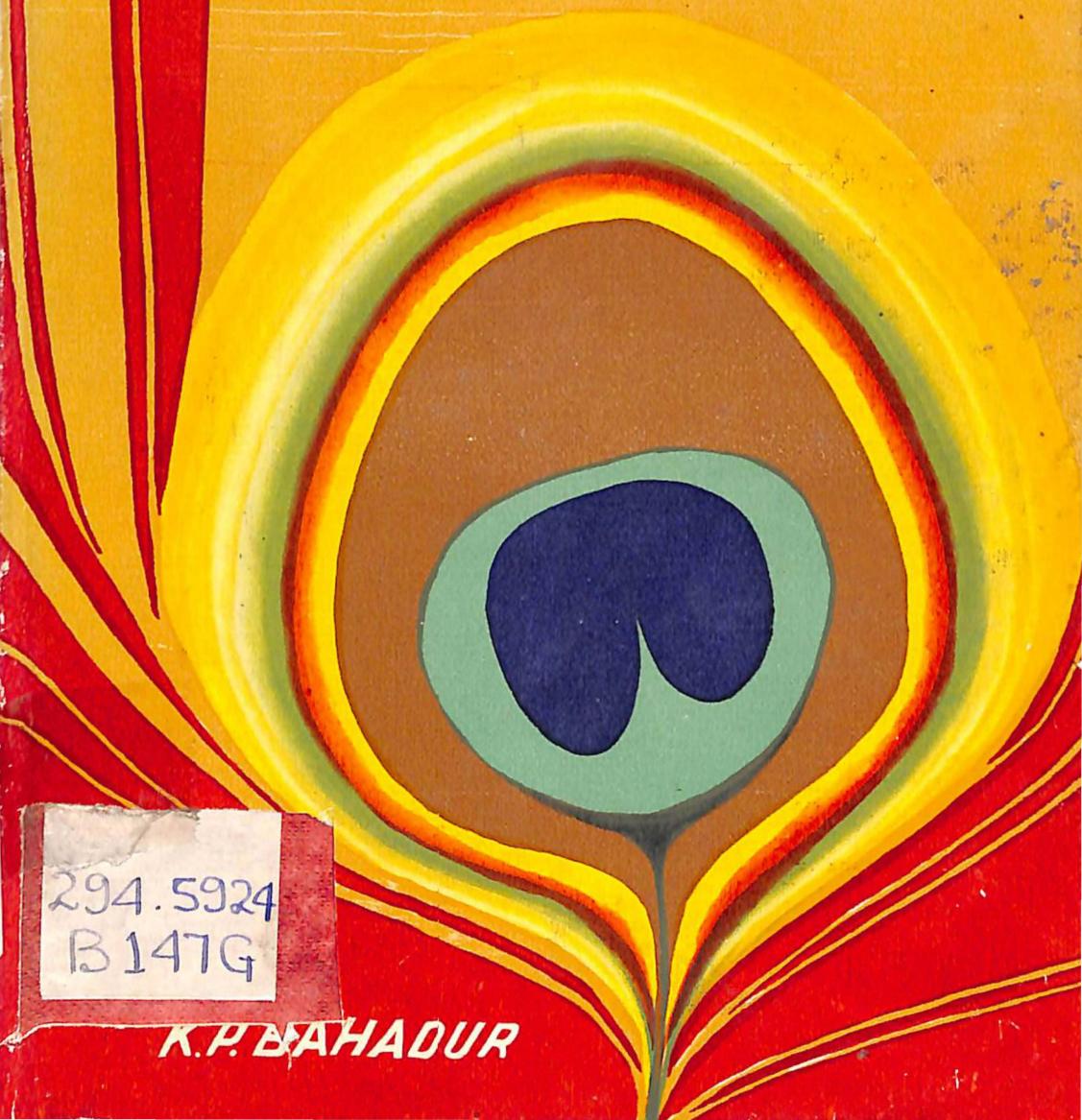


THE
GITA



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K.P. BAHADUR

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The Bhagavad Gita has been translated by various authors, but there is yet room for a complete verse to verse translation. Of all the Hindu scriptures perhaps the Gita is the one which says most in the smallest space. Unlike most other religious masterpieces it is pure and condensed philosophy. It may be said to be the quintessence of Indian wisdom. If there is any one word which can express its view-point it is 'renunciation'. But it is not addressed to the recluse. The detachment it urges is only the mental attitude to duty. Whatever job one is doing, here is a book which will help him to do it better. It is the right book for men of action, for the Lord says to his disciple, 'Action is superior to inaction'. If you desist from action you can't even maintain your body;

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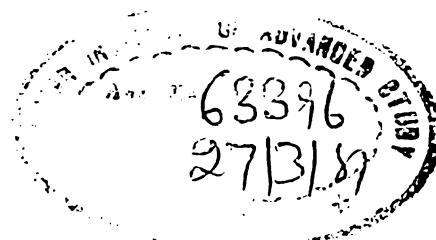
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FOREWORD

I have been able to glance through some portion of (this) rendering of the Bhagavad Gita into English verse.....The creation of such a work is an act of worship; and if it is published it will, as I hope, doubtless find some admirers.

To translate into another language, those scriptures which have been accredited by society to be canons of spiritual knowledge is very difficult. To creatively render is harder still. And to do so in verse is almost a novel undertaking.

Such a task should be viewed as an act of devotion, as I have said above. The primary reward to the author, of such labour, is soul-purification. If he has been able to glean such a reward, he has got everything there was to get.

Uttar Pradesh Yatra

Vinoba Ka Jaya Jagat

INTRODUCTION

The *Bhagavad Gita* contains the wisdom of different schools of Indian philosophy, like Sankhya, Yoga, Bhakti, Vedanta and so forth, in a condensed form. It shows us how God can be reached by the different paths of works, wisdom and devotion. For example, if one has to go to Delhi from say Lucknow, he can go by train or by road or by air. And just as by one conveyance he reaches soon, by another with some delay and by a third he may even have to stop overnight somewhere, so too one way might be quicker and easier and the other difficult and time consuming. About the relative merits of these three paths, however, the conclusion arrived at in the *Gita* is by no means definite. Arjuna, Lord Krishna's disciple, himself expresses this confusion : 'Krishna, if you consider knowledge as superior to action, why then do you urge me to this dreadful action ? You are, as it were, puzzling my mind by these seemingly involved expressions; therefore, tell me definitely the one discipline by which I may obtain the highest good.'¹ To this Krishna only replies that the votary of the Sankhya philosophy proceeds along the path of knowledge and the *karma-yogi* takes the path of action.² Further, he says that being easier to practice, the path of action is superior to knowledge.³ The *Gita* in fact extols all the three paths of works, wisdom and devotion, and points out the true philosophy of each of them.

Svadharma : In the second chapter Lord Krishna tries to solve Arjuna's problem when faced with a prospect of war with his near relations—'uncles and grand-uncles, teachers, brothers, cousins, sons and grandsons, fathers-in-law and well-wishers'.⁴ Krishna gives him a twofold answer. Firstly, he says that it is only the

1. B. G. III, 1-2 (Note—In this and future quotations given in the Introduction the version of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur is followed).
2. B. G. III, 3
3. B. G. V, 2
4. B. G., I, 26—7

body which is slain and not the soul. The soul is immortal and free from birth and decay. Even if the soul is conceived of as constantly taking birth and dying, then too one must not grieve for those who will be slain in battle 'for in that case the death of him who is born is certain, and the rebirth of him who is dead is inevitable'.¹ Secondly, Krishna points out that fighting is a Kshattriya's duty and so Arjuna must not flinch from it. 'One's own duty', says Krishna, 'even though devoid of merit, is preferable to that of another well performed'.² Every human being is bound by his nature and his mission. One must realise one's own self and not 'kick against the pricks'. As Shakespeare says :

*'This above all : to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man'.³*

Each man is bound by his *dharma*. It is his environment and atmosphere, and he has to conform to it. As Acharya Vinoba Bhave says, 'If someone were to say to a fish, "Milk is costlier than water; come and live in this milk" would it agree ? Fish can only live in water, they will die in milk. Even if someone else's *dharma* seems easier one should not take it up.'⁴ An example will make the point clear. Let us visualise a man who is fond of travelling, of staying in five star hotels, of good food, entertainment and high society. Such a kind of life might appear very attractive. But if one who is a quiet, introvert, stay at home type, tried to adopt it he would only be miserable. Robert Clive was a writer in the service of the East India Company. Many persons would have liked his peaceful and cushy job. But being a man of action, he got so bored with it that he tried unsuccessfully to blow out his own brains with a pistol, which luckily for him, misfired. He found his *svadharma* in war and administration, and became Governor-General of India.

1. B. G. II, 27

2. B. G., III, 35

3. *Hamlet*, I, iii, 78-80

4. *Tulks on the Gita*, George Allen and Unwin, London.

Action and Detachment : While urging Arjuna to fight, Krishna specifies one condition, *viz.*, 'Treat alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat'.¹ This leads us to two further points—the method of performing action and the acquisition of detachment. One would think that action and detachment are diametrically opposed, and it is impossible for the one to follow from the other. But the *Gita* marvellously reconciles the two by its concept of desireless action (*nishkama karma*). Its outstanding and oft-quoted view is : 'Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Let not the fruit of action be your object, nor let your attachment to be in action'.² When one acts, he normally does it for achieving a certain object. But it is not necessary that he should achieve it. A businessman might launch a foolproof scheme. Yet due to circumstances he might not have foreseen, it may be wrecked.

*'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will'*³

One may study hard for an examination, but not getting in the question paper subjects he had prepared, fail to make it. Thus the man who is positive that he will succeed is ear-marked for disappointment. Besides, even if by chance one does achieve what he desires the act is still fraught with selfishness. If one gives charity in the hope of seeing his name in the newspaper, the object obviously is to tickle one's own vanity rather than help another. Action in such cases becomes binding to the individual. Having achieved its merit himself no merit is left to the act *per se*. But the act which is performed without desire does not bind. It is like gold to the fire of covetousness. Such fire will destroy everything, but the desireless act shines in the fire even brighter. Nay, even more, the desireless act achieves in a mysterious way what the desireful one doesn't. Tulsidasaji says : 'As rivers enter the sea of themselves, even though the sea has no desire for them;

1. B. G. II, 38.

2. B. G. II, 47

3. Shakespeare, : *Hamlet*, V, ii, 10-11

so happiness and wealth are the lot of the virtuous man, because of his own nature'.¹ The second part of the aforesaid verse is even more important than the first—*na sangostava akarmani* ('nor let your attachement to be inaction'). Inaction is just as bad as action actuated by desire; perhaps worse. The man who is attached to inaction is slothful. He does not want to exert himself and finds innumerable excuses to justify his conduct. But there is really no excuse for inaction. Such a man says, 'When everything is destined why should I make any effort?' He forgets that though it is destined *he* does not know what that destiny is. Effort and destiny are not watertight compartments. They are inter-connected. Tulsidasaji says, 'O Tulsi, as is the destined end so is one impelled to action. Either his destiny comes to him, or he goes to meet his destiny'.² Thus without action there is no destiny. That is why Krishna says, 'Surely none can remain inactive even for a moment; everyone is helplessly driven to action by nature-born qualities'.³ Even God has to engage himself in activity in order to keep the universe going. Krishna says, 'Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds for me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by me; yet I continue to work. Should I not engage in action, unwearied, at any time, great harm will come to the world; for, Arjuna, men follow my path in all matters. If I do not perform action, these worlds will perish'.⁴ The scope of action is, therefore, all embracing. Action is incessant like day and night. The very process of living involves one in it. As Krishna says, 'Surely none can remain inactive even for a moment.' Another virtue of action is that it involves the whole social order. Widsom and devotion involve the aspirant alone, while a man's works influence him as well as the segment of society in which he is fated to move. Action

1. *Jim surita sagar mahan jahin, jaddyapi tehi kamana nahin,*
Timi sukh sampati binahin, bolaen, dharamsil pahin jahin subhaen.
Bala kanda, 293 : 1—2

2. *Tulsi jas bhavatavata, taisi milahi saha:*
Ap na avai tahi pahan, tahi tahan lai jai.
Bala kanda, 159 (B)

3. B. G., III, 5.

4. B. G. III, 22—4.

has, therefore, a wider scope. The reward to the doer is self-purification (*atma-shuddhi*). At the same time he has the opportunity to help others too. An observation about action which is highly significant in the present state of society and administration is, 'For whatsoever a great man does, that very thing other men do also, whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same.'¹

The Enlightened Soul : In the second chapter, too, Krishna draws a picture of the enlightened soul who has realised God. The intellect of the wise man is determinate and one-pointed.² Enlightenment is quite different from mere knowledge. Krishna says, 'A Brahmin who has obtained enlightenment has the same use for all the Vedas as one has for a small reservoir of water in a place flooded with water on all sides'.³ The marks of a soul who has realised God are : abandonment of all craving; being the same in joy and sorrow; absence of passion, fear and rage; calmness; equanimity; desirelessness and contentment. Such a man is 'unattached to everything, of stable mind, and removed from sense objects, as a tortoise which draws in its limbs from all directions'.⁴ Having been told the qualities of a sage of settled intelligence, the still curious disciple wants to know what makes a man commit sin.⁵ Krishna tells him that the culprit is desire. As flame is enveloped by smoke, mirror by dirt, even so knowledge is befogged by desire.⁶ The wise man controls his senses and kills desire.⁷ He knows the reality by knowing his inner self, which is greater than the body, sense, mind or intellect.⁸ As Ramana Maharishi says, 'Men avoid the inquiry into the true self, but what else is there so worthy to be undertaken.?' Again in the fourth chapter Krishna says, 'He

1. B. G., III, 21

2. B. G. II, 41.

3. B. G., II, 46.

4. B .G., II, 57—8.

5. B. G., III, 36.

6. B. G., III, 38.

7. B. G., III, 41.

8. B. G., III, 42.

who has subdued his mind and body, has no craving,—performing sheer bodily action such a person does not incur sin'.¹

Sacrifice and Knowledge : In the fourth chapter we are explained what real sacrifice is. There are *yogis* who offer all kinds of things as oblation, even their senses, objects of perception and their vital airs. But the highest sacrifice is that which leads one to knowledge. Knowledge is the greatest purifier. Krishna says, 'Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners you will cross over all sin by the raft of knowledge. For, as the blazing fire reduces the fuel to ashes, Arjura, even so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes. There is no purifier like knowledge in this world.'² In order to achieve knowledge one has to humbly approach those who are its repositories, *viz.* saints. In the *Upanishads* pupils are told to wait or carry out some specific duty before they can receive initiation. In the *Prashna Upanishad* when six would-be disciples approached the Sage Pippalada for being instructed about Brahman he said to them, 'Live again for a year more, passing your days in penance absence and faith, then you may question me as you desire'. In the *Chandogya Upanishad* Satyakama Jabala is asked to look after the cattle belonging to the preceptor for sometime so that he may be able to meditate in solitude before being taught. Similarly Krishna directs the seeker of knowledge to the saints : 'Attain this knowledge by all means. If you prostrate yourself at the feet of the wise, render them all forms of service, and question them with a guileless heart again and again, those wise seers of truth will unfold that knowledge to you.' The saints do not insist on humility due to any vanity or egotism of their own. They only wish to be satisfied that the ground on which they sow the seed of knowledge is well prepared to receive and nurture it. The man who doubts everything, however, cannot bring himself to believe anything. There can be no happiness for such a man. Krishna says, 'He who lacks discrimination, is devoid of faith, and is possessed by doubt, is lost to the spiritual path. For the doubting soul in

1. B. G. IV, 21.

2. B. G., IV, 36—8.

particular, there is neither this world nor the world beyond, nor even happiness.'¹

In the fifth chapter Krishna emphasises three points to his disciple : (1) Dependence on God. (2) The place of God in the affairs of men, and (3) Detachment and even-mindedness. 'He who acts' he says, 'offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water.'² And further on: 'Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who are constantly established in identity with Him, and are exclusively devoted to Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, go to whence there is no return.'³ Speaking of dependence on God, the divine sage Ramakrishna says : 'Keshab Sen asked me 'why do I not see God ?' I said, 'You do not see God because you busy yourself with things as name and fame and scholarship.' The mother does not come to the child as long as it sucks its toy. But when after a few minutes it throws the toy away and cries, then the mother takes the ricepot from the hearth and comes running to the child'.⁴ God is the controller of all beings, as Krishna says towards the end of the *Gita* : 'Arjuna, the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, who are mounted on the automaton of this body, causing them by His illusive power to revolve.'⁵ Ramakrishna says, 'The feeling "I am the doer" is the outcome of ignorance. But the feeling that God does everything is due to knowledge. God alone is the doer; all others are instruments in his hands.'⁶ Surrender to God creates a feeling of contentment and elation. It is as though we are going down the river in a barge. If one has faith in the boatman he will sit contentedly in it, but if he hasn't he will always be worried. The boatman will take the boat across anyway, but the mental attitude of the passenger will be instrumental in swaying his (the passenger's) own mind. In the *Ramacharitmanasa*, Rama

1. B G., IV, 40.

2. B. G., V, 10.

3. B. G., V, 17.

4. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna.*

5. B. G., XVIII, 61.

6. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna.*

says to his devotee, Hanuman, 'How can I consider him to have faith who calls himself my devotee but puts his reliance on man?' God is himself also drawn towards his devotee when there is complete surrender. Ramakrishna tells the following story to illustrate the point : 'Once Lakshmi and Narayana were seated in Vaikuntha, when Narayana suddenly stood up. Lakshmi had been stroking his feet. She said, "Lord where are you going?" Narayana answered, "One of my devotees is in danger. I must save him." With these words he went out. But he came back immediately. Lakshmi said, "Lord why have you returned so soon ?" Narayana smiled and said, "The devotee was going along the road overwhelmed with love for me. Some washermen were drying clothes on the grass and the devotee walked over them. At this the washermen chased him and were going to beat him with their sticks. So I ran out to protect him." "But why have you come back?" asked Lakshmi. Narayana laughed and said, "I saw the devotee himself picking up a brick to throw at them. So I came back."¹ It was because of this love for the self-surrendering devotee that Krishna, after having given his message to Arjuna and left him the choice to do as he pleased,² again takes him by the hand and tells him what is best : 'Hear again my supreme word, the most secret of all. You are very dear to me; therefore I shall tender you this salutary advice. Fix your mind on me, be devoted to me, worship me and bow to me; so shall you without doubt reach me. This I truly promise you; for you are dear to me. Surrendering all duties to me, seek refuge in me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins; grieve not.'³ Ramakrishna says, 'The misfortune that befalls a man on account of his egotism can be realised if you only think of the condition of the calf. The calf says, "Hamma! hamma!" that is "I ! I !" And just look at its misfortune! At times it is yoked to the plough and made to work in the field from sunup to sundown,

1. *Mora dasa kahai nar asa. Karai tau kahahu kaha bisvasa.*
Utrara kand, 45 : 2

2. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna.*

3. B. G., XVIII, 63.

4. B. G. XVIII, 64—6.

rain or shine. Again it may be slaughtered by the butcher. In that case the flesh is eaten and the skin tanned into hide. From the hide shoes are made. People put on these shoes and walk on the rough ground. Still that is not the end of its misfortunes. Drums are made from its skin and mercilessly beaten with sticks. At last its entrails are made into strings for the bow used in carding cotton. When used by the carder the strings give the sound "Tuhu ! tuhu!"; "Thou ! thou !" -- that is "It is thou, O Lord ! It is thou!" Then only do the calf's trouble come to an end, and it is liberated. It doesn't return to the world of action'.

(2) The place of God in the affairs of men — According to the theory of *karma* one reaps only what he has sown. The *Ramacharitmanasa* says *jo jas karai so tas phal chakha* 'as is the act so is the fruit thereof'. But if we believe that 'the moving finger writes and having writ, moves on,' and that everything is done by a superior power, then why should man suffer for his action? Thus neither complete fate nor complete free-will can provide an answer. Tulsidasaji says, 'Loss and gain, life and death, honour and dishonour, are in the hands of God.'² This seems to imply that in other things man possesses a certain amount of freedom of action. It is God who decides destiny, but he does not do it arbitrarily, rather on the basis of a man's works. Ramana Maharishi says, 'All the actions that the body is to perform are already decided upon at the time it comes into existence : the only freedom you have is whether or not to identify yourself with the body. But as beings reap the fruit of their actions in accordance with God's laws, the responsibility is their's not his.' The *Gita* holds that God does not take the responsibility of the virtue or sin of anyone, yet nature which impels man to act derives its motive power from God. Krishna says, 'The Lord determines neither the doership nor the doings of beings, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions. It is nature that functions deriving its motive power from God. The omnipresent God does not partake of the virtue or sin of anyone.'³

1. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna.*

2. *Hani labhu jivan maran jas apajasu bidhi hath.*

(*Ayodhya kand*, 171)

3. B. G., V, 14-15.

(3) Detachment and even-mindedness — These aspects have already been touched upon in the beginning of the *Gita*. Detachment, in fact is the keynote of Krishna's teachings, and has been emphasised right through it. He says, 'He who with reason firm and free from doubt, rejoices not on obtaining what is agreeable, and does not feel perturbed on meeting with the unpleasant, that knower of Brahma lives eternally in identity with it. He whose mind remains unattached to external enjoyment...enjoys eternal bliss'.¹ Similarly at another place Krishna says, 'When a man ceases to have any attachment either for the objects of the senses or for actions and has renounced all thoughts of the world, he is said to have attained *yoga*'.² But the *Gita* does not insist on ascetism. 'He is no yogi,' Krishna says, 'who has merely given up all activity'.³ What is necessary is that one must 'give up thoughts of the world'.⁴ Even if one abandons the world it is no use if in his mind he keeps on thinking of it. Ramana Maharishi says, 'Renunciation does not mean outward divestment of clothes and so on, or the abandonment of home. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachments'. The man of wisdom is also even minded in the sense that he looks on all alike. Krishna says, 'The wise man looks with the same eye on a Brahmin endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah'.⁵

Yoga : In the sixth chapter Krishna tells about control of the senses and equanimity through *yoga*. Patanjali defines *yoga* as 'restraint of the thought process'.⁶ Krishna emphasises the following points when speaking about it to his disciple. (1) concentration, (2) virtuous living, (3) equanimity, (4) detachment and (5) the practical means of attainment. The main object of *yoga* is to control the restless mind. As Arjuna himself acknowledges, 'the mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful; and therefore difficult

1. B. G., V, 20—21.
2. B. G., VI, 4.
3. B. G., VI, 1
4. B. G., VI, 2.
5. B. G., VI, 18.
6. *Yoga Sutra*, 1,1.

to control as the wind'.¹ Krishna admits that this is so. Yet the mind can be controlled through the practice of meditation and dispassion.² When the mind is completely controlled and gets focussed on God alone then the aspirant is established in yoga.³ This can be done by 'restraining the restless and fidgety mind from all those objects after which it runs'.⁴

2. **Virtuous living** — Under this head come continence and fearlessness (VI, 14) regulated diet, recreation, and hours of sleep (VI, 16 and 17) and giving up of worldly desires (VI, 24).

3. **Equanimity** — The self is both a friend and an enemy. The aspirant ought to conquer his lower self by his higher self (VI,6). He is unchangeable under all circumstances. A clod, a stone and a piece of gold are all the same to him (VI, 8). Even so he considers alike well-wishers, friends, foes, mediators, those whom he loves and those whom he hates (VI, 6, 8, 9). The mind of the yogi is perfectly calm in the midst of pairs of opposites such as cold and heat, joy and sorrow, honour and ignominy (VI, 7).

4. **Detachment** — *Vairagya* is getting away from the world's pleasures, bonds and relationship. It is these which are the source of sorrow. When the mind dwells on the joys of the senses, it hankers after them. Such a man either gets what he wants and becomes so much involved with it that he loses his peace of mind, or he does not get the pleasure he wished for and reaps disappointment. A story which Ramakrishna often told his devotees illustrates the point. There was a *sannyasi* (hermit) whose only possession was two pairs of loin-cloth. One day a mouse nibbled at one piece. So the holy man kept a cat to protect his loin-cloths from the mouse. Then he had to keep a cow to supply milk for the cat. Later he had to engage a servant to look after the cow. Gradually the numbers of his cows multiplied. He acquired pastures and farm-land. He had to engage a number of servants. Thus he became in course of

1. B. G., VI, 34.

2. B. G., VI, 35.

3. B. G., VI, 18.

4. B. G., II, 26.

time, a sort of landlord. And, last of all, he had to take a wife to look after his big household. One day, one of his friends, another monk, happened to visit him and was surprised to see his altered circumstances. When asked the reason, the holy man said, 'It is all for the sake of a piece of loin-cloth !'¹ Krishna speaks of the yogi's detachment as 'action without motive', and tranquillity of the mind' (VI, 3). The yogi 'completely gives up all desires' (VI, 24) and 'is not moved even by great sorrow' (VI, 22). He lives in seclusion all by himself and constantly engages his mind in meditation (VI, 10).

5. The practical means of attainment — The steps in yoga have been mentioned by Patanjali as eight. These are *yama* (truthfulness, continence, non-violence, non-stealing and non-covetousness) *niyama* (purity, austerity, contentment, repetition of sacred words and devotion to God), *asana* (posture, which is adopted by the aspirant for steadiness and comfort), *pranayama* (breath control), *pratyahara* (purity of mind by renouncing its objects) *dharaana* (fixing one's attention on some object), *dhyana* (when mind and the object on which it is fixed become one) and *samadhi* (direct knowledge, when the intellect becomes pregnant with truth). Krishna instructs his disciple on the way in which the yogi should carry out his discipline of yoga. He should select a clean spot, spread *kusha* grass on it and a deer-skin over it and above it a piece of cloth. The seat should neither be very high nor very low. Sitting there with trunk head and neck straight and steady he should concentrate his sight at the tip of his nose without looking in any other direction. He should thus practise mind and sense control.²

Another point made out by Krishna is that the practice of yoga is a continual process. Even if an aspirant dies without having achieved his object he dwells for sometime in the higher worlds like heaven etc., and then takes birth in the house of some pious and wealthy man, or in rare cases, in a family of enlightened yogis. Having done so he continues his endeavour and ultimately achieves

1. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna* p. 388 fn.

2. B. G., VI, 11-13.

God-realisation.¹ 'There is no fall for him either here or hereafter' Krishna says, 'for no one who works for God-realisation meets with an evil destiny'.²

Maya, and the way out of it : In the seventh chapter Krishna says that most people in the world are 'deluded by objects evolved from the three modes of nature — *sattva*, *rajasa* and *tamasa*,³ and so are prevented from knowing God. The binding effect of these three (called *gunas* or qualities in Sankhya philosophy) is very difficult to get over, and is possible only by God's own grace.⁴ The reference is obviously to what is known as *maya* in Hindu philosophy. In the beginning *maya* stood for supernatural power. Later the mystery aspect was emphasised and it came to mean magic or illusion. It was believed to have the power of veiling truth as well as misrepresenting it. So unless the veil of *maya* was removed truth could not be discerned. It was like a screen which stood between reality and the seeker. Unless it was removed reality could not be known. The same idea occurs in the *Ramacharitamanasa* in which the Lord Rama is spoken at as the master of *maya* or *mayapati*.⁵ *Maya*, says Tulsidasaji, cannot be transcended without the chanting of Rama's name.⁶ Krishna says that those who are ignorant and vile do not worship God.⁷ But all others do. And they can be classed under four types: 'who seeks wordly objects and wealth, one in trouble, and the man of wisdom.' Of these the man of wisdom is considered to be the noblest and best, but others too are not disparaged. God encourages all his devotee. Krishna says, 'Whatever celestial form a devotee seeks to worship with faith I stabilise the faith of that particular devotee in that very form.'⁸

When God is known, there remains nothing which is left to be realised. Ramakrishna says, 'God alone is the substance, and

1. B. G., VI, 41-5.

2. B. G., VI, 40.

3. Purity, restless activity, and continued dulness.

4. B. G. VII, 13-14.

5. *Uttara kanda*, 628 (as *jiyam jani bhajahim mayapati bhagavan*).

6. *ibid*, 788 (*Aisehin Hari binu bhaj:m khagesa Mitai na jivanha ker kalesa*

7. B. G., VII, 15.

8. B. G., VII, 21.

all else is illusory. One should worship God with one's whole mind... All else is illusory.'¹ Ramana Maharishi says, 'the meeting point of all religions is that God is everything and everything is God'. In the same manner Krishna says 'There is nothing else besides me, Arjuna. Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on me.'² Another interesting point brought up by Krishna is the question whether God should be thought of as formless or with form. The *Gita* does not seem to be very precise on this point. The general idea which persists is that he should be considered to be both. In the beginning Krishna says that God is 'born from age to age' (*sambhavami yuge yuge*)³ in order to protect the virtuous, destroy evil-doers and establish righteousness. Yet in Chapter VII he again says, 'Not knowing my unsurpassable and undecaying supreme nature, the unintelligent think me, the supreme spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, the embodiment of truth, knowledge and bliss, to have assumed a visible human form.'⁴ The observations of Krishna in this chapter definitely favour the view of a formless God.

Death and after : In the eighth chapter Krishna dwells upon the moment of a man's death and what happens thereafter. It is a common Hindu belief that the thoughts uppermost at the hour of death have a great bearing on a man's life in the hereafter. The *Ramacharitmanasa* says, 'Life after life sages seek salvation but even then they are unable to utter the name of God at the hour of their death.' The last thoughts of a man reflect the kind of life he has lived. If he has led a pious life his thoughts will be of holy and virtuous things. On the other hand if he has been a libertine, drunkard or an avaricious man he will not be able to switch on to thoughts of God on his deathbed. A parrot learns how to mechanically repeat 'Rama ! Rama ! But if one wrings his neck all that he can say is caw! caw ! If one wants his last thoughts to be those of God he must be thinking of Him every moment of his life, for one never knows which moment may be the last. Krishna says, 'He who

1. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna*

2. B. G., VII, 7.

3. B. G. IV, 8.

4. B. G., VII, 25.

departs from the body thinking of me alone, even at the time of his death, attains my state; there is no doubt in it Arjuna, thinking of whatever object one leaves at the time of death, that and that alone he attains, being ever absorbed in its thought. Therefore Arjuna, think of me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus surrendered to me you will doubtless come to me.¹

According to Hindu belief the cycle of nature is beginningless and endless. The cosmic unit of time is equal to 43,200 *lakh* years, which is just one day of Brahma's creation. Brahma creates the universe in the morning of his day and at night, earth heaven and hell, all return to chaos. Next morning these are re-created. Thus existence moves on till Brahma reaches the hundredth year of his life. At the end of this period not only the three worlds (earth, heaven and hell) but all the gods, sages, demons and men, and even Brahma himself are resolved into *Mahapralaya* (Great Dissolution). This is followed by a hundred Brahma years of chaos, after which another Brahma is born and the same process is repeated. Referring to this Krishna says, 'All embodied beings emanate from the Unmanifest (i.e. Brahma's subtle body) at the commencement of Brahma's day; at the commencement of his night, they merge in the same subtle body of Brahma, known as the Unmanifest. Arjuna, this multitude of beings being born, again and again, in consonance with nature, is dissolved at the commencement of Brahma's night, and rises again at the commencement of his day'.² But the supreme abode of God is beyond all these changes, and when a man attains that there is no more birth and death for him.³

Hindu philosophy has something to say of the soul's journey after a man's death. Ere the soul takes human form it passes through plant and animal life for countless ages. Men die according to their destiny and take either of two paths according to the merit or demerit of their deeds, their knowledge and their devotion. These paths are the *devyana* (way of the gods; *deva*=a god) and the *pitriyana*

1. B. G., VIII, 5-7.

2. B. G., VIII, 18-19.

3. B. G., VIII, 21.

(way of the fathers; *pitra*=father). If the soul goes the way of the gods, it passes from the realm of the gods to the sun and then to the moon. The soul is tested in the moon, and if found worthy continues its onward journey to lightning. From there it is led to the world of Brahman by a superhuman Being made of mind. In the course of its progress the soul sheds its good and evil deeds, the good ones falling on the relatives he loves and the evil ones falling on those he hates.

The way of the fathers is to the atmospheric world (*bhuvar loka*). There is soul turns into a disembodied ghost (*preta*), and remains so till the death ceremonies are completed. Thereafter it gets a suitable body and takes up its abode in the realm of its fathers. From thence the soul goes into space and then to the moon, where it remains till its merit is exhausted. After that it passes through space again and then through wind, smoke, mist, cloud, rain and with the rain it reaches earth again and sprouts as vegetable. It gets thereafter the form of whosoever eats the vegetable which is according to its destiny. Good souls are reborn in higher caste people. Bad ones as worms, moths, fish, pigs, dogs and other creatures.

The very wicked souls go neither the way of the fathers nor the way of the gods. They live in hell and suffer agelong torments. If even then their wicked deeds are not exhausted they are hurled into regions lower, below the earth. Those whose children fail to perform the funeral ceremonies become ghosts. Each man becomes the object of his worship. Those who worship the fathers go to them, those who worship the gods go to the gods. Those who worship Krishna go to him. They attain Brahman and are emancipated from the rounds of births and deaths. In the *Gita* Krishna describes the two paths (VIII, 24-26). Thereafter he tells his disciple, Arjuna, 'Be always established in yoga in the form of equanimity and thereby come to me.'¹

The Yoga of Devotion : In the ninth chapter Krishna speaks of the yoga of devotion. A certain sanctity is attached to this chapter of the *Gita* as Krishna himself says in the beginning of it 'This

1. B. G., VIII, 27.

is the supreme knowledge, the sovereign secret, the highest and purest'.¹ It is said that Jnanadeva in his final samadhi, recited this chapter and breathed his last. Krishna impresses on his disciple the desirability of complete devotion to God. All is God, and besides Him there is nothing. He is the sustainer and ruler of the universe, its father, mother and supporter. Of the ways of knowledge and devotion, that of devotion is far easier. In the *Ramacharitamanasa* Kakbhushundi says to Garura, 'Without the gem of devotion one cannot get happiness.'² Rama himself says, 'Wisdom is difficult to acquire, and there are many hindrances in acquiring it. The way to it is hard, and the soul finds no support as it proceeds on its path. Even after much effort if a person gets it, being devotionless he is not beloved of me.'³ Poet Raskhan says, 'I searched for God in the Vedas and Puranas, but never saw Him; when I was tired of my quest lo! I beheld him in a far off hermitage where He was massaging Radha's feet.' Krishna says, 'Even if the vilest sinner worships me with exclusive devotion he should be considered a saint'.⁴ For the Lord's devotee there is no impediment and no turning back. Krishna says, 'Know it for certain, Arjuna, my devotee never falls'.⁵ Further we have the assurance of the Lord that he personally helps his devotee: 'To those devotees who, knowing no one else, constantly think of me and worship me in a disinterested manner, I bring security and personally attend to their needs'.⁶ Further he says, 'I joyfully accept whatever my devotee with love offers me, whether it is a fruit, a flower, a leaf or even water'.⁷ The significant point about the offering is that it is given with love. Its value is immaterial. There is a story of O. Henry in which a newly-wed couple bought Christmas gifts for each other. The girl sold her hair and from the money purchased a watch-chain for her husband so that he may feel proud of his watch. The husband (unknown to her) sold off his watch to buy his wife

1. B. G., IX, 2 (*Rajavidya rajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam*

2. *Uttar kanda*, 119 B, 3

3. *Ibid*, 44: 2.

4. B. G., IX, 30

5. B. G., IX, 31

6. B. G., IX, 22.

7. B. G., IX, 26.

a hair comb which she very much coveted so that her hair may look nicer thereby. Though the gifts were thus useless they were yet prized by the couple because of the love which went into their making.¹ Commending a widow's small contribution to God's treasury, the Bible says : 'And he (Jesus Christ) looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all : For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God : but she of her penury hath cast in all the living she had.'² In the higher stage of devotion one sees nothing apart from God. Krishna says to his illustrious disciple, 'Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it to me....Fix your mind on me, be devoted to me, adore me and make obeisance to me; thus uniting yourself to me you shall come to me.'³

All is God : The tenth chapter of the *Gita* speaks of the all-compassing nature of God. Everything in the world follows from Him, everything moves according to his command. 'I am the source of all creation,' Krishna tells Arjuna, 'Everything in the world moves because of me.'⁴ Arjuna wants to know about God's glory in more detail. 'How am I to know you through constant meditation?' he asks Krishna. 'On what particular forms of yours should I meditate upon ?'⁵ The Lord says that of all things in the world he is the master and the source. He is the seed of all beings. All creatures depend on him for their existence, and are only a spark of the divine anvil. 'I hold this entire universe,' says Krishna, 'by just a small part of myself.'⁶

1. O. Henry, *The Gift of the Magi*.

2. St. Luke, 21 : 1-4.

3. B. G., IX, 27 and 34

4. B. G., X, 8.

5. B. G., X, 17.

6. B. G., X, 42.

The Lord Reveals Himself : In the eleventh chapter of the *Gita* Arjuna beholds the cosmic form of the Lord. It is seldom that God appears to his devotees. Indeed in certain religions, like Islam for example, it is a sacrilege to conceive of God having a form. In the Bible God appears to Moses as a burning bush: In the *Ramacharitmanasa* when Rama was born he showed his mother his divine form. In the same way as Arjuna in the *Gita*, mother Kaushalya was frightened on seeing it and begged him to assume the form of an innocent babe again. Arjuna himself urges Krishna to show him his divine form. ‘Lord you are precisely what you declare yourself to be. But I long to see your divine form, O, best of persons. If you consider me as capable of beholding it, then, O Lord of yoga reveal to me your imperishable form.’¹ But when he saw the vast and terrible form ‘with numerous faces and eyes, arms, thighs feet bellies and teeth, reaching the heavens, effulgent and many coloured,’² he was aghast, and prayed to him to reveal his divine aspect as the four-armed god holding a mace, *chakra*, lotus and conch in his hands. Krishna assumed this form and then returned to his former human aspect. Krishna then said. ‘This divine four armed form of mine can neither be seen by a study of the Vedas, nor by charity or ritual. Only single-minded devotion can reveal it. That person alone who is without attachment and is free from malice towards all being can reach me.’³

The Nectar of Pious Wisdom : The twelfth chapter of the *Gita* is called by Krishna himself the ‘nectar of pious wisdom.’⁴ Two points are discussed in it. (1) Who are the better worshippers, those who worship God with form or the ones who worship a formless God ? (2) What kind of man is dear to God ? The first question is specifically put by Arjuna to Krishna.⁵ The answer given is that both kinds of worshippers are acceptable to God, but the devotee has an easier access to Him. The path of wisdom is rugged and hard to tread, while devotion is an easy short-cut. The

1. B. G., 3-4

2. B. G., 23-4

3. B. G., XI, 54-5.

4. B. G., XII, 20.

5. B. G., XII, 1.

best yogis are the ones 'with supreme faith'.¹ These the Lord speedily rescues 'from the ocean of birth and death'.² Detailing the respective merit of wisdom, works and faith, Krishna says, 'Knowledge is better than doing something without due deliberation. Meditation is superior to knowledge. And best of all these is renunciation of the fruit of action, for this gives one instant peace'.³ The man who thoughtlessly does an act is worst of all because his act is neither desireless nor logical. Most crimes are committed in this manner. A man is filled with greed for money and robs someone. Or he is moved by lust and rapes an innocent girl. A sudden fit of rage which, as the *Gita* says results in destruction of wisdom.⁴ may end in a murder. Obviously such men are lowest in the scale. But even if one uses his wisdom, desirelessness is not obtained. Such wisdom is used for making money or getting some object. The meditating yogi does not suffer from these defects, still he is interested in his own upliftment. But when one considers the whole world his own and does good to others without expectation of any reward, this is the highest virtue.

Krishna describes the kind of man who is dear to God. Such a person has no malice towards anyone. He is free from egoism, alike in pleasure and pain, forgiving but of firm resolve. He is neither a source of annoyance, nor offends anyone. He is pure both outside and inside, clever, impartial and above all distractions. He has surrendered his mind to God and has shed his egoism. He has renounced both good and evil. He neither rejoices nor hates and is freed of all grief and desire. He is alike to friend and foe, honour and ignominy. Free from all attachment he gladly accepts whatever comes to him without asking.⁵ These are obviously qualities which saints and sages can possess. Speaking of

1. B. G., XII, 2.
2. B. G., XII, 7.
3. B. G., XII, 12.
4. B. G., II, 63.

(From anger arises bewilderment, then loss of memory, then destruction of intelligence).

5. B. G., 13-19.

virtuous persons the *Ramacharitmanasa* says, 'They consider another's daughter or wife as a mother and another's wealth as poison. They rejoice in another's prosperity and are grieved when they learn of another's sorrow. To them God is extremely dear.¹ At another place the example of felling a sandal-wood tree by an axe is given to illustrate the difference between a saintly person and a non-saintly one. 'The axe cuts the tree, but the tree, in return, imbues it with its perfume. In the end however, the blade of the axe is heated in the fire to give an edge, while sandal-wood paste is honoured by being applied to foreheads of people'.² Shri Vyasadeva condenses the requirement of virtuous action even further : 'Hear what *dharma* is in brief. Hear and practice it. That which causes hurt to you or that which is harmful to you—do not do that to others'. Whatever the means of attainment, the fundamental thing is that effort for it is needful. The only condition is that the mind must be fixed on God and reason established in Him alone.³

Spirit and Nature : The thirteenth chapter points out the sharp distinction between matter and spirit. Sankhya, the oldest school of India philosophy, was founded by Kapila who belongs to the sixth century B. C. It conceives of creation as being evolved from *prakriti* (nature). From this are derived the three *gunas* (qualities) which create the intellect (*buddhi*), *manas* the door-keeper of the senses and thence self-sense (*ahankara*) and finally the subtle and gross senses and elements. Thus when *prakriti*'s equilibrium is disturbed the process of creation is set in motion. This is done by *purusha* (spirit) which is of a nature opposed to *prakriti*. The Sankhya *purusha* is much like the *atman* of the Upanishads. It is without beginning or end, without qualities, subtle omnipresent

1. *Jajani sam janhin parnari. Dhan parav vish ten vish bhari Je harashahin par sampat dekhi, Dukhit hohim par bipat viseshi.*
Jihhahi Rama tumha pranapiare. Tinha ke man sukh sadan tumhare.
(Ayodhya kanda, 129 : 4)
2. *Sant asantanhi kai as karni, Jimi kuthar chandan acharani. Katai parasu malai sunu bhai, Nij guna del sugandha basai. Tate sura sasanha charhat, jag ballabh shrikhand, Anal dahi patal dhanahin parasu badan yah dand.* —Uttara kanda, 36 : 4 & 37
3. B. G., XII, 9.

and eternal. *Prakriti* is non-conscious, active alterable, characterised by the three *gunas*, and an object. *Purusha*, on the contrary, is conscious, inactive, constant, devoid of the *gunas*, and the subject. *Purusha* acts on the quiescent *prakriti* much like a magnet would move a nail when placed near it. Gaudapada likens the union of *purusha* and *prakriti* to a blind man carrying a lame one. In order to move the blind man carries the lame man on his shoulders. The lame man, who can see, points out the way, and with his guidance his companion, who can walk but can't see, moves along. In the same way *prakriti* which can move but not see, combines with *purusha* who sees but can't move.

According to Sankhya pain arises from contact with matter. When the soul is associated with the body it becomes sensible of sorrows and imperfections. But when by knowledge it is able to escape the perishable body it knows pain no more. The movement towards liberation is automatic. Having gained supreme knowledge the soul 'looks on nature as a spectator looks on an actress'. The soul separates from the body and nature ceases to act. The drama of life is ended. As the *Sankhya Karika* says, 'As a dancer, having exhibited herself on the stage ceases to dance, so does *prakriti* cease to produce when she has made herself manifest to the soul'.¹

Krishna speaks of the body as the field, and the soul, which is of the nature of God, as the knower of the field.² Knowledge or wisdom implies a combination of many things like absence of egoism, pride, hypocrisy, attachment and wordly bonds; and the presence of straightforwardness, service of the guru, purity of mind and body, steadfastness, self-control, dispassion, devotion to God and equanimity.³ In the Sankhian spirit the *Gita* says that matter produces the body and the senses, while spirit is the cause of experience, pleasure and pain.⁴ The spirit becomes identified with the body, but is really beyond it.⁵ But the wise man perceives

1. John Davies, *The Sankhya Karika of Ishwara Krishna*.

2. B. G., XIII, 1-2

3. B.G., XIII, 6-11.

4. B.G., XIII, 20.

5. B.G., XIII, 21-2.

this difference and is not beguiled. It is like the sun's light which floods a room and lights it up. It becomes then part of the room. But it is really not so because when the sun goes down the light is withdrawn. The soul thus remains pure even though contained in the body, as the ether pervades all space but retains its subtle nature.¹

Describing the beginningless and supreme Brahman, by knowing which immortality is obtained, Krishna says that it is beyond the reach of *maya*, the light of all lights and seated in the hearts of all.² As the *Katha Upanishad* says, 'Neither sun, moon, stars, fire, nor lightning, shine there. When he (Brahman) shines, then shines everything else. Everything in the world reflects his light.' It is knowledge of this Brahman which can release the soul for ever from its bondage.

Beyond the Gunas : The three qualities which firmly tie the imperishable soul to the body are *sattva* (purity), *rajasa* (activity) and *tamasa* (dulness). Although the first is better than the second and the second than the third, all of them bind the soul in some manner or the other, for all are products of egotism. *Sattva* makes the man say, 'I am happy and wise', *rajasa* 'I can do things' and *tamasa* 'I am too tired and lazy to do anything'. When the aspirant goes beyond these *gunas* and beholds that divinity which is beyond them, he is freed from birth, death, old age, and sorrow, and becomes immortal.³ Having been told this, Arjuna wants to know what distinguishes those persons who have thus transcended the *gunas*. Such a person, says Krishna, feels no aversion to these qualities (*sattva*, *rajasa* and *tamasa*) when they are present and does not long for them when they are absent. He remains absorbed in devotion to God and does not bother about the action of the qualities. For him joy and sorrow, disparagement and praise, the pleasant and the unpleasant, are all the same. Gold has the same value as a stone or a clod of earth. He considers foe and friend alike. Honour or dishonour are to him the same, and he never thinks himself as the

1. B.G., XIII, 32.

2. B.G., XIII, 17.

3. B.G., XIV, 20.

doer.¹ Such a person who has risen above the three *gunas* and places his trust in God is capable of attaining Brahman.

The fifteenth chapter of the *Gita* has been called by the Lord the most secret of his teachings.² Using the metaphor of the *peepul* tree (the Indian fig tree) Krishna explains the illusive world of creation which has to be transcended in order to reach God. In the *Ramacharitmanasa* Lakshmana says to Nishada, 'Meeting, parting, good and evil experiences, friends foes and well wishers, all are delusive. Birth, death and wordly involvement, wealth, misfortune, time and action, wherever existence spreads; the earth, home, city, family; heaven and hell and all that can be heard seen and thought of—all these are the creation of ignorance.'³ Similarly the *peepul* tree of creation which has its root in God, whose leaves are the Vedas, spreads out into the world. Its branches are the different kinds of living beings nourished by the three *gunas*, its tender leaves are sense-enjoyments.⁴ This tree has to be cut down by the axe of dispassion. The way to dispassion is to conquer pride, infatuation and attachment and then to advance on the Godward path. Having reached their goal there is no return for such beings.

The soul, says Krishna, is an eternal portion of God. The ignorant man does not perceive it, for it is observed only by the eye of wisdom. The body is perishable but not so the soul. God is distinct from both these. He sustains and nourishes everything and is designated as the Universal soul.⁵ The Upanishads also conceive of two entities—the soul (*atman*) and the empirical Absolute (*Brahman*), the first principle of the universe. The soul is of the nature of Brahman. The Vedanta says, 'that thou art' (*tat tvam asi*). When the truth of the soul is known, emancipation follows. The *Brihadarayaka Upanishad* says that the man who is free from desire ascends to Brahman :

1. B.G., XIV, 22-25
2. B.G., XV, 20.
3. *Ayodhya kanda*, 91, 3-4.
4. B.G., XV, 1-2.
5. B.G., XV, 7,10,16 and 17.

*'When every passion vanishes
That finds a home in the human heart
Then he who is mortal become immortal
Here already he has attained to Brahman'.¹*

The Divine and the Demoniacial : In the sixteenth chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna tells his disciple the difference between persons virtuous and wicked. The *Katha Upanishad* says, 'Wide apart and leading to different ways are ignorance and wisdom. Fools, dwelling in darkness, filled with conceit and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round, staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind. The hereafter does not arise before the eyes of one who is deluded by wealth. "This is the world" he thinks, "there is no other"—thus he falls again and again under death's sway'.² But the wise man distinguishes between what is good and what is pleasant, and chooses the good.³ Krishna divides men into the divine and demoniacal, the virtuous and the wicked. The divine virtues are fearlessness, absolute purity of the heart and the body, meditation, sense control, worship, study of the Scriptures straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, geniality of speech, absence of anger even on provocation, abandonment of the idea of doership in action, tranquillity, refraining from malicious gossip, kindness to all creatures, absence of attachment to the objects of the sense, abstaining from idle pursuits, following the Scriptures, sublimity, forgiveness, fortitude, and absence of malice and of self-importance. The other kind, the demoniacal are those who are hypocritical, arrogant, vain, harsh, ignorant and irascible. Such persons do not know what is right, they have no purity, goodness or truth. For them the world is godless and without foundation. They are cruel, of little understanding, ill-disposed, conceited and arrogant, immersed in sensual pleasures, intoxicated with wealth and honour, unbending, and given to passion, violence and rage. 'This has been won by me today' such men say; 'that ambition I shall now realise; this wealth is mine already; that will be mine again. This

1. Paul Duesseun, *The Philosophy of the Upanishad*

2. *Katha Up.*, 1, 2, 4-6.

3. *Ibid*, 1, 2, 2.

enemy has already been disposed of by me, and I shall make short work of others also. I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer : I am perfect, powerful and happy. I am wealthy and high-born. Who else is like me ? I shall perform sacrifices and rejoice.¹ In brief men can be divided into God-lovers and God-haters. The former achieve God, who is the object of their love, while the other ones are 'cast into demoniacal wombs birth after birth and are fools who do not attain God, but instead sink into lower and lower depths'.² The triple gate to hell is formed of passion anger and greed. Ramakrishna condenses this into the two ace vices, 'woman' and 'gold'. 'Woman and gold' he says, 'are the cause of bondage. Woman and gold alone constitute *samsara*, the world. It is woman and gold that keeps one from seeing God'.³

Sacrifice, Charity and Austerity : The seventeenth chapter follows from a doubt expressed by Arjuna who asks his Lord and guru, 'What about those who, though having faith, worship the gods but not in accordance with scriptural injunctions ?'⁴ Krishna tells him that faith is what makes and unmakes a man. It is of three kinds—that impelled by *sattva*, that arising from *rajasa* and that which has *tamasa* as its basis. Whatever the nature of a man's faith, that he is.⁵ The man of *sattvic* nature performs all acts with a high selfless and disinterested motive. He eats pure and nutritive food and offers sacrifice as ordained by the Scriptures and without expectation of a reward.⁶ He maintains austerity of body, speech and mind. Austerity of body is maintained by the worship of the gods, Brahmins, elders and the wise; and by maintaining straightforwardness, continence and non-violence. Austerity of speech means being truthful, agreeable and genial. Austerity of mind means keeping oneself cheerful and serene, self-controlled and pure of

1. B.G., XVI, 1-16.
2. B.G., XVI, 20.

3. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna*, p.391

4. B.G., XVII, 1.

5. B.G. XVII, 2-3 (*Sattva*—purity; *rajasa*—activity ;; *tamasa* -dulness).

6. Sacrifices are either obligatory, (*nitya*) or occasional (*naimittika*). Those performed for obtaining some specified desire (*karma*) come under the latter head.

heart.¹ The *sattvic* man acts without expectation of a reward. He makes selfless gifts without any thought of return.² Then there is the *rajasic* man. He takes food which is bitter, acid, over-salted, too hot, pungent, dry, burning and giving rise to pain, grief and illness.³ If he offers sacrifice he does it to show off and for some desire. If he undertakes some penance it is to win respect and honour; and he makes much of it. The result of such penance is short-lived. If he makes a gift he does it grudgingly and in order to get some advantage in return.⁴ Instead of worshipping the gods as the *sattvic* man does, he worships *yakshas*⁵ and demons. Thirdly, there is the *tamasic* kind of person. He worships neither gods nor demons, but spirits and ghosts. His food is putrid, stale, polluted half-cooked, insipid and impure. The sacrifice he offers is not according to the prescribed injunctions of the Scriptures and is devoid of faith. No food is distributed by him in it, no sacred formula chanted and no fees paid to the officiating priests. If he undertakes penance it is to harm others, and it is done in an improper manner by torturing the mind and the body. The gift of a *tamasic* man is given to undeserving persons at an improper place and time, and in a disrespectful and insulting manner.

The chapter also discusses the significance of the words '*Om Tat Sat*'. These, says Krishna, are the threefold designation of the Absolute. All sacrifices, gifts and penances begin with the utterance of '*Om*' by those who are entitled to chant the Vedas. '*Tat*' means that everything belongs to the Lord. As the *Isha Upanishad* says 'Know that whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God.'⁶ '*Sat*' means truth and goodness. It also means steadfastness in sacrifice, penance, and gift.⁷

1. B.G., XVIII, 14-6.

2. B.G., XVII, 20.

3. B.G., XVII, 9.

4. B.G., 9,12,18.

5. A class of supernatural beings attendant on Kubera, called *punya-janas* (good people)

6. *Isha Upanishad*, 1,1.

7. B.G., XVII, 23-7.

Reaching the Goal :: In the eighteenth and last chapter of the *Gita* Krishna gives his parting advice to Arjuna. In more respects than one this chapter contains the essence of the message of the *Gita*: which is, in one word, 'renunciation'. Arjuna wants to know the true meaning of *sannyasa* (ascetism) and of *tyaga* (renunciation). What follows is Krishna's explanation of their import. What should one relinquish or renounce, and what one shouldn't? The process of renouncing, says Krishna, should be a gradual one. Action of the *sattvic* kind which has the sanction of Scriptures should not be renounced. It is a mistake to thoughtlessly abandon it. Even if one abandons *rajasic* and *tamasic* action, that eliminates much of evil. Most crimes and wrongdoings are then automatically eliminated. The next step is to renounce the fruit of *sattvic* action. As Krishna says, 'An action enjoined by Scriptures which is done as a duty, giving up attachment and fruit, is regarded as a *sattvic* form of relinquishment'.¹ While man lives in the world, performance of action by him is inevitable. The only thing which he can do about it is that he should expect no reward for what he does. Wealthy men spend fabulous sums on building temples and caravanserais. But their main object is to perpetuate their name, or even to escape taxation. Their action, though beneficial to humanity, is not desireless and so bereft of spiritual value. But those who do good and give charity without expecting honour, name and reward, have understood the true import of action. This however, does not mean that the man who has attained wisdom should unsettle the minds of others who are still struggling to attain it. Nor is it of any use for one to take a sudden leap towards desirelessness. When the seeker's mind is attuned to that state it will come of itself to him. A householder devotee of Ramana Maharishi talked to him about renunciation :

Devotee : I am inclined to give up my job and remain always with Shri Bhagavan (The Maharishi).

Bhagavan : Bhagavan is always with you, in you. The self in you is Bhagavan.

1. B.G., XVII, 9.

Devotee : But I feel the urge to give up all attachments and renounce the world as a *sannyasin*.

Bhagavan : Renunciation does not mean outward divestment of clothes and so on, or the abandonment of home. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachments.

Devotee : But single minded devotion to God may not be possible unless one leaves the world.

Bhagavan : No. One who truly renounces actually merges in the world and expands his love to embrace the whole world. It would be more correct to describe the attitude of the devotee as universal love than as abandoning home to don the ochre robe.

Devotee : At home the bonds of affection are too strong.

Bhagavan : He who renounces when he is not yet ripe for it only creates new bonds.

Devotee : Is not renunciation the supreme means of breaking attachments ?

Bhagavan : It may be so for one whose mind is already free from entanglements. But you have not grasped the deeper import of renunciation : great souls who have abandoned the life of the world have done so not out of aversion to family life but because of their large-heartedness and all-embracing love for all mankind and all creatures.

Devotee : The family ties will have to go sometime so why shouldn't I take the initiative and break them now, so that my love can be equal to all ?

Bhagavan : When you really feel that equal love for all, when your heart has so expanded as to embrace the whole of creation, you will certainly not feel like giving up this or that ; you will simply drop off from secular life as a ripe fruit does from the branch of a tree. You will feel that the whole world is your home.¹

There are stages in the progress towards God, and everyone is moving forward to Him. It is not possible for embodied beings to renounce action. They are irrevocably driven to it, as Krishna

1. Arthur Osborne, *Ramana Maharishi and the Path of Self-knowledge*.

explains : 'Arjuna, the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, who are mounted on the automaton of this body, causing them by his illusive power to revolve according to their actions.'¹ The man who is on the path to God-realisation engages himself in devotional practices like worship, meditation and the chanting of the Lord's name. These may be tedious to start with but ultimately yield good result—'like poison in the beginning but like nectar in the end.' On the contrary the man who goes in for riotous living and indulges freely in the senses might enjoy himself for sometime but dissipation soon wears him out and makes him miserable. It is like nectar in the beginning and poison in the end. Meditation for example is hard to practice but ultimately gives peace to the mind. To drink is pleasurable, but soon the drinker becomes a drunkard and a habitual alcoholic, and may get cirrhosis of the liver or some such serious disease which brings him pain and suffering. All the good things in life are laboriously attained and their attainment brings peace and happiness. All vices are easy to acquire but they enslave and wreck one who seeks them.

Explaining the mechanism of action Krishna says, The causes which operate in the commission of an act are five—the body, the soul which is the body's agent, the sense organs, the divergent activities of these organs, and destiny. It is obvious that man is partly free in action and partly bound, and 'there's a destiny which shapes our ends.' The *Ramacharitmanasa* says : 'Birth, death and the experience of all joys and sorrows; loss and gain, union and separation—all these are governed by works performed, and by time. The ignorant man is elated with joys and grieved by misfortunes, while the man of steady mind is unmoved by both'. Destiny is of course a guiding factor. But it comes about by the acts done by men themselves. If a certain thing is to happen the man's mind is turned so, as to make it come to pass. That is why Krishna says that God dwells in the hearts of all beings and causes them to revolve by his illusive power. Tulsidasaji says, 'As is the destined end so is the impetus given. Either destiny comes to the doer, or the doer is drawn towards the preordained end'.

1. B.G., XVIII, 61.

Krishna re-emphasises that the notion of doership must be removed. 'He whose mind is free from the nature of doership' he says, 'and whose reason is not affected by worldly activities, is not bound by sin'.¹ Another thing is that one should do whatever he is called upon to do in the world honestly and sincerely. All men do not have the same fate. Some are born into high and wealthy families, others get humble households. One should not be envious of another's position or be chagrined with his own. 'Better one's own duty' says Krishna, 'though devoid of merit, than the duty of another even though well-executed'.² But the best is to 'surrender all duties to God and take refuge in Him alone'.³ This is the final stage of all renunciation. The man who surrenders completely to God has no more worries. As the sage Dadu says: 'He who has surrendered all worldly hopes and ambitions to him does the Lord Himself minister. His servant is free from care'.⁴

At the end of his discourse, Krishna says : now I have taught you all that there was to teach, reflect on it fully and do as pleases you.⁵ That indeed would be enough for the ordinary disciple. But Arjuna is someone special because he is very dear to Krishna.⁶ So the Lord gives him that instruction which is particularly meant for the closest devotee : 'Fix your mind on me, be devoted to me, worship me and bow to me; so shall you without doubt reach me. This I truly promise you.'⁷ As Ramakrishna says, 'The heart of the devotee is the drawing-room of God'.⁸ The final message of the *Gita* can be considered to be devotion and renunciation. Without God's love man is a creature of lifeless action.

*However handsome, well-born, wise,
Clever in spirit and wealthy;
Man is no better than a corpse, says Nanak
If God's love is not in him.*

1. B.G., XVIII, 17.
2. B.G., XVII, 47.
3. B.G., XVIII, 66.
4. W.G. Orr, *A Sixteenth Century, Indian Mystic*, Lutterworth Press.
5. B.G., XVIII, 63.
6. B.G., XVII, 64.
7. B.G., XVII, 65.
8. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna*, p.62 :

And before one reaches this state he has to renounce all those things which keep man away from God—the lure of sense pleasures the lust for wealth and the vanity of knowledge. Ramakrishna says, 'The essence of the *Gita* is what you get by repeating the word ten times. The word becomes reversed. It is then "tagi" which refers to renunciation. The essence of the *Gita* is : "O man, renounce everything and practice spiritual discipline for the realisation of God"'.¹

The *Gita* is above everything a practical code of conduct, not only showing clearly what is right, but also how to achieve it. That is why it is as popular now as it was thousands of years ago when it was written. That is why it has transcended the barriers of race and nation, country and clime.

I have always felt the necessity of a verse for verse rendering of this great book. I have considered it suitable to introduce a rhyme scheme all through. Besides, I feel that adequate justice has not been done to the musical stanzas of the Lord's vision and *Arjuna's* prayer in the eleventh chapter. I have tried to capture the grandeur and awe of the occasion. Most of the existing translations of the *Gita* are either in prose, or in prose interspersed with verse. As the *Gita* itself is in Sanskrit verse I think it stands to reason that a rendering of it in any other language should preferably be in verse. I, therefore, venture to present this new creative verse rendering with the hope that it will carry the greatness of this great book to an increasingly greater number of people.

Lucknow
1980

K. P. BAHADUR

Dhritrastra said :

1. Arrayed for battle, eager for the fray,
On Kurukshetra, how did my valiant sons,
And those of Pandu, act, O! Sanjaya, say.

* * * *

Sanjaya said :

2. Casting his gaze upon the Pandava host,
Brave warriors, gathered on the fateful field,
Duryodhana thus to Dronacharya spoke.

* * * *

3. See master, yonder! glistening in the sun,
The mighty army of the Pandus, trained
By your talented pupil Dristadyumna.

* * * *

4. Mark thee! there stand Satyaki and Virata
No less in strength than Arjuna and great Bhima,
And nigh him Drupada, on his shining car.

* * * *

5. Dhristaketu, Chekitana, the Kashi king,
And Parajeet, and Kuntibhoja, and Shaibya—
Loud on the battlefield their armour rings.

* * * *

6. Uttamanja, and Yudhamanyu,
Abhimanyu, and the sons of Draupadi,
All armed, upon their chariots, yonder view!

* * * *

7. And these O! Dronacharya, the warriors bold,
Arrayed for battle, on our side that stand;
Their names shall I unto thee now unfold.

* * * *

8. Thyself, and Bhishma, and Karna, and Kripacharya,
Who never knew defeat in battle yet—
Vikarna, and Aswatthama, Bhurisva.

9. And valiant heroes armed with bow and shield,
And deadly weapons, staking their sweet lives
For their king's honour, stand upon this field.

* * * *

10. Behold our men! invincible and strong;
How can Bhima's rabble stand agaisnt our might?
Arise, O! valiant Bhishma, and lead them on!

* * * *

11. Hark Ye! brave warriors! take positions so,
As you have been commanded; as round Bhishma
To build a solid rampart 'gainst the foe.

* * * *

12. Lo! at that moment loud the grandsire roared,
And blew his conch; whereat Duryodhana smiled,
To see the sound strike terror in the fold.

* * * *

13. Then conch and kettle-drum, loud and confused;
Trumpet and tabor, suddenly blared forth—
As if the fury of all hell broke loose.

* * * *

14. And seated on a glorious chariot drawn
By milk-white steeds, Sri Krishna and Arjuna blew
Their conches—Devadutta and Panchajanya.

* * * *

15. And mighty Bhima, as some dark thunderous cloud,
Leapt nimbly to his feet, and his conch blew,
The awesome Paundra—and its notes echoed loud.

* * * *

16. And king Yudhishtira blew his mighty conch
Anantavijaya; and Nakula, and Sahdeva,
The Sughosa, and the Manipuspaka strong.

* * * *

17. The Kashi king and valiant Sikhandi
Sent forth their notes reverberating loud—
And Dristadyumna, Virata, and Satyaki.

18. My gracious Lord, King Drupada sounded too
His noble conch; and Subadra's brave son,
And all the Pandavas five, their conches blew.
* * * *

19. Louder and louder swelled those fearful notes,
Striking cold terror in the Kaurava ranks,
As if a thousand lions at once did roar.
* * * *

20. Then, noble Dhritrastra! seeing thy sons arrayed
Against him; Arjuna lifted his great bow,
And to Sri Krishna thus with soft words he prayed.
* * * *

21-22. My chariot 'twixt the armies place O! Lord,
That I may see the warriors mighty lined,
Who eager stand to perish by the sword.
* * * *

23. So I more closely may these faces scan,
Which, burning with the fire of hatred fierce
Fanned by Duryodhana, seek to end our clan.
* * * *

24-25. Thus addressed, Govinda Arjuna's chariot placed
Between the armies, and unto him spoke;
Behold these Kauravas eager for the fray!
* * * *

26. And as he turned within his troubled sight
Swam teachers, friends, and blood relations all,
Ready for mortal combat and fierce fight.
* * * *

27-28. And drowned deep in compassion Arjuna said,
O ! Krishna, behold these kinsmen mad for war,
How can we thus prepare their blood to shed ?
* * * *

29. I am sick of this slaughter, Oh! my friend,
My limbs give way, my mouth is parched, my frame
Doth shake; my hair with horror stand on end.

CHAPTER II

Sanjaya said :

1. To Arjuna thus with false, compassion stirred,
Beset with troubled thoughts, and in grief drowned,
The gracious Lord addressed these noble words.

* * * *

2. Wherefrom this weakness at this odd hour came
Upon you, Arjuna ! Shunned by noble souls :
No glory shall it bring, or heaven or fame.

* * * *

3. For you, Destroyer of your foes, this fear
Doth ill become, arise O ! warrior, shake
This mean faint-heartedness and ill-timed tears.

* * * *

Arjuna said :

4. How shall I, Krishna, with bow and arrow stand
In equal combat 'gainst great Bhishma and Drona,
Whom I should rather meet with folded hands ?

* * * *

5. Better by far to take the beggar's bowl,
Than wade through blood to pleasures and false gain,
And with the shaft of sin to kill the soul.

* * * *

6. Those killing whom we do not wish to live
Do stand against us, and we do not know
To which shall victory her sweet laurels give.

* * * *

7. Govinda, in Thee my humble refuge seek
Do I, who am with contrary thoughts opprest,
Help me O ! Lord, help Thy disciple meek.

* * * *

8. For neither sway over the mighty earth,
Nor heavenly kingdom, can my grief allay,
That hath o'erpowered my reason at its birth.

Sanjaya said :

9. O ! King ! Thus unto Sri Krishna Arjuna spoke,
And saying "I will not fight !" he silent was.
And stubbornly refused to take his bow.

* * * *

10. Then, O ! Dhritrastra, the Lord with smiling face,
To troubled Arjuna these calm words addressed.
Between the armies for grim battle placed.

* * * *

Sri Bhagwan said :
11. Oh ! Arjuna, thou with senseless grief distressed
For those who need it not, dost speak in vain;
Wise men grieve not o'er the living or dead.

* * * *

12. Never was time when thou wast not, nor when
These kings were not, yea friend, nor ever shall
They cease to be, what sorrow hast thou then ?

* * * *

13. Childhood, and youth, and age, are but mere beads
Upon the string of life, e'en so the soul
Another body takes—be not deceived.

* * * *

14. The senses five to outward objects cling,
And with their contact are born all desires;
And pain and pleasure, heat and cold, these bring.

* * * *

15. If thou art wise pleasure and pain both shun,
And wean the senses from their objects dear,
Thus mayst thou also immortal become.

* * * *

16. The unreal never was, the real lives on
Eternally—this have the sages seen,
And seeing have ever known the born, unborn.

* * * *

17. The spirit that doth this vast creation tie,
Eternal, deathless, and immutable,
Know that 'tis neither born, nor does it die.

18. Yet shouldst thou fight O! Arjuna—as the rose
 Doth wither when the sap that fed it dries,
 So are these bodies when the spirit goes.

* * * *

19. For neither doth the soul kill nor is killed,
 But shineth ever like the heavenly sun,
 And with the majesty of God is filled.

* * * *

20. Not with the birth of body is it born,
 Nor with its death of its existence shorn,
 In regions everlasting is its home,
 And with life's sunset it begins its dawn.

* * * *

21. Oh! Arjuna, he who thus the soul will search—
 Eternal, deathless, free from all decay,
 Vain is to him this talk of death and birth.

* * * *

22. As one discarding weeds worn out and old,
 Unto him other takes, so doth the soul
 From forth its ancient castle onward fly,
 And in some nest seek out a new abode.

* * * *

23. Weapons cannot it sunder, nor fire burn,
 Nor water wet it, nor the wind it dry;
 Unharmed it lives, unharmed doth it return.

* * * *

24. For that which knows not beginning nor end,
 Nor death, nor birth, nor mortal life, nor change,
 What harm can fire or water to it send !

* * * *

25. Knowing thou this soul beyond all thought and speech,
 Beyond destruction and beyond all time,
 How canst thou Arjuna on these mortals grieve ?

* * * *

26. And if thou dost regard this soul as one
 Which takes part in the round of births and deaths,
 Even then O! Arjuna, grief thou shouldst have none.

27. That which is born is sure to die some day,
 And that which dies for certain birth will take,
 For what is destined shouldst thou weep then, say ?
 * * * *

28. From silence unto silence is this sleep,
 Only a little noise upon this earth,
 Oh! Arjuna, what cause hast thou then for grief?
 * * * *

29. Scarce any saw this soul so marvellous,
 Of those who saw few spoke of it as such,
 And those who heard knew not its mystery,
 Though having heard they could not feel its touch.
 * * * *

30. This soul concealed within all bodies know
 As indestructible, O! Arjuna, then
 Why grieveest thou o'er these poor mortals so!
 * * * *

31. Thou art a warrior; and no greater good
 Unto a warrior is a righteous war,
 This in thy haste hast thou not understood.
 * * * *

32. For Kshatriyas 'tis a great advantage given
 To show their prowess on the bloody field,
 And through it gain a place in mighty heaven.
 * * * *

33. If now thou dost hold back in righteous fight
 Thou dost against thine duty act, and all
 Thy men shall think thou art cowed down by might.
 * * * *

34. Nay, all shall cry out, "Shame O! Arjuna, shame!
 Thy back to turn thus;" and far worse than death
 Were for thee to besmirch thy valiant name.
 * * * *

35. And all the great car warriors in whose eyes
 Thou wast fame's favourite, shall think thou didst stay
 Thy hands through fear, and they shalt thee despise.

36. And all thy foes that now against thee stand,
 Shall raise their finger at thee, and shall say,
 "No greater coward breathed there in this land!"
 * * * *

37. If thou art slain thou straight to heaven shalt go,
 And if thou winnest, thine the victory
 Of all this earth; arise then! take thy bow!
 * * * *

38. Arise and fight! sinless and unconcerned
 Through triumph or defeat, pleasure or pain;
 Or gain or loss—whatever to thee comes.
 * * * *

39. This is the path of knowledge; hearken well
 Through selfless action how the wheel of Karma
 Canst thou destroy, now I to thee shall tell.
 * * * *

40. No little effort in this path is lost,
 And he is blest who doth so onward speed;
 For having started once he ne'er is crossed.
 * * * *

41. He who thus moves his intellect is firm,
 While of the other weak and wavering;
 The one sees not, the other seeing discerns.
 * * * *

42-43. Unwise art they O ! Arjuna, whom this earth
 With pleasure binds, the letter of the law
 Do they uphold, and bound from birth to birth.
 * * * *

44. Ever they go; for these cannot attain
 That noble intellect which broods on God;
 Vain is salvation for them, vain! thrice vain!
 * * * *

45. Be freed O ! Arjuna from the threefold snare
 Of Prakriti; from objects and desires
 Removed; thy soul unto the One laid bare.

46. To him whose turbulence with calm is stilled,
What can the Vedas teach? Who would desire
A pool, upon a land with water filled?

* * * *

47. Thy right to action is, never the fruit
Thereof; without attachment shouldst thou work;
Nor in inaction let thy mind take root.

* * * *

48. No joy in triumph, sorrow in defeat,
Be thine—and as the silent flame within
A burning lamp, this life with calmness greet.

* * * *

49. Beyond the prison of the "I" speed on,
Within the radiance wherein all one are,
And in thy soul the calmness of the dawn.

* * * *

50. In this uncertain shore of shifting sand,
One moment it is bright, another dark;
Unmoved upon it, Arjuna, shouldst thou stand.

* * * *

51. Those who without desire their acts perform,
Attain the blissful state of final rest;
For birth they die not, nor for death are born.

* * * *

52. Who past the mists of here and yonder flies,
Whom vex not all these varied shapes and forms,
For sure deep down within him peace abides.

* * * *

53. If sailing through the ruffled wisdom's sea,
The shore dost thou reach on the ship of faith,
Thou wouldst then with the One united be.

* * * *

54. Unto the Lord thus smiling, Arjuna spoke—
O! Krishna how acts the man of stable mind,
How shouldst one see him, and thus seeing him know?

Sri Bhagwan said :

55. When from all objects doth the mind unroll,
And with its own light shine, O! Arjuna then,
Know that life's purpose hath achieved its goal.
* * * *

56. Whom pleasure pleases not, nor sorrows grind,
Whom passion, fear, and anger never move,
Know him to be a sage of settled mind.
* * * *

57. Who good and evil knows not, but with eyes
Set firmly straight doth ever onward move
Upon the road of life, know him as wise.
* * * *

58. Far from the feverish haste and noisy din
He lives, unravished by the senses five;
As doth a turtle draw his limbs within.
* * * *

59. In triumph didst thou say "I drove desire",
Yet still the senses cried "Enjoy! Enjoy!"
Till when the mind was still, and died the fire.
* * * *

60. O! Arjuna, treacherous as a whirlpool deep,
The senses swallow e'en a swimmer skilled,
And vex his sinful soul with restless sleep.
* * * *

61. Therefore shouldst he in meditation bind
His riotous senses; and in Me engrossed
And stable, shall he lasting solace find.
* * * *

62. From sense contact is all attachment born,
And from it springs desire, which unfulfilled,
Upon the peaceful soul breaks anger's storm.
* * * *

63. From anger is infatuation bred,
Confounding memory; then reason dies,
Whereat the man in misery perishes.

64. But he who o'er his senses hath command,
 And steers between the rocks of pleasure and pain,
 Builds not his happiness on the shifting sand.

* * * *

65. So doth he drain his sorrow in the deep
 Of peace eternal, and from all things weaned,
 He waketh never from his restful sleep.

* * * *

66. But he who o'er his senses hath no sway,
 Is shaken like a reed upon the wind,
 Unwise and faithless; what peace hath he pray ?

* * * *

67. As helpless boat on stormy ocean tossed,
 The wandering mind pursuing its objects dear,
 Is in the sea of dismal darkness lost.

* * * *

68. Therefore O! Arjuna, he who lives unmoved
 By these vain objects; strong is he, and firm,
 And by his actions, he, his worth doth prove.

* * * *

69. When all are stumbling in the cheerless night,
 The ever watchful yogi keeps awake—
 And in his sleep is their elusive light.

* * * *

70. As winding rivers in the sea are lost,
 Nor by them doth the ocean change one jot,
 So unto God are dear the souls in which
 Desires are silenced, not those tempest tossed.

* * * *

71. Beyond the mist of "I" and "mine", the sun
 Of peace doth ever shine, within the veil
 Of ignorance, the lamp of knowledge burns.

* * * *

72. Such is O! Arjuna, one immersed in Me,
 Who with the light of knowledge slays the dark,
 A blissful wave in the Brahmanic sea.

CHAPTER III

1. To Krishña brave Arjuna said, "If so doth then
The sun of knowledge drive dark action's night,
Why dost thou Lord charge me to slay these men?
* * * * *
2. As if by contrary thoughts my mind to vex,
Thou speakest thus; reveal thou that one path
By which I may achieve all that is best".
* * * * *
3. Know thou O! Arjuna, **Mine** the two-fold ways.
Knowledge and action; for **Sankhya-yogi** one,
The other does the sage of action **take**.
* * * * *
4. Through action doth he gain from action rest,
No longer by it bound; nor canst he reach
The sand of bliss on oars of idleness.
* * * * *
5. Upon the waters of the stormy sea
Of life, what is man but a tiny speck,
For ever floating onwards, helplessly!
* * * * *
6. Who from the world his senses doth restrain,
Gloating upon them in his inner mind,
Deludes his own self, and no goodness gains.
* * * * *
7. But he who through his mind his acts controls,
Guiding his senses by detachment's light,
Know him to be a sage of action bold.
* * * * *
8. To thine own duty thine attention give—
Better to act, than in inaction sink;
For actionless thou couldst not even live!

9. Unto the selfless altar do thou bind
 Thy acts, an offering to the troubled world—
 And on thy back the burden of mankind.

* * * *

10. With Brahma's breath were mortal beings first made,
 And unto them said he, "Arise! increase!
 And on this earth find all that ye do crave!"

* * * *

11. Unto the gods give all that thou didst gain,
 And build a bridge unto the mighty heavens—
 Thus shalt thou to the highest good attain.

* * * *

12. Unto such shall the gods their favour give
 Unasked; and he who gives not in return,
 Takes as a thief in dark what is not his.

* * * *

13. The offerings of the sacrifice divine
 Be your food holy; for thrice sinful they
 Who only for their bodies drink and dine.

* * * *

14. From food art born the beings that live and move,
 And corn doth grow on rain; and clouds arise
 From offering which in action taketh root.

* * * *

15. Know thou that actions from the Vedas came—
 The blessed children of the Eternal Mind;
 And round the altar shines the deathless flame.

* * * *

16. And he, O! Arjuna, who doth not so turn
 Creation's wheel, of truth he lives in vain;
 With passion doth he waste, with folly burn.

* * * *

17. But he whose only anchor is the self—
 The one lamp shining in the dark, he strives
 No longer, and in its great glory dwells.

18. Nothing hath he to gain by acts undone
 Or those performed; no purpose of his own,
 In which with toiling creatures he is one.

* * * *

19. The task accomplished, and the guerdon gained,
 Shine out more noble with ethereal light,
 Without hope of reward or fear of shame.

* * * *

20. Borne on the bark of action Janaka crossed
 The shoreless sea of life, so shouldst thou do
 Thy work; that brings peace to those tempest tossed.

* * * *

21. For as the wind blows so the trees do bend,
 And when the sun doth rise all things do shine—
 So do all tread the path of noble men.

* * * *

22. In this vast universe of countless forms,
 What hath been left undone, what unattained ?
 Yet still My wheel revolves from dusk to dawn.

* * * *

23. If I My task relinquished, all beings blest
 In idleness would sink; O! Arjuna, they
 My guidance seek, and in My virtue rest.

* * * *

24. These spinning worlds would crumble, and all life
 End in confusion; I should be the cause
 Of caste destruction and unholy strife.

* * * *

25. Thus on this world's stage shouldst the knower play
 His part allotted; acting, yet not bound
 By action—thus live, and thus pass away.

* * * *

26. Yet not unsettling those to action tied;
 But placing his own hand upon the plough,
 And in their sleeping ears cry, "Rise O! Rise!"

27. Beneath all action works the threefold mode
 Of Prakriti; the vain deluded fool
 Thinks that 'tis he who doth the strings control.
 * * * *

28. But he O! Arjuna, who sees in all things
 The patterns wov'n of actions and their stuff,
 To him the claws of action do not cling.
 * * * *

29. And him thus groping helpless in the dark
 Of ignorance, shouldst thou by action guide,
 And set him back upon the noble path.
 * * * *

30. So Arjuna, with thy mind suffused with light,
 Calm and resigned, thy actions to Me giv'n,
 Do thou unruffled take thy arms and fight.
 * * * *

31. They who with fervent faith My words receive
 Do also break the shackles of their Karma,
 And find a place of rest, beyond all grief.
 * * * *

32. But those more thoughtless who with double tongue
 Vainly deride these words, know them as lost,
 In sorrow shall they sink, to ruin come.
 * * * *

33. All men move as their nature hath decreed,
 The wise to wisdom, and to folly fools,
 Nor canst they quarrel with their destiny.
 * * * *

34. between the whirlpools fierce of love and hate,
 The waters calm lie; them O! Arjuna, shun,
 Lest in their swirling waters thou art laid.
 * * * *

35. Better thine duty than another's act
 E'en though performed well; yea! a thousand times
 Sweet, death in this, than senseless life in that.

Arjuna said:

36. How doth sin's arrow pierce the noble soul's
Strong armour, that even 'gainst his will
O! Krishna, base evil takes him in strong hold?

* * * *

Sri Krishna said:

37. Know Arjuna, 'tis that uncontrolled desire
That takes the soul by storm and lays it low,
Born of attachment and unreasoned ire.

* * * *

38. As smoke the brightness of the fire doth steal,
Or dust the mirror's face; or as the child
Within its sheath-so doth desire conceal.

* * * *

39. And as a mounting fire with fuel fed
Rises for ever more, and all the wood,
Turns into ash-so knowledge perisheth.

* * * *

40. Upon the fortress of the mind and thought,
And senses unrestrained, she hath her sway;
And in her fatal net is knowledge caught.

* * * *

41. Therefore, have Arjuna o'er the senses sway,
And thy foe deadly, base desire, destroy,
That from thy Master snatcheth thee away.

* * * *

42. Greater than body are the senses dear,
And greater yet the mind and intellect;
But mighter than all is the self-the seer.

* * * *

43. What is beyond all fleeting thought, do know
O! Arjuna; and the mind to Reason bowed,
Slay thou Desire thy strong and stubborn foe.

Sri Krishna said:

1. To Viswan did I this yoga construe,
Who unto Manu; and Manu did teach
These words to his son, noble Iswaku.
* * * *
2. Thus handed down from father unto son,
With royal sages did the creed remain,
Till with time's flight, it followers had none.
* * * *
3. To thee these ancient words do I expound,
Thou My devotee and My chosen friend—
For common ears heard not their sacred sound.
* * * *
4. How wast it Krishna, said puzzled Arjuna then,
Viswaswara lived in ages vanished past,
How couldst thou him these noble words explain?
* * * *
5. Smiling, the Lord said, you and I have passed
Through countless births, O! Arjuna, these I know,
And thou seest not the seas that thou hast crossed.
* * * *
6. Though Myself am beyond all birth and change,
In this world, by Me made, do I descend
By My own hidden power, by Me unchained.
* * * *
7. When by Wrong's burden Righteousness doth bend,
And Goodness hides her face in Evil's veil.
Upon this earth do I Myself descend.
* * * *
8. To shield the right, the unrighteous to kill,
To bring back peace upon the toiling earth,
Do I from age to age My vow fulfil.

9. Who knows Me as the One from which all springs,
To Me returns, freed from the troubled world;
In Me he liveth and to Me he clings.

* * * *

10. Whose passions fall as do the autumn leaves,
From love removed, and fear, and bitter rage;
To Me he comes as doth the wave to sea.

* * * *

11. Unto Me all these varied paths do surge,
And as they ask so I the fruit bestow,
As one by one in Me they lie submerged.

* * * *

12. They who would let the bud of action bloom
Into the flower of gain, in this brief world,
Before God's altar kneel and crave for boons.

* * * *

13. On My own anvil art the four castes ground,
By Me their work made and their duties cast;
Yet know Me far beyond their mortal round.

* * * *

14. The sting of action hath no power to strike,
For I crave not the fruit; who thus Me knows,
The coil of Karma doth not imprison tight.

* * * *

15. In days of yore those who strove thus were freed—
So Arjuna, shouldst thou thine own task perform,
And seek not for the fruit, but cast the seed.

* * * *

16. As by a thread divided art the twain
That e'en the wise know not, their truth shall I
Exound, that ye be freed from action vain.

* * * *

17. What action is, and what action is not—
The evil of inaction, likewise know;
For action's path with mystery is fraught.

18. He who in action doth inaction see,
Finding the truth of both; in him there shines
The light before which ignorance doth flee.

* * * *

19. Who takes the yoke without a thought of gain,
And purifies his acts in wisdom's fire,
To him do e'en the sages bow in shame.

* * * *

20. Whom doth the fruit of action no more vex,
Freed from this restless world, who peace hath found,
He toileth ever, yet for ever rests.

* * * *

21. He whom thought troubleth not nor flesh doth tear,
Nor fierce desire consume, nor pleasures bind,
Him action staineth not, nor sin impair.

* * * *

22. Who seeks contentment in whate'er his lot,
Whom pleasure and pain touch not, nor grief doth wound,
Is not with envy hurt or grief distraught.

* * * *

23. Whose mind for ever is in knowledge drowned,
Free from attachment to things loved and dear,
He from the bonds of action is unbound.

* * * *

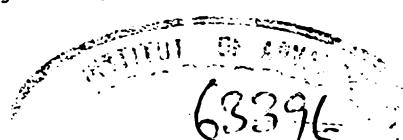
24. Brahma is the pourer and Brahma is the poured,
And unto Brahma he reacheth who thus acts—
Him doth eternally that Brahma enfold.

* * * *

25. Some to the gods their sacrifice do make:
Yet others in the holy fire of Brahma
Their very self do seek to immolate.

* * * *

26. And others still, their erring senses lay
Upon the holy altar of restraint,
And in its fire their treasured objects slay.



27. And some upon the altar of the Mind
 Their life-breath and their senses calmly place,
 And in the fire of Yoga their wisdom find.
 * * * *

28. Thus some their sacrifice with wealth do make,
 While others with the rituals of their caste,
 And some their knowledge on the altar place.
 * * * *

29. And safely balanced on their Kusa seats,
 They pour their life breath in the sacrifice;
 And with its flames their stern penances feed.
 * * * *

30. These with their might controlled their sins have slain,
 And with their knowledge pierced the darkening mist-
 Their noble souls no more the flesh shall stain.
 * * * *

31. Drunk with its nectar freed from bonds are they;
 Who do not sacrifice e'en on this earth
 No joy attain, how in the other say?
 * * * *

32. In the vast temple of the world there glow
 These sacrificial flames by action lit,
 Released is he who doth this secret know.
 * * * *

33. Nobler the soul with wisdom doth conspire
 To light the golden flames unto the gods-
 For action is the flint, knowledge the fire.
 * * * *

34. This knowledge shouldst thou steadfastly attain
 Taught by the sages, at their holy feet
 Bowed in all humbleness, this dost thou gain.
 * * * *

35. And in its blinding flash wilt thou then see
 No more delusions; but like morning light
 Bathing a dark nook, thine own self and Me.

36. And in the boat of knowledge wilt thou cross
 The dark and dismal seas of sinfulness,
 And bravely reach the calm and distant shore.

* * * *

37. As doth the fire all fuel to ashes turn,
 So action's evil in the brilliant fire
 Of knowledge perishes, and quietly burns.

* * * *

38. Pure are the hearts in which doth knowledge shine—
 A flawless flame within the polished glass;
 Lit by the torch of action made divine.

* * * *

39. They also who with deep devotion seek
 Me, through this troubled world, do likewise find
 Beyond all passing sorrows, endless peace.

* * * *

40. But he who hides himself in doubt's dark veil
 No comfort knows in this world or the next—
 Cast here and there, a ship without a sail.

* * * *

41. The noose of action him doth stifle not
 O! Arjuna, who with wisdom armed doth lay
 His actions like flowers on the feet of God.

* * * *

42. O! Arjuna, with the sword of knowledge, slay
 This doubt born of the seed of ignorance,
 And with thy bow stand fast and face the fray!

Arjuna said:

- O! Krishna, the path of knowledge thou didst teach,
And now the path of action; which hath then
The greater benediction? My doubts ease.

* * * *

Sri Krishna said:

- Knowledge and action both to bliss supreme
Do lead- the one the rugged narrow path:
The other clear upon the world's face gleams.

* * * *

- Who neither this desires nor that disdains,
E'en while he acts is not by action soiled,
By joy he is not moved, nor by grief stained.

* * * *

- Two diverse branches of the self-same tree
Knowledge and action are; misguided they
Who in their noble paths divergence see.

* * * *

- As waves upon the common ocean's brink
Rising and falling, in the vast sea merged-
So shouldst thou these two as one ever think.

* * * *

- He who the path of action doth not tread
O! Arjuna, stumbles blindly in the dark;
He shall not reach the blissful fountain-head.

* * * *

- Whose soul is one with the World-soul, whose mind
And senses are subdued, whose heart is pure;
Him, e'en though acting, action doth not bind.

* * * *

- He says he seeth, yet he doth not see-
And doing all, yet nothing doth he do-
And from his sight all sins do hide and flee.

9. He eats, and sleeps, and wakes, and breathes, and walks,
 Yet ever nearer unto Me he comes,
 For he hath built his home upon the rock.

* * * *

10. Who unto Brahman doth an offering make
 Of all his actions, lives untouched by sin,
 A lotus smiling o'er the muddy lake.

* * * *

11. Unbound by reason and the fivesold snare,
 By his own action is he purified,
 Building a house of glory unaware.

* * * *

12. And rising on the wings of sacrifice,
 The one unto his Maker ever dear—
 The other with base selfishness is tied.

* * * *

13. And from the labours of this suffering world
 He ever rests; about his city strong
 And its nine portals all his actions curled.

* * * *

14. The doer, the action, and its bitter fruit,
 Alike Him stain not, Who beyond them is—
 The light of nature, which all this does move.

* * * *

15. Not raised with virtue, nor with sin cast low
 For ever doth He shine; 'tis we poor men
 In dark do stumble which surrounds the glow.

* * * *

16. As darkness swallowed by the morning light
 Their ignorance by knowldege is destroyed,
 And unto them unveiled His peerless might.

* * * *

17. And as the rivers in the ocean pour,
 So are these souls in Him for ever merged,
 Sinless and stainless, they return no more.

18. The low he spurns not, nor the high doth praise—
The honoured Brahmin and the pariah cursed—
Their difference with his nobleness erased.

* * * *

19. Already in this mortal world and weak,
They are the castles on the shifting sands—
The priceless gems within the endless deep.

* * * *

20. Who in this brief and chequered path doth shun
With calm indifference, joy and bitter pain,
Know him a part of that eternal One.

* * * *

21. Unmindful of this empty show he speeds
Upon the inward voyage of the soul,
And one with Brahma attains eternal peace.

* * * *

22. As deadly poison in a cup of gold,
As empty bubbles floating in the air,
The pleasures of the senses come and go.

* * * *

23. He whom the thorny barks of lust and rage
Hurt not, who on this shifting earth hath won
The tournament of peace, he is the sage.

* * * *

24. He shines more brilliant with the inner light
Than ever sun shone; and his happy home
Is in the land of Brahma, serene and bright.

* * * *

25. The sinless seer in whom the self is slain
By truth, whose mind in God fixed, and whose acts
Unto the good of men, doth Brahma attain.

* * * *

26. Whom wicked anger and lust vex no more,
Who turns to God as sunflower to the sun,
Eternal peace is ever his abode.

27. Sunk in the silent river of his soul
He shuts his mind to this world's idle noise;
With watchful calmness, his life breath controlled,
* * * *

28. The steeds of mind and senses yoked in one,
He leads them onwards to the blissful goal;
Till fear, desire, and anger, are undone.
* * * *

29. And weary with the world in Me he seeks
His place of rest--his friend and guardian I--
And in My bosom finds eternal peace.

CHAPTER VI

1. Without hope of return who cheerful bends
Unto his task he is a sage in truth,
Not he who leaves the plough in ignorance.
* * * *
2. Know Arjuna, what 'tis truly to renounce—
For no one is a sage who doth not shed
The fruit of action while to action bound.
* * * *
3. Through it doth climb the contemplative soul
Unto the heavenly heights, from which the world
Doth seem an empty shell desired no more.
* * * *
4. Unyoked to senses and from actions free
These fruitless objects from his mind do fall,
And sink for ever in the yogic sea.
* * * *
5. For ever rising like the rising tide,
By his own effort shall the self be raised,
For 'tis the friend and 'tis the foe besides.
* * * *
6. Who o'er himself hath triumphed he hath won
The glorious victory, and who in the dark
Doth blindly fall will to destruction come.
* * * *
7. Beyond all joys and sorrows doth he dwell,
Him happiness, and heat and cold move not;
Nor heaven's bliss, nor all the pains of hell.
* * * *
8. With knowledge sated whose soul doth abide
Above all warring senses, gold and stone
Alike to him—he unto God is tied.
* * * *
9. To whom the hateful and the dear are one,
The saint and sinner, and the near and far,
His grandeur shineth forth as doth the sun's.

10. In the soft peace of solitude shut fast,
 Mind fixed, desireless, and all bonds undone,
 He calmly steps upon this noble path.
 * * * * *

11. Upon the kusa grass a deer-skin spread
 Nor low nor high, and on it a cloth laid-
 A seat of quietness far from noisy tread.
 * * * * *

12. And on it should he sit with sharpened mind
 Unto a point bent, and his senses quiet,
 And in the peace of yoga his solace find.
 * * * * *

13. With head upraised, and body firm should he
 In front his gaze fix; till his steady eyes
 Upon his nose's tip dwell constantly.
 * * * * *

14. Unto the pure life pledged, fearless and calm,
 His mind subdued and in Me ever drowned,
 Should he sit silent through this shifting storm.
 * * * * *

15. Thus merged with Me he shall have bliss that knows
 No mortal end, nor these vain pleasures fled
 With every gust of wind; nor grief that grows.
 * * * * *

16. Not for the glutton nor for he that starves,
 In sleep o'er-sunk, nor ceaselessly awake,
 Is this thrice blessed and hazardous path.
 * * * * *

17. But he who mindeth well his food and rest,
 His hours of happy toil and action sweet,
 Him doth this yoga reveal its glory blest.
 * * * * *

18. When, as the sun's rays through the burning glass,
 The soul in God doth shine, and all these vain
 Pleasures are dead, he is with yoga at last.
 * * * * *

19. As sootless flame within a sheltered place
 Silent and steady doth for ever shine,
 So doth the yogi's mind in God's embrace.

20. As breathless traveller gazing at the snows
 Of silver peak, when mind by yoga subdued
 Doth stand amazed at its true self, it knows.

* * * *

21. And seeking in that self a light that shines
 Beyond sense pleasures of Mind-knowledge born,
 And finding, ever leaves false hopes behind.

* * * *

22. And holding it within his grasp doth cry—
 “No greater glory than this ever was;
 From which no pain can part, nor tears untie !”

* * * *

23. Know then the knot of sorrow is undone,
 And in the sea of calm the soul doth swim—
 So shouldst this noble path be sought and won.

* * * *

24. All thoughts removed from this bewildering world,
 With the mind's leash the senses he doth stay,
 And in the mantle of peace lieth curled.

* * * *

25. And as the tranquil light of the soft moon
 On troubled waters, in his soul there fills
 Eternal joy—when mind to thought doth swoon.

* * * *

26. And from all ways to seize the wayward mind,
 And hold it fast upon the chosen path;
 Till in the Atman its abode it finds.

* * * *

27. For sinless yogi to the Self doth come
 As the young bud into the blossom breaks;
 When mind is calm, and passion hath been won.

* * * *

28. Beyond the starry skies in regions blest,
 In holy happiness that knows no end:
 Drowned in the sleep of bliss, he ever rests.

29. And drinking deep upon the Source—whence springs
 Creation's myriad streams—he doth espy
 All things in Self; and Self within all things.
 * * * *

30. Who sees Me in this vast creation's web,
 And Me in all that lives and moves and is;
 With him I am—he never perisheth.
 * * * *

31. Who worships Me as Soul of all that be
 E'en while he works, doth in My bosom rest—
 In him I live, and he doth live in Me.
 * * * *

32. Blest is he, Arjuna, who this knowledge gains
 Of the world-vision; that but pleased is he
 At other's pleasure, and sad at their pain.
 * * * *

33. To Krishna said Arjuna, restless is the mind
 As new caged bird how shall it then perform
 This noble task, how wilt the soul it bind ?
 * * * *

34. Unsteady, turbulent, and hard to tame,
 This wayward mistress; sooner curb the wind,
 Than in thought's thimble this mind's sea contain!
 * * * *

35. Oh! Arjuna, bound within the twofold strands
 Of constant effort, and desireless work.
 This fickle, treacherous mind, thou canst command.
 * * * *

36. Swift of attainment, who his inner shrine
 Hath taken with long vigil, on him soon
 This priceless yoga sheds forth its fruits divine.
 * * * *

37. Unto the Lord then Arjuna said, what end
 Befalls O! Krishna, the man who strong of faith,
 But passion unsubdued, in yoga descends ?

38. Doth he not perish like the cloud that fades
 Betwixt disdained joys and bliss unattained,
 Deluded in this noble pilgrimage ?

* * * *

39. This doubt of mine remove O! holy one—
 That vexes me; 'tis Thou alone canst clear
 My mind O! Krishna, for other there is none.

* * * *

40. To troubled Arjuna, thus the lord did speak—
 He falleth not in this world or the next
 For no one on this path with evil meets.

* * * *

41. On heavenly planet doth he soon take birth,
 And after long sojourn from thence is born
 Into some rich and pious home on earth.

* * * *

42. And who in this dark muddy pond hath lived
 A lotus leaf unstained, of virtue rare,
 Is in some household born of yogic bliss.

* * * *

43. And with the seed sown of his previous life
 There grows a larger tree; and more he seeks
 To reach the goal he did before descry.

* * * *

44. And as one drunk he blindly moveth on
 Toward that glory; as for old men play—
 So for him rituals and their objects gone.

* * * *

45. And purged of sins and sorrows he doth shine,
 A silvery star upon the silent sky,
 One with the object of his search divine.

* * * *

46. More blest than hermit, or the priest, or sage,
 Is he, the seeker of desireless work;
 O! Arjuna, be thou a karma-yogin made.

47. But dearest unto Me whose hands and feet
In selfless service move, in Me engrossed;
He toiling ever, finds for ever peace.

CHAPTER VII

1. To Arjuna said the blessed Lord, now hear
How on Me meditating thou wilt know,
Through yoga of action Me beyond all fear.
* * * *
2. To thee shall I this truth entire unfold,
The way of knowledge, and the bliss of Brahma,
Which known remaineth nothing to be told.
* * * *
3. Only a handful of these thousands strive
To gain perfection, and of them are rare
Those valiant souls that unto Me arrive.
* * * *
4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, and the mind,
Reason and ego—these My eight limbs are;
In them shalt thou My lower nature find.
* * * *
5. Know thou beyond them, Arjuna, there exists
My higher soul—above these elements—
The source of this world's life, through which all is.
* * * *
6. Mark O! Dhananjaya, of these two are born
All mortal beings; and of their earthly day,
I am the sunset, as I am the dawn.
* * * *
7. Beyond Me, wielder of the mighty bow!
There nothing is; as beads upon one string,
So on Me all creation threaded know.
* * * *
8. I am the substance that in water rests,
The moon's light and the sun's, the Vedic 'Aum',
The sound in ether, and men's manliness.

9. The fragrance of the earth, the fire's light,
 The life spark glowing through all mortal beings,
 The sages' penance, and their sacrifice.
 * * * *

10. I am the seed cast in the womb of life,
 The splendour shining through all wordly things,
 I am the wisdom living in the wise.
 * * * *

11. Of those who are from base attachment free
 I am the strength, O! Arjuna, and desire
 Of righteousness in beings know thou Me.
 * * * *

12. The pure, the passionate, and the ignorant
 In Me their source have, but I am contained
 Not in them; for they change, but I am one.
 * * * *

13. Deluded by these modes men know Me not,
 Who am eternal and beyond all time,
 My light for ever shines, their shadows pass.
 * * * *

14. Hard is the sea of life, by Maya's storm
 Disturbed, to cross; but they who in Me dwell,
 Alone shall reach the distant shore unharmed.
 * * * *

15. The evil and the damned, lost in the blind
 Path of illusion--these from Me do fly--
 Sinful and base, Me shall they never find.
 * * * *

16. Know ye, O! Arjuna, these to Me do turn;
 The one grief-laden, and for mammon one:
 One for prized knowledge, and one truth to learn.
 * * * *

17. He who hath wisdom gained, on Me his mind
 For ever fixed, he is of virtue blest,
 By Me beloved is he, and doth Me find.

18. And all are valiant, but the wise I hold
 As My own dear self, he with Me is one;
 To Me he cleaveth, and I am his goal.
 * * * *

19. And after endless lives to Me he comes,
 Beholding all in Me, and Me in all:
 Yea, hard to find is such a noble one !
 * * * *

20. But those with wisdom darkened by desire.
 Bend down in awe before the lesser gods,
 And woo with water or appease with fire.
 * * * *

21. As unto Me doth My devotee come,
 So I his faith do nurse with loving hands;
 Until the infant thirst is strong and firm.
 * * * *

22. And by that one shall he fulfilment find,
 Freed of all bonds, and in My bosom rest,
 And taste the bliss by Me alone enjoined.
 * * * *

23. They of small sight who seek a lower one,
 Shall find the lesser good and in it dwell;
 But My devotee doth unto Me come.
 * * * *

24. Blind to My nature is the thoughtless soul
 Who knows Me one more mid these changing forms :
 When I behind them am, Supreme and Whole.
 * * * *

25. Enveloped deep by dark delusion's storm
 Am I concealed from these bewildered hosts,
 They see Me not, eternal and unborn.
 * * *

26. And those O ! Arjuna , carried by Death's tide;
 The living and those yet to come and pass—
 They know Me not, but them I clearly espy.

27. Caught in the net of base desire and hate
They ever dwell, these vain misguided souls,
Lost in the darkness they themselves did make.

* * * *

28. But those who righteous act, and their sins mend,
Freed from emotion's storm unto Me fly,
And I their saviour am unto the end.

* * * *

29. They who in Me their final refuge seek,
Freed from decay and death they Brahman know,
And seeing the Self they find in action peace.

* * * *

30. They know Me One, divine and of the earth,
The lord of sacrifice; they know Me when
They leave this life, to take another birth.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Then Arjuna spoke unto the Blessed Lord—
What lies behind the Absolute and Self?
What in all beings, all actions, and all gods?
* * *
2. For whom the sacrificial fire doth burn
In these frail bodies? And, O! Krishna, the soul
How doth Thee know when unto Thee returns?
* * *
3. Know ye, the Lord said, changeless is this Brahma,
And Self the light that shineth through all beings,
And Karma the source from which all these have come.
* * * *
4. This form of nature, Arjuna, moulds all life,
And Self—all things divine; and in the fire
Of sacrifice, I Myself, do abide.
* * * *
5. Who doth his body part, on Me alone
His mind firm rooted, he beyond all doubt
To Me doth come, and in Me finds his home.
* * * *
6. Unto that state O! Arjuna, he attains—
The sum of his life's work—which at that hour
Doth in his warring mind at last remain.
* * * *
7. So every hour with Me thou shouldst be one,
And with the evil powers take arms and fight,
Thus unto Me shalt thou then surely come.
* * * *
8. Who on the One his wandering thought doth fix
By constant meditation, he O! Partha,
Doth reach the shore of everlasting bliss.

9. Whose mind is fixed upon the Eternal One,
Small as a grain, yet monarch of this all,
Beyond all thought, and gleaming as the sun.

* * * *

10. And gathering his life force between his eyes,
With mind unwavering, and devotion strong,
The mould of this life leaves—doth to Me fly.

* * * *

11. Now shall I unto thee that state unfold,
For which the sages passion-free aspire—
Of self-control the end and good the goal.

* * * *

12. With all the nine gates of this city closed,
And mind in heart confined, and in the head
The life force gathered by the power of yoga.

* * * *

13. The 'Aum' eternal on his dying lips,
Of Me he thinks as he thus wanders forth,
From out this prison house, to lasting bliss.

* * * *

14. In whose pure mind do I for ever live,
He is, O! Arjuna, My loved worshipper;
Know he is Mine, and I am always his.

* * * *

15. And having to Me come, these noble souls
No longer taste the weariness of life;
Across the bridge of sorrows is their goal.

* * * *

16. From birth to death is all life on this earth:
These whirling planets change, but this know well
O! Arjuna, for these souls there is no birth.

* * * *

17. They know the nature of creation's day
of ages fifty score, when came the world,
And likewise night, when it doth pass away.

18. All objects from this nothingness are born,
 And in the evening's light do sink and die,
 Dissolved in darkness, from dusk unto dawn.

* * * *

19. And with the first rays of the cosmic sun
 All life awakens; thus eternally,
 O! Partha, creation ever onward runs.

* * * *

20. But far beyond the ever changing life
 Is the Eternal Lord of all these worlds—
 These change and pass, but He doth never die.

* * * *

21. Beyond the cycle of all birth and change
 Is my Supreme Abode of final rest,
 From which return not those who once attain.

* * * *

22. In This, O! Arjuna, do all souls abide,
 And in all living beings Its light doth shine;
 This canst thou reach with faith thy constant guide.

* * * *

23. Now shall I Arjuna, unto thee explain,
 When yogins pass away ne'er to return,
 And when departing they are born again.

* * * *

24. The sage who with the fire and light doth fly,
 And in the fortnight of the waxing moon
 Upon the north sun's path, with him am I.

* * * *

25. But he who passes in the misty night,
 And in the half year of the southern sun,
 Shall soon return from forth the lunar light.

* * * *

26. Who doth the path of light and knowledge tread,
 He finds eternal peace; but lost is one
 Who in the curtain dark of folly dwells.

27. The yogin who these paths, O! Arjuna, knows,
Is from the snare of false delusion free—
So shouldst thou ever cast thy mind in Yoga.

* * * *

28. And as an eagle soaring to his goal,
Past Vedic ritual, gifts, and sacrifice;
He swiftly reaches My Supreme Abode.

CHAPTER IX

1. Unto thee, strong of faith, I will declare
That secret by which I am seen and known,
And freed shalt thou be from this evil snare.
* * * *
2. By its own splendour doth this secret shine,
One moment is there darkness; then the veil
Is thrust aside, revealing light divine.
* * * *
3. But they of little faith, O! Arjuna, weave
Of their own ignorance, and endless web
In which they wander, far removed from Me.
* * * *
4. In Me is all this universe contained,
And all these mortal beings from Me do spring;
But I beyond them am, untouched, unstained.
* * * *
5. And as the eternal snows, I feed the veins
Of brief existence; as the endless sun
I shine on all things, but remain unchanged.
* * * *
6. As stormy winds upon the face of earth
In space abide; so do these transient beings
Upon My bosom find eternal rest.
* * * *
7. All beings O! Arjuna, at the cosmic end
Of this revolving wheel, are soon dissolved
In Me, and I again them onward send
* * * *
8. Into the world; by My Supreme command
These forms go forth, by their own actions built—
They cast the seed, but I the Gardener am.

9. O! Arjuna, far beyond this show am I,
Above this cosmic wheel of human birth,
Unmoved by action and men's smiles and sighs.

* * * *

10. And by My power doth this whole world revolve
Through birth and death, though Arjuna, far removed,
I am Myself, the Author of it all.

* * * *

11. And fools who Me discern in human form
Think vainly that My spirit is bounded by
These blocks of stone, or images adorned.

* * * *

12. Deceived are these souls by their actions vain,
Their empty knowledge, and their vain desires;
Blind greed their goal, and darkness their domain.

* * * *

13. But those great souls O! Arjuna , who Me know
Eternal, deathless, and immutable,
Their thoughts to Me do ever endless flow.

* * * *

14. Me do they see, Me praise, Me ever keep
In their pure minds, before Me do they bow;
And in Me ever do they work and sleep.

* * * *

15. While others do their knowledge humbly lay
Upon My altar; Me they know as one,
Eternal, deathless, and of many ways.

* * * *

16. I am the worship, and the offering I;
I am the chant, the fuel, and the fire—
The ritual action, and the sacrifice.

* * * *

17. This universe is My beloved child,
Its source am I, and I the sacred OM,
The Known, the Pure, the Holy, and the Wise.

18. The Sap of life, the Goal, the Lord, and Home
 The Lover, Refuge, Witness, and the Fount,
 The Life, and Death, and Seed eternal sown.

* * * *

19. Warmth of the sun, and Master of the rain,
 The Light immortal, and the Shade of death,
 And Being, non-being am I, O! warrior famed.

* * * *

20. The knowers of the Vedas, and who make
 The Soma, are sinless, and to paradise
 They come, and of its heavenly pleasures taste.

* * * *

21. Yet when their sport is ended they return
 Into this world, for they have sought the fire
 That burneth ever, and the mortal urn.

* * * *

22. But who on Me alone doth fix his mind,
 His treasure guard I, and grant his desire;
 And I his yoke do bear, his sorrows grind.

* * * *

23. And those, O! Arjuna, who the lesser gods
 Do worship, also in My fold do come,
 Though treading on the lost forsaken path.

* * * *

24. For I of sacrifices am the Lord,
 And their Enjoyer, but these souls know not
 My nature, endless and beyond these worlds.

* * * *

25. Whom doth one worship, him he doubtless finds--
 The gods and spirits, and the powers dark;
 But unto Me he cometh who is Mine.

* * * *

26. Who offers unto Me a flower or leaf,
 Or fruit, or water, with love in his heart,
 That I accept, placed with affection deep.

27. All acts, all offerings, and all gifts that be;
 All penances, and all that thee sustains,
 Do thou, O! son of Kunti, dedicate to Me.
 * * * *

28. So both the bonds of good and evil shunned,
 Thou art deliveredd, and with firm desire
 All to renounce, thou dost unto Me come.
 * * * *

29. To all these struggling souls am I the same,
 One none I smile or frown; but he is Mine
 And I his, who with love calls on My name.
 * * * *

30. And as the darkness of the night dissolved
 By the sun's morning rays, the evil soul
 Who unto Me turns hath thus right resolved.
 * * * *

31. And swiftly unto righteousness he turns
 Clothed in eternal peace. This Arjuna know,
 With grief doth My devotee never burn.
 * * * *

32. For those who in Me do their refuge seek
 O! Arjuna, be they meanest of the mean,
 Unto the greatest glory will they reach.
 * * * *

33. Much more the saints of noble birth and deeds—
 From this brief life of sorrow do they fly;
 Relieved their burdens, unto Me they speed.
 * * * *

34. On Me thy mind fix and on Me thy soul,
 On Me thy worship and thy reverence;
 And unto Me come, making Me thy goal.

CHAPTER X

1. This is, O! Arjuna, My supreme command
For thy great good, so spake the blessed Lord,
For thou art My disciple, and loved one.

* * * *

2. They know Me not the teacher and the sage,
Who am the source eternal and unborn,
For I am Master of the made, unmade.

* * * *

3. Who knows Me endless and unmanifest,
The Lord of all creation and these worlds—
Free from delusion and sin doth he rest.

* * * *

4. Birth, death, calm, truth, and victory o'er the self,
Wisdom, and knowledge, and insight divine;
Pleasure and pain, and fear and fearlessness:

* * * *

5. Non-violence, content, and austerity,
Benevolence, and equal-mindedness,
Failure, and fame; are all alone from Me.

* * * *

6. The seers seven of might, the ancient four,
The makers of the law, are from Me born;
And from them did this race of mankind flow.

* * * *

7. Who knows in truth My glory and My power,
Know that beyond all doubt to Me he comes,
And is in Me united every hour.

* * * *

8. I am the source from which all this doth rise,
The endless river of life, creation's spring;
And Me with changeless love worship the wise.

9. Their thought in Me abiding, and their lives
Unto Me given, joyfully they cross
Upon contentment's bark this stormy tide.

* * * *

10. Who with Me ever is, and with love strong
Unto Me comes, to him I give the light
In whose eternal radiance he lives long.

* * * *

11. And by the lamp of wisdom is the gloom
Of ignorance dispelled, I am unchanged;
But by My grace My loved one changeth soon.

* * * *

12. Thou art the Spirit supreme! then Arjuna cried,
The Home Eternal, and the Self divine,
The Prime, the Unborn, that doth e'er abide.

* * * *

13. Thus didst speak Narada, and the seers divine—
Vyasa, Asita, Devala, and Thyself O! Lord;
All this have I known by these words of Thine:

* * * *

14. And these O! Keshav, Thine own spoken words
I know as truth; for of Thy form serene,
Neither the godless nor the godly heard.

* * * *

15. By Thy own power art Thou to Thyself known
O! First of persons, source of creatures all,
Lord! Master of this universe alone.

* * * *

16. Reveal I pray Thee Thine own glorious forms—
Whereby pervading these revolving worlds,
Thou dost for e'er abide, and far beyond!

* * * *

17. O! Yogen blest how shouldst the mind on Thee
For ever dwell? How art Thou Master known
By Thy disciples? This acquaint Thou me.

18. Fain would I hear again Thy words until
 With their intoxication I am drunk;
 As sea for ever fed but never filled.

* * * *

19. To restless Arjuna thus the Lord did speak—
 Some forms of Mine will I to thee declare,
 For endless are they as the endless deep.

* * * *

20. Within the heart of creatures do I dwell
 The Self eternal; from Me flows all life—
 I am their source, and I their end as well.

* * * *

21. I am the Vishnu of the Adityas,
 The radiant sun amid the lesser lights,
 The chief of maruts, and moon mid the stars.

* * * *

22. Of Vedas Samveda am I, of gods, Indra,
 And mind amongst the senses; of all life
 I am the consciousness which shines within.

* * * *

23. I am Shiva mid the Rudras, and Kubera
 Of the Yaksa-Raksas, of Vasus Agni I,
 And of the mountains I am Meru great.

* * * *

24. And of the household priests O! Partha, know Me
 Brhaspati, and of commanders Skanda;
 And mid the lakes I am the endless sea.

* * * *

25. Of sages Brhgu, and of speech the 'Aum',
 The silent prayers upon soft moving lips;
 And Himalaya of steady things am known.

* * * *

26. Of trees I am the Asvattha, and of seers
 Narada the great, amongst gandharvas am I
 Chitraratha; and Kapila of the sages dear.

27. Mid horses Ucchaishravas, nectar-born,
Of elephants Airavata, and of men,
I am the Lord revered and monarch sworn.

* * * *

28. Of weapons thunderbolt, of cows know Me
The cow of plenty; and love's wayward god:
And of the serpents I am Vasuki.

* * * *

29. Of nagas Ananta am I, and Varuna great
Of creatures of the sea, and of those gone
Aryama; Yama of those that order make.

* * * *

30. Prahlada of might, and time that doth swift fly;
Of beasts the stately lion, and of the birds
The glorious eagle soaring through the sky.

* * * *

31. I am the pure and fragrant wind that blows;
Of warriors Rama, and alligator sharp
Of fish, and Ganga of the streams Me know.

* * * *

32. Of all creation beginning and summit,
And middle I; and Arjuna, of all science—
I am self-knowledge, and the soul of wit.

* * * *

33. Of letters, A, of things that do unite
I am the dual; and time that knows no end;
Preserver of all, looking on all sides.

* * * *

34. The fire of death and seed of things unborn—
Of females patience, memory, speech, and fame:
And wisdom which with happiness is strong.

* * * *

35. Of hymns I in the Brihatsaman ring;
Of metres gayatri, Magha of the months,
And of the seasons I am luscious spring.

36. Of games of chance I am the wayward dice;
 The splendour of the splendid, victory,
 And effort; and good that in goodness lies.

* * * *

37. Of Yadavas Vasudeva, and Dhananjaya
 Amongst the Pandavas, and of sages Vyasa;
 And Sukracharya mid men to wisdom wed.

* * * *

38. Of chastisement: I am the heavy rod,
 And counsel wise of they who victory seek;
 Of secrets silence, and prized knowledge sought.

* * * *

39. Whatever is the seed of all these lives,
 O! Arjuna, that I am; nor doth exist
 Without Me anything in this world wide.

* * * *

40. And endless as the sky doth My light shine,
 O! conqueror of thy foes, only a few
 Have I revealed of myriad forms of Mine.

* * * *

41. All that which lies beyond the finite sphere
 Has from My splendour sprung; the ecstacies
 Past words, and grief which is too deep for tears.

* * * *

42. What boots it Arjuna thee these truths to know—
 By Me is this whole universe contained;
 And on one part of Me these worlds I hold.

CHAPTER XI

1. Then Arjuna said, this knowledge Thou hast giv'n
Of thine grace Lord, hath my doubt quite dispelled,
And now I see the light that shines in heav'n.
* * * *
2. The history brief of life—this have I spied—
How things arise, and how they pass away;
And seen Thy majesty, O! Lotus cyed.
* * * *
3. E'en as Thou art Thou hast indeed described,
O! Lord Supreme, yet 'tis my fond desire
To see Thy form divine with my own eyes.
* * * *
4. And if O! Lord Thou thinkest that by me
Thou canst be seen, reveal that form of Thine
Which these bewildered eyes do thirst to see.
* * * *
5. The Blessed Lord then said—Arjuna behold!
These hundred thousand forms of various shapes,
And hues, and kinds, and sizes manifold.
* * * *
6. Behold the Vasus and the Rudras bold,
The Asvins, Maruts, and the Adityas;
And wonders many never seen before.
* * * *
7. See here today the universe entire,
Moving unmoving, in Me unified;
And Arjuna, whate'er else thou dost desire.
* * * *
8. But with these eyes thou canst not Me espy,
And on thee will I plant My sight supreme;
Behold My glory Arjuna with new eyes !

9. Unto blind Dhritrastra Sanjaya spoke—O ! king
 The Lord of Yoga then unto Partha did show
 That form supreme of which the sages sing.
 * * * *

10. Of diverse mouths and eyes, and visions great,
 Of weapons sacred, ornaments divine,
 Such as eyes never saw, nor words did prate.
 * * * *

11. With garlands holy crowned and raiments decked,
 With perfumes and with pastes divine adorned,
 And piercing gaze that did on all sides rest.
 * * * *

12. As if a thousand suns had flooded forth
 And set the sky ablaze with their white glow :
 So was the splendour that then Arjuna saw.
 * * * *

13. There Arjuna saw the universe compressed,
 And countless worlds within the Eternal One—
 That in the body of the Lord did rest.
 * * * *

14. Then Arjuna with his hair in awe upraised
 Did bow his head low on the ground and thus—
 With folded hands—unto the Lord did pray.
 * * * *

15. Within Thy body Lord I see, the gods and varied
 hosts that be,
 And Brahma seated all alone, upon his glorious
 lotus throne ;
 O ! Lord I see the sages wise, and nagas bedecked
 in heavenly guise;
 Lord I behold ! Lord I behold ! Thy splendour that
 can ne'er be told.
 * * * *

16. I see Thy form that endless lies, Thy
 splendour shining on all sides,
 And arms and faces strange and bare, and
 eyes and bellies everywhere;

And yet Thy end is nowhere seen, or Thy beginning
Lord Supreme :

Lord I behold ! Lord I behold ! Thy glory great
and manifold.

* * * *

17. I see Thee with Thy crown and mace, and discus
fierce of deadly pace,
And everywhere a blaze of light which falls
upon my dazzled sight;
From every sphere a fire that burns, more
bright than ever shone the sun :
Lord I behold ! Lord I behold ! Thy grandeur that
can ne'er be told.

* * * *

18. Thou art beyond the beings that pass,
the deathless glory seen at last;
Thou art the final resting place, in this world's
blind and endless race;
Thou art the grandeur of all law, the primal
cause of all that was—
Thou art both God and Absolute, the melody
and yet the lute.

* * * *

19. I see Thee without source or end, infinite
and of mighty strength,
And countless arms about Thee swim, and moon
and sun are Thy eyes twin;
I see Thy face a flaming fire, whose heat burns
up these worlds entire—
I see Thy glory might Being, such as these
eyes have never seen.

* * * *

20. Between the earth and heaven Thy home, and
Thou art in the skies alone;
When this Thy wondrous form is seen, of
aspect awful and serene,

The three worlds tremble at Thy might, and pause awhile in their swift flight;
 What tongue can of Thy glory speak, Who art beyond both thought and speech?

* * * *

21. Within Thee dwell the heavenly band, and some in fear without Thee stand,
 With folded arms they frightened pray, by Thy great glory swept away;
 And holy seers their hymns do sing, and loud and strong their praises ring;
 O! Lord I see Thy form divine, beyond the reach of place or time.

* * * *

22. The Vasus and the Adityas, the Sadyas and the great Rudras,
 The Viswas and Aswins sublime, the Maruts and the manes divine;
 The Asuras and the Siddhas fair, the Yaksas and Gandharvas debonair—
 All stand around and gaze and gaze, at Thine majestic form amazed.

* * * *

23. And looking on Thee in alarm, of many mouths and eyes and arms,
 And myriad thighs and hands and feet, and bellies low and mighty teeth,
 The worlds do tremble violently, Thy aspect terrible to see—
 And so do I, O! Lord divine, when I see all Thy glory shine.

* * * *

24. Tall as the sky when I behold Thee, blazing forth in hues untold,
 Thy heavenly lips thus parted wide, and large and ever glowing eyes;

My soul doth tremble as a leaf upon the storm;
 no rest or peace
 Do I, O! Vishnu, find when I, behold Thee
 reaching to the sky.

* * * *

25. When I Thy fearful mouth discern, like Time's
 devouring flames that burn,
 I see the curtain of the night, that swiftly
 closes on my sight;
 And like a traveller lost I feel, a restlessness
 that knows no peace—
 O! gracious Lord of gods I pray, Thou refuge
 of the world, me save!

* * * *

26. The sons of Dhritrastra mighty armed, and all
 the warriors that do swarm,
 And kings that boast their royal might,
 and princes gathered for the fight;
 Great Bhishma, and Karna, and mighty Drona, who
 for the fray do restless roam—
 And those who on our side do pace, the chosen
 of the Kshatriya race;

* * * *

27. Are rushing in Thy fearful mouth, set with
 long tusks that turn about;
 And like the millstones that do grind the
 grain to chaff and powder fine—
 So are these bodies crushed and cast, upon Thy
 Lungry teeth and sharp :
 O! Lord I see Thy endless form, of aspect
 terrible and strong.

* * * *

28. As rushing rivers onward speed, through
 slippery stone and watery weed;
 Through rocks and valleys deep and wide, and
 snowy peaks and mountain sides:

And wandering through the plains do pour, their
waters on the ocean's shore—
So in Thy flaming mouth do fly, the heroes
that do yonder lie.

* * * *

29. As moths upon the blazing fire do blindly
rush, and soon expire,
So blinded by their ignorance, according as
their deeds do turn;
And sprouting as they cast the seed, within
Thy mouth they swiftly speed—
And meet the end that they did plan, by their
misguided scheming hands.

* * * *

30. As crackling flames that lick the leaves, the
worlds do in Thy mouth recede,
And in the universe they rise, as shining
clouds on every side,
And with their fiery radiance burn, whatever
that unto them turns;
O! Vishnu, I see all the worlds, but empty
sparks that rise and burst.

* * * *

31. O! tell me who art Thou in sooth; remove the
veil that hides the truth—
From where Thou comest, what Thy ways, where
Thy abode of shining face;
O! glorious Lord of fearful form, Thee have
I sought to know for long;
To me who stumbles in the dark, reveal O!
what Thou truly art.

* * * *

The Blessed Lord said :

32. I am the scythe that slays and reaps, that
lays all living things to sleep;
I am the canker in the leaf, and I the rust
that settles deep :

The world destroying time know Me; in Me
all joys and sorrows see—
And though thou turnest silently, these
warriors soon shall cease to be.

* * * *

33. O! Arjuna rise and play the part, the stage
is set, thou merely art
A line upon the pattern made, by Me devised—
and these arrayed
Are by Me slain, and Me alone; the fever of
thy thought and foam,
Are empty musings in the dark; arise, and make
thy glorious mark!

* * * *

34. And Drona, and Bhishma, and Jayadrath, slay; and
Karna and other warriors grey;
Who are by Me already doomed, that for each one
there waits a tomb;
I am the Captain of these souls, the Knower of
their destined goal—
Lift up thy bow, be not dismayed, and victory
shall be thine this day.

* * * *

Sanjaya said :

35. With fear then trembling, and with hands joined close,
Saluting Keshav again, and yet again;
With faltering voice Arjuna to Sri Krishna spoke.

* * * *

36. O! Krishna; the world may fain delight
in Thine divine and glorious light;
From Thee the demons flee in fear, and hosts
of gods are coming near;
To Thee in adoration now, they fold their hands
and humbly bow,
I see Thy glory Lord divine, and add unto
their praises, mine.

* * * *

38. The first of gods, the Primal Being, the
solace of this world supreme;
The knower and the knower's field, the goal unto
which all doth lead;
By Thee are all these worlds entwined, O!
Thou of endless form divine—
O! what Thy grandeur can contain, Thou who
art One without a twain?

* * *

* * * *

41. For thoughtless words without a care, of
Thy true nature unaware,
In rashness unto Thee addressed, or in the
guise of fondness dressed;
O! Krishna, O! Yadava, comrade dear, for
what I spoke counting Thee near,
As friends do prattle each to each, and swear
and shout with empty speech :
* * * * *

42. For what I lightly spoke in jest, while Thou
upon Thy couch did rest,
Or while at play or on the bed, and what at
meal time I hath said
To Thee alone, or in the wake of boon
companions, Lord I pray,
Forgive me, O! unshaken one, beyond the reach
of wind and sun.
* * * * *

43. The Father of the universe, of that which
moves and that which rests,
Unto Thee all do homage pay, the teacher Thou,
Thy pupils they;
No one is equal unto Thee, and how could
there one greater be?
In all the three worlds there is none, to
match Thy power O! glorious one.
* * * * *

44. I humbly bow before Thee Lord, and seek
Thy grace and noble word;
As is a father to his son, a lover unto his
loved one;
As friend unto a friend would be, so be O!
Lord Thou unto me—
O! Lord, I am Thy humble child, be Thou my
guardian and my guide.

45. Thy form transcendent have I seen, of aspect fearful and serene; With fear is torn this heart of mine, reveal that glorious form of Thine, Which to the troubled mind brings peace, O! Lord I tremble at Thy feet— O! Lord be merciful and show, Thy form that in the darkness glows.

* * * *

46. O! Thou of thousand feet and arms, O! Thou of universal form, I fain would see Thee as before, with crown and mace and disc and flower— Thy nectar filled and beauteous smile, and lotus feet and kindly eyes; I crave Thy mercy and Thy grace, I wish to see Thy heavenly face.

* * * *

47. To Arjuna then the Lord did say, My form which thou hast seen this day, By My grace and My power divine, infinite and beyond all time; Supreme and primal and of light, that shines across the vale the of night— This luminous eternal form, none hath seen since the world did dawn.

* * * *

48. This form which thou hast seen today, O! warrior of the Pandu race, Is not by Vedas e'er attained, or sacred rites or study vain; Or gifts or penances austere, or fasts or vows or toil or tears— Form whence this endless world began, this form saw not, the eyes of man.

CHAPTER XII

1. Then Arjuna thus unto the Lord did speak—
Are they more blessed who Thee formless know,
Or they who in a personal form Thee seek?
* * * *
2. Know Arjuna, said the Lord, they who their minds.
On Me for ever fix with faith supreme,
In Me they dwell and Me they ever find.
* * * *
3. And those who know Me as unmanifest,
Eternal, omnipresent, and beyond
All thought and name, immutable and First.
* * * *
4. Who with senses subdued do view as one
all life, who for the welfare of the world
Do toil and strive, they also to Me come.
* * * *
5. But narrower is their path, and hard to reach
Me formless; by their form enslaved are they—
As would the eagle fly the sun to seek.
* * * *
6. They who their actions lay unto My feet
Who ever on Me muse—on Me alone
And ever do Me serve with thought and speech.
* * * *
7. Whose minds do in Me dwell, O! Arjuna they
Are unto Me thrice dear; and from the sea
Stormy, of birth and death, do I them save.
* * * *
8. Then let thy mind dwell and thy thought abide
In Me alone, of this there is no doubt—
In time to come I will be at thy side.

9. And if thy thought thou canst not, Arjuna, stay
 Upon Me steadfastly, then shouldst thou find
 Through meditation unto Me a way.
 * * * *

10. And if the wayward mind doth thee defeat,
 Take up the yoke, and do thy task assigned.
 As offering made unto My holy feet.
 * * * *

11. If thus thou canst not seek, thy refuge take,
 In My abode, and with thy self subdued.
 Renounce the fruit of action for My sake.
 * * * *

12. More blest is knowledge than action unwise,
 And nobler meditation; but still great the fruit
 Renounced of action, for thence peace doth rise.
 * * * *

13. Who turns unto all as the rising sun,
 Unselfish, humble, kind, compassionate:
 Who in the storm of pleasure and pain is one:
 * * * *

14. Contented, self-controlled, and of mind firm,
 Who offers unto Me his wisdom prized,
 My loved devotee is, and to Me comes.
 * * * *

15. Who from this world shrinks not, and who is dear
 Unto it, and from joy and anger free;
 Fearless and calm—he unto Me is near.
 * * * *

16. Skilful, and unconcerned, and passionless;
 Desireless, and unruffled—who doth act
 Without hope of return, in him I dwell.
 * * * *

17. From joy and hate removed, and from dark grief;
 From base desire, and from evil and good—
 In his pure heart I constant vigil keep.

18. Alike to friend and foe who doth as one
Receive life's flowers and thorns, whom heat and cold
And pleasure and pain touch not, nor shade nor sun.
* * * *

19. To blame and praise indifferent, and content
With all that time brings, and of steadfast mind,
To silence bound; I am his faithful friend.
* , * * *

20. Who with unfailing faith this truth doth learn,
To Me all thoughts surrendered; he is Mine,
And in his heart My flame doth ever burn.

CHAPTER XIII

1. O! son of Kunti know, the Lord then said,
The body is the field in which the soul
Doth act and move, and doth for ever dwell.
* * * *
2. I am the shining self that doth abide
Within the field eternal—this to know
Dispels the darkness which shuts out the light.
* * * *
3. Hear now the things of which is matter formed,
From whence it comes and what becomes—and hear
The source of self, and that which drives it on.
* * * *
4. Of it the seers have sung in song and hymn
Of knowledge sacred and of thought divine;
And through the years their noble words do ring.
* * * *
5. The elements five, the ego, and the mind,
The life force and the organs ten that feel,
The objects of the senses that do bind.
* * * *
6. Of pain and pleasure, and desire and hate,
Of strength and clinging obstinate to life,
Of mind and sense—is changing matter made.
* * * *
7. Forgiveness, calmness and sincerity,
Purity, patience, service, self-control;
Non-violence, oneness and humility.
* * * *
8. Renunciation, victory o'er the self,
Perception of the ill of birth and age,
Of sickness, and the pain of life, and death.

9. Indifference, non-attachment unto son,
Or wife, or home, or kinsmen, or to kind-
In fortune or misfortune being one.

* * * *

10. Unswerving love for Me, and Me alone,
Strong by discipline made, and solitude;
Far from the madding crowds and noisy homes.

* * * *

11. The constant yearning for soul-knowledge-thence
The practice of the truth; this shouldst thou know
As wisdom true, the rest is ignorance.

* * * *

12. Of Brahman great, without beginning or end,
Which neither is, nor is not, shall I tell-
By knowing which eternal life is gained.

* * * *

13. With hands and feet and eyes on every side,
With heads and faces, and with ears around,
Enveloping the world, he doth abide.

* * * *

14. Eyeless he seeth, and without the mind
He knows; supporting all, is unattached-
Removed from action, he enjoyment finds.

* * * *

15. Without all mortal beings and yet within;
Moving, unmoving, far away, and near-
Subtle, beyond all knowledge, know ye him.

* * * *

16. One is he, yet in beings divided dwells;
From him all take birth, and to him return-
Supporter, creator, and destroyer as well.

* * * *

17. He is the light that hath no darkness known,
The golden dweller in the hearts of beings,
The object of all knowledge and its goal.

18. Thus have I briefly unto thee disclosed
 The knower and the field, and knowledge; which
 Knowing, My devotee doth unto Me go.

* * * *

19. Know thou beginningless nature and God;
 And born of nature are the forms and modes-
 The web in which this changing world is caught.

* * * *

20. From nature do proceed cause and effect,
 The instrument, the agent of all acts;
 And pain and pleasure in the soul do rest.

* * * *

21. To nature closely bound, the soul doth soon
 Enjoy her qualities; and thence attached
 It falleth into good and evil womb.

* * * *

22. And thus the Spirit dwelleth in the flesh-
 Seer and supporter, and the Lord Supreme;
 Enjoying and beholding, passionless.

* * * *

23. Who hath both soul and nature thus perceiveth,
 And all their changing modes, is from the round,
 Endless, of birth and death, for ever freed.

* * * *

24. Some by one-pointedness the Self do gain
 Fixing their thought within: by knowledge some;
 While others by right action do attain.

* * * *

25. And others though not knowing, still do get
 The light from those that know, and learning pray,
 And praying do they cross the sea of death.

* * * *

26. Whatever in this universe abides
 O ! Arjuna, is of Spirit and matter born-
 From them is all, nor is there aught beside.

27. And he who sees within these fleeting lives
 The Lord Supreme, who doth for ever dwell
 Beyond all change: he sees with true insight.
 * * * *

28. And seeing the Lord Supreme in all that is,
 He does not by his self injure the Self;
 And soon attains unto the height of bliss.
 * * * *

29. And he who sees 'tis nature that doth show
 The fruit of action, not the self divine—
 Of vision deep and strong, he knows! he knows!
 * * * *

30. Who sees all forms proceeding from the One,
 And in the Lord contained: he shall in sooth
 Unto the state of true attainment come.
 * * * *

31. Undying, and without a source is this
 Supreme Self, with no attributes, O! Prince,
 And acting, it beyond all action is.
 * * * *

32. As subtle space which spreadeth everywhere,
 Yet is not tainted, so the Self doth stay
 Within all forms, and yet remaineth pure.
 * * * *

33. As doth the one sun brighten this whole earth,
 So doth the Lord, O! Arjuna, by His light
 Illuminate the field of death and birth.
 * * * *

34. Who have betwixt the field and knower seen
 Thus wisely, and know how to tread the path
 Eternal, they reach unto bliss supreme.

CHAPTER XIV

1. The Blessed Lord said—I shall now unfold
That sacred wisdom by which sages pass
From this world, and attain the highest goal.
* * * *
2. Enveloped by which they like Me become,
And when these worlds are made they are not born.
And at their dissolution not undone.
* * * *
3. Great Brahma is My Womb; in it I cast
The seeds of life, O! Prince, from which do spring
The myriad creatures of these planets vast.
* * * *
4. I am the Womb, and I again the Seed;
And I the Seed do cast—form which are born
All forms that in the Womb do sojourn keep.
* * * *
5. Bound by the three-linked chain of Nature forged
Of passion, purity, and ignorance;
The Spirit Eternal in the flesh is caught.
* * * *
6. From goodness doth proceed all health and light.
It binds O! Arjuna, by attachment strong
The soul to happiness and wisdom bright.
* * * *
7. From passion cometh craving, and desire
For pleasure: and from them doth action spring—
The action doth the restless soul conspire.
* * * *
8. From dulness comes all ignorance which ties
The senses; and O! Arjuna, then the soul
Is salve to sleep, and indolence, and lies.

9. The pure soul unto happiness is joined.
 To action passionate, but O! Arjuna know,
 The soul of dulness doth no solace find.

* * *

10. Yet all the three do dwell in every man,
 And where the one reigns others are subdued,
 Binding all souls, O! Arjuna, with their strands.

* * * *

11. When from the gates the light of knowledge gleams
 Within this citadel, then shouldst thou know
 The prince of goodness rules and reigns supreme.

* * * *

12. When passion rules, then Arjuna, doth unrest
 And craving rise, and avarice and greed;
 From which to action is the soul impelled.

* * * *

13. When dulness takes the field then darkness reigns
 O! Arjuna, and delusion; and the soul
 Is by deceit obscured, and folly vain.

* * * *

14. Unto the highest heaven doth it fly,
 When borne upon the wings of purity
 It leaves the flesh where goodness did abide.

* * * *

15. And steeped in passion it is soon reborn
 In those who action love, while dulness casts
 It in the womb of those deluded long.

* * * *

16. For noble action's fruit is pure and sweet,
 Of passion painful; and from ignorance
 There cometh darkness dim, and dull defeat.

* * * *

17. From goodness knowledge comes, from passion greed,
 From dulness negligence and error rise,
 And ignorance, which grows as rotten weed.

18. When goodness reigns the soul moves unto God;
 When passion 'tis at rest; when ignorance
 It downward sinks, and is for ever lost.

* * * *

19. And he that thus perceives the mystic One,
 Knowing that the modes do act and naught beside,
 And sees the Self beyond, he to Me comes.

* * * *

20. But when the soul doth rise beyond the three,
 It gains eternal life, and from old age,
 And birth, and death, and pain, is ever free.

* * * *

21. Then Arjuna said, O, Lord what is the seal
 Of him who hath beyond the three modes ris'n;
 How doth he live, and what doth he achieve?

* * * *

22. The Lord said, Arjuna, who does not abhor
 Life, light, delusion, when they do arise,
 Nor sorrow for them when they are no more.

* * * *

23. Who seated unconcerned does see them pass,
 Who stands aside unwavering; and who knows
 'Tis nature which in action taketh part.

* * * *

24. Alike in pain and pleasure, praise and blame.
 Things pleasant and unpleasant, firm; to whom
 Stone, gold, and lowly earth, are all the same.

* * * *

25. In honour and dishonour who is one.
 To friend and foe alike; who is beyond
 Desire for action, he unto Me comes.

* * * *

26. And who doth serve me with unfailing love,
 He too attaineth; and he doth arise
 Beyond the cloud of nature, far above.

27. For I the blissful and immortal home
Of Brahman am, and I th' eternal law;
And in My bosom rest all they that roam.

CHAPTER XV

1. The tree of life, the Lord said, spreads beneath,
Its leaves the Vedas, and its branches life—
The wise know thus—and in the skies its seed.
* * * *
2. Above, below, its branches nourished by
The modes, its buds sense objects; and the roots
Of karmic action made, on the earth lie.
* * * *
3. Its form, its source, its end, no one can tell,
Or its strength understand, till with the axe
Of non-attachment sharp the tree he fells.
* * * *
4. Beyond it lies the path of no return,
On which the worshipper doth ever tread—
The source from which hath this vast world begun
* * * *
5. Unto the goal eternal they do reach,
From pride desire, delusion, pleasure and pain,
Who free are; and bound by devotion deep.
* * * *
6. Where sun and moon shine not, nor fire burns,
That is, O! Arjuna, My supreme abode;
Which having reached once, none doth e'er return.
* * * *
7. A fragment of My self enters the soul,
Round it the senses and the wayward mind;
And yet another life is on its goal.
* * * *
8. As perfume swiftly borne by hurrying breeze,
The lord of life the senses and the mind
Doth carry, when He enters and doth leave.

9. With eye and ear, and touch and taste, and mind,
 The objects of the senses He enjoys,
 Till He departs another life to find.

* * * *

10. When thus He stays or passes, or doth live
 With nature yoked the eye of wisdom sees
 H'm; but from those deluded He is hid.

* * * *

11. The sages see Him seated in the self
 When they do strive; but those of evil mind
 Though seeking find Him not, nor near Him dwell

* * * *

12. The glory of the sun that ever shines
 Upon the world, the splendour of the moon,
 The brilliance of the fire--these know as Mine.

* * * *

13. Into this world I enter, and support
 All life by My energy; and all plants
 Are by Me nourished in the moon's soft glow.

* * * *

14. And mingling with inward and out breath
 The fire of life in beings do I become,
 And various kinds of food do I digest.

* * * *

15. Within the inmost heart is My abode,
 All memory and all wisdom are from Me,
 I am the Vedas, and from Me they flow.

* * * *

16. Two beings are there, one passes, one remains;
 To one all life belongs; the other is
 The soul eternal and beyond all change.

* * * *

17. But higher than these is the Self that shines,
 The Lord undying which these worlds sustains,
 And in them dwells, immortal and divine.

18. Beyond the changing and the changeless, I
Do ever dwell; and in the Vedas four
Am I, the Lord Eternal, thus described.

* * * *

19. Who knoweth Me as Lord, O! Arjuna he
Beyond all ignorance doth rise and know;
And freed from all his bonds doth worship Me

* * * *

20. Thus have I unto thee, O! Sinless One,
These truths revealed, from which all things are known,
And done all acts which ought to have been done.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Charity, self control, and sacrifice,
Purity, wisdom, and all righteousness;
Surrender, fearlessness, and knowledge wise.
* * * *
2. Kindness, renunciation, steadiness;
Modesty, truthfulness, compassion, peace—
Absence of greed, fault finding, fickleness.
* * * *
3. Forgiveness, gentleness, and fortitude,
Freedom from pride and malice; Arjuna know,
Are signs of souls with the divine imbued.
* * * *
4. Arrogance and harshness, rage and scorn,
And ignorance, O! Arjuna, in them live
Who are of nature demoniac born.
* * * *
5. The good delivered are, the evil bound;
Grieve not O! Arjuna, for thy destiny
Hath thee a nature good and noble found.
* * * *
6. Two beings there are, the evil and divine,
Within these worlds; the good hath been described—
Hear now, O! Arjuna, of the evil kind.
* * * *
7. Of purity and goodness they know not,
Of action's virtue, or of things renounced;
And in them of truth is found not one jot.
* * * *
8. Unreal the world for them, without support;
Born of desire, and accident, and chance;
Godless, and futile, and without a goal.

9. These feeble souls of empty deeds and thoughts
 Rise up as cruel foes against the world,
 On its destruction bent, with minds distraught.

* * * *

10. Upon the sizzling flames of hot desire,
 And pride and arrogance, these hypocrites
 Deluded burn, and with false views conspire.

* * * *

11. Who clutching at vain pleasures are sore torn
 By grievous cares; fulfilment of desire
 Their highest aim; who will not see beyond :

* * * *

12. Around them weaving webs of lust and rage,
 And storing wealth by unjust means, they dwell
 In constant unrest of their own greed made;

* * * *

13. "To-day this hath been gained, tomorrow that
 Shall mine be; and lo! this desire have I
 Attained—and that wealth shall I soon amass!

* * * *

14. "This foe have I slain, and those shall I slay—
 Success is mine, the glory and the power :
 And I the happy conqueror of this day.

* * * *

15. "I sacrifice ! I give ! and I rejoice !
 I am well born and rich ! and didst e'er see
 My like !"—deluded thus, they raise their voice.

* * * *

16. Bewildered by these thoughts; and in the net
 Built of delusion dark and base desire,
 Entrapped; they fall into a loathsome hell.

* * * *

17. Conceited, obstinate, and filled with pride,
 And vanity of wealth; they do perform
 False sacrifices, contrary to all rites.

18. Me, dweller and the witness of their deeds;
 Despise these vicious souls—emboldened by
 Their pride, and lust, and rage, and self-conceit.
 * * * *

19. These evil-doers, and vile beings, I cast
 In demoniac wombs; and in the rounds
 Of birth and death they ever enslaved are.
 * * * *

20. And Me, O! Arjuna, they do not attain,
 But fall for ever lower, and still low;
 Not rising till their ignorance is slain.
 * * * *

21. The triple gate through which the soul doth run
 To ruin, is of lust, and greed, and rage—
 These three shouldst therefore thou for ever shun.
 * * * *

22. Who from this gate of darkness is released,
 O! son of Kunti, he his soul doth raise—
 And onward set, the highest state doth reach.
 * * * *

23. But who doth follow his desires blindfold,
 By right unmoved; for him no happiness
 Doth lie—nor will he reach the promised goal.
 * * * *

24. Therefore let thou the scriptures be thy guide
 For good and evil; and thy destined task
 Accomplish in the world—Me at thy side.

Arjuna said:

1. They who, O! Krishna, do sacrifice with faith,
But minding not the scriptures : are their acts
Of dulness, goodness, or of passion made?
* * * *
2. The faith of men know variously to dwell,
As is their nature; good passionate or dull—
The Lord then said—of these shall I thee tell.
* * * *
3. For faith and nature are thus close allied
O! Arjuna, and the one from other comes;
As cloth doth take the colour of its dye.
* * * *
4. The good the gods revere; of passion they,
The demigods and demons; and the dull
In ignorance to ghosts and spirits pray.
* * * *
5. And some with pride and vanity made blind.
And force of lust and passion, do perform
Deeds violent; by the scriptures not enjoined.
* * * *
6. With torture their weak bodies they oppress,
Wherein My dwelling place is; know these men
Do act in folly and in wickedness.
* * * *
7. The sacrifice, the penance, and the gift,
Are likewise of three modes; and so the food
Dear unto all; e'en as their nature is.
* * * *
8. Unto the good are dear foods sweet and soft,
Agreeable, life-giving, and which keep
The body strong and true, and mind gift,

9. Viands bitter saltish, pungent, hot, and sour,
And harsh, and burning—which sickness and pain,
And grief, do bring—the passionate men adore.

* * * *

10. And that which tasteless is, stale and unclean;
Rotten, cast-off, and spoiled—is dear to souls
In whom the spirit of dulness reigns supreme.

* * * *

11. The sacrifice according to decree
Of duty made, without hope of return;
That know as good, thus offered unto Me.

* * * *

12. But that O! Arjuna, which reward to get
Is made; or for the sight of men around—
Know it to be an offering passionate.

* * * *

13. And that which is against all law prescribed,
Bereft of faith, and shorn of charity;
In that base offering doth dulness reside.

* * * *

14. The worship of the sages, and of gods
And priests; the wise and pure, and those upright—
Thus is the penance of the body sought.

* * * *

15. Words truthful and of no offence, and kind,
Pleasing, and helpful, and the Vedic songs—
By these is penance of the speech divined.

* * * *

16. Gentleness, silence, and serenity;
The mind made pure, and self which is controlled—
That shouldst thou penance of the mind perceive.

* * * *

17. They who desireless, and with utmost faith
These penances perform, with balanced mind;
Blessed are these beings, and of goodness they.

18. And that which honour and respect to gain,
Is penance passionate, and of little worth;
Unstable and ephemeral, Selfish, vain:

* * * *

19. That know as dull with vengence which conspires
To cause hurt unto others or one's self;
As is a thorn upon the prickly briar.

* * * *

20. The gift giv'n at auspicious time and place
Without desire of recompense is good;
Of duty unto worthy person made.

* * * *

21. That know as passionate which the giver burns
With sorrow; and which in the giving hath
Desire of future gain—hope of return.

* * * *

22. That gift is dull which is with loathing given
To the unworthy, at wrong place and time,
Without the rites that to it favour bring.

* * * *

23. The threefold wings of Brahman these do know,
Tat, Sat, and Aum—of which the sacred flame
In offsprings, Vedas, and the Brahmins glows.

* * * *

24. The knowers of the Brahman thus do sing
The holy 'AUM'; which in the sacrifice,
And gifts, and penances, doth resonant ring.

* * * *

25. With 'Tat' the seekers of the truth do make
All penance, sacrifice, and holy gifts;
Which bless both him who gives and him who takes.

* * * *

26. And 'Sat' O! Arjuna, is the blazing sun
Of good and truth; that sends its light across
The mist of lies—and all things noble done.

27. And what in sacred gift and sacrifice
And penance steadfast is; that too know thou
As 'Sat'; and action that from them doth rise.
* * * *

28. What gift is offered and what service pressed
O! Partha, without devotion; 'tis 'Asat'—
And hath no good in this world or the next.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. Then Arjuna said, O! Krishna acquaint me with
The nature of renunciation pure;
And what relinquishment of action is.
* * * *
2. By work desireless is the goal attained;
The lord did say—and those that leave the fruit
Of action, are not bound by action vain.
* * * *
3. "Shun action evil", some of wisdom say:
While others that the acts of sacrifice,
And gift, and penance, are not cast away.
* * * *
4. Hear from me, Arjuna, what relinquishment
In truth is; threefold hath the giving up
Of action been expounded, best of men!
* * * *
5. The acts of penance, gift, and sacrifice,
The wise relinquish not; by them are they
Raised high in heaven, and are purified.
* * * *
6. But even these without desire for fruits
Should be performed—from all attachment free:
This know, O! Arjuna, My considered view.
* * * *
7. For duty shunned by thy own creed prescribed
Know as deceit—of dulness in sooth born;
And ignorant are they who from it fly.
* * * *
8. And passionate its relinquishment through fear
Of suffering, or of pain; no virtue lies
In such abandonment from duties dear.

9. But he who does what should forsooth be done;
 Renouncing all attachment, and all hope—
 From goodness such relinquishment doth come.

* * * *

10. The wise man and the good whose doubts are driv'n
 Is not by task unpleasant e'er repelled;
 Nor action pleasing ever doth him win.

* * * *

11. Around them weave all beings the captive web
 Of work eternal; and none canst abstain—
 He hath relinquished who the fruit hath shed.

* * * *

12. Threefold the fruit of action they receive
 Who did relinquish not—good, evil, mixed—
 But none he gets, who this desire did leave.

* * * *

13. Thee shall I teach the fivefold elements
 O! Arjuna, from which action taketh birth;
 Which from the Vedic seers to thee are sent.

* * * *

14. One is the place, and one the agent wise;
 The instruments diverse, and efforts made—
 And light divine, that ever onwards guides.

* * * *

15. Whatever action doth a man here do,
 By body, speech, or mind—right be, or wrong—
 Know from these sources five it doth ensue.

* * * *

16. But he of intellect untrained doth know
 Himself as agent—he of perverse mind,
 Sees not the truth that lies deep down below.

* * * *

17. Who is not blinded by the ego vain—
 Unbound by work; whose mind unsullied is;
 Slays not these men—already by Me slain:

18. Of subject, object, and of knowledge, made
 Is thought, and agent, instrument, and act—
 The elements three from which is action raised.
 * * * *

19. And of three kinds—so do the scriptures speak—
 Are action, agent, and wise knowledge known;
 As are the modes in them: hear thou of these.
 * * * *

20. Of goodness is that knowledge that doth know
 In this vast world of differences, the One—
 The Being Eternal in this changing flow.
 * * * *

21. The knowledge by which all these myriad souls
 Are seen as many with no bond between;
 Is led by passion to its empty goal:
 * * * *

22. And that false knowledge which to erring sight,
 The part reveals, as if it were the whole;
 Narrow and blind, it doth from dulness rise,
 * * * *

23. That action know as good which is enjoined;
 Without desire performed, or love or hate—
 Without hope of return, or gain to find.
 * * * *

24. But action which unto desire is set,
 On gain bent, but with heavy heart for what
 If fain would do not, know as passionate.
 * * * *

25. That know as dull which ignorantly done
 Beyond one's power; regardless of the end.
 Or loss and injury caused unto one.
 * * * *

26. The doer from false vanity removed,
 Attachment free, filled with resolve, unmoved
 By failure or success; know him as good.

27. The doer by passion swayed, violence and greed;
 By joy and sorrow moved, of heart impure—
 He is of nature passionate decreed.

* * * *

28. And he is dull who is deceitful, vile,
 Impulsive, mean, delaying, ignorant;
 Whose mind uncultured is—as of a child.

* * * *

29. Hear now, O! Arjuna, how the threefold kind
 Of steadiness and knowing doth prevail;
 According as the modes them separate bind.

* * * *

30. That which doth action and non-action know,
 What should be feared and done, and what should not;
 What binds and frees, O! Partha, from goodness flows.

* * * *

31. By which is right and wrong O! Arjuna seen
 Through misty error; and the good and bad—
 That understanding I of passion ween.

* * * *

32. And that as right perceived which wrong remains,
 Against all truth, O! Arjuna, that do know
 Is understanding dull—of nature vain.

* * * *

33. That steady thought by which the mind doth brood,
 Detached from past regrests, and future fears,
 O'er all the world of nature—know as good.

* * * *

34. That steadiness by which the mind holds fast,
 Desireful unto duty, joy, and wealth;
 Is Arjuna, in the mould of passion cast.

* * * *

35. And that by which the ignorant do scorn
 To give up sleep, and fear, and arrogance;
 Know Arjuna! 'tis of nature dulness born.

36. And now of happiness I shall thee explain,
O! Arjuna, whereby doth a man rejoice;
And sensing which is all his sorrow slain.
* * * *

37. That which like poison seems, but in the end
Is nectar—and from self-discernment comes;
Know that 'tis from the fount of goodness sent;
* * * *

38. And that which from the senses doth arise
Like nectar first, but poison at the last—
In passion doth that happiness reside.
* * * *

39. But that from negligence, and sloth, and sleep
Doth spring; and ever doth the soul delude—
Hath found its evil root in dulness deep.
* * * *

40. No creature liveth there on heaven or earth,
Free from the modes, that are of nature born;
And in them doth all changing life take birth.
* * * *

41. Of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and of Shudra;
Know each O! Arjuna, is with virtue blest—
As by his nature each one is imbued.
* * * *

42. Faith, wisdom, calmness, and forbearance strong;
Self-control, uprightness, purity—
Live in the Brahmin, of his nature born.
* * * *

43. Valour, and courage, is a Kshatriya's dharma—
Over men command; and on the battle-field
Determination never back to turn.
* * * *

44. In plough, and field, and cattle, and in trade,
A Vaisya's duty lies; and know the Shudra,
By nature is for faithful service made.

45. As vernal blossom in the bud doth sleep,
So to his duty bound, each one doth strive;
And in its glory his perfection seek.

* * * *

46. From whom this world of varied creatures springs—
By whom pervaded; through his duty one
Doth reach the good—Him ever worshipping.

* * * *

47. More blessed is the task though sadly wrought,
Thine own; than glory in another's act—
For one thus working sin approacheth not.

* * * *

48. For effort's brightness is in error's foam
Ruffled, O! Arjuna, shun not thine own task,
Though imperfectly done; for 'tis thy own.

* * * *

49. Who like the floating weed doth ever flow,
In whom the flame of passion is put out;
Surrendering all—he self-release doth know.

* * * *

50. To thee shall I, O! son of Kunti, tell,
How on perfection's wings he swiftly, soars,
And in the land of Brahman soon doth dwell.

* * * *

51. With understanding deep and pure arrayed,
Away from sights and sounds of this vain world,;
Beyond attraction and aversion placed:

* * * *

52. Alone who dwells with thought and speech controlled,
Frugal, and wrapped in meditation deep;
Whom Passion grips not in his treacherous hold;

* * * *

53. And shedding forth desire and arrogance,
Possessiveness, and rage, and ego vain—
The tranquil soul doth unto Brahman come.

54. One with the Brahman, from all sorrows free;
 One to all creatures, and of spirit calm—
 With love supreme he cometh unto Me.

* * * *

55. In love's revealing light doth wisdom shine;
 And I am known, and what I really am;
 And knowing, on My bosom he reclines.

* * * *

56. All acts accomplished in Me refuge take,
 So unto Me shalt thou O! wanderer, come;
 And reach My home eternal, by My grace.

* * * *

57. All actions unto Me surrendered, live—
 Thy mind in Me engrossed; with steadfastness,
 Thy heart and soul in Me for ever fixed.

* * * *

58. If on Me thou dost call, thy hand will I
 Take hold; and guide thee o'er the stormy sea—
 If heeding not, forsaken wilt thou lie.

* * * *

59. If sunk in self-conceit thou thinkest now,
 "I will not fight", in vain dost thou resolve—
 For fight thou must, to God's of divine will bowed.

* * * *

60. And that against thy will shall sooth be done,
 Which thou wouldest not; for when unfurled the sail,
 The ship shall plough the way the wind doth run.

* * * *

61. Within the lotus of the heart unseen,
 The Lord, O! Arjuna, dwells; and unto Him
 All beings to turn, as set on some machine.

* * * *

62. No more, O! Arjuna, lost in this world roam;
 Unto Him flee, and by His grace do find
 Peace everlasting—and eternal home.

63. So have within thee I these truths instilled—
 Mystery of mysteries—do thou reflect
 Calmly, O! friend, and do as thou dost will.

* * * *

64. Unto My word supreme do thou pay heed,
 Well loved art thou to Me; and so will I
 For thine great good this secret doctrine teach.

* * * *

65. With thought, devotion, and with sacrifice,
 Me worship; and dear friend, I promise thee—
 Me shalt thou reach, and in Me ever bide.

* * * *

66. To Me for shelter come, be not aggrieved—
 All works abandoned; unto Me alone;
 And from all burdens thee will I release.

* * * *

67. Of life impure, in whom faith doth not surge,
 Who Me denounces, and Me disobeys—
 Speak not to such a one these hallowed words.

* * * *

68. Who unto My devotees doth impart
 These secret teachings, with love unto Me;
 Shall doubtless unto Me return at last.

* * * *

69. And he is dear to Me who understands
 These words; and with them doth the ocean cross—
 And crossing taketh others by the hands.

* * * *

70. And who these verses scans with wisdom keen,
 He doth Me worship by the sacrifice
 Of knowledge—so do I, O! Arjuna, ween.

* * * *

71. Who with devotion doth unto them lend
 His ears, without deriding; soon is free—
 And onward to the world of bliss shall wend.

72. Hast thou O! Arjuna, meditated well
 On these My words; and is thy ignorance
 Born of thy thought's confusion, now dispelled?
 * * * *

73. Destroyed is my delusion, Arjuna said,
 By Thee O! Krishna; and as Thou hast me shown,
 So I the path of righteousness will tread.
 * * * *

74. Thus have I heard O! king, So Sanjaya spoke—
 These words supreme of Vasudeva to Partha;
 Which through me like a livid flame did course.
 * * * *

75. And by the boon by Vyasa on me bestowed,
 I heard this secret on the battle-field,
 From lips divine of Krishna, the Lord of Yoga,
 * * * *

76. And when my mind doth fondly dwell upon
 These wondrous words, by Krishna to Arjuna given;
 Thrilled am I as the lotus at the dawn.
 * * * *

77. And when that beauteous form again I greet,
 Of Krishna divine; O! king, my heart doth thrill,
 As doth a lover his loved one to meet.
 * * * *

78. Where'er is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga divine,
 And Arjuna, wielder of the mighty bow,
 There victory, joy, and virtue, ever shine.

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K. P. Bahadur, who is a senior member of the Indian Administrative Service, began his writing career almost twenty years back. Since then he has authored more than thirty books on Philosophy, Sociology, History, Folklore and Fiction. Five of his books have been published under the UNESCO Indian Translation Series. His other monumental works are The Wisdom of India Series (planned in six volumes of which five have been published), Castes and Tribes of India (6 volumes), A History of Indian Civilisation (planned in 5 volumes, 2 published). In addition, he has authored Aspects of the Ramacharitamanasa, Five Upanishads, Five Windows to God, and Folk Tales of Uttar Pradesh. Bahadur (born 21st Feb. 1924) did his M. A. in English from Allahabad University. He is listed in Contemporary Authors, Gale Research Company, Michigan.

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