paandu, arranged in battle formation by your talented disciple, the son of Drupada. (1.03)

There are many heroes and mighty archers equal to Bheema and Arjuna in war such as Yuyudhaana and Viraata; and the great warrior, Drupada; (1.04)

Dhrishtaketu, Chekitaana, and the heroic King of Kaashi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and the great man Saibya; (1.05)

The valiant Yudhaamanyu, the formidable Uttamaauja, the son of Subhadraa, and the sons of Draupadi; all of them are great warriors. (1.06)

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<sup>1</sup>The American Gita Society announces the publication of their Second Edition of THE BHAGAVAD-GITA (The Song of God)

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Glossary

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Also know, O best among the twice born, the distinguished ones on our side. I name the commanders of my army for your information. (1.07)

Yourself, Bheeshma, Karna, and the victorious Kripa; Ashvatthaamaa, Vikarna, and the son of Somadatta. (1.08)

And many other heroes who have risked their lives for me. They are armed with various weapons, and all are skilled in warfare. (1.09)

Our army, commanded by Bheeshma, is invincible; while their army, protected by Bheema, is easy to conquer. (1.10)

Therefore all of you, occupying your respective positions on all fronts, protect Bheeshma only. (1.11)

The mighty Bheeshma, the eldest man of the Kuru dynasty, roared as a lion and blew his conch loudly bringing joy to Duryodhana. (1.12)

After that, conches, kettledrums, cymbals, drums, and trumpets were sounded together. The commotion was tremendous. (1.13)

Then Lord Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a grand chariot yoked with white horses, blew their celestial conches. (1.14)

Krishna blew His conch, Paanchajanya; Arjuna blew his conch, Devadatta; and Bheema, the doer of formidable deeds, blew (his) big conch, Paundra. (1.15)

The son of Kunti, King Yudhishtira, blew (his conch) Anantavijaya, while Nakula and Sahadeva blew Sughosha and Manipushpaka conches, respectively. (1.16)

The King of Kaashi, the mighty archer; Shikhandi, the great warrior; Dhristadyumna, Viraata, and the invincible Saatyaki; (1.17)

King Drupada, and the sons of Draupadi; the mighty son of Subhadraa; all of them blew their respective conches, O lord of the earth. (1.18)

The tumultuous uproar, resounding through earth and sky, tore the hearts of the Kauravas. (1.19)

Seeing the sons of Dhritaraashtra standing; and the war about to begin; Arjuna, whose banner bore the emblem of Hanumana, took up his bow; and (1.20)

Spoke these words to Lord Krishna: O Lord, (please) stop my chariot between the two armies until I behold those who stand here eager for battle and with whom I must engage in this act of war. (1.21-22)

I wish to see those who are willing to serve the evil-minded son of Dhritaraashtra by assembling here to fight

the battle. (1.23)

Sanjaya said: O King, Lord Krishna, as requested by Arjuna, placed the best of all the chariots in the midst of the two armies; (1.24)

Facing Bheeshma, Drona, and all other Kings; and said to Arjuna: Behold these assembled Kurus! (1.25)

There Arjuna saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and comrades. (1.26)

Seeing fathers-in-law, all those kinsmen, and other dear ones standing in the ranks of the two armies, (1.27)

Arjuna was overcome with great compassion and sorrowfully said: O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen standing with a desire to fight, (1.28)

My limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry. My body quivers and my hairs stand on end. (1.29)

The bow, Gaandeeva, slips from my hand and my skin intensely burns. My head turns, I am unable to stand steady and, O Krishna, I see bad omens. I see no use of killing my kinsmen in battle. (1.30-31)

I desire neither victory nor pleasure nor kingdom, O Krishna. What is the use of the kingdom, or enjoyment, or even life, O Krishna? (1.32)

Because all those, for whom we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures, are standing here for the battle, giving up their lives and wealth. (1.33)

Teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives. (1.34)

I do not wish to kill them, who are also about to kill, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, let alone for this earthly kingdom, O Krishna. (1.35)

O Lord Krishna, what pleasure shall we find in killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra? Upon killing these felons we shall incur sin only. (1.36)

Therefore, we should not kill our brothers, the sons of Dhritaraashtra. How can we be happy after killing our kinsmen, O Krishna? (1.37)

Though they, blinded by greed, do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being treacherous to friends. (1.38)

Why shouldn't we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family, think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna? (1.39)

With the destruction of the family, the eternal family traditions are destroyed, and immorality prevails due to the destruction of family traditions. (1.40)

And when immorality prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupted; when women are corrupted, social problems arise. (1.41)

This brings the family and the slayers of the family to hell, because the spirits of their ancestors are degraded when deprived of ceremonial offerings of rice-ball and water. (1.42)

The everlasting qualities of Varna and family traditions of those who destroy their family are ruined by the sinful act of illegitimacy. (1.43)

Note: Varna means color, or the make up and the hue of mind; a social division or order of society such as caste in India.

We have been told, O Krishna, that people whose family traditions are destroyed necessarily dwell in hell for a long time. (1.44)

Alas! We are ready to commit a great sin by striving to slay our kinsmen because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom. (1.45)

It would be far better for me if the sons of Dhritaraashtra should kill me with their weapons in battle while I am unarmed and unresisting. (1.46)

Sanjaya said: Having said this in the battle field and casting aside his bow and arrow, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow. (1.47)

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## CHAPTER 2

### TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna spoke these words to Arjuna whose eyes were tearful and downcast, and who was overwhelmed with compassion and despair. (2.01)

The Supreme Lord said: How has the dejection come to you at this juncture? This is not fit for an Aryan (or the people of noble mind and deeds). It is disgraceful, and it does not lead one to heaven, O Arjuna. (2.02)

Do not become a coward, O Arjuna, because it does not benefit you. Shake off this weakness of your heart and get up (for the battle), O Arjuna. (2.03)

Arjuna said: How shall I strike Bheeshma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship, with arrows in battle, O Krishna? (2.04)

It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble gurus, because, by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures stained with (theirs) blood. (2.05)

Neither do we know which alternative (to beg or to kill) is better for us, nor do we know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us. We should not even wish to live after killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra who are standing in front of us. (2.06)

My heart is overcome by the weakness of pity, and my mind is confused about Dharma. I request You to tell me, decisively, what is better for me. I am Your disciple.

Teach me who has taken refuge in You. (2.07)

Dharma may be defined as the eternal law governing, upholding, and supporting the creation and the world order. It also means duty, righteousness, ideal conduct, moral principles, and truth. Adharma is an antonym to Dharma. Expert guidance should be sought during the moment of crisis.

I do not perceive that gaining an unrivaled and prosperous kingdom on this earth, or even lordship over the gods will remove the sorrow that is drying up my senses. (2.08)

Sanjaya said: O King, after speaking like this to Lord Krishna, the mighty Arjuna said to Krishna: I shall not fight, and became silent. (2.09)

O King, Lord Krishna, as if smiling, spoke these words to the despondent Arjuna in the midst of the two armies. (2.10)

The Supreme Lord said: You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet speak the words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. (2.11)

There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. (2.12)

Just as the Atma acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life, similarly Atma acquires another body after death. The wise are not deluded by this. (See also 15.08) (2.13)

Atma or Atman means conscious-ness, spirit, soul, self, the source of life and the cosmic power behind the body-mind complex. Just as our body exists in space, similarly our thoughts, intellect, emotions, and psyche exist in Atma, the space of consciousness. Atma cannot be perceived by the senses, because, the senses abide in Atma.

The contacts of the senses with the sense objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, and pain and pleasure. They are transitory and impermanent. Therefore, (learn to) endure them, O Arjuna. (2.14)

Because the calm person, who is not afflicted by these feelings and is steady in pain and pleasure, becomes fit for immortality, O Arjuna. (2.15)

There is no nonexistence of the Sat (or Atma) and no existence of the Asat. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of truth. (2.16)

Sat exists at all timespast, present, and future. Atma is called Sat. Asat is a notion that does not exist at all (like the horn of a rabbit, or the water in a mirage). The one that has a beginning and an end is neither Sat nor Asat. The body is neither Sat nor Asat, or both Sat and Asat, because, it has a temporary existence. Mithya is

the one that appears Sat at first sight, but is really Asat. Body, like the universe or Jagat, is called Mithya.

Know That, by which all this (universe) is pervaded, to be indestructible. No one can destroy the indestructible (Atma) . (2.17)

Bodies of the eternal, imperishable, and incomprehensible soul are said to be perishable. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna. (2.18)

The one who thinks that Atma is a slayer, and the one who thinks that Atma is slain, both are ignorant, because Atma neither slays nor is slain. (2.19)

The Atma is neither born nor does it die at any time, nor having been it will cease to exist again. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Atma is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. (2.20)

O Arjuna, how can a person who knows that the Atma is indestructible, eternal, unborn, and imperishable, kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed? (2.21)

Just as a person puts on new garments after discarding the old ones, similarly Atma acquires new bodies after casting away the old bodies. (2.22)

Weapons do not cut this Atma, fire does not burn it, water does not make it wet, and the wind does not make it dry. (2.23)

This Atma cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried up. It is eternal, all pervading, unchanging, immovable, and primeval. (2.24)

The Atma is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchanging. Knowing this Atma as such you should not grieve. (2.25)

If you think that this (body) takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this. (2.26)

Because, death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable. (2.27)

All beings, O Arjuna, are unmanifest before birth and after death. They are manifest between the birth and the death only. What is there to grieve about? (2.28)

Some look upon this Atma as a wonder, another describes it as wonderful, and others hear of it as a wonder. Even after hearing about it no one actually knows it. (2.29)

O Arjuna, the Atma that dwells in the body of all (beings) is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn for any body. (2.30)

Considering also your duty as a warrior you should not waver. Because there is nothing more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war. (2.31)

Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an op-

portunity for an unsought war that is like an open door to heaven. (2.32)

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. (2.33)

People will talk about your disgrace forever. To the honored, dishonor is worse than death. (2.34)

The great warriors will think that you have retreated from the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly esteemed you will lose respect for you. (2.35)

Your enemies will speak many unmentionable words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful than this? (2.36)

You will go to heaven if killed, or you will enjoy the earth if victorious. Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna. (2.37)

Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way you will not incur sin. (2.38)

The wisdom of Saamkhya (or the knowledge of the Self) has been imparted to you, O Arjuna. Now listen to the wisdom of Karma-yoga endowed with which you will free yourself from the bondage of Karma. (2.39)

In Karma-yoga no effort is ever lost, and there is no harm. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear (of birth and death). (2.40)

Karma-yoga is also referred to as Nishkaama Karma-yoga, Seva, selfless service, Buddhi yoga, yoga of work, science of proper action, and yoga of equanimity. A Karma-yogi works for the Lord as a matter of duty without a selfish desire for the fruits of work, or any attachment to results. The word Karma also means duty, action, deeds, work, or the results of past deeds.

Those who are resolute have only one thought (of Self-realization), but the thoughts of the irresolute are endless and many-branched, O Arjuna. (2.41)

The unwise who delight in flowery words (or the chanting of the Vedas without understanding the real meaning) stress Karma-Kaanda, the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas, O Arjuna, and say that there is nothing else (except material enjoyment). (2.42)

They prescribe various specific rites for the attainment of pleasure and power to those who are full of desires, and hold the attainment of heaven as the highest goal of life. The rebirth is their fruit of action. (2.43)

The resolute determination (of Self-realization) is not formed in the minds of those who are attached to pleasure and power; and whose discernment is obscured by such (ritualistic) activities. (2.44)

The Vedas deal with the three states or Gunas of mind. Become free from dualities, be ever balanced and uncon-

cerned with the thoughts of acquisition and preservation. Rise above the three Gunas, and be Self-conscious, O Arjuna. (2.45)

Guna means the quality, state, or the property of mind, matter, and the nature. Refer to Chapter 14 for more details on Gunas.

To a Self-realized person the Vedas are as useful as a reservoir of water when there is flood water available everywhere. (2.46)

You have Adhikaara over your respective duty only, but no control or claim over the results. The fruits of work should not be your motive. You should never be inactive. (2.47)

The word Adhikaara means ability and privilege, prerogative, jurisdiction, discretion, right, preference, choice, rightful claim, authority, control. Do your duty to the best of your ability, O Arjuna, with your mind attached to the Lord, abandoning (worry and) attachment to the results, and remaining calm in both success and failure. The equanimity of mind is called Karma-yoga. (2.48)

Work done with selfish motives is inferior by far to the selfless service or Karma-yoga. Therefore be a Karma-yogi, O Arjuna. Those who seek (to enjoy) the fruits of their work are verily unhappy (because one has no control over the results). (2.49)

A Karma-yogi gets freedom from both vice and virtue in this life itself. Therefore, strive for Karma-yoga. Working to the best of one's abilities without getting attached to the fruits of work is called (Nishkaama) Karma-yoga. (2.50)

Wise Karma-yogis, possessed with mental poise by renouncing the attachment to the fruits of work, are indeed freed from the bondage of rebirth and attain the blissful divine state. (2.51)

When your intellect will completely pierce the veil of delusion, then you will become indifferent to what has been heard and what is to be heard (from the scriptures). (2.52)

When your intellect, that is confused by the conflicting opinions and the ritualistic doctrine of the Vedas, shall stay steady and firm with the Self, then you shall attain Self-realization. (2.53)

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what is the mark of a person whose Prajna is steady and merged in superconscious state? How does a person of steady Prajna speak? How does such a person sit and walk? (2.54)

Prajna means consciousness, mind, intellect, judgment, discrimination, and wisdom.

The Supreme Lord said: When one is completely free from all desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the (joy of) Self, then one is called a person of steady

Prajna, O Arjuna. (2.55)

A person whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow, who does not crave pleasures, and who is free from attachment, fear, and anger; such a person is called a sage of steady Prajna. (2.56)

Those who are not attached to anything, who are neither elated by getting desired results nor troubled by undesired results, their Prajna is deemed steady. (2.57)

When one can completely withdraw (or restrain) the senses from the sense objects as a tortoise withdraws its limbs (into the shell), then the Prajna of such a person is considered steady. (2.58)

The desire for sensual pleasures fades away if one abstains from sense enjoyment, but the craving (for sense enjoyment) remains. The craving also disappears from the one who has seen (or known) the Supreme. (2.59)

Restless senses, O Arjuna, forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection. (2.60)

Having brought the senses under control, one should fix one's mind on the Self. One's Prajna becomes steady whose senses are under control. (2.61)

One develops attachment to sense objects by thinking about sense objects. Desire for sense objects comes from attachment to sense objects, and anger comes from unfulfilled desires. (2.62)

Delusion arises from anger. The mind is bewildered by delusion. Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered. One falls down (from the right path) when reasoning is destroyed. (2.63)

A disciplined person, enjoying sense objects with senses that are under control and free from likes and dislikes, attains tranquillity. (2.64)

All sorrows are destroyed upon attainment of tranquillity. The intellect of such a tranquil person soon becomes completely steady. (2.65)

There is neither Self-knowledge nor Self-perception to those whose senses are not under control. Without Self-perception there is no peace; and without peace there can be no happiness. (2.66)

The mind, when controlled by the roving senses, steals away the Prajna as a storm takes away a boat on the sea from its destination, the spiritual shore. (2.67)

Therefore, O Arjuna, one's Prajna becomes steady whose senses are completely withdrawn from the sense objects. (2.68)

A yogi is aware of the thing (or Atma) about which others are unaware. A sage who sees is unaware of the experience (of sense objects) about which others are aware. (2.69)

One attains peace in whose mind all desires enter with-

out creating any disturbance, as river waters enter the full ocean without creating a disturbance. One who desires material objects is never peaceful. (2.70)

One who abandons all desires and becomes free from longing and the feeling of 'I' and 'my' attains peace. (2.71)

O Arjuna, this is the Braahmee or superconscious state. Attaining this (state), one is no longer deluded. Gaining this state, even at the end of one's life, a person attains oneness with the Supreme. (2.72).

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### CHAPTER 3 PATH OF KARMA-YOGA

Arjuna said: If You consider that transcendental knowledge is better than work then why do You want me to engage in this horrible war, O Krishna? (3.01)

You seem to confuse my mind by apparently conflicting words. Tell me, decisively, one thing by which I may attain the Supreme. (3.02)

The Supreme Lord said: In this world, O Arjuna, a twofold path of Sadhana (or the spiritual practice) has been stated by Me in the past. The path of Self-knowledge (or Jnana-yoga) for the contemplative, and the path of unselfish work (or Karma-yoga) for the active. (3.03)

Jnana-yoga is also called Saamkhya-yoga, Samnyasa-yoga, and yoga of knowledge. A Jnana-yogi does not consider oneself the doer of any action, but only an instrument in the hands of divine for His use. The word Jnana means metaphysical or transcendental knowledge.

One does not attain freedom from the bondage of Karma by merely abstaining from work. No one attains perfection by merely giving up work. (3.04)

Because no one can remain actionless even for a moment. Everyone is driven to action, helplessly indeed, by the Gunas of nature. (3.05)

The deluded ones, who restrain their organs of action but mentally dwell upon the sense enjoyment, are called hypocrites. (3.06)

The one who controls the senses by the (trained and purified) mind and intellect, and engages the organs of action to Nishkaama Karma-yoga, is superior, O Arjuna. (3.07)

Perform your obligatory duty, because action is indeed better than inaction. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible by inaction. (3.08)

Human beings are bound by Karma (or works) other than those done as Yajna. Therefore, O Arjuna, do your duty efficiently as a service or Seva to Me, free from attachment to the fruits of work. (3.09)

Yajna means sacrifice, selfless service, unselfish work, Seva, meritorious deeds, giving away something to oth-

ers, and a religious rite in which oblation is offered to gods through the mouth of fire.

Brahmaa, the creator, in the beginning created human beings together with Yajna and said: By Yajna you shall prosper and Yajna shall fulfill all your desires. (3.10)

Nourish the Devas with Yajna, and the Devas will nourish you. Thus nourishing one another you shall attain the Supreme goal. (3.11)

Deva means a deity, a demigod, a celestial person, the agent of God, one who fulfills desires and protects.

The Devas, nourished by Yajna, will give you the desired objects. One who enjoys the gift of the Devas without offering them (anything in return) is, indeed, a thief. (3.12)

The righteous who eat the remnants of the Yajna are freed from all sins, but the impious who cook food only for themselves (without sharing with others in charity) verily eat sin. (3.13)

The living beings are born from food, food is produced by rain, rain comes by performing Yajna. The Yajna is performed by doing Karma. (See also 4.32) (3.14)

The Karma or duty is prescribed in the Vedas. The Vedas come from Brahman. Thus the all-pervading Brahman is ever present in Yajna or service. (3.15)

The one who does not help to keep the wheel of creation in motion by sacrificial duty, and who rejoices in sense pleasures, that sinful person lives in vain, O Arjuna. (3.16)

The one who rejoices in the Self only, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, for such a (Self-realized) person there is no duty. (3.17)

Such a person has no interest, whatsoever, in what is done or what is not done. A Self-realized person does not depend on anybody (except God) for anything. (3.18)

Therefore, always perform your duty efficiently and without attachment to the results, because by doing work without attachment one attains the Supreme. (3.19)

King Janaka and others attained perfection (or Self-realization) by Karma-yoga alone. You should perform your duty (with apathetic frame of mind) with a view to guide people and for the universal welfare (of the society). (3.20)

Because, whatever noble persons do, others follow. Whatever standard they set up, the world follows. (3.21)

O Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds (earth, heaven, and the upper regions) that should be done by Me, nor there is anything unobtained that I should obtain, yet I engage in action. (3.22)

Because, if I do not engage in action relentlessly, O Arjuna, people would follow My path in every way. (3.23)

These worlds would perish if I do not work, and I shall be the cause of confusion and destruction of all these people. (3.24)

As the ignorant work, O Arjuna, with attachment (to the fruits of work), so the wise should work without attachment, for the welfare of the society. (3.25)

The wise should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant who is attached to the fruits of work, but the enlightened one should inspire others by performing all works efficiently without attachment. (See also 3.29) (3.26)

All works are being done by the Gunas (or the energy and power) of nature, but due to delusion of ego people assume themselves to be the doer. (See also 5.09, 13.29, and 14.19) (3.27)

The one who knows the truth, O Arjuna, about the role of Guna and action does not get attached to the work, knowing that it is the Gunas that work with their instruments, the organs. (3.28)

Those who are deluded by the Gunas of nature get attached to the works of the Gunas. The wise should not disturb the mind of the ignorant whose knowledge is imperfect. (See also 3.26) (3.29)

Dedicating all works to Me in a spiritual frame of mind, free from desire, attachment, and mental grief, do your duty. (3.30)

Those who always practice this teaching of Mine, with faith and free from cavil, are freed from the bondage of Karma. (3.31)

But, those who carp at My teaching and do not practice it, consider them as ignorant of all knowledge, senseless, and lost. (3.32)

All beings follow their nature. Even the wise act according to their own nature. What, then, is the value of sense restraint? (3.33)

Raaga and Dwesha (or the attachments and aversions) for the sense objects remain in the senses. One should not come under the control of these two, because they are two stumbling blocks, indeed, on one's path of Self-realization. (3.34)

One's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work. Death in carrying out one's natural work is useful. Unnatural work produces too much stress. (See also 18.47) (3.35)

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what impels one to commit sin as if unwillingly and forced against one's will? (3.36)

The Supreme Lord said: It is Kaama and anger born of Rajo Guna. Kaama is insatiable and is a great devil. Know this as the enemy. (3.37)

Kaama, the passionate desire for all sensual and material pleasures, becomes anger if it is unfulfilled. As the fire

is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by the amnion, similarly the Self-knowledge gets obscured by Kaama. (3.38)

O Arjuna, Jnana gets covered by this insatiable fire of Kaama, the eternal enemy of Jnani. (3.39)

The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be the seat of Kaama. Kaama, with the help of the senses, deludes a person by veiling Jnana. (3.40)

Therefore, O Arjuna, by controlling the senses kill this devil (of material desire) that destroys knowledge and discrimination. (3.41)

The senses are said to be superior (to matter or the body), the mind is superior to the senses, the intellect is superior to the mind, and Atma is superior to the intellect. (3.42)

Thus, knowing the Atma to be superior to the intellect, and controlling the mind by the intellect (that is purified by Jnana), one must kill this mighty enemy, Kaama, O Arjuna. (3.43)

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#### CHAPTER 4

##### PATH OF RENUNCIATION WITH KNOWLEDGE

The Supreme Lord said: I taught this imperishable (science of right action, or) Karma-yoga to (King) Vivasvaan. Vivasvaan taught it to Manu. Manu taught it to Ikshavaaku. (4.01)

Thus handed down in succession the royal sages knew this (Karma-yoga). After a long time the science of Karma-yoga was lost from this earth. (4.02)

Today I have described the same ancient science to you, because you are my sincere devotee and friend. Karma-yoga is a supreme secret indeed. (4.03)

Arjuna said: You were born later, but Vivasvaan was born in ancient time. How am I to understand that You taught this yoga in the beginning (of the creation)? (4.04)

The Supreme Lord said: Both you and I have taken many births. I remember them all, O Arjuna, but you do not remember. (4.05)

Though I am eternal, imperishable, and the Lord of all beings; yet I (voluntarily) manifest by controlling My own material nature using My Yoga-Maya. (See also 10.14) (4.06)

Yoga-Maya is same as Maya; the supernatural, extraordinary, and mystic power of Brahman. The word Maya means unreal, illusory, or deceptive image of the creation. Due to the power of Maya one consider the universe as existent and distinct from Brahman, the Supreme spirit. Brahman is invisible potential energy; Maya is kinetic energy, the force of action. They are inseparable like fire and heat. Maya is a metaphor used to explain

the visible world or Jagat to common people.

Whenever there is a decline of Dharma and the rise of Adharma, O Arjuna, then I manifest (or incarnate) Myself. I incarnate from time to time for protecting the good, for transforming the wicked, and for establishing Dharma, the world order. (4.07-08)

The one who truly understands My transcendental birth and activities (of creation, maintenance, and dissolution), is not born again after leaving this body and attains My abode, O Arjuna. (4.09)

Freed from attachment, fear, and anger; fully absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, and purified by the fire of Self-knowledge, many have attained Me. (4.10)

With whatever motive people worship Me, I reward them (or fulfill their desires) accordingly. People worship (or approach) Me with different motives. (4.11)

Those who long for success in their work here (on the earth) worship the demigods (or Devas). Success in work comes quickly in this human world. (4.12)

The four Varna or divisions of human society, based on aptitude and vocation, were created by Me. Though I am the author of this system, one should know that I do nothing and I am eternal. (See also 18.41) (4.13)

Works do not bind Me, because I have no desire for the fruits of work. The one who understands this truth is (also) not bound by Karma. (4.14)

The ancient seekers of liberation also performed their duties with this understanding. Therefore, you should do your duty as the ancients did. (4.15)

Even the wise are confused about what is action and what is inaction. Therefore, I shall clearly explain what is action, knowing that one shall be liberated from the evil (of birth and death). (4.16)

The true nature of action is very difficult to understand. Therefore, one should know the nature of attached action, the nature of detached action, and also the nature of forbidden action. (4.17)

Attached action is selfish work that produces Karmic bondage, detached action is unselfish work or Seva that leads to nirvana, and forbidden action is harmful to society. The one who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is a wise person. Such a person is a yogi and has accomplished everything. (See also 3.05, 3.27, 5.08 and 13.29) (4.18)

A person whose all works are free from selfish desires and motives, and whose all Karma is burned up in the fire of Self-knowledge, is called a sage by the wise. (4.19)

Having abandoned attachment to the fruits of work, ever content, and dependent on no one (but God); though engaged in activity, one does nothing at all (and incurs no Karmic reaction). (4.20)

Free from desires, mind and senses under control, renouncing all proprietorship, doing mere bodily action, one does not incur sin (or Karmic reaction). (4.21)

Content with whatever gain comes naturally by His will, unaffected by dualities, free from envy, equanimous in success and failure; though engaged in work such a person is not bound (by Karma). (4.22)

Those who are devoid of attachment, whose mind is fixed in knowledge, who does work as a Seva to the Lord, all Karma of such liberated persons dissolves away. (4.23)

Brahman is the oblation. Brahman is the clarified butter. The oblation is poured by Brahman into the fire of Brahman. Brahman shall be realized by the one who considers everything as (a manifestation or) an act of Brahman. (Also see 9.16) (4.24)

Some yogis perform the Yajna of worship to Devas alone, while others offer Yajna itself as offering in the fire of Brahman by performing the Yajna (of Self-knowledge). (4.25)

Some offer their hearing and other senses (as sacrifice) in the fires of restraint, others offer sound and other objects of the senses (as sacrifice) in the fires of the senses. (4.26)

Others offer all the functions of the senses, and the functions of Prana (or the five bioimpulses) as sacrifice in the fire of the yoga of self-restraint that is kindled by knowledge. (4.27)

Others offer their wealth, their austerity, and their practice of yoga as sacrifice, while the ascetics with strict vows offer their study of scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice. (4.28)

Those who are engaged in yogic practice, reach the breathless state by offering inhalation into exhalation and exhalation into inhalation as sacrifice (by using short breathing Kriya techniques). (4.29)

Deep spiritual meaning and interpretation of the practical yogic verses (4.29, 4.30, 5.27, 6.13, 8.10, 8.12, 8.13, 8.24, and 8.25) should be acquired from a Self-realized master of Kriya-yoga.

Others restrict their diet and offer their inhalations as sacrifice into their inhalations. All these are the knowers of sacrifice, and are purified by (theirs) sacrifice. (4.30)

Those who perform Yajna obtain the nectar (of knowledge) as a result of their sacrifice and attain eternal Brahman. O Arjuna, even this world is not (a happy place) for the non-sacrificer, how can the other world be? (See also 4.38, and 5.06). (4.31)

Thus many types of sacrifice are described in the Vedas. Know them all to be born from Karma or the action of body, mind, and senses. Knowing this, you shall attain nirvana. (See also 3.14) (4.32)

The knowledge sacrifice is superior to any material sac-

rifice, O Arjuna. Because, all actions in their entirety culminate in knowledge. (4.33)

Acquire this transcendental knowledge by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service (to a Self-realized guru). The wise who have realized the truth will teach you. (4.34)

Knowing that, O Arjuna, you shall not again get deluded like this. By this knowledge you shall behold the entire creation in your own Self/Lord, or in Brahman. (See also 6.29) (4.35)

Even if one is the most sinful of all sinners, yet one shall cross over the ocean of sin by the raft of knowledge alone. (4.36)

As the blazing fire reduces wood to ashes, similarly, the fire of Self-knowledge reduces all Karma to ashes, O Arjuna. (4.37)

Verily there is no purifier in this world like knowledge. One who becomes purified by Karma-yoga discovers this knowledge within (naturally) in course of time. (See also 4.31, and 5.06). (4.38)

The one who has faith, and is sincere, and has mastery over the senses, gains this knowledge. Having gained this, one at once attains the supreme peace. (4.39)

But the ignorant, who has no faith and is full of doubt (about the Self), perishes. There is neither this world nor the world beyond nor happiness for the one who doubts. (4.40)

Karma does not bind one who has renounced work (by renouncing the fruits of work) through Karma-yoga; whose doubt is completely destroyed by knowledge; and who is Self-realized, O Arjuna. (4.41)

Therefore, resort to Karma-yoga and cut the ignorance-born doubt abiding in your heart by the sword of Self-knowledge, and get up (to fight), O Arjuna. (4.42)

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## CHAPTER 5 PATH OF RENUNCIATION

Arjuna said: O Krishna, You praise transcendental knowledge (the Saamkhya or Karma-Samnyasa) and also performance of unattached action, Karma-yoga. Tell me, definitely, which one is better of the two. (See also 5.05) (5.01)

Karma-Samnyasa means renunciation of doership, ownership, and selfish motive behind an action, and not the renunciation of work, or the worldly objects. Karma-Samnyasa comes only after the dawn of Self-knowledge. Therefore, words Jnana, Saamkhya, Samnyasa, and Karma-Samnyasa are used interchangeably throughout the Gita. Renunciation is considered the goal of life, and Karma and Jnana are the necessary means to achieve the goal.

The Supreme Lord said: Karma-Samnyasa, and Karma-

yoga both lead to the Supreme. But, of the two, Karma-yoga is superior to Karma-Samnyasa. (5.02)

A person should be considered a true Samnyasi or renunciant who neither likes nor dislikes. Because, free from the dualities, O Arjuna, one is easily liberated from bondage. (5.03)

The ignorant, not the wise, consider Karma-Samnyasa and Karma-yoga as different from each other. The person who has truly mastered one, gets the benefits of both. (5.04)

Whatever goal a Samnyasi reaches, a Karma-yogi also reaches the same goal. One who sees the path of renunciation and the path of work as the same, really sees. (See also 6.01 and 6.02) (5.05)

But Samnyasa, O Arjuna, is difficult to attain without Karma-yoga. A Karma-yogi sage quickly attains Brahman. (See also 4.31, and 4.38) (5.06)

A Karma-yogi whose mind is pure, whose mind and senses are under control, and who sees one and the same Self in all beings, is not bound (by Karma) though engaged in work. (5.07)

A Samnyasi who knows the truth thinks: I do nothing at all. For in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing; and (5.08)

Speaking, giving, taking, opening and closing the eyes, a Samnyasi believes that only the senses are operating upon their sense objects. (See also 3.27, 13.29, and 14.19) (5.09)

One who does all work as an offering to the Lord, abandoning attachment to the results, is as untouched by sin (or Karmic reaction) as a lotus leaf is untouched by water. (5.10)

A Karma-yogi performs action by body, mind, intellect, and senses, without attachment (or ego), only for self-purification. (5.11)

A Karma-yogi, abandoning the fruit of work, attains Supreme Bliss while others, who are attached to the fruits of work, become bound by selfish work. (5.12)

A person who has subdued the senses and completely renounced (the fruits of) all works, dwells happily in the City of Nine Gates, neither performing nor directing action. (5.13)

The Lord neither creates the urge for action nor the feeling of doership nor the attachment to the results of action in people. All these are done by the (Gunas of) nature. (5.14)

The Lord does not take the (responsibility for) good or evil deeds of anybody. The knowledge is covered by (the veil of) ignorance, thereby people are deluded. (5.15)

But their knowledge, whose ignorance is destroyed by

the Self-knowledge, reveals the Supreme like the sun (reveals the beauty of objects of the world). (5.16)

They, whose mind and intellect are absorbed in the Self, who remain firmly attached with the Self, who have Self as their supreme goal, whose sins (or impurities) have been destroyed by the knowledge, do not take birth again. (5.17)

An enlightened person looks at a learned and humble Braahmana, an outcast, even a cow, an elephant, or a dog with an equal eye. (5.18)

Everything has been accomplished in this very life by those whose mind is set in equality. Such a person has realized Brahman because Brahman is flawless and impartial. (See also 18.55) (5.19)

One who neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant nor grieves on obtaining the unpleasant, who is undeluded, who has a steady mind, and who is a knower of Brahman; such a person abides in Brahman. (5.20)

A person whose mind is unattached to sensual pleasures, who discovers the joy of the Self, and whose mind is in union with Brahman through meditation, enjoys eternal bliss. (5.21)

Pleasures derived from the contact of senses with their objects (or the sensual pleasures) are verily the source of misery, and have a beginning and an end. The wise, O Arjuna, do not rejoice in sensual pleasures. (See also 18.38) (5.22)

One who is able to withstand the impulse of lust and anger before death is a yogi, and a happy person. (5.23)

One who finds happiness with the Self, who rejoices the Self within, and who is illuminated by the Self-knowledge; such a yogi becomes one with Brahman and attains supreme nirvana. (5.24)

Seers whose sins (or imperfections) are destroyed, whose doubts have been dispelled by knowledge, whose disciplined minds are attached with the Self, and who are engaged in the welfare of all beings attain Supreme Brahman. (5.25)

A Self-realized person who is free from lust and anger, and who has subdued the mind and senses easily attains nirvana. (5.26)

Renouncing sense enjoyments; fixing the eyes and mind at the midbrows; equalizing the breath moving through the nostrils (by Kriya techniques); (See also 4.29, 6.13 and 8.10) (5.27)

With senses, mind, and intellect under control; having liberation as the prime goal; free from lust, anger, and fear; such a sage is verily liberated. (5.28)

The one who knows Me as the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, as the great Lord of all the worlds, and as the friend of all beings, attains peace. (5.29)

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CHAPTER 6  
PATH OF MEDITATION

The Supreme Lord said: One who performs the prescribed duty without seeking its fruit is a Samnyasi and a (Karma) yogi, not the one who merely does not light the sacred fire, and does not work. (6.01)

O Arjuna, know that to be the Karma-yoga which they call Samnyasa. No one becomes a Karma-yogi who has not renounced the selfish motive behind an action. (See also 5.01, 5.05, 6.01, and 18.02) (6.02)

For the wise who seeks to attain yoga (of meditation or the equanimity of mind), Karma-yoga is said to be the means; for the one who has attained yoga, the equanimity becomes the means (of Self-Realization). (6.03)

A person is said to have attained yogic perfection when there is no desire for sensual pleasures, or attachment to the fruits of work, and has renounced all personal selfish motives. (6.04)

One must elevate, not degrade, oneself by one's own mind "mind". The mind alone is one's friend as well as one's enemy. (6.05)

The mind is the friend "friend" of those who have control over it, and the mind acts like an enemy for those who do not control it. (6.06)

One who has control over the mind is tranquil in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain, and in honor and dishonor; and is ever steadfast with the Supreme Self. (6.07)

A yogi is called Self-realized who is satisfied with knowledge and understanding of the Self, who is equanimous, who has control over the (mind and) senses, and to whom a clod, a stone, and gold are the same. (6.08)

A person is considered superior who is impartial towards companions, friends, enemies, neutrals, arbiters, haters, relatives, saints, and sinners. (6.09)

Let the yogi ° seated in solitude and alone ° having mind and senses under control and free from desires and attachments for possessions, try constantly to contemplate on the Supreme Self. (6.10)

The yogi should sit on a firm seat that is neither too high nor too low, covered with sacred Kusha grass, a deer's skin, and a cloth, one over the other, in a clean spot. (6.11)

Sitting (in a comfortable position) and concentrating the mind on a single object, controlling the thoughts and the activities of the senses, let the yogi practice meditation for self-purification. (6.12)

Hold the waist, spine, chest, neck, and head erect, motionless and steady, fix the eyes and the mind steadily between the eye brows, and do not look around. (See also 4.29, 5.27 and 8.10) (6.13)

A simple meditation technique is given here: (1) Fix your gaze and the mind inside the chest center, the seat of the causal heart, and breath normally. Imagine a crimson lotus with a cool radiant point-source of light in the center of the lotus. Quietly watch the breath coming in and going out of this lotus. Do not try to control your breathing. (2) Mentally chant your mantra, or "So" as you inhale and "Hum" as you exhale. Meditate calmly on the effulgent lotus, just witness and watch the thought waves of the mind, and feel the peace and serenity.

With serene and fearless mind; practicing celibacy; having the mind under control and thinking of Me; let the yogi sit and have Me as the supreme goal. (6.14)

Thus, by always keeping the mind fixed on the Self, the yogi whose mind is subdued attains peace of the Supreme nirvana by uniting with Me. (6.15)

This yoga is not possible, O Arjuna, for the one who eats too much, or who does not eat at all; who sleeps too much, or who keeps awake. (6.16)

But, for the one who is moderate in eating, recreation, working, sleeping, and waking, this yoga (of meditation) destroys (all) sorrow. (6.17)

A person is said to have achieved yoga, the union with the Self, when the perfectly disciplined mind gets freedom from all desires, and becomes absorbed in the Self alone. (6.18)

As a lamp in a spot sheltered (by Brahman) from the wind (of desires) does not flicker, this simile is used for the subdued mind of a yogi practicing meditation on Brahman. (6.19)

When the mind disciplined by the practice of meditation becomes steady, one becomes content in the Self by beholding Him with (purified) intellect. (6.20)

One feels infinite bliss that is perceivable only through the intellect, and is beyond the reach of the senses. After realizing Brahman, one is never separated from absolute reality. (6.21)

After Self-Realization (SR), one does not regard any other gain superior to SR. Established in SR, one is not moved even by the greatest calamity. (6.22)

The (state of) severance of union with sorrow is known by the name of yoga. This yoga should be practiced with firm determination and perseverance, without any mental reservation or doubts. (6.23)

Totally abandoning all selfish desires, and completely restraining the senses (from the sense objects) by the intellect; (6.24)

One gradually attains tranquillity of mind by keeping the mind fully absorbed in the Self by means of a well-trained (and purified) intellect, and thinking of nothing

else. (6.25)

Wheresoever this restless and unsteady mind wanders away, one should (gently) bring it back to the reflection of the Supreme. (6.26)

Supreme bliss comes to a Self-realized yogi whose mind is tranquil, whose desires are under control, and who is free from sin (or faults). (6.27)

Such a sinless yogi, who constantly engages the mind with the Self, easily enjoys the infinite bliss of contact with Brahman. (6.28)

Because of perceiving the (same) Self (abiding) in all beings and all beings (abiding) in the (same) Self; a yogi, who is in union with the Self, sees everybeing with an equal eye. (See also 4.35) (6.29)

Those who see Me in everything and see everything in Me, are not separated from Me and I am not separated from them. (6.30)

The non-dualists, who adore Me as abiding in all beings, abide in Me irrespective of their mode of living. (6.31)

One is considered the best yogi who regards every being like oneself, and who can feel the pain and pleasures of others as one's own, O Arjuna. (6.32)

Arjuna said: O Krishna, You have said that yoga of meditation is characterized by the equanimity (of mind), but, due to restlessness of mind I do not perceive the steady state of mind. (6.33)

Because the mind, indeed, is very unsteady, turbulent, powerful, and obstinate, O Krishna. I think restraining the mind is as difficult as restraining the wind. (6.34)

The Supreme Lord said: Undoubtedly, O Arjuna, the mind is restless and difficult to restrain, but it is subdued by Abhyaasa (or constant vigorous spiritual practice with perseverance), and Vairagya (or detachment), O Arjuna. (6.35)

In My opinion, yoga is difficult for the one whose mind is not subdued. However, yoga is attainable by the person of subdued mind by striving through proper means. (6.36)

Arjuna said: For the faithful but of unsubdued mind, who deviates from (the path of) meditation and fails to attain yogic perfection ° what is the destination of such a person, O Krishna? (6.37)

Do they not perish like a dispersing cloud, O Krishna, having lost both (yoga and Bhoga, the heavenly and worldly pleasures), supportless and bewildered on the path of Self-realization? (6.38)

O Krishna, only You are able to completely dispel this doubt of mine. Because there is none, other than You, who can dispel this doubt. (See also 15.15) (6.39)

The Supreme Lord said: There is no destruction, O Ar-

juna, for such a yogi either here or hereafter. A transcendentalist is never put to grief (or bad state), My dear friend. (6.40)

The unsuccessful yogi is reborn, after attaining heaven and living there for many years, in the house of the pure and prosperous; or (6.41)

Such a yogi is born in a family of wise transcendentalists. A birth like this is very difficult, indeed, to obtain in this world. (6.42)

After taking such a birth, O Arjuna, one regains the knowledge acquired in the previous life, and strives again to achieve perfection. (6.43)

The unsuccessful yogi is instinctively carried towards Brahman by virtue of Sanskaara (or the impressions) of yogic practices of previous lives. Even the inquirer of Brahman surpasses those who perform Vedic rituals. (6.44)

The yogi who diligently strives, perfecting (gradually) through many incarnations, becomes completely free from all sins (or imperfections) and reaches the supreme goal (of Self-realization). (6.45)

The yogi is superior to the ascetics. The yogi is superior to the (Vedic) scholars. The yogi is superior to the ritualists. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi. (6.46)

I consider one to be the most devoted of all the yogis who lovingly contemplates on Me with supreme faith, and whose mind is ever absorbed in Me. (See also 12.02 and 18.66) (6.47)

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## CHAPTER 7

### SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-REALIZATION

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, listen how you shall know Me completely without any doubt, with your mind absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, and performing yogic practices. (7.01)

I shall fully explain to you the Self-knowledge together with Self-realization after knowing that nothing more remains to be known in this world. (7.02)

Scarcely one out of thousands of persons strives for perfection of Self-realization. Scarcely any one of the striving, or even the perfected persons, truly understands Me. (7.03)

The mind, intellect, ego, ether, air, fire, water, and earth are the eightfold transformation of My Prakriti. (See also 13.05) (7.04)

That which creates diversity, and all that can be seen or known is called Prakriti. Prakriti is also the material cause or the material out of which everything is made. Prakriti is the original source of the material world consisting of three Gunas, and eight basic elements out of which everything in this universe has evolved accord-

ing to Saamkhya doctrine. Prakriti is also referred to as Asat, perishable, body, matter, nature, material nature, Maya, Mahat Brahma, field, creation, and manifest state.

This Prakriti is My lower energy. My other higher energy is the Purusha by which this entire universe is sustained, O Arjuna. (7.05)

Purusha is the consciousness that observes, witnesses, watches, and supervises Prakriti. It is the spiritual energy or the efficient cause of the universe. This is also referred to as Sat, imperishable, Atma, consciousness, spirit, self, soul, energy, field knower, creator, and the unmanifest state. Prakriti and Purusha are not two independent identities but the two aspects of Brahman, the Absolute Reality.

Know that all creatures have evolved from this twofold energy, and Brahman is the origin as well as the dissolution of the entire universe. (See also 13.26) (7.06)

O Arjuna, there is nothing higher than Brahman. Everything in the universe is strung on Brahman like jewels on the thread of a necklace. (7.07)

O Arjuna, I am the sapidity in the water, I am the radiance in the sun and the moon, the sacred syllable OM in all the Vedas, the sound in the ether, and the manhood in men. (7.08)

I am the sweet fragrance in the earth. I am the heat in the fire, the life in all living beings, and the austerity in the ascetics. (7.09)

O Arjuna, know Me to be the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, and the brilliance of the brilliant. (See also 9.18 and 10.39) (7.10)

I am the strength, that is devoid of lust and attachment, of the strong. I am the lust (or Kaama) in human beings that is in accord with Dharma (for procreation), O Arjuna. (7.11)

Know that the three Gunas, Saattvika, Raajasika, and Taamasika, also emanate from Me. I am not in (or dependent on) the Gunas, but the Gunas are in (or dependent on) Me. (See also 9.04 and 9.05) (7.12)

Human beings are deluded by these three Gunas of nature; therefore, they do not know Me who is above these Gunas and eternal. (7.13)

My divine Maya consisting of three Gunas or states of mind is difficult to overcome. Only they who surrender unto Me cross over this Maya. (See also 14.26, 15.19, and 18.66) (7.14)

The evil doers, the ignorant, the lowest persons who are attached to demonic nature, and whose intellect has been taken away by Maya do not worship or seek Me. (7.15)

Four types of virtuous ones worship or seek Me, O Ar-

juna. They are: the distressed, the seeker of Self-knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise one who knows the Supreme. (7.16)

Among them the wise one, who is ever united with Me and whose devotion is single minded, is the best. Because, I am very dear to the wise, and the wise is very dear to Me. (7.17)

All these (seekers) are indeed noble, but I regard the wise as My very Self, because the one who is steadfast becomes one with the Supreme Being. (See also 9.29) (7.18)

After many births the wise ones resort (or surrender) to Me by realizing that everything is (a manifestation of) Brahman indeed. Such a great soul is very rare. (7.19)

They, whose wisdom has been carried away by various desires impelled by their own Sanskaara, resort to other gods (or deities) and practice various religious rites. (7.20)

Whosoever desires to worship whatever deity (using whatever name, form, and method) with faith, I make their faith steady in that very deity. (7.21)

Endowed with steady faith they worship that deity, and fulfill their wishes through that deity. Those wishes are, indeed, granted only by Me. (7.22)

Such (material) gains of these less intelligent human beings are temporary. The worshipers of Devas go to Devas, but My devotees come to Me. (7.23)

The ignorant think of Me, the Para-Brahman, as having no form or personality and I can take (any physical) form; because (these) people are not being able to comprehend My supreme imperishable and incomparable existence. (7.24)

The word 'Avyakta' has been used in verses 2.25, 2.28, 7.24, 8.18, 8.20, 8.21, 9.04, 12.01, 12.03, 12.05, and 13.05. It takes different meaning according to the context. Avyakta does not mean formless; it means unmanifest or a transcendental form that is invisible to our physical eyes. It is used in the sense of unmanifest Prakriti, and also in the sense of Para-Brahman. The Para-Brahman or absolute consciousness is higher than both Brahman and the unmanifest Prakriti. Para-Brahman (or Krishna) is imperishable, without any origin and end. Para-Brahman is not formless. It has Divya Roopa, a transcendental form and Supreme Personality. The ignorant think of the Lord as formless because He is not visible. Because:

Veiled by My divine Maya, I am not known by all. Therefore, the ignorant one does not know Me as the unborn and eternal Brahman. (7.25)

I know, O Arjuna, the beings of the past, of the present, and those of the future, but no one really knows Me. (7.26)

All beings in this world are in utter ignorance due to the delusion of dualities born of likes and dislikes, O Arjuna. (7.27)

Persons of virtuous (or unselfish) deeds, whose Karma has come to an end, become free from the delusion of dualities and worship Me with firm resolve. (7.28)

Those who strive for freedom from (the cycles of birth) old age and death by taking refuge in Me know Brahman, the individual self, and Karma in its entirety. (7.29)

The steadfast persons, who know that Brahman is everything, the Adhibhoota, the Adhidaiva, and the Adhiyajna, remember Me even at the time of death (and attain Me). (See also 8.04) (7.30)

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## CHAPTER 8 IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN

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Arjuna said: O Krishna, what is Brahman? What is Adhyaatma? What is Karma? What is called Adhibhoota? And what is known as Adhidaiva? (8.01)

O Krishna, who is Adhiyajna, and how does He dwell in the body? How can You be remembered at the time of death by the steadfast? (8.02)

The Supreme Lord said: Brahman is the Supreme imperishable. The individual self (or Jeevaatma) is called Adhyaatma. The creative power that causes manifestation of beings is called Karma. (8.03)

All perishable objects are called Adhibhoota, and the soul is Adhidaiva. I am Adhiyajna, the five basic elements, in the body, O Arjuna. (8.04)

The One who leaves the body, at the hour of death, remembering Me attains My abode. There is no doubt about this. (8.05)

Remembering whatever object one leaves the body at the end of life, one attains that object, O Arjuna, because of the constant thought of that object (one remembers that object at the end of life and achieves it). (8.06)

Therefore, always remember Me and do your duty. You shall certainly attain Me if your mind and intellect are fixed on Me. (8.07)

By contemplating on Me with an unwavering mind, disciplined by the practice of meditation, one attains the Supreme divine spirit, O Arjuna. (8.08)

The one who meditates on Brahman as the omniscient, the oldest, the controller, smaller than the smallest (and bigger than the biggest), the sustainer of everything, the inconceivable, the self luminous like the sun, and as tran-

scendental or beyond the material reality; (8.09)

At the time of death with steadfast mind and devotion; making the flow of Pranic impulse rise up (to the middle of two eye brows) by the power of yoga and holding there; attains the Supreme divine spirit. (See also 4.29, 5.27, and 6.13) (8.10)

I shall briefly explain to you (the process to attain) that goal which the knowers of the Vedas call the imperishable; into which the ascetics, freed from attachment, enter; and desiring which people lead a life of celibacy. (8.11)

Controlling all the (nine) doors of the body, the abode of consciousness; focusing the mind on the heart and Prana in the cerebrum, and engaged in yogic practice; (8.12)

One who leaves the body while meditating on Brahman and uttering OM, the sacred monosyllable sound of Brahman, attains the Supreme goal. (8.13)

I am easily attainable, O Arjuna, by that ever steadfast yogi who always thinks of Me and whose mind does not go elsewhere. (8.14)

After attaining Me the great souls do not incur rebirth, the impermanent home of misery, because they have attained the highest perfection. (8.15)

The dwellers of all the worlds including the world of Brahmaa, the creator, are subject to (the miseries of) repeated birth and death. But, after attaining Me, O Arjuna, one does not take birth again. (See also 9.25) (8.16)

Those who know that the day of Brahmaa lasts one thousand Yugas (or 4.32 billion years) and that his night also lasts one thousand Yugas, they are the knowers of day and night. (8.17)

All manifestations come out of the unmanifest state or Prakriti at the arrival of Brahmaa's day, and they again merge into the same Prakriti at the coming of Brahmaa's night. (8.18)

The same multitude of beings come into existence again and again at the arrival of the day of Brahmaa, and they are annihilated, inevitably, at the arrival of Brahmaa's night. (8.19)

There is another eternal unmanifest state higher than (both Purusha and) Prakriti that does not perish when all beings perish. (8.20)

This unmanifest state is called the imperishable or Brahman. This is said to be the ultimate goal. Those who reach My Supreme abode do not return (or take rebirth). (8.21)

This Supreme abode, O Arjuna, is attainable by unswerving devotion to Me within which all beings exist, and by which all this universe is pervaded. (See also 9.04 and 11.55) (8.22)

O Arjuna, now I shall describe different paths departing by which, during death, the yogis do or do not come back. (8.23)

Fire, light, daytime, the bright lunar fortnight, and the six months of the northern solstice of the sun; departing by the path of these gods the yogis, who know Brahman, attain nirvana. (8.24)

Smoke, night, the dark lunar fortnight, and the six months of southern solstice of the sun; departing by these paths, the righteous person attains lunar light (or heaven) and reincarnates. (8.25)

The path of light (of spiritual practice of Kundalini yoga and Self-knowledge) and the path of darkness (of materialism and ignorance) are thought to be the world's two eternal paths. The former leads to nirvana and the latter leads to rebirth. (8.26)

Knowing these two paths, O Arjuna, a yogi is not bewildered at all. Therefore, O Arjuna, be steadfast in yoga (of meditation) at all times. (8.27)

The yogi who knows all this goes beyond getting the benefits of the study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices, austerities, and charities, and attains the Supreme eternal abode. (8.28)

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## CHAPTER 9

### SUPREME KNOWLEDGE AND THE BIG MYSTERY

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The Supreme Lord said: I shall reveal to you, who do not disbelieve, the most profound secret of Self-knowledge and Self-realization. Having known this you will be freed from the miseries of worldly existence. (9.01)

This knowledge is the king of all knowledge, is the most secret, is very sacred, it can be perceived by instinct, conforms to Dharma, is very easy to practice, and is imperishable. (9.02)

O Arjuna, those who have no faith in this knowledge follow the cycle of birth and death without attaining Me. (9.03)

This entire universe is pervaded by Me, the unmanifest Brahman. All beings depend on (or remain in) Me (like a chain depends on gold). I do not depend on them. (See also 7.12) (9.04)

From a Dvaitic or dualistic view point, waves depend on the ocean, the ocean does not depend on the waves. But, from an Advaitic or non-dualistic point of view, as stated in verse 9.05 below, the question of wave abiding in the ocean or the ocean abiding in the wave does not arise, because there is no wave or ocean. It is water only. Similarly, everything is a manifestation of Brahman only.

(Gita 7.19)

And yet beings, in reality, do not remain in Me. Look at the power of My divine mystery. Though the sustainer and creator of all beings, I do not remain in them. (In reality, the chain does not depend on gold; the chain is nothing but gold. Also, matter and energy are different as well as non-different). (9.05)

Consider that all beings remain in Me (without any contact or without producing any effect) as the mighty wind, moving everywhere, eternally remains in space. (9.06)

All beings merge into My Prakriti at the end of a Kalpa (or a cycle of 4.32 billion years), O Arjuna, and I create (or manifest) them again at the beginning of the next Kalpa. (9.07)

Using My Prakriti I create, again and again, the entire multitude of beings that are helpless, being under the control of (the Gunas of) Prakriti. (9.08)

These acts of creation do not bind Me, O Arjuna, because I remain indifferent and unattached to those acts. (9.09)

The Prakriti or nature, under My supervision, creates all animate and inanimate objects; and thus the creation keeps on going, O Arjuna. (See also 14.03) (9.10)

The ignorant ones, not knowing My supreme natures as the great Lord of all beings, disregard Me when I assume human form. (9.11)

The ignorant persons having false hopes, false actions, and false knowledge, possess the delusive (or Taamasika) qualities (See 16.04-18) of fiends and demons. (9.12)

But great souls, O Arjuna, who possess divine qualities (See 16.01-03) know Me as the (material and efficient) cause of creation and imperishable, and worship Me single-mindedly. (9.13)

Persons of firm resolve worship Me with ever steadfast devotion by always singing My glories, striving to attain Me, and prostrating before Me. (9.14)

Some worship Me by knowledge sacrifice. Others worship the infinite as the one in all (or non-dual), as the master of all (or dual), and in various other ways. (9.15)

I am the ritual, I am the Yajna, I am the offering, I am the herb, I am the mantra, I am the Ghee, I am the fire, and I am the oblation. (See also 4.24) (9.16)

I am the supporter of the universe, the father, the mother, and the grandfather. I am the object of knowledge, the purifier, the sacred syllable OM, and also the Rig, the Yajur, and the Sama Vedas. (9.17)

I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the substratum, and the imperishable

seed. (See also 7.10 and 10.39) (9.18)

I give heat, I send as well as withhold the rain, I am immortality as well as death, I am also both the Sat and the Asat, O Arjuna. (Brahman is everything, See also 13.12) (9.19)

The knowers of the three Vedas and the drinkers of the juice of Soma (or devotion), whose sins are cleansed, worship Me by Yajna for gaining heaven. As a result of their good Karma they go to heaven and enjoy celestial sense pleasures. (9.20)

Having enjoyed the wide world of heavenly sense pleasures they return to the mortal world upon exhaustion of their good Karma (or Punya). Thus following the injunctions of three Vedas, the fruitive workers take repeated birth and death. (See also 8.25) (9.21)

To those ever steadfast devotees, who always remember or worship Me with single-minded contemplation, I personally take responsibility for their welfare. (9.22)

O Arjuna, even those devotees who worship demigods with faith, they too worship Me, but in an improper way. (9.23)

Because I alone am the enjoyer of all Yajna, and the Lord. But, people do not know My true transcendental nature. Therefore, they fall (into the repeated cycles of birth and death). (9.24)

Worshippers of the demigods go to the demigods, the worshippers of the ancestors go to the ancestors, and the worshippers of the ghosts go to the ghosts, but My devotees come to Me (and are not born again). (See also 8.16) (9.25)

Whosoever offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water with devotion; I accept and eat the offering of devotion by the pure-hearted. (9.26)

O Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever charity you give, whatever austerity you perform, do all that as an offering unto Me. (See also 12.10, 18.46) (9.27)

By this attitude of complete renunciation (or Samnyasa-yoga) you shall be freed from the bondage, good and bad, of Karma. You shall be liberated, and come to Me. (9.28)

The Self is present equally in all beings. There is no one hateful or dear to Me. But, those who worship Me with devotion, they are with Me and I am also with them. (See also 7.18) (9.29)

Even if the most sinful person resolves to worship Me with single-minded loving devotion, such a person must be regarded as a saint because of making the right resolution. (9.30)

Such a person soon becomes righteous and attains everlasting peace. Be aware, O Arjuna, that My devotee

never falls down. (9.31)

Anybody, including women, merchants, laborers, and the evil-minded can attain the supreme goal by just surrendering unto My will (with loving devotion), O Arjuna. (See also 18.66) (9.32)

Then, it should be very easy for the holy Braahmanas and devout royal sages (to attain the Supreme state). Therefore, having obtained this joyless and transient human life, one should always remember Me with loving devotion. (9.33)

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow down to Me. Thus uniting yourself with Me, and setting Me as the supreme goal and sole refuge, you shall certainly realize (or come to) Me. (9.34)

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## CHAPTER 10

### MANIFESTATION OF THE ABSOLUTE

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, listen once again to My supreme word that I shall speak to you, who are dear, for your welfare. (10.01)

Neither the Devas nor the great sages know My origin, because I am the origin of all Devas and sages also. (10.02)

One who knows Me as the unborn, the beginningless, and the Supreme Lord of the universe, is considered wise among the mortals, and gets liberation from the bondage of Karma. (10.03)

Discrimination, knowledge, non-delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the mind and senses, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness; (10.04)

Nonviolence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, and ill fame; all these diverse qualities in human beings arise from Me alone. (10.05)

The seven great sages and four ancient Manus, from whom all these creatures of the world were born, originated from My potential energy. (10.06)

One who truly understands My manifestations and yogic powers, is united with Me in unswerving devotion. There is no doubt about this. (10.07)

I am the origin of all. Everything emanates from Me. Understanding this, the wise ones worship Me with love and devotion. (10.08)

With their minds absorbed in Me, with their lives surrendered unto Me, always enlightening each other by talking about Me; they remain ever content and delighted. (10.09)

I give the knowledge, to those who are ever united with Me and lovingly adore Me, by which they come to Me. (10.10)

Out of compassion for them I, who dwell within their heart, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the

shining lamp of knowledge. (10.11)

Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the supreme abode, the supreme purifier, the eternal divine spirit, the primal God, the unborn, and the omnipresent. (10.12)

All sages have thus acclaimed You. The divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala, Vyaasa, and You Yourself tell me. (10.13)

O Krishna, I believe all that You have told Me to be true. O Lord, neither the Devas nor the demons fully understand Your manifestations. (See also 4.06) (10.14)

O Creator and Lord of all beings, God of all gods, Supreme person and Lord of the universe, You alone know Yourself by Yourself. (10.15)

(Therefore), You alone are able to fully describe Your own divine glories, the manifestations, by which You exist pervading all the universe. (10.16)

How may I know You, O Lord, by constant contemplation? In what form (of manifestation) are You to be thought of by me, O Lord? (10.17)

O Lord, explain to me again in detail, Your yogic power and glory; because, I am not satiated by hearing Your nectar-like words. (10.18)

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, now I shall explain to you My prominent divine manifestations, because My manifestations are endless. (10.19)

O Arjuna, I am the Atma abiding in the heart of all beings. I am also the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings. (10.20)

I am Vishnu among the (twelve) sons of Aditi, I am the radiant sun among the luminaries, I am Marici among the gods of wind, I am the moon among the stars. (10.21)

I am the Sama Veda among the Vedas; I am Indra among the Devas; I am the mind among the senses; I am the consciousness in living beings. (10.22)

I am Shiva among the Rudras; (I am) Kubera among the Yakshas and demons; I am the fire among the Vasus; and I am Meru among the mountain peaks. (10.23)

Among the priests, O Arjuna, know Me to be the chief, Brihaspati. Among the army generals, I am Skanda; I am the ocean among the bodies of water. (10.24)

I am Bhrgu among the great sages; I am the monosyllable OM among the words; I am Japa among the Yajna; and I am the Himalaya among the immovables. (10.25)

I am the Peepal tree among the trees, Narada among the sages, Chitraaratha among the Gandharvas, and sage Kapila among the Siddhas. (10.26)

Know Me as Uchchaishrava, born at the time of churning the ocean for getting the nectar, among the horses; Airavata among the elephants; and the King among men. (10.27)

I am thunderbolt among the weapons, Kaamadhenu among the cows, and the cupid among the procreators. Among the serpents, I am Vaasuki. (10.28)

I am Sheshanaaga among the Naagas, I am Varuna among the water gods, and Aryamaa among the manes. I am Yama among the controllers. (10.29)

I am Prahlaada among Diti's progeny, time or death among the healers, lion among the beasts, and the Garuda among birds. (10.30)

I am the wind among the purifiers, and Lord Rama among the warriors. I am the shark among the fishes, and the Ganges among the rivers. (10.31)

I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of the creation, O Arjuna. Among the knowledge I am knowledge of the supreme Self. I am logic of the logician. (10.32)

I am the letter "A" among the alphabets, among the compound words I am the dual compound, I am the endless time, I am the sustainer of all, and have faces on all sides (or I am omniscient). (10.33)

I am the all-devouring death, and also the origin of future beings. Among the feminine nouns I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intellect, resolve, and forgiveness. (10.34)

I am Brihatsaama among the hymns. I am Gaayatri among the mantras, I am Maargsirsha (November-December) among the months, I am the spring among the seasons. (10.35)

I am the fraud of the gambler; I am the splendor of the splendid; I am victory (of the victorious); I am resolution (of the resolute); I am the goodness of the good. (10.36)

I am Vaasudeva among the Vrishni, Arjuna among the Paandavas, Vyaasa among the sages, and Ushanaa among the poets. (10.37)

I am the power of rulers, the statesmanship of the seekers of victory, I am silence among the secrets, and the Self-knowledge of the knowledgeable. (10.38)

I am the origin or seed of all beings, O Arjuna. There is nothing, animate or inanimate, that can exist without Me. (See also 7.10 and 9.18) (10.39)

There is no end of My divine manifestations, O Arjuna. This is only a brief description by Me of the extent of My divine manifestations. (10.40)

Whatever is endowed with glory, brilliance, and power; know that to be a manifestation of a fraction of My splendor. (10.41)

What is the need for this detailed knowledge, O Arjuna? I continually support the entire universe by a small fraction of My energy. (10.42)

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## CHAPTER 11 VISION OF THE COSMIC FORM

Arjuna said: My illusion is dispelled by Your profound words, that You spoke out of compassion towards me, about the supreme secret of the Self. (11.01)

O Krishna, I have heard from You in detail about the origin and dissolution of beings, and Your imperishable glory. (11.02)

O Lord, You are as You have said, yet I wish to see Your divine cosmic form, O Supreme Being. (11.03)

O Lord, if You think it is possible for me to see this, then O Lord of the yogis, show me Your imperishable Self. (11.04)

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, behold My hundreds and thousands of multifarious divine forms of different colors and shapes. (11.05)

See the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ashvins, and the Maruts. Behold, O Arjuna, many wonders never seen before. (11.06)

O Arjuna, now behold the entire creation; animate, inanimate, and whatever else you like to see; all at one place in My body. (11.07)

But, you are not able to see Me with your physical eye; therefore, I give you the divine eye to see My majestic power and glory. (11.08)

Sanjaya said: O King, having said this; Lord Krishna, the great Lord of (the mystic power of) yoga, revealed His supreme majestic form to Arjuna. (11.09)

(Arjuna saw the Universal Form of the Lord) with many mouths and eyes, and many visions of marvel, with numerous divine ornaments, and holding divine weapons. (11.10)

Wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with celestial perfumes and ointments, full of all wonders, the limitless God with faces on all sides. (11.11)

If the splendor of thousands of suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, even that would not resemble the splendor of that exalted being. (11.12)

Arjuna saw the entire universe, divided in many ways, but standing as (all in) One (and One in all) in the body of Krishna, the God of gods. (11.13)

Then Arjuna, filled with wonder and his hairs standing on end, bowed his head to the Lord and prayed with folded hands. (11.14)

Arjuna said: O Lord, I see in Your body all the gods and multitude of beings, all sages, celestial serpents, Lord Shiva as well as Lord Brahma seated on the lotus. (11.15)

O Lord of the universe, I see You everywhere with infinite form, with many arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes. Neither do I see the beginning nor the middle nor the end of Your Universal Form. (11.16)

I see You with Your crown, club, discus; and a mass of radiance, difficult to behold, shining all around with immeasurable brilliance of the sun and the blazing fire. (11.17)

I believe You are the imperishable, the Supreme to be realized. You are the ultimate resort of the universe. You are the protector of eternal Dharma, and the imperishable primal spirit. (11.18)

I see You with infinite power, without beginning, middle, or end; with many arms, with the sun and the moon as Your eyes, with Your mouth as a blazing fire whose radiance is scorching all the universe. (11.19)

The entire space between heaven and earth is pervaded by You alone in all directions. Seeing Your marvelous and terrible form, the three worlds are trembling with fear, O Lord. (11.20)

These hosts of demigods enter into You. Some with folded hands sing Your names and glories in fear. A multitude of Maharishis and Siddhas hail and adore You with abundant praises. (11.21)

Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Saadhya, Vishwedevas, Ashvins, Maruts, Ushmapas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas; they all amazingly gaze at You. (11.22)

Seeing your infinite form with many mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, stomachs, and many fearful teeth; the worlds are trembling with fear and so do I, O mighty Lord. (11.23)

Seeing Your great effulgent and various-colored form touching the sky; Your mouth wide open and large shining eyes; I am frightened and find neither peace nor courage, O Krishna. (11.24)

Seeing Your mouths, with fearful teeth, glowing like fires of cosmic dissolution, I lose my sense of direction and find no comfort. Have mercy on me! O Lord of gods, refuge of the universe. (11.25)

The sons of Dhritaraashtra along with the hosts of kings; Bheeshma, Drona, and Karna together with chief warriors on our side are also quickly entering into Your fearful mouths having terrible teeth. Some are seen caught in between the teeth with their heads crushed. (11.26-27)

As many torrents of the rivers rush toward the ocean, similarly, those warriors of the mortal world are entering Your blazing mouths. (11.28)

As moths rush with great speed into the blazing flame for destruction, similarly all these people are rapidly rushing into Your mouths for destruction. (11.29)

You are licking up all the worlds with Your flaming mouths, swallowing them from all sides. Your powerful radiance is burning the entire universe, and filling it with splendor, O Krishna. (11.30)

Tell me who are You in such a fierce form? My salutations to You, O best of gods, be merciful! I wish to understand You, the primal Being, because I do not know Your mission. (11.31)

The Supreme Lord said: I am death, the mighty destroyer of the world, out to destroy. Even without your participation all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall cease to exist. (11.32)

Therefore, you get up and attain glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these (warriors) have already been destroyed by Me. You are only an instrument, O Arjuna. (11.33)

Kill Drona, Bheeshma, Jayadratha, Karna, and other great warriors who are already killed by Me. Do not fear. You will certainly conquer the enemies in the battle, therefore, fight! (11.34)

Sanjaya said: Having heard these words of Krishna; the crowned Arjuna, trembling with folded hands, prostrated with fear and spoke to Krishna in a choked voice. (11.35)

Arjuna said: Rightly, O Krishna, the world delights and rejoices in glorifying You. Terrified demons flee in all directions. The hosts of Siddhas bow to You in adoration. (11.36)

Why should they not, O great soul, bow to You, the original creator who is even greater than Brahmaa? O infinite Lord, O God of gods, O abode of the universe, You are both Sat and Asat, and the imperishable Brahman that is beyond both (Sat and Asat). (11.37)

You are the primal God, the most ancient Person. You are the ultimate resort of all the universe. You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme abode. The entire universe is pervaded by You, O Lord of the infinite form. (11.38)

You are Vaayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Shashaanka, and Brahmaa as well as the father of Brahmaa. Salutations to You a thousand times, and again and again salutations to You. (11.39)

My salutations to You from front and from behind. O Lord, my obeisances to You from all sides. You are infinite valor and the boundless might. You pervade everything, and therefore You are everywhere and in everything. (11.40)

Considering You merely as a friend, not knowing Your greatness, I have inadvertently addressed You as O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend; merely out of affection or carelessness. (11.41)

In whatever way I may have insulted You in jokes; while playing, reposing in bed, sitting, or at meals; when alone, or in front of others; O Krishna, I implore You for forgiveness. (11.42)

You are the father of this animate and inanimate world, and the greatest guru to be worshipped. No one is even equal to You in the three worlds; how can there be one greater than You? O Being of Incomparable Glory. (11.43)

Therefore, O adorable Lord, I seek Your grace by bowing down and prostrating my body before You. Bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to a friend, and as a husband to his wife, O Lord. (11.44)

I am delighted by beholding that which has never been seen before, and yet my mind is tormented with fear. Show me that (four-armed) form. O God of gods, the refuge of the universe have mercy! (11.45)

I wish to see You with a crown, holding mace and discus in Your hand. O Lord with thousand arms and universal form, appear in the four-armed form. (11.46)

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, being pleased with you I have shown you, through My own yogic powers, this supreme, shining, universal, infinite, and primal form of Mine that has never been seen before by anyone other than you. (11.47)

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by Yajna, nor by charity, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, can I be seen in the cosmic form in this human world by anyone other than you, O Arjuna. (11.48)

Do not be perturbed and deluded by seeing such a terrible form of Mine as this. With fearless and cheerful mind, now behold My four-armed form. (11.49)

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna, having thus spoken to Arjuna, revealed His four-armed form. Then assuming His gentle human form, Mahatma Krishna consoled Arjuna who was terrified. (11.50)

Arjuna said: O Krishna, seeing this gentle human form of Yours, I have now become composed and I am normal again. (11.51)

The Supreme Lord said: This (four-armed) form of Mine that you have seen is very difficult, indeed, to see. Even the gods are ever longing to see this form. (11.52)

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by charity, nor by ritual, can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me. (11.53)

However, through single-minded devotion alone, I can be seen in this form, can be known in essence, and also can be reached, O Arjuna. (11.54)

The one who does all works for Me, and to whom I am the supreme goal, who is my devotee, who has no attachment, and is free from enmity towards any being attains Me, O Arjuna. (See also 8.22) (11.55)

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CHAPTER 12  
PATH OF DEVOTION

Arjuna said: Those ever-steadfast devotees (or Bhaktas) who thus worship You (as the manifest or personal God), and those who worship the eternal unmanifest (the formless or impersonal) Brahman (by developing Jnana), which of these has the best knowledge of yoga? (12.01)

The Supreme Lord said: Those ever steadfast devotees who worship with supreme faith by fixing their mind on Me as personal God, I consider them to be the best yogis. (See also 6.47) (12.02)

But those who worship the imperishable, the undefinable, the unmanifest, the omnipresent, the unthinkable, the unchanging, the immovable, and the eternal Brahman; (12.03)

Restraining all the senses, even minded under all circumstances, engaged in the welfare of all creatures, they also attain Me. (12.04)

Self-realization is more difficult for those who fix their mind on the formless Brahman, because the comprehension of the unmanifest Brahman by the average embodied human being is very difficult. (12.05)

But, to those who worship Me as the personal God, renouncing all actions to Me; setting Me as their supreme goal, and meditating on Me with single minded devotion; (12.06)

I swiftly become their savior, from the world that is the ocean of death and transmigration, whose thoughts are set on Me, O Arjuna. (12.07)

Therefore, focus your mind on Me alone and let your intellect dwell upon Me through meditation and contemplation. Thereafter you shall certainly come to Me. (12.08)

If you are unable to meditate (or focus your mind) steadily on Me, then seek to reach Me, O Arjuna, by practice of (any other) spiritual discipline (or Sadhana of your choice). (12.09)

If you are unable even to do any Sadhana, then be intent on performing your duty for Me. You shall attain perfection just by working for Me (as an instrument, just to serve and please Me, without selfish motives). (See also 9.27, 18.46) (12.10)

If you are unable to work for Me then just surrender unto My will with subdued mind, and renounce (the attachment to, and the anxiety for) the fruits of all work (by learning to accept all results, as God-given, with equanimity). (12.11)

Knowledge is better than mere ritualistic practice, meditation is better than mere knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of work is better than meditation, peace immediately follows the renunciation of (the attachment to) the fruit of work. (See more on renunciation in Chapter

18) (12.12)

One who does not hate any creature, who is friendly and compassionate, free from (the notion of) “I” and “my”, even-minded in pain and pleasure, forgiving; and (12.13)

The yogi who is ever content, who has subdued the mind, whose resolve is firm, whose mind and intellect are engaged in dwelling upon Me; such a devotee is dear to Me. (12.14)

The one by whom others are not agitated, and who is not agitated by others; who is free from joy, envy, fear, and anxiety; is also dear to Me. (12.15)

One who is free from desires; who is pure, wise, impartial, and free from anxiety; who has renounced (the doership in) all undertakings; and who is devoted to Me, is dear to Me. (12.16)

One who neither rejoices nor grieves, neither likes nor dislikes, who has renounced both the good and the evil, and who is full of devotion, such a person is dear to Me. (12.17)

The one who remains the same towards friend or foe, in honor or disgrace, in heat or cold, in pleasure or pain; who is free from attachment; and (12.18)

The one who is indifferent or silent in censure or praise, content with anything, unattached to a place (country, or house), equanimous, and full of devotion; that person is dear to Me. (12.19)

But those devotees who have faith and sincerely try to develop the above mentioned immortal virtues, and set Me as their supreme goal; are very dear to Me. (12.20)

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## CHAPTER 13

### CREATION AND THE CREATOR

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, this body (the miniature universe) may be called the field or creation. One who knows the creation is called the creator by the seers of truth. (13.01)

Know Me to be the creator of all creation, O Arjuna. The true understanding of both the creator and the creation is considered by Me to be the transcendental or metaphysical knowledge. (13.02)

What the creation is, what it is like, what its transformations are, where the source is, who that creator is, and what His powers are, hear all these from Me in brief. (13.03)

The sages have described Him in many ways, in various Vedic hymns, and also in the conclusive and convincing verses of the Brahmasutra. (13.04)

The five basic elements, the “I” consciousness or ego, the intellect, the unmanifest Prakriti, the ten senses, the mind, and the five sense objects; (See also 7.04) (13.05)  
Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the physical body, con-

sciousness, and resolve. Thus the field (the creation or body) has been briefly described with its transformations. (13.06)

Humility, modesty, nonviolence, forbearance, honesty, service to guru, purity (of thought, word, and deed), steadfastness, self-control; and (13.07)

Aversion towards sense objects, absence of ego, constant reflection on the agony and suffering inherent in birth, old age, disease, and death. (13.08)

Detachment, non-fondness with son, wife, and home; un-failing equanimity upon attainment of the desirable and the undesirable; and (13.09)

Unswerving devotion to Me by the yoga of exclusivity, love for solitude, distaste for social gossips; and (13.10)

Steadfastness in knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, and the perception of (the omnipresent God as) the object of true knowledge is called knowledge; what is contrary to this is ignorance. (13.11)

I shall fully describe the object of knowledge, knowing which one attains immortality. The beginningless Supreme Brahman is said to be neither Sat nor Asat. (See also 9.19) (13.12)

Having hands and feet everywhere; having eyes, head, and face everywhere; having ears everywhere; the creator exists in the creation by pervading everything. (13.13)

He is the perceiver of all sense objects without the senses; unattached, yet the sustainer of all; devoid of the Gunas, yet the enjoyer of the Gunas. (13.14)

He is inside as well as outside all beings, animate and inanimate. He is incomprehensible because of His subtlety. He is very near as well as far away. (13.15)

Undivided, yet appears as if divided in beings; He, the object of knowledge, is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of (all) beings. (13.16)

The light of all lights, He is said to be beyond darkness. He is the knowledge, the object of knowledge, and seated in the hearts of all beings, He is to be realized by the knowledge. (13.17)

Thus the creation as well as the knowledge and the object of knowledge have been briefly described. Understanding this, My devotee attains Me. (13.18)

Know that Prakriti and Purusha are both beginningless; and also know that all manifestations and Gunas arise from the Prakriti. (13.19)

The Prakriti is said to be the cause of production of physical body and organs (of perception and action). The Purusha (or the consciousness) is said to be the cause of experiencing pleasures and pains. (13.20)

The Purusha associating with Prakriti (or matter), enjoys the Gunas of Prakriti. Attachment to the Gunas

(due to ignorance caused by previous Karma) is the cause of the birth of Jeevaatma in good and evil wombs. (13.21)

Jeevaatma or Jeeva is defined as Atma accompanied by the subtle (or astral) body consisting of the six sensory faculties and vital forces; the living entity; the individual soul enshrined in the physical body.

The Supreme Spirit in the body is also called the witness, the guide, the supporter, the enjoyer, and the great Lord or Paramaatma. (13.22)

They who truly understand Purusha and Prakriti with its Gunas are not born again regardless of their mode of life. (13.23)

Some perceive God in the heart by the intellect through meditation; others by the yoga of knowledge; and others by the yoga of work (or Karma-yoga). (13.24)

Some, however, do not understand Brahman, but having heard (of it) from others, take to worship. They also transcend death by their firm faith to what they have heard. (13.25)

Whatever is born, animate or inanimate, know them to be (born) from the union of the field (or Prakriti) and the field knower (or Purusha), O Arjuna. (See also 7.06) (13.26)

The one who sees the imperishable Supreme Lord dwelling equally within all perishable beings truly sees. (13.27)

Seeing the same Lord existing in everybeing, one does not injure the other self and thereupon attains the Supreme goal. (13.28)

Those who perceive that all works are done by the (Gunas of) Prakriti alone, and thus they are not the doer, they truly understand. (See also 3.27, 5.09, and 14.19) (13.29)

When one perceives diverse variety of beings resting in One and spreading out from That alone, then one attains Brahman. (13.30)

The imperishable Supreme Self, being beginningless and without Gunas, though dwelling in the body (as Atma) neither does anything nor gets tainted, O Arjuna. (13.31)

As the all-pervading ether is not tainted because of its subtlety, similarly the Self, seated in everybody, is not tainted. (13.32)

O Arjuna, just as one sun illuminates this entire world, similarly the creator illumines (or gives life to) the entire creation. (13.33)

They, who understand the difference between the creation (or the body) and the creator (or the Atma) and know the technique of liberation (of Jeeva) from the trap of Maya with the help of knowledge, attain the Supreme. (13.34)

CHAPTER 14  
THREE GUNAS OF NATURE

The Supreme Lord said: I shall further explain to you that supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, knowing that all the sages have attained supreme perfection after this life. (14.01)

Those who have taken refuge in this knowledge attain unity with Me, and are neither born at the time of creation nor afflicted at the time of dissolution. (14.02)

O Arjuna, My Prakriti (or the material nature) is the womb wherein I place the seed (of spirit or Purusha) from which all beings are born. (See also 9.10) (14.03)

Whatever forms are produced in all different wombs, O Arjuna, the great Prakriti is their (body-giving) mother, and the Purusha is the (seed or life-giving) father. (14.04)

Sattva or goodness, Rajas or activity, and Tamas or inertia; these three Gunas (or states) of mind (or Prakriti) bind the imperishable soul to the body, O Arjuna. (14.05)

Of these, Sattva, being calm, is illuminating and ethical. It fetters the embodied being, the Jeevaatma or Purusha, by attachment to happiness and knowledge, O Arjuna. (14.06)

O Arjuna, know that Rajas is characterized by intense (selfish) activity and is born of desire and attachment. It binds the Jeeva by attachment to the fruits of work. (14.07)

Know, O Arjuna, that Tamas, the deluder of Jeeva, is born of inertia. It binds by ignorance, laziness, and (excessive) sleep. (14.08)

O Arjuna, Sattva attaches one to happiness, Rajas to action, and Tamas to ignorance by covering the knowledge. (14.09)

Sattva dominates by suppressing Rajas and Tamas; Rajas dominates by suppressing Sattva and Tamas; and Tamas dominates by suppressing Sattva and Rajas, O Arjuna. (14.10)

When the lamp of knowledge shines through all the (nine) gates of the body, then it should be known that Sattva is predominant. (14.11)

Greed, activity, restlessness, passion, and undertaking of (selfish) works arise when Rajas is predominant, O Arjuna. (14.12)

Ignorance, inactivity, carelessness, and delusion arise when Tamas is predominant, O Arjuna. (14.13)

One who dies during the dominance of Sattva goes to heaven, the pure world of the knowers of Supreme. (14.14)

When one dies during the dominance of Rajas, one is reborn as attached to action (or the utilitarian type); and dying in Tamas, one is reborn as ignorant (or lower creatures). (14.15)

The fruit of good action is said to be Saattvika and pure, the fruit of Raajasika action is pain, and the fruit of Taamasika action is ignorance. (14.16)

Knowledge arises from Sattva; desires arise from Rajas; and negligence, delusion, and ignorance arise from Tamas. (14.17)

Those who are established in Sattva go to heaven; Raajasika persons are reborn in the mortal world; and the Taamasika persons, abiding in the lowest Guna, go to hell (or born as lower creatures). (14.18)

When visionaries perceive no doer other than the Gunas (or the power of Brahman), and know That which is above and beyond the Gunas; then they attain nirvana. (See also 3.27, 5.09, and 13.29) (14.19)

When one transcends (or rises above) the three Gunas that originate in the mind; one is freed from birth, old age, disease, and death; and attains nirvana. (14.20)

Arjuna said: What are the characteristics of those who have transcended the three Gunas, and what is their conduct? How does one transcend these three Gunas, O Lord Krishna? (14.21)

The Supreme Lord said: One who neither hates the presence of enlightenment, activity, and delusion nor desires for them when they are absent; and (14.22)

The one who remains like a witness; who is not moved by the Gunas, thinking that the Gunas only are operating; who stands firm and does not waver; and (14.23)

The one who depends on the Lord and is indifferent to pain and pleasure; to whom a clod, a stone, and gold are alike; to whom the dear and the unfriendly are alike; who is of firm mind; who is calm in censure and in praise; and (14.24)

The one who is indifferent to honor and disgrace; who is the same to friend and foe; who has renounced the sense of doership; is said to have transcended the Gunas. (14.25)

The one who offers service to Me with love and unswerving devotion transcends Gunas, and becomes fit for realizing Brahman. (See also 7.14 and 15.19) (14.26)

Because, I am the abode of the immortal and eternal Brahman, of everlasting Dharma, and of the absolute bliss. (14.27)

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CHAPTER 15  
SUPREME SPIRIT

The Supreme Lord said: They (or the wise) speak of the eternal Ashvattha tree having its origin above (in unmanifest Brahman) and its branches below (in the cosmos) whose leaves are the (Vedic) hymns. One who understands this is a knower of the Vedas. (15.01)

The branches (of this world tree of Maya) spread below

and above (or all over the cosmos). The tree is nourished by the Gunas; sense pleasures are its sprouts; and its roots (of ego and desires) stretch below in the human world causing Karmic bondage. (15.02)

Neither its (real) form nor its beginning, neither its end nor its existence is perceptible here on the earth. Having cut these firm roots of the Ashvattha tree by the mighty ax of (Jnana and) Vairagya or detachment; (15.03)

The goal (of nirvana) should be sought reaching which one does not come back; thus thinking: In that very primal spirit I take refuge from which this primal manifestation comes forth. (15.04)

Those who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are constantly dwelling in the Supreme Self with all Kaama completely stilled, who are free from the dualities known as pleasure and pain; such undeluded persons reach the eternal goal. (15.05)

The sun does not illumine there, nor the moon, nor the fire. That is My supreme abode. Having reached there they do not come back. (15.06)

Atma in the body is My eternal indivisible fragment indeed. Atma gets bound (or attached, and is called Jeevaatma) due to superimposition or association with the six sensory faculties, including the mind, of perception. (15.07)

As the air takes away the aroma from the source (or flower), similarly Atma takes the six sensory faculties from the physical body it casts off (during death) to the (new physical) body it acquires (in reincarnation by the power of Karma). (See also 2.13) (15.08)

The Jeevaatma enjoys sense pleasures with the help of six sensory faculties: hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell, and mind. (15.09)

The ignorant do not perceive Jeeva departing from the body, or remaining in the body and enjoying sense pleasures by associating with the Gunas. Those with the eye of knowledge can see. (15.10)

The yogis striving (for perfection) behold Atma abiding in their heart; but the ignorant, whose intellect is not pure, do not perceive Him even though striving. (15.11)

The light that coming from the sun illumines the whole world; and which is in the moon, and in the fire; know that light to be Mine. (See also 13.17 and 15.06) (15.12)

Entering the earth I support all beings with My energy; becoming the sap-giving moon I nourish all the plants. (15.13)

Becoming the digestive fire, I remain in the body of all living beings; uniting with vital breaths, the Prana and Apana, I digest all four varieties of food; and (15.14)

I am seated in the hearts of all beings. The memory,

knowledge, and the removal of doubts and wrong notions (about the Self) by reasoning in Samadhi come from Me. I am verily that which is to be known by (the study of) all the Vedas. I am, indeed, the author of the Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas. (See also 6.39) (15.15)

There are two entities in this world: the perishable and the imperishable. (The bodies of) all beings are perishable, and the Atma is imperishable. (15.16)

There is another supreme spirit called Ishvara or Paramaatma, the indestructible Lord who pervades the three worlds and sustains them. (15.17)

I am beyond the perishable body, and higher than the imperishable Atma; therefore, I am known in this world and in the Vedas as Purushottama, or the Supreme Spirit. (15.18)

The wise one, who truly knows Me as the Purushottama, knows everything and worships (or surrenders unto) Me wholeheartedly, O Arjuna. (See also 7.14, 14.26, and 18.66) (15.19)

Thus this most secret science has been explained by Me, O sinless Arjuna. Having understood this, one becomes enlightened and one's all duties are accomplished. (15.20)

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## CHAPTER 16

### DIVINE AND THE DEMONIC QUALITIES

The Supreme Lord said: Fearlessness, purity of heart, perseverance in the yoga of knowledge, charity, sense restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, honesty; (16.01)

Nonviolence, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, equanimity, abstaining from malicious talk, compassion for all creatures, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness; (16.02)

Splendor, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, absence of malice, and absence of pride; these are the qualities of those endowed with divine virtues, O Arjuna. (16.03)

Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness, and ignorance; these are the marks of those who are born with demonic qualities, O Arjuna. (16.04)

Divine qualities lead to nirvana, the demonic (qualities) are said to be for bondage. Do not grieve, O Arjuna, you are born with divine qualities. (16.05)

There are two types of human beings in this world: the divine, and the demonic. The divine has been described at length, now hear from Me about the demonic, O Arjuna. (16.06)

Persons of demonic nature do not know what to do and what not to do. They neither have purity nor good conduct nor truthfulness. (16.07)

They say that the world is unreal, without a substratum, without a God, and without an order. The world is caused by lust (or Kaama) alone and nothing else. (16.08)

Adhering to this view these lost souls, with small intellect and cruel deeds, are born as enemies for the destruction of the world. (16.09)

Filled with insatiable desires, hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance; holding wrong views due to delusion; they act with impure motives. (16.10)

Obsessed with great anxiety until death, considering sense gratification as their highest aim, convinced that this (sense pleasure) is everything, (16.11)

Bound by hundreds of ties of desire and enslaved by lust and anger; they strive to obtain wealth by unlawful means for the fulfillment of desires. They think: (16.12)

This has been gained by me today, I shall fulfill this desire, this is mine and this wealth also shall be mine in the future; (16.13)

That enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others also. I am the Lord. I am the enjoyer. I am successful, powerful, and happy; (16.14)

I am rich and born in a noble family. I am the greatest. I shall perform sacrifice, I shall give charity, and I shall rejoice. Thus deluded by ignorance; (16.15)

Bewildered by many fancies; entangled in the net of delusion; addicted to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures; they fall into a foul hell. (16.16)

Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with pride and intoxication of wealth; they perform Yajna only in name, for show, and not according to scriptural injunction. (16.17)

Clinging to egoism, power, arrogance, lust, and anger; these malicious people hate Me (who dwells) in their own body and others' bodies. (16.18)

I hurl these haters, cruel, sinful, and mean people of the world, into the wombs of demons again and again. (16.19)

O Arjuna, entering the wombs of demons birth after birth, the deluded ones sink to the lowest hell without ever attaining Me. (16.20)

Lust, anger, and greed are the three gates of hell leading to the downfall (or bondage) of Jeeva. Therefore, one must (learn to) give up these three. (16.21)

One who is liberated from these three gates of hell, O Arjuna, does what is best, and attains the supreme goal. (16.22)

One who acts under the influence of their desires, disobeying scriptural injunctions, neither attains perfection nor happiness nor the supreme goal. (16.23)

Therefore, let the scripture be your authority in deter-

mining what should be done and what should not be done. You should perform your duty following the scriptural injunction. (16.24)

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## CHAPTER 17 THREEFOLD FAITH

Arjuna said: What is the state of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with faith but without following the scriptural injunctions, O Krishna? Is it Saattvika, Raajasika, or Taamasika? (17.01)

The Supreme Lord said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three types: Saattvika, Raajasika, and Taamasika. Hear that from Me. (17.02)

O Arjuna, the faith of each is in accordance with one's own nature or Sanskaara. A person is known by the faith. One can become whatever one wants to be (if one constantly contemplates on the object of desire with faith). (17.03)

The Saattvika persons worship Devas, the Raajasika people worship demigods and demons, and the Taamasika persons worship ghosts and spirits. (17.04)

Those who practice severe austerities without following the scriptures, with hypocrisy and egotism, impelled by lust, and attachment; (17.05)

Senselessly torturing the elements in their body and also Me who dwell within the body; know these ignorant persons to be of demonic nature. (17.06)

The food preferred by all is also of three types. So are the sacrifice, austerity, and charity. Now hear the distinction between them. (17.07)

The foods that promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy; are juicy, smooth, substantial, and agreeable to the stomach. Such foods are dear to the Saattvika persons. (17.08)

Foods that are bitter, sour, salty, very hot, pungent, dry, and burning; and cause pain, grief, and disease; are liked by Raajasika persons. (17.09)

The foods liked by Taamasika persons are half-cooked, tasteless, rotten, stale, refuses, and impure (such as meat and alcohol). (17.10)

Yajna enjoined by the scriptures, performed with a firm belief that it is a duty, and without the desire for the fruit, is Saattvika Yajna. (17.11)

Yajna which is performed only for show, or aiming for fruit, know that to be Raajasika Yajna, O Arjuna. (17.12)

Yajna that is performed without following the scripture, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantra, faith, and gift, is said to be Taamasika Yajna. (17.13)

The worship of Devas, Braahmana, guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, celibacy, and nonviolence; these are said

to be the austerity of deed. (17.14)

Speech that is not offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular reading of scriptures is called the austerity of word. (17.15)

The serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-restraint, and the purity of mind are called the austerity of thought. (17.16)

Threefold austerity (of thought, word, and deed) practiced by yogis with supreme faith, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be Saattvika austerity. (17.17)

Austerity that is done for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for show, is said to be Raajasika, unsteady, and impermanent. (17.18)

Austerity performed without proper understanding, or with self-torture, or for harming others, is declared as Taamasika austerity. (17.19)

Charity that is given as a matter of duty, to a deserving candidate who does nothing in return, at the right place and time, is called a Saattvika charity. (17.20)

Charity that is given unwillingly, or to get something in return, or looking for some fruit, is called Raajasika charity. (17.21)

Charity that is given at a wrong place and time, to unworthy persons, without paying respect or with contempt, is said to be Taamasika charity. (17.22)

“OM TAT SAT” is said to be the threefold name of Brahman. The Braahmana, the Vedas, and the Yajna were created from this in the ancient time. (17.23)

Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity prescribed in the scriptures are always commenced by uttering “OM” by the knowers of Brahman. (17.24)

Various types of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are performed by the seekers of nirvana by uttering “TAT” (or He is all) without seeking a reward. (17.25)

SAT is used in the sense of reality and goodness. The word “SAT” is also used for an auspicious act, O Arjuna. (17.26)

Faith in sacrifice, charity, and austerity is also called SAT. The action for the sake of the Supreme is verily termed as SAT. (17.27)

Whatever is done without faith; whether it is sacrifice, charity, austerity, or any other act; is called Asat. It has no value here or hereafter, O Arjuna. (17.28)

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## CHAPTER 18

### NIRVANA THROUGH RENUNCIATION

Arjuna said: I wish to know the nature of Samnyasa and Tyaaga and the difference between the two, O Lord Krishna. (18.01)

The Supreme Lord said: The sages call Samnyasa the

renunciation of selfish work. The wise define Tyaaga as the renunciation of attachment to the fruits of all work. (See also 5.01, 5.05, and 6.01) (18.02)

Some philosophers say that all work is full of faults and should be given up, while others say that acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity should not be abandoned. (18.03)

O Arjuna, listen to My conclusion about Tyaaga. Tyaaga is said to be of three types. (18.04)

Acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed, because sacrifice, charity, and austerity are the purifiers of the wise. (18.05)

Even these (obligatory) works should be performed without attachment to the fruits. This is My definite supreme advice, O Arjuna. (18.06)

Renunciation of obligatory work (or duty) is not proper. The abandonment of duty is due to delusion, and is declared to be Taamasika Tyaaga. (18.07)

One who abandons duty merely because it is difficult, or because of fear of bodily trouble, does not get the benefits of Tyaaga by performing such Raajasika Tyaaga. (18.08)

Obligatory work performed as duty, renouncing attachment to the fruit, is alone regarded as Saattvika Tyaaga, O Arjuna. (18.09)

One who neither hates a disagreeable work nor is attached to an agreeable work, is Saattvika, wise, a renunciant, and free from all doubts. (18.10)

Human beings cannot completely abstain from work. Therefore, the one who completely renounces the attachment to the fruits of all works is considered a Tyaagi (or renunciant). (18.11)

The threefold fruit of works – desirable, undesirable, and mixed – accrues after death to a non-Tyaagi but never to a Tyaagi. (18.12)

Learn from Me, O Arjuna, the five causes, as described in the Saamkhyas doctrine, for the accomplishment of all actions. (18.13)

The physical body or the seat of Karma, the doer or the Guna, various instruments or the organs (of perception and action), various Pranas or bioimpulses, and the fifth is the presiding deities (or the five basic elements). (18.14)

Whatever action, whether right or wrong, one performs by thought, word, and deed; these are its five causes. (18.15)

This being the case; the ignorant person who considers oneself as the sole agent due to imperfect understanding does not understand. (18.16)

The one who is free from the notion of doership and whose wisdom is not befouled; even after slaying these

people, neither slays nor is bound (by the act of killing). (18.17)

The subject, the object, and the knowledge (of the object) are the threefold impetus to action. The (ten) organs, the Karma, and the Gunas are the threefold factors involved in any action. (18.18)

The Jnana (or knowledge), the Karma (or action), and the Kartaa (or agent) are said to be of three types according to the Guna theory of Saamkhya doctrine. Hear duly about these also. (18.19)

Knowledge by which one sees a single imperishable reality in all beings as undivided in the divided; such knowledge is considered to be Saattvika. (18.20)

Knowledge by which one sees different realities of various types among all beings as separate from one another, consider that knowledge to be Raajasika. (18.21)

Knowledge by which one clings to one single effect (such as the body) as if it is everything, and which is irrational, baseless, and worthless; such knowledge is declared to be Taamasika. (18.22)

Obligatory duty performed without likes, dislikes, and attachment by the one who does not desire fruit is said to be Saattvika. (18.23)

Action performed with ego, with selfish motives, and with too much effort; is declared to be Raajasika. (18.24)

Action that is undertaken because of delusion; disregarding consequences, loss or injury to others, as well as one's own ability is said to be Taamasika action. (18.25)

The agent who is free from attachment, is non-egotistic, endowed with resolve and enthusiasm, and unperturbed in success or failure is called Saattvika. (18.26)

one who is passionate, desires the fruits of work, who is greedy, violent, impure, and is affected by joy and sorrow; such an agent is proclaimed to be Raajasika. (18.27)

Undisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, malicious, lazy, depressed, and procrastinating; such an agent is called a Taamasika agent. (18.28)

Now hear the threefold division of Buddhi (or intellect) and resolve, based on Gunas, as explained by Me fully and separately, O Arjuna. (18.29)

O Arjuna, the Buddhi by which one understands the path of work and the path of renunciation, right and wrong action, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that Buddhi is Saattvika. (18.30)

The intellect (or Buddhi) by which one incorrectly distinguishes between Dharma and Adharma, and right and wrong action; that intellect is Raajasika, O Arjuna. (18.31)

O Arjuna, the intellect which, obscured by ignorance,

accepts Adharma as Dharma and thinks everything to be which it is not, that is Taamasika intellect. (18.32)

The unwavering resolve by which one regulates the activities of mind, Prana (or the bioimpulses), and senses through yoga (of meditation); that resolve is Saattvika, O Arjuna. (18.33)

The resolve by which a person, craving for the fruits of work, clings to Dharma or righteous deeds, Artha or accumulation of wealth, and Kaama or enjoyment of sensual pleasures with great attachment; that resolve, O Arjuna, is Raajasika. (18.34)

resolve by which a dull person does not give up sleep, fear, grief, despair, and arrogance; that resolve is Taamasika, O Arjuna. (18.35)

And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, about the threefold pleasure. The pleasure one enjoys from (spiritual) practice results in cessation of sorrow. (18.36)

This pleasure, appears as poison in the beginning but is like nectar in the end, comes by the grace of Self-knowledge; is good or Saattvika. (18.37)

Sensual pleasures appear as nectars in the beginning, but become poison in the end; such pleasures are called Raajasika pleasures. (See also 5.22) (18.38)

Pleasure that deludes a person in the beginning and in the end; which comes from sleep, laziness, and confusion; such pleasure is called Taamasika (pleasure). (18.39)

There is no being, either on the earth or in the heaven or among the Devas, who is free from these three Gunas of Prakriti, the material nature. (18.40)

The division of labor into the four categories – Braahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra – is also based on the Gunas inherent in peoples' nature (or the natural propensities, and not necessarily as one's birth right), O Arjuna. (See also 4.13) (18.41)

Those who have serenity, self control, austerity, purity, patience, honesty, knowledge, Self-realization, and belief in God are labeled as Braahmanas, the intellectuals. (18.42)

Those having the qualities of heroism, vigor, firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from battle, charity, and administrative skills are called Kshatriyas, the protectors. (18.43)

Those who are good in cultivation, cattle rearing, business, trade, and industry are known as Vaishyas. Those who do service and labor type work are classed as Shudras. (18.44)

One attains the highest perfection by devotion to one's natural work. Listen to Me how one attains perfection while engaged in natural work. (18.45)

He from whom all beings originate, and by whom all this universe is pervaded; worshipping Him by performing

one's natural duty for Him one attains perfection. (See also 9.27, 12.10) (18.46)

One's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work. One who does the work ordained by one's inherent nature (without selfish motives) incurs no sin (or Karmic reaction). (See also 3.35) (18.47)

One's natural work, even though defective, should not be abandoned; because all undertakings are enveloped by defects as fire is covered by smoke, O Arjuna. (18.48)

The person whose mind is always free from attachment, who has subdued the mind and senses, and who is free from desires, attains the supreme perfection of freedom from (the bondage of) Karma through renunciation. (18.49)

Learn from Me briefly, O Arjuna, how one who has attained such perfection realizes Brahman, the supreme state of knowledge. (18.50)

Endowed with purified intellect, subduing the mind with resolve, turning away from sound and other objects of the senses, giving up likes and dislikes; and (18.51)

Living in solitude, eating lightly, controlling the thought, word, and deed; ever absorbed in yoga of meditation, and taking refuge in detachment; and (18.52)

Relinquishing egotism, violence, pride, lust, anger, and desire for possession; free from the notion of "my", and peaceful; one becomes fit for attaining oneness with Brahman. (18.53)

Absorbed in Brahman, the serene one neither grieves nor desires; becoming impartial to all beings, one obtains My supreme devotion. (18.54)

By devotion one truly understand what and who I am in essence. Having known Me in essence, one immediately merges into Me. (See also 5.19) (18.55)

One attains the eternal imperishable abode by My grace, even while doing all duties, just by taking refuge in Me. (18.56)

Mentally offering all actions to Me, be devoted to Me. Resorting to equanimity, always fix your mind on Me. (18.57)

When your mind becomes fixed on Me, you shall overcome all difficulties by My grace. But, if you do not listen to Me due to ego, you shall perish. (18.58)

If due to ego you think: I shall not fight; this resolve of yours is vain. Your own nature will compel you (to fight). (18.59)

What you do not wish to do out of delusion; you shall do even that against your will, bound by your own nature-born Karma, O Arjuna. (18.60)

The Lord abides in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings to act (or work out their Karma) by His power of Maya as if they are (puppets of Karma)

mounted on a machine. (18.61)

Seek refuge in Him alone with all your heart, O Arjuna. By His grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal abode. (18.62)

Thus the knowledge that is more secret than the secret has been explained to you by Me. After fully reflecting on this, do as you wish. (18.63)

Hear again My supreme word, the most secret of all. You are very dear to Me, therefore, I shall tell this for your benefit. (18.64)

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer service to Me, bow down to Me, and you shall certainly reach Me. I promise you because you are very dear to Me. (18.65)

Setting aside all noble deeds, just surrender completely to the will of God (with firm faith and loving contemplation). I shall liberate you from all sins (or bonds of Karma). Do not grieve. (18.66)

This (knowledge) should never be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerity, who is without devotion, who does not desire to listen, or who speaks ill of Me. (18.67)

The one who shall propagate this supreme secret philosophy (or the transcendental knowledge of the Gita) amongst My devotees, shall be performing the highest devotional service to Me and shall certainly attain (or come to) Me. (18.68)

No other person shall do a more pleasing service to Me, and no one on the earth shall be more dear to Me. (18.69)

I shall be worshipped with Jnana-Yajna (or knowledge sacrifice) by those who shall study this sacred dialogue of ours. This is My promise. (18.70)

Whoever hears this with faith and without cavil becomes free from sin, and attains heaven (or the higher regions for those whose actions are pure). (18.71)

O Arjuna, did you listen to this with single-minded attention? Has your delusion born of ignorance been destroyed? (18.72)

Arjuna said: By Your grace my delusion is destroyed, I have gained knowledge, my confusion (with regard to body and Atma) is dispelled and I shall obey Your command. (18.73)

Sanjaya said: Thus I heard this wonderful dialogue between Lord Krishna and Mahatma Arjuna, causing my hair to stand on end. (18.74)

By the grace of (guru) sage Vyaasa, I heard this most secret and supreme yoga directly from Krishna, the lord of yoga, Himself speaking before my very eyes. (18.75)

O King, by repeated remembrance of this marvelous and sacred dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, I am thrilled at every moment; and (18.76)

Recollecting again and again, O King, that marvelous form of Krishna I am greatly amazed and I rejoice over and over again. (18.77)

Wherever is Krishna, the lord of yoga; and wherever is Arjuna, the archer; there will be everlasting prosperity, victory, happiness, and morality. This is my conviction. (18.78)

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### EPILOGUE

#### The Farewell Message of Lord Krishna

Lord Krishna on the eve of His departure from the arena of this world, after finishing the difficult task of establishing Dharma, gave His last parting discourse to His uncle Uddhava who was also His dearest devotee and follower. At the end of a long sermon comprising of more than one thousand verses Uddhava said: O Lord, I think the pursuit of yoga as You narrated (to Arjuna, and now) to me, is very difficult, indeed, for most people, because it entails control of the unruly senses. Please tell me a short, simple, and easy way to God-realization. Lord Krishna upon Uddhava's request gave the essentials of Self-realization for the modern age as follows:

(1) Do your duty, to the best of your abilities, for the Lord without any selfish motive, and remember God at all times – before starting a work, at the completion of a task, and while inactive.

(2) Practice to look upon all creatures as Myself in thought, word, and deed; and mentally bow down to them.

(3) Awaken your dormant Kundalini power – by using yogic techniques – and perceive that the power of God is with you at all times; through the activities of mind, senses, breathing, and emotions; and is constantly doing all the work using you as a mere instrument. Paramahansa Hariharananda says: God is in everything as well as above everything.

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A word for the youth from Swami Vivekananda (In Chicago, 1893):

“Whatever you are doing, put your whole mind on it. If you are shooting, your mind should be only on the target. Then you will never miss. If you are learning your lessons, think only of the lesson. In India boys and girls are taught to do this.”

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### REFERENCES

Books highly recommended for further study on your own:

We carry only publications 1 and 2 listed below; Publications #2, 3, and 4 are also available from any New Age Book Store; The Vedanta Society, 2323 Vallejo St., San Francisco, Ca 94123, Phone (415) 922-2323; or South Asia Books (SAB), P.O. Box 502, Columbia, MO 65205

USA (314-474-0116, fax 8124) (Also, SAB sells Tulasi Ramayana, and many other hard to find Indological publications.

(1) “All 700 Verses of The Bhagavad-Gita” in simple English by The American Gita Society; 8.5”x11” 24 pages; available, free, on “internet” for you to read and copy. or send \$3 cash to cover cost of Xeroxing, handling, and postage only, or make a tax deductible check payable to: “THE RAMAYANA SABHA” and mail to: 511 Lowell Place, Fremont, CA 94536-1805 USA.

(2) The “The Bhagavad-Gita” by The American Gita Society, Translated by Dr. Ramananda Prasad, to be Published (in Oct. 1995) by the largest Indological publisher, Motilal of New Delhi; with original Sanskrit verses, English transliteration, translation, commentary, index, and glossary of Sanskrit words; 321 pages in two colors, \$9 includes Postage and Handling. Author has donated seed money, copyrights as well as all profit and royalty to AGS. (Also available from New Leaf Distributors, 5425 Tulane Dr SW, Atlanta, GA 30336-2323 USA, or SAB, Columbia). . . .

(3) The Bhagavad-Gita by Swami Chidbhavananda., Publisher: Shri Ramakrishna Mission, \$8+P&H (4) Bhagavad-Gita by Swami Sivananda, Divine Life Society. ISBN 0 949971 61 8, Price \$19+P&H A MEDITATION TECHNIQUE Several meditation techniques have been mentioned in the Gita. Powerful and sacred techniques used by the sages can be given, without any fee or charge of any kind, to those sincere seekers who have seriously studied these lessons or the Bhagavad-Gita; are trying to practice Yama and Niyama by thought, word, and deed; and sincerely request it. We have just given a glance of a three part meditation technique in verse 6.13 for the students, in general, of this course. The American Gita Society charges no fee for its services and solicits no donation from the students of this course in keeping with the beautiful Vedic tradition. Please call (510/791-6953 on Mondays between 6 and 8 PM, California time) or write to us for help or guidance. Please enclose a self addressed-stamped envelope for any reply via US mail.

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The Bhagavad-Geeta

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The End