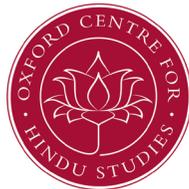


BHAGAVAD-GITA

BHAGAVAD-GITA
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Chapter 1



Verses 1–47

1. Dhritarashtra said: On the field of dharma at Kurukshetra, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do when they assembled there seeking battle, O Samjaya?
2. Samjaya said: On seeing the battle array of the Pandava host, King Duryodhana approached the acharya and spoke these words.
3. Behold this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, acharya, arranged in battle array by the son of Drupada, your intelligent disciple.
4. There are heroes and great bowmen in that host, the equals in battle of Bhima and Arjuna: Yuyudhana, Virata, and Drupada that great chariot warrior.
5. Then there are Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana, and the heroic King of Kashi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and Shaibya who is a hero among men;
6. The mighty Yudhamanyu, the heroic Uttamaujas, the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi; all of them are great chariot warriors.
7. Now learn about those who are most prominent on our side, O best of brahmins. For your understanding I will inform you about the captains leading my army.
8. There is yourself, and then Bhishma, Karna, the all-conquering Kripa, Ashvatthaman, Vikarna, and the son of Somadatta as well.

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9. And many other heroes are willing to lay down their lives for my sake. They carry many different types of weapon and all of them are skilled in the arts of warfare.
10. Guarded by Bhishma, our strength is unlimited but their strength, guarded by Bhima, is limited indeed.
11. Situated in each of your allotted stations, all of you must give protection to Bhishma.
12. The senior member of the Kuru house, Duryodhana's mighty grandfather, then roared as loudly as a lion and blew on his conch shell. This sound brought joy to Duryodhana.
13. Conch shells, kettledrums, panava drums, anaka drums, and horns then immediately resounded all together making a tumultuous sound.
14. Mounted on a mighty chariot yoked to white horses, Madhava and the Pandava then blew their celestial conch shells.
15. Hrishikesha sounded the Panchajanya and Dhanamjaya blew on the Devadatta. Vrikodara, the performer of formidable deeds (bhima-karma), blew the great conch shell known as Paundra.
16. King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew the Anantavijaya, Nakula blew the Sughosha, and Sahadeva sounded the Manipushpaka.
17. That mighty bowman the King of Kashi, Shikandin the great chariot warrior, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, the unconquerable Satyaki,
18. Drupada and all the sons of Draupadi, O lord of the earth, as well as the mighty son of Subadhra then blew their respective conch shells.
19. That sound shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra for the tumult resonated across both the sky and the earth.
20. Seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra gathered there and the weapons starting to fly, the Pandava with a monkey on his banner took up his bow.

Chapter 1

21. He then spoke the following words to Hrishiksha, O lord of the earth. Kindly position my chariot in the space between the two armies, Acyuta,
22. So that I can look upon all those who have assembled here seeking battle. Let me see those with whom I will have to fight in this warlike endeavour.
23. I see them assembled here intent on battle, seeking to please the ignorant son of Dhritarashtra by fighting on his behalf.
24. Addressed in this way by Gudakesha, O Bharata, Hrishiksha positioned that wonderful chariot in the space between the two armies.
25. In the presence of Bhishma and Drona and all the kings of world, he said, Behold, Partha, the Kurus gathered here together.
26. Partha could see fathers and grandfathers standing there, as well as the teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, allies,
27. Fathers-in-law, and friends who were present in the two armies. On seeing all his family members standing nearby, the Kaunteya
28. Was overwhelmed with profound compassion and spoke these words in a mood of dejection, On seeing these relatives here, Krishna, standing ready and seeking battle,
29. My limbs are failing me, my mouth is drying up, there are tremors all over my body and its hairs are standing erect.
30. The bow named Gandiva slips from my hand and my skin is burning. I can no longer stand up for my mind has become dizzy.
31. I see unfavourable omens, Keshava; I cannot see how anything good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle.
32. I have no desire for victory, Krishna, nor for a kingdom or for worldly pleasure. What is the point of our gaining a kingdom, Govinda, or objects of enjoyment or even maintaining our lives,

33. When all those for whom we might desire a kingdom, objects of enjoyment and the pleasures of life are taking part in this war, giving up their lives and their wealth?
34. By that I mean our teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives.
35. Though they may kill me I have no wish to kill these men, Madhusudana, not even if we could gain dominion over the three worlds thereby, how much less then for acquiring this earth?
36. After killing the sons of Dhritarashtra what pleasure would there be for us, Janardana? Sin alone would come to us by killing these men who seek to kill us.
37. We have no right to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra for they are our own relatives. How could we ever be happy again after destroying our family, Madhava?
38. Even if their consciences have been obliterated by greed and they cannot see the evil inherent in causing the destruction of their family or the sin involved in betraying a friend,
39. How can we fail to have wisdom enough to turn away from such a sin, for we can certainly see what a crime it is to bring about the destruction of the family, Janardana.
40. When a family is devastated in this way, the ancient traditions of dharma relating to the family also perish. And when such dharma perishes adharma predominates over the entire family.
41. And as a result of the predominance of adharma, Krishna, the women of the family become degraded; and when the women are thus degraded, a mingling of the varnas arises.
42. Such a mingling leads both the destroyer of the family and the family itself to hell. Deprived of the ritual offerings of pinda and water, the ancestors of such families fall from their position.

Chapter 1

43. As a result of the wicked acts of those who harm the family, acts which lead to a mingling of the varnas, the eternal forms of dharma rooted in caste (jati) and family are destroyed.
44. And we have heard, Janardana, that there is undoubtedly an abode in hell for those men who are destroyers of family dharma.
45. Alas! Alas! We are bent on performing a most sinful deed by slaying our family members in battle due to our greed for the pleasure of sovereignty.
46. If the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, were to slay me in battle unresisting and unarmed, that would be better for me.
47. After speaking in this way on the field of battle, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot and cast aside his bow and his arrows, his mind agitated by sorrow.

Chapter 2



Verses 1–3: Krishna’s rebuke

1. Samjaya said: Madhusudana then spoke the following words to Arjuna who was filled with compassion, whose eyes were agitated and full of tears, and who was lamenting.
2. The Lord said: Whence could such faintheartedness have come upon you at this time of trial? This is not proper for a civilised man, it does not lead to heaven and it will bring dishonour.
3. Do not give up your manhood in this way, Partha! Such a mood ill becomes you. Giving up this pathetic weakness of heart, arise, O destroyer of the foe.

Verses 4–9: Arjuna again refuses to fight

4. Arjuna said: O Madhusudana, how can I employ my arrows in fighting with Bhishma and with Drona on the field of battle? They are worthy of my worship, O slayer of the foe.
5. It would be far better to refrain from killing such noble-minded teachers and to live in this world by begging for our food. Our teachers are desirous of wealth, but if we kill them the rewards we would enjoy would be tainted with blood.
6. Nor do we know which would be better for us, defeating them or being defeated by them, for after killing the sons of Dhritarashtra, now positioned before us, we would have no wish to live.

7. My very existence is afflicted by problems caused by weakness and my mind is confused about dharma. So now I am asking you which is the best course to adopt. Answer me clearly for I am now your student. Instruct me for I have surrendered to your guidance.
8. I cannot see anything that will dispel the grief that is drying up my senses, not even attaining a prosperous kingdom on earth without any rival, nor even gaining lordship over the gods.
9. Samjaya said: After speaking in this way to Hrishikesha, Gudakesha said to Govinda, 'I will not fight.' He then fell silent, O destroyer of the foe.

Verses 10–30: The atman, the inner self

10. With a slight smile, Hrishikesha then spoke these words to the lamenting Arjuna whilst they were situated in the space between the two armies.
11. The Lord said: Whilst grieving for those who should not be lamented over, you speak words that appear wise. But learned men grieve for neither the living nor the dead.
12. There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these lords of men; nor shall any of us cease to exist in the future.
13. Even as the embodied soul present in this body goes through childhood, youth, and then old age, in the same way it then acquires a different body. One who is wise is not confused about this.
14. It is contact of the senses with their objects, Kaunteya, which leads to sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain. Being impermanent, such sensations come and go and so you must learn to endure them, Bharata.
15. If these sensations do not distract a person, O best of men, and if he can remain equal in sorrow and happiness, then such a wise person gains the state of immortality.

Chapter 2

16. That which is unreal never comes into being and that which is real never ceases to be. Those who perceive the truth can recognise this conclusion concerning these two.
17. You must understand this to be the indestructible principle that pervades this whole world. No one can bring about the destruction of this unchanging principle.
18. This eternal embodied soul is indestructible and beyond comprehension. The bodies it inhabits, however, are said to be finite. Therefore fight, O Bharata.
19. Neither the person who thinks this self is the killer nor he who thinks it is killed properly understands it, for it does not kill and it cannot be killed.
20. It is never born and it never dies. It is existing now and it will never cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, everlasting, and most ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.
21. How can a person who properly understands this as indestructible, eternal, unborn, and without decay cause the death of anyone or kill anyone? What will he cause the death of? What will he kill?
22. Just as a person casts aside old clothes and puts on other ones that are new, so the embodied soul casts aside old bodies and accepts other new ones.
23. Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot make it wet, and wind cannot dry it.
24. This cannot be cut, it cannot be burned, and it cannot be moistened or dried. It is eternal, all-pervasive, fixed, immovable, and everlasting.
25. It is said that it is imperceptible and inconceivable and it is not subject to transformation. Understanding it in this way, you should lament no more.
26. And even if you think that it is born repeatedly and repeatedly dies, still you should not lament over it, O mighty one.

27. For one who has been born death is certain and for one who has died birth is certain. Therefore you should not lament over something that cannot be averted.
28. The beginning of living beings is unknown, their interim stage is visible and their end is again unknown. So why should there be any lamentation over this?
29. One person sees it as wonderful, another person may speak of it as wonderful and yet another person may come to hear about it as wonderful; but even after hearing about it no one truly understands it.
30. This embodied soul present within the bodies of all beings is eternal and can never be killed. Therefore you should not lament for any living being.

Verses 31–38: The dharma of a kshatriya

31. Considering the nature of your personal dharma you should not hesitate. For a kshatriya there is nothing superior to fighting in accordance with dharma.
32. Kshatriyas who encounter a war of this type become joyful, Partha; it comes unsought and yet opens the door to heaven.
33. And if you do not engage in this dharmic battle then you will destroy both your personal dharma and your honour, and you will accumulate sin.
34. Then people will always speak of your dishonour; and for a person who has achieved renown dishonour is worse than death.
35. The great chariot warriors will think that you have left the battle due to fear. Those who had previously thought highly of you will now hold you in contempt.
36. Your enemies will speak many insulting words about you, condemning your prowess. What could be more painful than that?
37. Either you will die and reach heaven or else you will conquer and rule the earth. Therefore arise, Kaunteya, with your resolve set on battle.

Chapter 2

38. Become equal-minded towards happiness and distress, gain and loss, victory and defeat and then engage yourself in battle. You will not acquire sin by acting in this way.

Verse 39–41: An introduction to karma-yoga

39. I have spoken so far on the basis of Samkhya but now listen to this concerning Buddhi Yoga, the yoga of the intellect. When you engage in action on the basis of this understanding (*buddhya*) you will free yourself from the bondage of action.
40. There is nothing to lose in this attempt and neither can there be any failure, for even a slight engagement in this dharma frees one from great danger.
41. Here the resolute intelligence becomes fixed on one point, O child of the Kurus, but the understandings of those who are irresolute have many branches and diversify without limit.

Verses 42–46: Criticism of the vedic religion

42. Persons lacking in insight who are attached to the religion of the Vedas speak in flowery language. ‘There is nothing more than this’, they say.
43. Filled with desires and seeking the heavenly worlds, they advocate many different types of rituals, which lead to a higher birth as the result of that action. Pleasure and power are the goals they seek.
44. The resolute form of intelligence existing in the state of *samadhi* can never arise for such persons who remain attached to pleasure and power and whose minds are carried away by such desires.
45. The Vedas are concerned with the three *gunas* but you must become free from the three *gunas*, Arjuna. One who is self-possessed transcends duality, always adheres to the quality of *sattva* and has no interest in gain or protection of what has been gained.

46. As with the purpose served by a reservoir of water when the whole area is flooded with water, so it is with the purpose of the Vedas for a brahmin who is enlightened by knowledge.

Verses 47–53: An outline of karma-yoga

47. You only have a right to the action itself and never to the fruits of that action. Do not make the rewards of action your motive and do not develop any attachment for avoiding action.
48. Situated in yoga, perform your duties whilst giving up all attachments, Dhananjaya. Remain equal in success and failure for such equanimity is what is meant by yoga.
49. Action alone (karma) is greatly inferior to Buddhi Yoga, Dhananjaya. Seek shelter in the intellect (*buddhau*); those motivated by the fruits of action are petty-minded.
50. By focusing the intellect in this way (*buddhi-yukto*) one sets aside both righteous and unrighteous deeds. Therefore engage yourself in this yoga for yoga is the true art of performing action.
51. Wise men who engage in the yoga of the intellect abandon the fruits that are born of action. Free from the bondage of rebirth, they attain a position that has no blemish.
52. When your intellect breaks free of the dense thicket of illusion you will reach a state of indifference for what should be heard and what has been heard in the past (*shruta*).
53. Your intellect becomes perplexed by the Shruti, but when it remains steady and fixed in the state of *Samadhi*, without any wavering, you will then have achieved success in yoga.

Verses 54–72: The characteristics of one who performs buddhi-yoga

54. Arjuna said: What is the defining feature of a person whose realisation is steady and who remains firm in this state of *samadhi*, Keshava? How does such a steady-minded person speak? How does he sit? How does he move?
55. The Lord said: When a person sets aside all the desires running through his mind, Partha, and satisfies himself in the self alone he is then described as one whose wisdom is steady.
56. When the mind does not grieve over life's sorrows, when a person remains untouched by the joys of life and free from passion, fear, and anger he is described as a sage whose understanding is steady.
57. When a person has no affection for any object at all and feels neither joy nor loathing when he gains desirable and unwanted results, then his wisdom is firmly established.
58. When a person withdraws all his senses from their objects, like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, then his wisdom is firmly established.
59. The objects of pleasure cannot touch the embodied soul when it abstains from them. Although one can restrict one's inclination in this way the attraction still remains, but after perceiving the Supreme one completely renounces such attraction.
60. The agitating senses can forcibly carry away the mind of even a perceptive person who makes the proper endeavours, Kaunteya
61. Restraining all these senses, one engaged in this practice should remain dedicated to me. When he has his senses under control then his wisdom is firmly established.
62. When a person thinks about the objects of the senses, attachment for them inevitably arises. Due to that attachment desire appears and from desire anger comes into being.

63. From anger comes delusion and as a result of that delusion one's thinking is degraded. When thinking is degraded one's intelligence is destroyed and when intelligence is destroyed a person is lost.
64. But one who possesses self-control can move amongst the sense objects using senses that are free of desire and loathing and are directed by his will alone. Such a person attains a state of absolute tranquillity.
65. In that state of tranquillity all his sufferings disappear. And when one's mind is thus at peace the realisation (*buddhi*) then becomes steady.
66. But there can be no realisation for one who does not engage in this practice and indeed no proper engagement of the mind. Without engaging the mind properly there is no peace and how can there be happiness for one who is not at peace?
67. Whichever of the roaming senses the mind becomes attached to will carry away a person's understanding, just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.
68. Therefore, O mighty one, only if a person completely draws back his senses from their objects is his wisdom firmly established.
69. One who practices this restraint is awake when it is night for all living beings. And that period in which living beings are awake is night for the perceptive sage.
70. Just as rivers flow into the sea, which is always full and remains steady and immovable, so all these desires flow into such a person. It is he who attains peace, not one who seeks to fulfil those desires.
71. Giving up all desires such a person moves through life without attachment. He has no sense of 'mine' or 'I'; it is he who attains peace.
72. This is the transcendental state, Partha, and on reaching such a position one is no longer deluded. If one can remain situated in this state of consciousness even at the time of death then one attains *brahma nirvana*.

Chapter 3



Verses 1–2: Arjuna’s inquiry

1. Arjuna said: If you regard realisation as being superior to action then why are you urging me to engage in a form of action (karma) that is so dreadful?
2. It seems that you are confusing my understanding by this equivocal instruction. Please tell me conclusively of the one course by which I can obtain the greatest benefit.

Verses 3–8: What is renunciation?

3. The Lord said: O sinless one, I have already alluded to a twofold system that exists in this world. For Samkhyas it is by the yoga of knowledge (*jñana-yoga*) and for yogins it is by the yoga of action (*karma-yoga*).
4. A person does not gain freedom from action simply by ceasing to act and he cannot reach the ultimate state of perfection by renunciation alone.
5. No one can remain still without performing any action, not even for a moment. Everyone is helplessly engaged in some form of action by the *gunas* that are born out of *prakriti* (matter).
6. One who restricts his organs of action but continually dwells on the objects of the senses within his mind is a deluded soul. Such a person is referred to as a hypocrite.
7. But one who continues to act whilst controlling the senses with the mind, Arjuna, using his organs of action

to perform *karma-yoga* without any attachment, is certainly superior.

8. You should continue to perform your prescribed duties, for performing action is superior to refraining from action. You cannot even sustain your bodily functions without acting.

Verses 9–16: The vedic ritual and karma-yoga

9. Except where action is performed in the execution of *yajña*, this world remains in the bondage of action. Remaining free of attachment, Kaunteya, you should therefore perform action for that purpose alone.
10. In the beginning, after creating living beings along with *yajña*, Prajapati said to them: You will flourish by means of this ritual; this will be the cow that grants all your desires.
11. You should sustain the gods in this way and the gods will then sustain you. Sustaining each other in this way, you will achieve the highest benefit.
12. Sustained by *yajña*, the gods will bestow upon you all the food you may desire. One who consumes the foods given by the gods without making offerings to them is certainly a thief.
13. Righteous people who consume food left after a *yajña* are freed from all blemishes. But wicked people who cook just for themselves consume only sin.
14. Living beings exist on food and food is produced due to rain. The rain comes as a result of *yajña* and *yajña* is performed by ritual action.
15. You should understand that ritual action is derived from the Veda (Brahma) and the Veda appears from the *akshara* (undecaying). Hence the all-pervasive Brahman is always present within the *yajña*.
16. In this world, a malicious person who delights only in the senses, and does not perpetuate the turning of the wheel thus set in motion, certainly lives a worthless life.

Verses 17–26: Why should a yogin perform rituals?

17. But for a person who seeks pleasure in the self alone, finds contentment through the self and is fulfilled by the self there is no prescribed duty to perform.
18. There is nothing for him to gain by either performing or renouncing such duties. Nor is there any reason for him to be dependent on another living being.
19. Remaining always unattached, you should therefore perform your prescribed duty. A person who performs such duty without attachment attains the highest goal.
20. It was solely through the performance of action that Janaka and others attained a state of complete perfection. Just by considering the welfare of the world, you should be inspired to act.
21. Whatever course of action a superior man pursues, lesser persons will follow and the world will accept the standard he sets.
22. There is no action that I am bound to perform anywhere in the three worlds, nor anything I might need that I have not already attained, and yet still I am engaged in action.
23. For if ever I was to cease from the actions I tirelessly perform, all people would follow my path, Partha.
24. If I did not perform these duties then these worlds would fall into ruin. I would then be the creator of chaos and thereby cause harm to living beings.
25. People devoid of knowledge perform actions on the basis of worldly attachment, Bharata. The wise should act in the same way but without attachment, seeking the well-being of the world.
26. The wise man should not cause any breach in the understanding of ignorant people attached to performing action. By acting whilst engaged in his yoga discipline he should encourage them to perform all their duties.

Verses 27–35: Karma-yoga and spiritual knowledge

27. All actions are ultimately performed by the *gunas* inherent in *prakriti* (matter), but a person whose mind is deluded by the sense of ‘I’ thinks, ‘I am the doer.’
28. But one who understands the truth about the distinction between *guna* and action, O mighty one, understands that it is just one set of *gunas* acting on other *gunas*. By understanding action in this way he remains unattached.
29. Those who are confused about the *gunas* inherent in *prakriti* have attachment for the action generated by the *gunas*. But one who understands all this should not disturb such ignorant persons who have only limited knowledge.
30. Casting off all your deeds onto me by fixing your mind on the true self, remaining free of desire and free of any sense of ‘mine’, you should now fight with the emotions banished.
31. Persons who are faithful and devoid of envy and who always adhere to the teaching I have just revealed are released from the effects of action.
32. But those who despise this teaching of mine and do not adhere to it are deluded in all their wisdom. You should know that they are lost souls who are completely dull-witted.
33. Even one who possesses knowledge conducts himself in accordance with his nature. Living beings must conform to their inherent nature; what can repression of one’s nature achieve?
34. Desire and aversion are the conditions of the senses in relation to objects they perceive. A person must not fall under the control of either of these tendencies for both are obstacles to him.
35. Even though it may have faults, one’s own dharma is still superior to accepting the dharma of another, even if it be perfectly observed. Death in the performance of one’s own dharma is better, for another’s dharma is a source of danger.

Verses 36–43: The root cause of wicked action

36. Arjuna said: What is it that impels a person to act sinfully even though he has no desire to do so, Varshneya, compelling him to act in that way as if by force?
37. The Lord said: It is desire, it is anger; this arises from the *guna* known as *rajas*. You should know this as a mighty devouring force, a great source of sin; it is the enemy in this world.
38. As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dirt and as an embryo is covered by its membrane, so is this world covered by desire.
39. Knowledge is covered by this desire, which is therefore the great enemy of one who possesses knowledge. This enemy in the form of desire, Kaunteya, blazes like an insatiable fire.
40. The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its abode. Covering the true knowledge of the embodied being, it thus places it in a state of delusion.
41. Therefore you must first regulate the senses, O best of the Bharatas, and then conquer this source of sin, which destroys both spiritual and practical knowledge.
42. They say that the senses are in a superior position and that the mind is superior to the senses. The intellect stands above the mind, but this is superior even to the intellect.
43. Thus understanding that which is superior to the intellect and making yourself steady by your own self, you must defeat this enemy in the form of desire, O mighty one, though it is difficult to overcome.

Chapter 4



Verses 1–11: The doctrine of avatar

1. The Lord said: I instructed this ever-existing yoga to Vivasvan. Vivasvan instructed it to Manu and Manu taught it to Ikshvaku.
2. It was in this way that the Raja-Rishis (royal saints) understood this yoga, receiving it one from the other in succession, but after a long time had passed knowledge of this yoga was lost in this world, Paramtapa.
3. This same ancient yoga has today been instructed by me to you because you are my devotee (*bhakta*) and my friend. It is indeed the most profound mystery.
4. Arjuna said: Your birth was later than the birth of Vivasvan, which was earlier. So how can I understand that you taught this to him in the beginning?
5. The Lord said: There are many births of mine that have passed and of yours also, Arjuna. I know about them all but you do not know of them, Paramtapa.
6. Although I am unborn and my identity is unchanging, and although I am the controller (*ishvara*) of all beings, still I resort to my own *prakriti* energy and appear by means of my own power.
7. Whenever there is a decline in *dharma*, O Bharata, and whenever there is an increase in *adharma*, it is then that I manifest myself.
8. For the protection of the righteous (*sadhus*), for the destruction of the wrongdoers and for the purpose of

establishing *dharma*, I appear age after age.

9. He who fully understands the truth about my divine birth and activity does not take birth again after giving up his body. He comes to Me, Arjuna.
10. Free of desire, fear, and anger, wholly dedicated to me and dependent upon me, many persons purified by knowledge and austerity have attained my state of existence.
11. According to the manner in which they dedicate themselves to me so I devote myself to them. In all circumstances people follow the path I set for them, Partha.

Verses 12–17: Krishna and Karma-yoga

12. Seeking success through ritual action, some people worship the gods. In the human sphere, success is quickly attained through ritual acts.
13. I created the system of four *varnas* based on the *gunas* and types of action. And you should understand that although I am the creator of this system, I am still the one who does not act, the one who does not decay.
14. Actions cannot leave a mark on me and I am unaffected by the fruits of action. He who understands this truth about me is not bound by the actions he performs.
15. In the past this truth was well known to people who sought liberation from rebirth and also performed action. So you should also perform your designated actions, just as people in the past fulfilled their duties.
16. What is action? What is non-action? Even the wise are confused about this. I will now explain to you what action is; when you understand this you will be freed from evil.
17. One must understand about action and one must understand about forbidden action. One must also understand what non-action is; the course of action is indeed hard to comprehend.

**Verses 18–23: The Question
Answered – Karma-yoga**

18. One who perceives inaction in action and action in inaction is intelligent amongst men. He is properly engaged and he performs all his designated actions.
19. When all a person's endeavours are devoid of any inclination towards desire, his action is burned by the fire of knowledge. The wise ones describe such a person as a learned *pandit*.
20. When a person gives up attachment for the fruits of action, is always satisfied and is not dependent on any other, then even though he is engaged in action he performs no action at all.
21. Having no expectation of result, controlling his thoughts, practising self-control, giving up all desire for acquisitions and acting only for the maintenance of the body, a person remains free of contamination.
22. If he is satisfied with whatever befalls him, transcends duality, is free of envy and is equal in success and failure, then even though he engages in action he is not bound by it.
23. For a liberated person whose attachments have vanished, whose mind is absorbed in higher knowledge and who acts only in the form of *yajña*, any action he performs dissolves away completely.

Verses 24–32: Various forms of yajña

24. The sacrificial offering is Brahman. The oblation is Brahman; it is offered by Brahman into the fire that is also Brahman. Brahman alone is reached by a person who absorbs his mind completely in the ritual act that is Brahman.
25. Some practitioners make *yajña* offerings dedicated to the gods alone but others make their offerings into the fire of Brahman, performing *yajña* for its own sake.

26. Then there are some who offer hearing and the other senses into the fires of restraint and others who offer sound and the other objects of the senses into the fires of the senses themselves.
27. Others offer all the actions performed by the senses and the movements of the breath into the fire of yoga practice based on self-control, which is illuminated by means of true knowledge.
28. Some sages, strictly adhering to their vows, perform *yajña* with their possessions, some through religious austerity, some through yoga, and some through recitation and knowledge of sacred texts.
29. Others offer the *prana* breath into the *apana* and the *apana* into the *prana*, dedicating themselves to the practice of *pranayama* by restricting the movement of the *prana* and the *apana*.
30. Others restrict their eating and make offerings of the *prana* breaths into the *prana* breaths themselves. All such persons who have knowledge of *yajña* have their contaminations destroyed by means of *yajña*.
31. Consuming the nectar or immortality in the form of the leftover offerings at the end of a *yajña*, they proceed to the eternal region of Brahman. There is nothing in this world for a person who performs no *yajña*, O best of the Kurus, and this is even more the case for the other world.
32. Thus many different types of *yajña* are expanded within the mouth of Brahman. You must understand that all of them are based on action, for when you understand this you will be liberated.

**Verses 33–42: realised knowledge
as the goal of karma-yoga**

33. The *Jñāna Yajña* consisting of knowledge is superior to the *Dravya Yajña* consisting of physical objects, O destroyer of the foe. Without any exception, Partha, all

Chapter 4

- action finds its proper conclusion in knowledge.
34. You should gain this knowledge through submission, inquiry, and service. Those who have knowledge and perceive the truth will impart knowledge to you.
 35. And when you have acquired this knowledge, you never again fall prey to illusion, Pandava, for you will see that all living beings are within your own self and, moreover, within me.
 36. Even if you perform sinful acts more heinous than those of all other sinners, still you can cross beyond all such wickedness by means of the boat of knowledge.
 37. Just as a blazing fire turns fuel to ashes, Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge turns all actions to ashes.
 38. In this world there is nothing as purifying as knowledge. In due time, a person who is successful in yoga will find this knowledge within himself through himself alone.
 39. One who has faith will acquire this knowledge if he devotes himself to the quest and gains mastery over the senses. And when he has acquired this knowledge he very soon attains supreme peace.
 40. But if a person is devoid of knowledge, has no faith or is beset by doubts he will meet with destruction. Neither this world nor the world to come is for the doubting soul, and he can never be happy.
 41. When his action is given over to the practice of yoga, when his doubts are destroyed by knowledge, and when he is in full control of his existence, a person's actions cannot bind him, Dhanamjaya.
 42. Therefore, using the sword of knowledge, cut through this doubt of yours, which has arisen due to ignorance and is now situated in your heart. Take up this yoga and arise, Bharata.

Chapter 5



Verses 1–7: Samkhya and yoga are one

1. Arjuna said: Krishna, you advocate both the renunciation of action and the yoga of action as well. But which of these is the better course? Tell me this definitively.
2. The Lord said: Renunciation and *karma-yoga* both lead to the highest result. But between the two, *karma-yoga* is superior to the renunciation of action.
3. One who neither loathes nor hankers after anything is to be known as a constant renunciant. Transcending such duality, O mighty one, he easily breaks free of bondage.
4. Foolish people say that Samkhya and yoga are different, but not learned *pandits*. A person who properly adheres to one of these paths gains the fruit of both.
5. The position achieved by the followers of Samkhya is also attained by those who adhere to the path of yoga. One who sees that Samkhya and yoga are one and the same, truly sees.
6. But without engaging in yoga practice renunciation is very difficult to achieve. The sage who engages in yoga practice quickly attains Brahman.
7. One who engages in yoga and has purified his very being, who has gained self-mastery and control of the senses, whose own self has become the self of all beings, is not besmirched even though he engages in action.

Verses 8–15: Karma-yoga and realised knowledge

8. One who is engaged in yoga practice and sees the truth thinks, 'I never perform any action.' He thinks in this way even whilst seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing,
9. Speaking, evacuating, seizing, opening his eyes, or closing them. He considers, 'It is just the senses engaging with their objects.'
10. One who deposits his actions on Brahman and abandons attachment is not smeared by sin when he acts, as a lotus leaf is not touched by water.
11. Abandoning attachment, *yogins* then act with body, mind, speech, and with the senses in order to purify themselves.
12. Abandoning the fruits of action, the practitioner of yoga attains enduring peace. But one who does not engage in yoga and is motivated by desire remains in bondage, attached to the fruits of action.
13. Giving up all actions mentally, the embodied being easily remains in full control within the city of nine gates, neither acting nor causing action to be performed.
14. The Lord generates neither the means by which action is performed nor the actions themselves as performed by the people of the world. Nor does he create the conjunction between action and its result; it is a person's inherent nature that does this.
15. The mighty Lord does not assume anyone's sin or indeed their virtue. But knowledge is covered over by ignorance and so living beings become deluded.

**Verses 16–26: Knowledge, detachment,
and spiritual realisation**

16. But for some people the ignorance shrouding the inner self (*atman*) is destroyed by knowledge. For such persons, knowledge acts like the sun and illuminates the higher reality.

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17. Their intelligence, their life and their conviction are devoted to that goal, for they are fully dedicated to it. Purged of contamination by means of knowledge, they go to the place from which there is no return.
18. The learned *pandit* perceives the same reality within a brahmin endowed with wisdom and good conduct, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and one who eats dogs.
19. Even whilst they are still in this world, persons whose minds are fixed in this state of equanimity conquer the process of creation. It is Brahman that is free of blemish and always the same and so they are situated in Brahman.
20. Such a person does not rejoice when he gains what is dear to him nor is he disturbed when he experiences something undesirable. His intellect is steady, he is free of delusion, he has knowledge of Brahman and he is situated in Brahman.
21. Remaining wholly unattached to external sensations, such a person finds joy in the self within. Absorbing himself in Brahman through yoga practice, he experiences joy that does not decay.
22. The pleasures that arise from sensory contacts are in fact sources of misery. They have a beginning and an end, Kaunteya, and so an enlightened person (*budha*) does not delight in them.
23. Any person in this world who is able to resist the force of desire and anger before being released from the body is indeed properly engaged in yoga and is a joyful man.
24. One whose happiness is within, whose pleasure is within and whose light is within is indeed a *yogin*. Existing as Brahman, he attains the state of *brahma nirvana*.
25. It is *rishis* who are free of contamination who gain that state of *brahma nirvana*. For them duality is dispelled, they are self-controlled and they take delight in the welfare of all beings.

26. This *brahma nirvana* quickly arises for sages detached from desire and anger, whose minds are controlled, and who have knowledge of the inner self.

Verses 27–29: A different kind of yoga

27. Setting aside external perceptions, fixing his vision between the eyebrows, bringing the *prana* and *apana* breaths into a state of equilibrium as they move within the nostrils,
28. And controlling the senses, mind, and intellect, the sage who constantly dedicates himself to liberation from rebirth and who has given up desire, fear, and anger, is indeed a liberated person.
29. Understanding me to be the true object of *yajña* and acts of austerity, the supreme lord of the all the worlds and the friend of all beings, he attains a state of absolute tranquillity.

Chapter 6



Verses 1–9: Renunciation as the basis for yoga

1. The Lord said: A person who performs the action he is duty-bound to perform whilst remaining detached from the fruit of action is a true renunciant (*samnyasin*) and a *yogin*, not one who never lights the sacrificial fire and does not perform the ritual.
2. You should know that that which they call *samnyasa* is in fact yoga, Pandava. One who has not given up the inclination for pleasure can never become a *yogin*.
3. For the sage who is a beginner in yoga, action is said to be the means, but for one who is advanced in yoga, tranquillity is said to be the means.
4. When he has no attachment for the objects of the senses or for performing action and when he gives up all material inclinations, he is said to be advanced in yoga.
5. One should elevate oneself by means of the self and one should never degrade oneself. One is indeed one's own friend and one's own enemy as well.
6. The self is the friend to one who gains self-control by means of the self. But when one has lost his self, then this very self acts like an enemy.
7. When a person has self-control and possesses inner tranquillity the supreme self is realised, whether there be heat or cold, happiness or distress, honour or dishonour.

8. Satisfied by his knowledge and realisation alone, situated in a higher position and mastering his senses, one who engages in this way is said to be a *yogin*. He regards a lump of earth, a stone, and gold equally.
9. When considering friends, allies, enemies, those who are indifferent, neutrals, those who hate, relatives, righteous persons, and the wicked, one who is equal-minded is in a superior position.

Verses 10–17: the practice of yoga

10. Staying in a secluded place, the *yogin* should engage himself constantly. He should remain alone, controlling his mind and self, without any aspiration and without any sense of ownership.
11. He should prepare a firm seat for himself in a clean place, not too high and not too low, covered with cloth, animal hide, and *kusha* grass.
12. Sitting there on his seat, fixing his mind on a single point, controlling the movements of his mind and senses, he should engage in yoga practice in order to purify himself.
13. Holding his body, head, and neck in a straight line, steady and without moving, he should concentrate on the point of his nose whilst not looking in any direction.
14. With his whole being in a state of tranquillity, free of fear, steady in his vow of celibacy, controlling his mind, with his thoughts concentrated on me, the practitioner should sit there, dedicating himself to me.
15. By constantly engaging himself in this way, the *yogin* who controls his mind attains the state of tranquillity, which culminates in *nirvana* and which rests upon me.
16. Yoga cannot be practised if one eats excessively or does not eat at all, nor if one sleeps too much or remains constantly awake.
17. The yoga that destroys suffering can be practised if one displays moderation in eating, leisure pursuits, performance of action, sleeping, and wakefulness.

Verses 18–32: The object and goal of meditation

18. When a person controls the mind (*citta*) and fixes it on the *atman* alone, untouched by any desires, he is then said to be properly engaged in yoga.
19. *Yogins* who have controlled the mind and who practise yoga in relation to the *atman* have been compared to a lamp in a windless place that never flickers.
20. When the restrained mind ceases from its activities due to the practice of yoga and when the *atman* is perceived by means of one's own faculties, so that a person finds satisfaction within the *atman*;
21. When one experiences that limitless joy, which is grasped by the intellect (*buddhi*) but is beyond the range of the senses, and remains fixed on it never wavering from that focus;
22. Then, after attaining this position, one realises that there is nothing superior to what has been achieved; when situated in this state of being one cannot be disturbed even by terrible suffering.
23. One should understand that what is known as yoga amounts to the breaking of the connection with suffering. Yoga must be performed with firm resolve and with a state of mind free from despondency.
24. This should be done whilst giving up all the desires that arise from material inclinations and restraining the entire group of senses by means of the mind alone.
25. One should undertake this withdrawal little by little, using the resolutely focussed intellect. Fixing the mind in conjunction with the *atman*, one should not think of any other object.
26. One must withdraw the wavering, unsteady mind from wherever it wanders and bring it back under control, fixed on the *atman* alone.
27. The highest joy comes to that *yogin* whose mind is tranquil, whose passions are quieted, who exists as Brahman, and who has no blemish.

28. Engaging himself constantly in this pursuit, the *yogin* who is free of blemish easily makes contact with Brahman and acquires endless joy.
29. One who engages in yoga practice sees the *atman* within all beings and all beings within the *atman*, maintaining this equal vision everywhere.
30. For one who sees me everywhere and who sees everything as existing within me, I am never lost and nor is he ever lost to me.
31. Regardless of the way he lives, one who adheres to this sense of oneness and worships me as the one situated within all beings is a *yogin* who exists in me.
32. One who thus sees everyone's pleasure and suffering as the same as his own, Arjuna, is considered to be the highest *yogin*.

Verses 33–36: Arjuna's misgivings about yoga

33. Arjuna said: I see no firm status for this yoga you have explained as being based on equal-mindedness, Madhusudana, because of this unsteadiness.
34. The mind is unsteady, Krishna, it is dominating, powerful, and very firm. I think controlling the mind is harder to achieve than controlling the wind!
35. The Lord said: Without doubt, O mighty one, the mind is flickering and difficult to restrain. But through constant endeavour and renunciation it can be restrained, Kaunteya.
36. In my opinion it is difficult for a person who lacks self-control to follow the path of yoga. But one who makes this endeavour after achieving self-mastery is able to do so by employing the proper means.

Verses 37–47: The fate of the yogin who falls short

37. Arjuna said: A person who does not endeavour enough but is endowed with faith may be distracted from yoga by the fluctuations of the mind and so fail to gain the goal of yoga. What result does he achieve, Krishna?

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38. With both his aims unachieved, is he not lost like a divided cloud without any real position, O mighty one, deluded from the path to Brahman?
39. You should completely dispel this doubt of mine, Krishna. Except for yourself, there is no one who can dispel it.
40. The Lord said: Neither here nor in the next world, Partha, is such a person ever lost. No one who does good will ever attain a bad result thereby.
41. After reaching the worlds enjoyed by the righteous and residing there for innumerable years, the failed *yogin* takes birth in the house of pure-hearted, prosperous people.
42. Or he may be born into a family of *yogins*, possessed of wisdom. A birth in this world of that type is very rarely attained.
43. There he regains the state of consciousness he achieved in his previous body and once more endeavours for perfection, O child of the Kurus.
44. He is drawn in that direction even against his will due to the regulated practice he previously undertook. Even a person who merely attempts to gain an understanding of yoga transcends the teachings of the Veda.
45. Through his continuous endeavour, the *yogin*, engaged in his practice and purified of faults, will gain perfection after several births and then proceed to the highest destination.
46. The *yogin* is superior to one who undertakes austerity. He is also regarded as being superior to one who possesses knowledge and to one who performs ritual action. Therefore, Arjuna, become a *yogin*.
47. And of all *yogins*, he who has faith and who worships me with his inner-self absorbed in me is the most advanced in yoga. That is my opinion.

Chapter 7



Verses 1–7: Krishna as the source of the world

1. The Lord said: Now hear, O Partha, how you can have full knowledge of me without any doubts by attaching your mind to me and practising yoga dedicated to me.
2. I shall explain to you in full both the *jñāna* and the *vijñāna*. When this is understood there is nothing else remaining that should be known.
3. Amongst thousands of men only one will endeavour for perfection, and amongst those who do endeavour and achieve that goal, only one will come to know me in truth.
4. Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect, and the sense of ego comprise the eight component parts of my energy known as *prakṛiti*.
5. This is the inferior *prakṛiti*, but you should also know about my higher *prakṛiti*, which is distinct from it. This is the element of life, O mighty one, the *jīva bhūta*, by means of which this world is held in place.
6. You should understand that these two are the origin, the womb of all living beings. I am the source of the entire world and its passing away as well.
7. There is no other thing superior to me, Dhananjaya. As jewels are strung on their thread so this whole world is strung upon me.

Verses 8–15: Krishna’s presence within the world

8. I am flavour in water, Kaunteya. I am the effulgence in the moon and the sun. I am Pranava (Om) in all the Vedas, I am sound in space and manliness in men.
9. And I am the primal aroma in earth; I am the heat in fire. I am life in all living beings; I am the austerity of those who undertake such austerities.
10. You should know me as the eternal seed of all beings, Partha. I am the intelligence of those who are intelligent; I am the energy of all energetic sources.
11. And I am the power of the powerful when it is devoid of desire and passion. I am desire in living beings, O best of the Bharatas, when it does not transgress dharma.
12. You should understand that the states of existence based on *sattva*, *rajas*, and on *tamas* come into being from me. But I am not in them; they are in Me.
13. Being deluded by these three states of being, in which the three *gunas* are inherent, the whole world cannot understand me, for I am beyond all three states and I am undecaying (*avyaya*).
14. This divine *maya* of mine consisting of the *gunas* is difficult to go beyond, but those who surrender to me alone cross beyond this *maya*.
15. The wrongdoers, the foolish, the lowest of men, persons whose knowledge is taken away by illusion (*maya*) and those who take to the asuric form of existence do not surrender to Me.

Verses 16–19: The four types of devotee

16. There are four types of righteous person who worship Me, Arjuna: one who is in distress, one who wishes to understand, one who seeks prosperity, and the *jñānin* who possesses knowledge, O best of the Bharatas.
17. Amongst these four the *jñānin* who is always properly engaged and has one-pointed devotion is the best. I am very dear to such a *jñānin* and he is dear to me.

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18. They are all noble persons but I regard the *jñānin* as my very self (*atma*). He is unwavering in dedicating himself to me alone as his ultimate goal.
19. At the end of many births one who possesses knowledge finally resorts to me, realising, ‘Vasudeva is all things.’ Such a *mahatma* is very rarely found.

Verses 20–23: Worshipping other gods

20. But those bereft of knowledge due to their pursuit of this or that desire surrender to other gods, accepting the appropriate discipline for worship as dictated by their own inner nature.
21. Whatever the form the devotee wishes to faithfully worship, I bestow upon him the firm faith that enables him to do so.
22. When endowed with such faith he then engages in the worship of that god and as a result attains what he desires. These desired objects are, however, granted by me alone.
23. The results of the worship performed by such unintelligent persons are all temporary. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods; my devotees come to me.

Verses 24–30: Perception of Krishna

24. Those who lack intelligence think of me as a non-manifest entity taking a manifest form. They do not know my higher nature, which is unfading and unsurpassed.
25. I am not manifest to all because I am concealed by *yog-amaya*. So this deluded world does not comprehend me, the one who is unborn and unfading.
26. I know the living beings of the past, the present, and the future, Arjuna, but there is no one who knows me.
27. Through the illusion of duality, Bharata, arising from desire and loathing, all living beings in this created world pass into a state of ignorance, Paramtapa.

28. But persons whose wickedness has reached an end and who are engaged in virtuous acts become free from the illusion of duality. They worship me and remain firm in their vows.
29. Those who resort to me and thereby endeavour for liberation (*moksha*) from old age and death fully understand Brahman and have complete knowledge of *adhy-atma* and of action (*karma*).
30. Those who also know me in relation to the *adhibhuta*, the *adhidiva*, and the *adhiyajña* can, with their consciousness fixed, know me even at the time of death.

Chapter 8



Verses 1–4: Some definitions

1. Arjuna said: What is that Brahman? What is *adhyatma*? What is karma, O Purushottama? And what is it that is defined as *adhibhuta*? What is it that is called *adhidaiva*?
2. What is the *adhiyajña*, O Madhusudana, and how is it present within this body? And how are you to be known at the time of death by those who have attained self-mastery?
3. The Lord said: That which decays not (*akshara*) is the Supreme Brahman; it is one's inherent nature (*sva-bhava*) that is referred to as *adhyatma*. The creative force producing the existence of living beings is known as *karma*.
4. *Adhibhuta* is the existence that decays (*kshara-bhava*), and *adhidaiva* is the soul within (*purusha*). I alone am the *adhiyajña* here in this body, O best of embodied beings.

Verses 5–16: Fixing the mind on Krishna

5. And one who leaves the body at the time of death whilst focusing the mind on me alone attains my existence. There is no doubt about that.
6. Whatever the state of being a man's mind is fixed upon at the time of death as he leaves his body is the state he then attains, Kaunteya, for a person develops into the type of existence he constantly dwells upon.

7. At all times therefore you should concentrate upon me and engage in battle. If your mind and intellect are fixed on me, you will be free from doubt and then you will come to me.
8. It is through the consciousness being absorbed without deviation in the disciplined practice of yoga that a man goes to the Supreme Divine Being upon whom his thoughts are fixed.
9. One should thus fix the mind upon the one who is the ancient seer, the controller who is smaller than the smallest thing, the ordainer of all that comes to pass, whose form is inconceivable, who is dazzling like the sun, and who is beyond all darkness.
10. At the time of death a person should absorb himself in devotion (*bhakti*) with an unwavering mind, using the power of yoga practice. Placing the life breath between the eyebrows in the proper way, he thereby attains that original Supreme Person.
11. I shall now briefly explain to you that *akshara* (undecaying) principle, which those who know the Vedas expound upon and which sages who are devoid of passion enter into. It is due to their desire for this position that they take vows of celibacy.
12. Sealing all the entrances of the body, fixing the mind upon the heart and keeping the life breath (*prana*) within the head, a person should remain steadfast in yoga concentration.
13. One who gives up his body and departs this world whilst reciting 'Om', the single syllable that is Brahman, and fixing his mind on me attains the highest destination.
14. For a person who always sets his mind on me and never allows his concentration to wander, a *yogin* constant in his practice, I am very easy to attain, Partha.
15. Each rebirth is miserable and temporary but after attaining me the *mahatmas* never take birth again, having achieved the highest state of perfection.

16. Repeated birth occurs in all the worlds right up to Brahmaloaka, Arjuna. But after attaining me, Kaunteya, there is no more rebirth.

Verses 17–22: The material and the spiritual domain

17. Those persons who understand his day and his night recognise the limit of Brahma's day as one thousand *yugas* (ages) and they understand his night as also lasting for a thousand *yugas*.
18. When the day commences all beings emerge from the *avyakta* (the non-manifest state of matter) and thereby become manifest. When the night comes, they merge once more into that which is designated as the *avyakta*.
19. Coming into being time and again, this host of living beings is helplessly merged back once more when the night comes. And at the coming of the day they appear again.
20. Beyond that *avyakta*, however, there is another *avyakta* (non-manifest) existence, which is eternal. When all living beings are destroyed that *avyakta* principle is not destroyed.
21. This *avyakta* is referred to as the *akshara*, non-decaying. They say it is the ultimate goal for on reaching this position one does not return. It is my supreme abode.
22. That Supreme Being (*purusha*), Partha, is attained by undivided devotion. The living beings are situated within him and he pervades this entire world.

Verses 23–28: Times for leaving the body

23. Now I shall speak of the time of departing in which the *yogins* do not return to this world and the time in which they do return, O best of the Bharatas.
24. Persons who have knowledge of Brahman (or the Vedas) and who depart during the fire, the light, the day, the bright half of the moon, or the six months when the sun is in the northern transit go to Brahman.

25. But a *yogin* who departs during the smoke, the night, the dark fortnight of the moon or the six months when the sun is in its southern transit come back to this world after entering the light of the moon.
26. Thus it is understood that there are these two paths from this world, the light and the dark, which exist eternally. By following one there is no return, but by following the other one comes back once more.
27. By understanding these two paths, Partha, the *yogin* is never bewildered. So engage yourself in the practice of yoga at all times, Arjuna.
28. A specific reward is ordained as the fruit of the merit (*punya*) acquired through study of the Vedas, sacrifice (*yajña*), religious austerity (*tapa*) or acts of charity, but by fully understanding this wisdom the *yogin* goes beyond this world and attains the supreme, original position.

Chapter 9



Verses 1–3: The introduction to the chapter

1. But now, O non-envious one, I will reveal to you this greatest of mysteries, including both the *jñāna* and the *vijñāna*. When this is understood you will be liberated from evil.
2. This teaching is the king of knowledge, the king of mysteries. This is the purest of all things. It can be realised by direct perception, it is based on dharma, it is very easy to perform and it is unfading.
3. Persons who have no faith in this dharma do not attain Me, Paramtapa. They return to the path of death and rebirth.

Verses 4–10: God and the world

4. This whole world is pervaded by me in my non-manifest form. All beings are situated in me but I am not present in them.
5. And yet the living beings are not situated in me; you should see this as my magical opulence. My own self is what causes living beings to exist; it sustains the living beings but is not situated within them.
6. The great wind, constantly moving through all places, is situated in space. You should understand that it is in this sense that all living beings are situated in me.
7. At the end of the period of creation (*kalpa*), Kaunteya, all beings enter into my *prakṛiti*, and at the beginning of a *kalpa*, I manifest them again.

8. Making use of this *prakṛiti* of mine, I repeatedly create this entire host of living beings. They are helpless for they are under the control of *prakṛiti*.
9. And these actions do not bind me, Dhanamjaya. It is as if I am situated in a position of neutrality, unattached to these actions.
10. It is through me alone that *prakṛiti* brings the moving and non-moving beings into existence, for I am the Controller. This is the reason why the world proceeds on its course.

Verses 11–15: Worship of Krishna

11. Fools despise me when I accept this human form. They do not understand my higher nature as the Supreme Lord of the living beings.
12. The hopes, deeds, and understanding of these unintelligent persons are futile. Falling prey to delusion they adopt the nature of *asuras* and *rakshasas*.
13. But the *mahatmas* inherit the divine nature, Partha. Understanding that I am the unchanging source of all beings, they worship me with undeviating minds.
14. Constantly singing my praises, engaging in resolute vows and bowing before me with devotion, they are always engaged in acts of worship.
15. There are others who make their offerings through the *jñāna-yaज्ञāna*, the sacrifice of knowledge, and who worship me as that which is one and yet still exists in many different forms, with faces turned in every direction.

Verses 16–19: The immanence of Krishna

16. I am the ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering made to the ancestors and I am the herbs. I am the *mantra*, I am the ghee, I am the sacred fire and I am the offering made into the fire.
17. I am the father of this world, the mother, the ordainer

and the grandfather. I am the object of knowledge, I am the purifier, I am the syllable *om*, and I am the Rik, the Sama and the Yajus.

18. I am the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend. I am creation, destruction, and the foundation, I am the treasury and I am the imperishable seed.
19. I bring forth warmth, I hold back the rain and I then release it. I am immortality and I am death. I am both being and non-being, Arjuna.

Verses 20–25: Worship of the gods and worship of Krishna

20. Drinking Soma, purged of sin (*papa*), those who follow the three Vedas seek the heavenly destination by worshipping me with *yajñas*. By this means they attain the pure domain presided over by the lord of the gods and in that heaven they experience the celestial pleasures enjoyed by the gods.
21. But after enjoying the delights of that extensive heavenly domain, they must re-enter the mortal world when their stock of piety (*punya*) is exhausted. So by adhering to the dharma of the three Vedas persons who seek to fulfil their desires merely go there and then again come back.
22. But then there are persons who worship me with undeviating concentration. For those who engage constantly in this way I bring both prosperity and security.
23. Those who are devoted to other gods and worship them with faith actually worship me alone, Kaunteya, but not in the manner that is properly ordained.
24. It is I alone who am the enjoyer and also the master of all *yajñas*. Such persons do not know me as such and so fall down from the position they attain.
25. Devotees of the gods go to the gods, devotees of the ancestors go to the ancestors, those who worship spirits go to the spirits but those who worship me go to me.

**Verses 26–34: Worship of Krishna
– The way of bhakti**

26. When it is presented in a mood of devotion, I will accept the devotional offering of a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water from one who is pure at heart.
27. Make whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever charity you give, and whatever austerities you undertake into an offering to Me, Kaunteya.
28. It is in this way that you will be liberated from both the good and evil results, which are the bonds of action. By engaging yourself in this yoga of renunciation, you will become liberated and you will come to me.
29. I am equal towards all living beings; no one is hated by me and no one is beloved. Those who worship me with devotion, however, are in me and I am in them.
30. Even if a person who thus worships me as his only object performs the most wicked deeds, still he is to be considered a *sadhu* for his resolution is correct.
31. He quickly becomes a *dharmatma*, committed to dharma, and attains enduring peace. Make it known, Kaunteya, that my devotee does not perish.
32. Having sought shelter with me, Partha, even those of evil births, as well as women, *vaisyas*, and *shudras*, go to the highest destination.
33. How much more so then in the case of righteous brahmins, and those religious kings (*raja-rishis*) who show devotion. So having reached this temporary world that is devoid of happiness, you should engage in worshipping me.
34. Fix your mind on me, become my devotee, worship me and bow down to me. By engaging yourself in such acts and dedicating yourself to me, you will surely come to me.

Chapter 10



Verses 1–7: Krishna as the origin of the world

1. The Lord said: Listen again, O mighty one, to the excellent words I will speak to you. You take delight in such matters and I desire your welfare.
2. The gods cannot comprehend my origin and neither do the great *rishis*. Indeed it is I who am the only source of the gods and the great *rishis*.
3. One who knows me as unborn and without beginning, as the great Lord of the worlds, is the one who is not deluded amongst mortal beings. He is liberated from all sins.
4. Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from illusion, tolerance, truthfulness, self-control, tranquillity, joy, misery, existence, non-existence, fear, fearlessness,
5. Not harming, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame, and infamy are the varied dispositions for living entities, which arise from me alone.
6. In the beginning the seven great *rishis* and the four Manus were endowed with my nature because they were born from my mind; all these living beings existing in the world are descended from them.
7. One who properly understands this glory and mystical power of mine is properly engaged through unwavering yoga discipline. There is no doubt about this.

Verses 8–11: Worship of Krishna

8. I am the origin of all things; everything comes into being from out of me. Understanding this, the enlightened ones worship me, filled with loving attachment.
9. Their minds are absorbed in me and their lives are given over to me, they enlighten one another about me. Talking constantly about me, they find satisfaction and delight.
10. To those who engage constantly in such practices, worshipping in a mood of love, I give that yoga of the intellect by means of which they come to me.
11. I am situated within their very being and out of compassion I destroy the darkness that arises from ignorance with the blazing torch of knowledge.

Verses 12–15: Arjuna accepts Krishna's divine status

12. Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the supreme abode and the supreme purifier. You are the eternal divine *purusha*, the primordial Deity, unborn and all-pervading.
13. All the *rishis* speak of you in this way, including Narada the divine *rishi*, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa. Now you yourself are declaring it to me.
14. I accept everything you have said to me as true, O Keshava. Neither the gods nor the Danavas (*asuras*) can understand your manifestation, O Lord.
15. You alone can understand your own Self by your own power, O Supreme Person, for you are the source of all living beings. You are the Lord of all beings, the god of gods, the Lord of the world.

Verses 16–18: How can one conceive of Krishna?

16. You should now fully explain your own divine glories. Tell me about those glorious attributes through which you pervade these worlds and remain present

within them.

17. How can I come to know you, O *yogin*, and constantly fix my mind upon you? In what forms of existence can I conceive of you, O Lord?
18. Speak to me again at length, Janardana, about this yoga of yours and your glorious power (*vibhuti*). I am never fully satiated when hearing these ambrosial words.

Verses 19–38: Krishna’s presence within this world

19. The Lord said:Very well, I will speak about my own divine attributes, but only those that are most prominent, O best of the Kurus, for there is no limit to the extent of my manifestation.
20. I am the *atman*, Gudakesha, situated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning of the living beings and I am their middle and end as well.
21. Amongst the Adityas I am Vishnu, amongst luminous objects I am the radiant sun. Amongst the Maruts I am Marichi and amongst stars I am the moon.
22. Of the Vedas I am the Sama Veda, amongst the gods I am Vasava (Indra). Amongst the senses I am the mind and amongst living beings I am consciousness.
23. Amongst the Rudras I am Shankara, amongst the Yakshas and Rakshasas I am Vittesha. Amongst the Vasus I am fire (Agni) and amongst high-peaked mountain I am Meru.
24. Amongst priests know me to be Brihaspati, the foremost amongst them. Amongst generals I am Skanda and amongst bodies of water I am the ocean.
25. Amongst the great *rishis* I am Bhrigu, amongst utterances I am the one syllable (*om*). Amongst *yajñas* I am the Japa Yajña and of things that move not, I am Himalaya.
26. Amongst all the trees I am the Ashvattha (fig) tree, amongst the divine *rishis* I am Narada. Amongst the Gandharvas I am Chitraratha and amongst those who

- have achieved perfection I am the sage Kapila.
27. Amongst horses, know me to be Uchchishravas who appeared from the nectar. Amongst the lords of the elephants I am Airavata and amongst men I am the sovereign.
 28. Amongst weapons I am the thunderbolt, amongst cows I am the *kamadhuk*. Amongst progenitors I am Kandarpa and amongst serpents I am Vasuki.
 29. Amongst the Nagas I am Ananta, amongst those who inhabit the waters I am Varuna. Amongst the ancestors I am Aryaman and amongst those who exert control I am Yama.
 30. Amongst the Daityas I am Prahlada, amongst those who calculate I am time. Amongst beasts I am the lion, the king of the beasts, and amongst birds I am Vainateya (Garuda).
 31. Of purifiers I am the wind, amongst those who bear weapons I am Rama. Amongst fishes I am the Makara and amongst rivers I am Jahnavi (Ganga).
 32. Amongst created objects I am the beginning and the end and I am the middle as well, Arjuna. Of all forms of knowledge I am knowledge of the *atman* and in debaters I am the ability to reach the ultimate conclusion.
 33. Amongst letters I am the letter 'a', amongst compound words I am the dual word. I am time that has no end and I am the Ordainer facing all directions.
 34. I am death who devours everyone, I am the origin of all things yet to be. Amongst feminine virtues I am fame, good fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, endurance, and forgiveness.
 35. Of the Sama hymns I am the Brihat Sama and amongst Vedic metres I am the Gayatri. Of the months I am Margashirsha and of the seasons I am that which brings the flowers.
 36. Amongst cheats I am dicing, I am the energy of those who possess energy. I am victory, I am resolution, and I

- am the existence of all that exists.
37. Amongst the Vrishnis I am Vaasudeva (Krishna), amongst the Pandavas I am Dhananjaya (Arjuna). Amongst sages I am Vyasa and amongst seers I am the seer named Ushanas.
 38. Amongst those who chastise I am punishment, amongst those who seek victory I am good policy. Amongst secrets I am silence and I am the wisdom of the wise.

Verses 39–42: Explanation of the divine presence

39. And I am that which is the seed of all living beings, Arjuna. There is no living being, moving or non-moving, which exists without me.
40. There is no end to my divine glories, Paramtapa; what I have revealed is just an indication of the extent of my glory.
41. You should understand that whenever a glorious form of existence displays its opulence or power, this arises from a small part of my splendour.
42. But what is the need for you to understand it to its full extent, Arjuna? It is enough to know that I am present here, sustaining the whole world with just one part of myself.

Chapter 11



Verses 1–4: Arjuna’s request for a vision of the divine presence

1. Arjuna said: For my benefit you have explained the ultimate mystery, which is known as the *adhyatma*. Through this explanation my illusion is now gone.
2. I have heard from you at length about the beginning and end of the living beings, O lotus-eyed one, and about your inexhaustible power.
3. You are certainly what you have described yourself to be, O Parameshvara, and I now wish to behold that glorious form of yours, O Purushottama.
4. If you think it is possible for me to see it, O Lord, then reveal to me your unchanging Self, O Yogeshvara.

Verses 5–8: Krishna agrees to Arjuna’s request

5. The Lord said: Behold, O Partha, hundreds and thousands of my divine forms; they are of various different types, of many colours and configurations.
6. Behold the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Ashvins, and Maruts, numerous things that have never before been seen. Behold these wonders, O Bharata.
7. Now behold the entire world with its moving and non-moving creatures situated as one within my body, O Gudakesha, and whatever else you wish to see.
8. But you cannot see me in this way with your own eyes and so I give to you divine vision. Now behold my glorious yoga!

Verses 9–14: Manifestation of the Vishva-rupa

9. Samjaya said: When he had spoken these words, O king, Hari the great lord of yoga revealed to Partha his supreme, glorious form.
10. It had many mouths and eyes and many features wonderful to behold. It had many divine ornaments and many divine weapons, raised aloft.
11. It was adorned with celestial garlands and raiments and was anointed with celestial perfumes. This limitless Deity was wondrous in all ways, with faces on all sides.
12. If a thousand suns were to rise in the sky at the same time, each with a blazing effulgence, it might then resemble the wondrous radiance of that great being.
13. The Pandava then saw the entire world, undivided and yet manifold, situated there in one place within the body of the god of gods.
14. Thereupon Dhananjaya became filled with wonder and the hair on his body stood erect. Bowing his head to that Deity and placing his palms together, he then began to speak.

Verses 15–31: Description of the Vishva-rupa

15. Arjuna said: I see all the gods in your body, O Lord, and the entire host of different living beings. I see Brahma, the lord, who remains seated on a lotus, and all the *rishis* and celestial serpents.
16. With so many arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes, I see you with this unlimited form that spreads everywhere. There is no end, no middle, and no beginning as I behold you, for you are the Lord of the world and the world is your body (*vishva rupa*).
17. I see you with a crown, club, and disc, and your fiery effulgence illuminates all directions. I see you everywhere though you are so difficult to look upon, for the blazing light of fire and sun spreads beyond measure.

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18. You are the Supreme Akshara (undeteriorating), that which must be known. You are the ultimate abode of this world. You are unfading (*avyaya*), the guardian of the eternal dharma and I regard you as the eternal *purusha*.
19. You are without beginning, middle, or end, and have limitless power. You have innumerable arms and the sun and moon are your eyes. I see you with blazing fire as your mouth as you heat this entire world with your radiance.
20. From the heavens to the earth, the whole sky is pervaded by you alone and so are all the directions. After seeing this wonderful and yet terrible form of yours the three worlds are trembling, O Mahatma.
21. These hosts of celestial beings are entering into you; some are afraid and praise you with folded palms. The hosts of *rishis* and perfect beings (*siddhas*) proclaim the sound *svasti*, and glorify you with hymns and words of praise.
22. The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Vishva-devas, Ashvins, Maruts, ancestors, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas are all beholding you in utter astonishment.
23. This great form of yours has many mouths and eyes, O mighty one, and has many arms, thighs, and feet. It has many bellies and many fearsome teeth. After seeing this form the worlds tremble in fear and so do I!
24. You are radiant and multicoloured, you touch the limit of the sky, your gaping mouths are wide open and your wonderful eyes are blazing. Seeing you thus, my inner self is trembling with fear; I cannot maintain my steadiness or composure, O Vishnu.
25. Seeing your mouths with their terrible teeth, which are like the flames at the end of the world, I can no longer recognise the directions or find any peace. Be merciful, O Lord of the gods, abode of the world.

26. All these sons of Dhritarashtra along with this host of the kings of the earth, as well as Bhishma, Drona, the *suta's* son, and the great warriors of our army as well
27. Are all rushing forth and entering your mouths with those terrible teeth that are so terrifying. Some of them can be seen caught between those teeth with their heads being crushed.
28. As the many currents of the rivers rush with force and flow towards the ocean, so these heroes amongst men enter your blazing mouths.
29. As moths meet with destruction by rapidly entering a blazing fire, so the people of the world rush forward and meet with destruction by entering your mouths.
30. Devouring the worlds from all sides, you lick them all up with your blazing mouths. Having filled the entire universe with its energy, this terrible effulgence of yours is scorching everything, O Vishnu.
31. Tell me who you are with this fearful form. I bow down to you, be merciful, O greatest of the gods. I wish to know you, the primordial being. I cannot comprehend the acts you are engaged in.

**Verses 32–34: Time, the great
destroyer of the worlds**

32. The Lord said: I am all-powerful time that brings destruction to the world. My activity here is to put an end to these worlds. Even without you, none of these warriors assembled here in battle array will survive.
33. Therefore arise and win renown. Defeat your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. These warriors are already slain by me and you should merely be my instrument, Savyasachin.
34. Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna, and the other heroic warriors have already been killed by me, so you may slay them without hesitation. Fight and you will defeat your enemies in the battle.

Verses 35–46: Arjuna’s prayers

35. Samjaya said: After hearing Keshava’s words, Kiritin joined his palms and paid his respects whilst trembling in fear. He then addressed Krishna again in stuttering tones, bowing down in a mood of awe and fear.
36. Arjuna said: As is appropriate, Hrishikesha, the world is delighted by your glorification and becomes joyful. Whilst the terrified *rakshasas* flee in various directions, the hosts of perfect beings bow down before you.
37. Why should they not bow before you, O Mahatma, for you are greater even than Brahma, the original creator of the world. You are the unlimited lord of the gods, the abode of the world; you are the *aksharam*, (that which does not decay); you are being and non-being and that which lies beyond both.
38. You are the original Deity, the primeval *purusha*. You are the ultimate resting place of this world. You are the knower and that which is to be known, the supreme, the abode. This entire world is pervaded by you, O you of limitless form.
39. You are Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the Moon, Prajapati, and the great-grandfather. I bow to you, I bow to you a thousand times over, and then still I bow to you once again.
40. I bow to you from the front, I bow from behind, and I bow from all sides, for you are everything. Your power is unlimited and your might cannot be measured. It is you alone who reach into all things, and therefore you are that which is all things.
41. Thinking of you as a friend, I spoke presumptuously, saying, ‘O Krishna, O Yadava, O my friend.’ I was unaware of your greatness and I did this because I did not understand, or perhaps out of affection.
42. Making jokes, I behaved improperly towards you whilst we were passing time together, resting, sitting, or eating, sometimes when we were alone and sometimes when

- others were present, Achyuta. Now I beg your forgiveness for you are beyond all measure.
43. You are the father of the moving and non-moving beings, you are the object of worship for the world and you are the greatest teacher. No one is your equal so how could anyone in the three worlds be greater than you? Your power is unrivalled.
 44. Therefore I bow down to you and prostrate my body. I seek your grace for you are the worshipful Lord. Please tolerate my conduct, O Lord, as a father to a son, a friend to a friend, or a lover to his beloved.
 45. I was thrilled to see this form that was never previously seen, but my mind is disturbed by fear. Now show me that other form, O Lord. Show me mercy, O lord of the gods, abode of the world.
 46. I now wish to see you with a crown, a club, and a disc in your hand. O thousand-armed one, O Vishva Murti, please now assume once more your four-armed form.

Verses 47–50: Krishna reassumes his human form

47. The Lord said: It was as an act of grace, Arjuna, that I displayed that supreme form to you by means of my own powers of yoga. That form is filled with energy, it is universal, it is unlimited and primeval. I have never displayed it to anyone but yourself.
48. Not through the Veda, *yajña*, recitation, charity, ritual, or harsh austerity can I be seen in this form by anyone other than you in the world of men, O hero of the Kurus.
49. Do not tremble with fear and do not be bewildered after seeing this form of mine, which is so fearful. Let your fears be dispelled and let your mind be contented; now behold once more that form of mine.
50. Samjaya said: After speaking to Arjuna in this way, Vasudeva again revealed to him his own form. That great soul consoled the frightened Arjuna by again assuming his benign form.

**Verses 51–55: Bhakti Is the key
to knowledge of God**

51. Arjuna said: Seeing this benign human form of yours, Janardana, my mind is now at peace and I have regained my normal condition.
52. The Lord said: It is very hard to gain a vision of this form of mine that you have seen. Even the gods are always longing for a vision of this form.
53. Not through the Vedas, austerity, charity, or sacrificial offerings is it possible to see me in the way that you have seen me here.
54. Only through undivided devotion, Arjuna, is it possible to know me and to see me in this form and indeed to enter into me, Paramtapa.
55. One who performs his deeds for me, regards me as supreme, becomes my devotee, remains free of attachments and has no hatred for any living being will come to me, Pandava.

Chapter 12



Verses 1–5: Bhakti or jñana, which is the superior path?

1. Arjuna said: Between those devotees who dedicate themselves to you, being constantly engaged in the way you have described, and those who revere the non-manifest *akshara* feature, who have the superior understanding of yoga?
2. The Lord said: In My opinion, those who fix their minds on me, who constantly engage in serving me and who possess absolute faith are engaged in the best way possible.
3. But those who dedicate themselves to the non-deteriorating (*akshara*), indeterminate, non-manifest feature, which is present everywhere, is unknowable, and is situated in the transcendent realm, unmoving and constant,
4. Who control their senses and who are equal-minded in all ways also attain me, delighting as they do in the welfare of all beings.
5. But there is greater difficulty involved for those whose thoughts adhere to the non-manifest feature. For embodied beings the way to the non-manifest feature is one of suffering.

Verses 6–7: The grace of God – Krishna saves

6. But for those who are devoted to me, who surrender all their actions to me, who worship me and meditate on me through single-pointed yoga,

7. I become without delay the deliverer from the ocean of death and rebirth, Partha, for their consciousness is absorbed in me.

**Verses 8–12: Different types
of devotion**

8. Set your mind on me alone; let your understanding enter into me. You will then dwell in me alone, of this there is no doubt.
9. If you are not able to hold your consciousness steadily upon me, then you should seek to attain me by means of regulated yoga practice, O Dhananjaya.
10. If you are unable even to undertake this regulated practice, then dedicate yourself to working on my behalf. By performing acts on my behalf you can still achieve success.
11. And if you are unable to undertake the practice of yoga dedicated to me, then gain self-control and practise the renunciation of the fruits of all action.
12. Knowledge is better than regulated practice and meditation is superior to knowledge. Renouncing the fruits of action is better than meditation for from renunciation comes unending peace.

Verses 13–20: The qualities of the devotee

13. He has no hatred for any living being, he shows goodwill and compassion; he has no sense of possession and no pride, he remains equal in misery and joy, and he has endurance;
14. He is always contented, he is a *yogin* possessing self-control; he is firm in his commitment and he absorbs his mind and intelligence in me: such a devotee is loved by me.
15. No one in the world has fear of him and he does not fear anyone in the world; he feels no elation, distress, fear, or passion; such a person is loved by me.

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16. He has no hankerings, he is pure, expert, indifferent, free of anxiety, and he has renounced his material endeavours; such a devotee is loved by me.
17. He does not rejoice or hate, lament, or hanker, and he has renounced both pleasing and vile objects; such a devoted one is loved by me.
18. He is equally disposed toward an enemy and a friend, he regards honour and contempt as the same, he has equal regard for heat and cold, and for joy and misery, and he has given up all attachment to the world.
19. He is unmoved by condemnation or praise, he is silent and satisfied with whatever befalls him, he has no permanent abode, and he is steady in his understanding; such a devoted one is loved by me.
20. Those who venerate with full faith the immortal teaching based on dharma which I have spoken here, who are dedicated to me and are my devotees, are dearly loved by me.

Chapter 13



Verses 1–4: Kshetra and kshetrajña

1. The Lord said: This body, Kaunteya, is referred to as the *kshetra* (field); those who understand such matters speak of the one who has knowledge of the field as the *kshetrajña*, the knower of the field.
2. You should also understand that I am the *kshetrajña* present within all the *kshetras*, Bharata. Knowledge of the *kshetra* and *kshetrajña* is knowledge indeed; that is my opinion.
3. So listen to me now as I explain briefly about the *kshetra* and what it is like, about the transformations it undergoes and about which one of them comes from the other. I will also explain who he is and what his powers are.
4. This subject has been sung about by the *rishis* in many ways in various hymns of the Veda. It has also been explained through reasoned conclusions in the aphorisms of the *Brahma Sutra*.

Verses 5–6: Explanation of the kshetra

5. The great elements, the sense of ego (*ahamkara*), the intellect (*buddhi*), matter in its non-manifest state (*avyakta*), the eleven senses, and the five objects they perceive,
6. Desire, loathing, joy, misery, the aggregate of all faculties, consciousness, and resolve; this in short is what is known as the *kshetra*, along with the transformations it undergoes.

Verses 7–11: Explanation of jñāna

7. Avoiding pride and deceit, not harming, patience, honesty, serving the *acharya*, purity, steadfastness, self-control,
8. Detachment from the objects of the senses, being free of the sense of ego, perceiving the problem inherent in the misery of birth, death, old age, disease, and suffering,
9. Being without attachment and without affection for sons, wife, home, and other such things, always maintaining an equal disposition whatever happens, be it desirable or undesirable,
10. Maintaining undeviating devotion to me through yoga fixed on no other point, living in a deserted place, taking no pleasure in other people's company,
11. Constant dedication to the knowledge designated as *adhyatma* (relating to the *atman*) and perceiving the true object of knowledge; all this is said to be *jñāna* (knowledge) and everything else is said to be *ajñāna* (ignorance).

**Verses 12–18: Explanation of jñeya,
'that which must be known'**

12. I shall now speak about the *jñeya*, the object we must strive to know, for when this is known one attains immortality. It is without beginning, it is the Supreme Brahman (or it is without beginning and dependent on me); it is said that it is neither existent nor non-existent.
13. Its hands and feet are everywhere, its eyes, heads, and mouths are everywhere, its ears are everywhere in the world; thus it remains, pervading all things.
14. It appears to have the attributes of senses and yet in truth it is devoid of senses. It is without attachment but it supports all things, it is free of the *gunas* and yet it experiences the *gunas*.
15. It is both outside and within the living beings; it moves and yet it is unmoving. Because of its subtle nature it is hard to know; it is far away but very close as well.

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16. It appears to be divided up within different living beings and yet it remains undivided. This sustainer of living beings is the *jñeya* that which must be known; it devours them and it brings them into being as well.
17. It is the light of luminous objects and is said to be beyond the darkness. It is knowledge, the object that should be known, and it is accessible through knowledge; it is situated within the heart of all beings.
18. Now *kshetra*, *jñana*, and *jñeya* have all been briefly explained. After realising this truth, my devotee becomes ready to achieve my state of existence.

Verses 19–23: Prakriti and purusha

19. You should understand that both *prakriti* (matter) and *purusha* (spirit) have no beginning. You should also know that all transformations and the *gunas* have their origin in *prakriti*.
20. In terms of the enactment of the process of cause and effect, *prakriti* is said to be the ultimate cause whilst in the experiencing of joy and misery, *purusha* is said to be the cause.
21. Whilst situated within the domain of *prakriti*, the *purusha* experiences the attributes that arise from *prakriti*. Attachment to these attributes is the cause of the *purusha*'s birth in both auspicious and inauspicious wombs.
22. The Supreme *purusha* within the body is the witness and the one who grants permission, the sustainer, the enjoyer, the great Lord (*maheshvara*). It is he who is spoken of as *paramatman* (the supreme soul).
23. Whatever a person's state of existence, if he thus understands *purusha*, as well as *prakriti* with its *gunas*, he never takes birth again.

**Verses 24–34: Knowledge and
the goal of knowledge**

24. It is by means of the self that some perceive the self within themselves through meditation. Others do this through the yoga based on Samkhya and others again through *karma-yoga*.
25. Then there are still others who do not gain knowledge by any of these means but devote themselves to the self after hearing from other people. Dedicating themselves what they have learnt in this way, they too go beyond death.
26. You should understand that every being that has come into existence, moving or non-moving, arises from this combination of *kshetra* and *kshetrajña*, Bharata.
27. The Supreme Lord is equally present in all living beings; when the body is destroyed he is not destroyed. One who can perceive his presence truly sees.
28. By perceiving the same Lord situated everywhere a person will not harm the self by means of the self. As a result of this realisation he goes to the supreme abode.
29. All types of action are performed by *prakriti* (matter) alone. The *atman* is never the performer of action. One who sees this truly sees.
30. When a person sees the manifold existence of living beings situated as one entity and that they expand from out of that one entity, he then attains Brahman.
31. Because it is without beginning and is untouched by the *gunas*, even though it is situated within the body, this unchanging *paramatman* does not act and is not defiled.
32. Just as all-pervasive space is never contaminated due to its subtle nature, so the *atman*, situated within the body in all places, is not contaminated.
33. And just as the sun alone illuminates this whole world, so the *kshetrin* within it illuminates the entire *kshetra*, Bharata.

Chapter 13

34. Persons who possess the eye of knowledge can comprehend the distinction between *kshetra* and *kshetrajñā*, and the liberation of living beings from *prakṛiti*. Such persons reach the supreme.

Chapter 14



Verses 1–2: Introduction to the chapter

1. Once more I will speak to you about the highest knowledge, which is supreme amongst all types of knowledge. Comprehending this wisdom, all the sages achieve the highest perfection when they depart from this world.
2. Devoting themselves to this knowledge, they come to my own state of being. Hence they are not born at the time of creation and at the time of destruction they remain undisturbed.

Verses 3–4: Creation as the impregnation of the womb of brahman

3. My womb is the great Brahman and I deposit the seed of life therein. Thence arises the origin of all beings, Bharata.
4. Different forms appear in all the various wombs, Kaunteya, but the great Brahman is the womb for them all and I am the father who bestows the seed.

Verses 5–13: A discourse on the three gunas

5. *Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are the *gunas* arising from *prakriti*. They bind the changeless, embodied entity within the body, O mighty one.
6. Of these *gunas*, because *sattva* is flawless it is luminous and has no contamination. It is through attachment to happiness and attachment to knowledge (*jñana*) that it causes bondage, O sinless one.

7. You should understand that *rajas* is of the nature of passion; it gives rise to hankering and attachment. It binds the embodied entity through attachment to action, Kaunteya.
8. And you should know that *tamas*, which is delusion for all embodied beings, appears due to ignorance. It causes bondage through negligence, lethargy, and sleep.
9. *Sattva* causes one to adhere to happiness whilst *rajas* causes adherence to action, Bharata, and by obscuring a person's wisdom *tamas* creates adherence to negligence.
10. *Sattva* prevails by subjugating *rajas* and *tamas*, Bharata; *rajas* prevails by subjugating *sattva* and *tamas*, and *tamas* prevails by subjugating *sattva* and *rajas*.
11. When the illumination of knowledge appears in all the doorways in this body then one should understand that *sattva* has become dominant.
12. Greed, endeavour, engagement in activities, agitation, hankering; these appear when *rajas* becomes dominant, O best of the Bharatas.
13. Dullness, inaction, misunderstanding, delusion; these appear when *tamas* becomes dominant, O child of the Kurus.

Verses 14–18: The gunas and rebirth

14. When the embodied soul encounters death whilst *sattva* predominates, it then moves on to the pure worlds obtained by those who possess the highest knowledge.
15. If he meets with death whilst *rajas* predominates, he takes birth amongst those attached to action and if he dies whilst *tamas* predominates he is reborn within the wombs of those who are deluded.
16. They say that the fruit of righteous deeds is Sattvic and without blemish. But suffering is the fruit of *rajas* and ignorance is the fruit of *tamas*.
17. Knowledge arises from *sattva* and greed arises from *rajas*. Negligence and delusion arise from *tamas*, and ignorance as well.

18. Those who adhere to *sattva* move upwards, those who adhere to *rajas* remain in between, whilst those who adhere to *tamas* and follow the ways of the lowest *guna* go downwards.

Verses 19–20: Moksha: going beyond the gunas

19. When the seer observes that there is no agent of action other than the *gunas* and gains knowledge of that which is beyond the *gunas*, he attains my state of being.
20. Transcending these three *gunas* that cause the body to exist, the embodied entity is liberated from the misery of birth, death, and old age, and attains immortality.

Verses 21–25: The characteristics of one who has transcended the gunas

21. Arjuna said: What are the characteristics of one who has transcended these three *gunas*, O Lord? How does he behave? How does he go beyond the three *gunas*?
22. The Lord said: He does not hate illumination, activity, or delusion when they appear, Pandava, and neither does he long for them when they disappear.
23. He remains indifferent, as if undisturbed by the *gunas*, thinking, 'It is the *gunas* alone that are active'. He thus remains steady and does not waver.
24. He is equally disposed in distress and happiness, he is self-contained, and he views a lump of earth, a stone, and gold as the same. He is firmly resolved and he is equally disposed towards those who are dear to him and those who are not. Likewise he is equally disposed when criticised or glorified.
25. Whether honoured or condemned he is still the same, and he is equally disposed towards friends and foes. He has abandoned all his worldly endeavours. Such a person is said to be beyond the *gunas*.

**Verses 26–27: Going beyond the
gunas through bhakti**

26. And one who reveres me through undeviating *bhakti-yoga* also transcends the *gunas* and becomes fit to attain the state of Brahman.
27. For I am the foundation on which the immortal, unchanging Brahman exists. I am also the foundation of the eternal dharma and of absolute joy.

Chapter 15



Verses 1–6: The world as an inverted tree

1. The Lord said: They speak of an unfading Ashvattha tree with its roots above, its branches below, and the Vedic hymns as its leaves. One who understands this tree has knowledge of the Vedas.
2. Its branches spread out above and below, nourished by the *gunas*. The objects of the senses are its shoots. Its roots also spread down below into the human domain where they become combined with action.
3. Its form cannot be identified for it has no end and no beginning and no foundation either. Using the sharp weapon of detachment, one should cut down this firmly-rooted Ashvattha tree.
4. One should then seek that position from which, once attained, there is no return, thinking, 'I surrender to that original being (*purusha*) out of whom flowed forth the primeval creative impulse.'
5. Without pride or folly, overcoming the barrier of attachment, constantly absorbed in knowledge of the *atman*, with desires nullified, free from the duality identified as pleasure and suffering, those who are free of illusion then progress to that changeless state of being.
6. The sun does not illuminate that place, neither does the moon or fire. Having gone there one does not return; that is my supreme abode.

Verses 7–11: The transmigrating soul

7. In the world of living beings (*jiva-loka*), the eternal living element is nothing but a part of me. It draws to itself the five senses and the mind, which is the sixth, all of which reside in *prakriti*.
8. When the Lord (*ishvara*) takes on a body and when he moves out from it, he holds on to these six and moves on in the way the wind carries aromas from their original place.
9. Presiding over the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, as well as the mind, he then experiences the objects of the senses.
10. Whether he is departing or remaining, or whether he is experiencing the world by association with the *gunas*, those who are deluded do not perceive him. Those, however, who possess the eye of knowledge can perceive him.
11. *Yogins* who pursue their endeavours perceive him situated within their own being, but those who are unintelligent and fail to achieve self-mastery are never able to perceive him despite making the endeavour.

Verses 12–14: The presence of god within the world

12. The energy emanating from the sun, which illuminates the entire universe, and that of the moon and fire as well: you should know that energy as mine alone.
13. Entering into the earth, I sustain the living beings through my potency. Becoming the moon, which is imbued with liquid potency, I nourish all the plants.
14. I become the *vaishvanara* energy, the digestive heat, and in this form reside within the bodies of the living beings. By combining with the *prana* and *apana* breaths, I digest the four types of food.

Verses 15–20: The three eternal principles

15. And I am situated in the hearts of all; memory, knowledge, and the loss of knowledge arise from me. It is I alone who am to be understood from all the Vedas. I am the creator of Vedanta and I alone am the knower of the Vedas.
16. In the world there are these two *purushas*, the *kshara* (decaying), and the *akshara* (non-decaying). The *kshara* is all living beings, whilst that which is situated beyond it is referred to as *akshara*.
17. But the highest *purusha* is different again and is designated as the *paramatman*. This is the immutable Lord who enters the threefold world and sustains it.
18. And because I am beyond the *kshara* and superior to the *akshara* as well, I am therefore celebrated in both general speech and in the Veda as ‘Purushottama’.
19. One who is not deluded and knows me thus as *purushottama*, knows all things. He then worships me with his entire existence, O Bharata.
20. I have now revealed this most secret of teachings, O sinless one. One who comprehends this doctrine is wise indeed and has fulfilled all his duties, O Bharata.

Chapter 16



Verses 1–6: The *daivi sampad* and the *asuri sampad*

1. Fearlessness, being pure at heart, remaining resolute in the pursuit of knowledge through yoga practice, charity, self-control, performing sacrifices, study of the Vedas, austerity, honesty;
2. Not harming, truthfulness, avoiding anger, renunciation, tranquillity, never maligning others, compassion for other beings, being free of greed, kindness, modesty, never wavering;
3. Energy, patience, resolve, purity, the absence of malice, and of arrogance; these constitute the qualities of one born with the *daivi sampad*, the godly disposition, Bharata.
4. Deceit, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness, and ignorance are the qualities of one born with the *asuri sampad*, the asuric disposition, Partha.
5. The *daivi sampad* leads to liberation but the *asuri sampad* is regarded as a cause of bondage. Do not be concerned, you have been born with the *daivi sampad*, Pandava.
6. There are two types of living being in this world, the *daiva* and the *asura*. I have described the *daiva* at some length so now hear from me about the *asura* disposition, Partha.

**Verses 7–18: The asuri sampad,
the nature of wicked persons**

7. Asuric persons know nothing about the performance of ritual action or about the renunciation of action. Neither purity nor good conduct are ever found in them, nor indeed is truthfulness.
8. They say, ‘The world has no truth to it, it has no absolute basis and no presiding Deity. It comes into being without any causal factor. What cause for existence can there be apart from sexual desire?’
9. Those who have destroyed their own selves and have little intelligence adhere to views of this type. Inimical to all, they then engage in cruel deeds and bring destruction to the world.
10. Pursuing insatiable desires and filled with deceit, pride, and passion, due to delusion they adhere rigidly to their false conceptions and proceed on the basis of impure resolve.
11. Right up to the point of death they are beset by limitless anxieties, devoting themselves to the fulfilment of sensual desires, convinced there is nothing more than that.
12. Bound by hundreds of ropes in the form of their aspirations, dominated by desire and anger, they accumulate wealth by immoral means in order to fulfil their desires.
13. ‘I have obtained this much today and I will obtain more to satisfy my desire. This much wealth is mine now and this much more will come to me in the future.
14. ‘I have slain this enemy and I will kill the others as well. I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am successful, powerful, and happy.
15. ‘I am wealthy and born into a good family. Who is there who can be my equal? I will perform sacrifices, I will give charity and thus I will rejoice.’ Such are the ideas of those deluded by ignorance.

16. Being distracted by so many different notions, entangled in the net of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of their sensual desires, they fall down into an impure state of hell.
17. Being full of self-importance, stubborn, and intoxicated by wealth, pride, and passion, they dishonestly perform rituals that are *yajña* in name only, deviating from the prescribed method.
18. Absorbing themselves in egotism, strength, arrogance, desire, and anger, they display hatred and envy towards me, present as I am in their own bodies and in the bodies of others as well.

**Verses 19–24: The fate of the
wickedly and the godly**

19. Those cruel persons are filled with hatred and are the lowest of men. Within the cycle of rebirth, I cast such impure beings into *asura* wombs where they stay for ever.
20. Entering an asuric womb birth after birth, such fools never attain me, Kaunteya, and so they fall down to the lowest state of existence.
21. This doorway to hell that destroys the soul is threefold, consisting of desire, anger, and greed. You should therefore renounce these three.
22. A man who frees himself from these three gateways of *tamas*, Kaunteya, can act for his own welfare and then proceed to the highest abode.
23. One who abandons the rules ordained by scripture and acts according to his own desire can never attain perfection, happiness, or the highest abode.
24. Therefore scripture should be your authority in establishing what should and should not be done. When you understand the rules revealed by scripture, you can then act in accordance with your duty.

Chapter 17



Verses 1–4: The significance of faith

1. Arjuna said: There are some people who faithfully make offerings but ignore scriptural rules. What is their status, Krishna? Is it said to be in *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas*?
2. The Lord said: The faith of embodied beings arises from their inherent nature and is of three types. It can be based on *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas*. Now hear about this.
3. For all beings, the faith they have corresponds to their nature, Bharata. A person is formed by his faith, for the nature of that faith shapes what he is.
4. Those who are sattvic make offerings to the gods, those dominated by *rajas* worship *yakshas* and *rakshasas*, whilst other persons under the influence of *tamas* worship spirits and ghosts.

Verses 5–6: Excessive asceticism condemned

5. Some people who undertake acts of austerity perform ferocious deeds not sanctioned by scripture. They are motivated by hypocrisy and egotism, and are beset by the power of desire and passion.
6. They simply cause the elements of the body to waste away and they afflict me as well, for I am also present in the body. You should understand them as having the conviction of the *asura* nature.

Verses 7–10: Food in relation to the gunas

7. Now the food all beings find pleasing is also of three types, as is *yajña*, *austerity*, and charity. Listen to this analysis of those categories.
8. The foods liked by sattvic persons are those that bring long life, vigour, strength, and health, and which cause happiness and delight. Such foods are very tasty, juicy, crisp, and pleasing.
9. Foods liked by persons predominated by *rajas* are bitter, sour, salty, very hot, pungent, strong-tasting, and burning. Such foods cause suffering, sorrow, and ill-health.
10. The foods liked by those predominated by *tamas* are generally stale, tasteless, rotten, left by others, dirty, and foul.

Verses 11–13: Yajña in relation to the gunas

11. When *yajña* is performed by persons who do not desire to gain thereby, in strict accordance with the proper rules, and with the mind absorbed in the thought, 'It is my duty to make this offering,' then it is of the nature of *sattva*.
12. But when it is performed with some result in mind or out of vanity, O best of the Bharatas, that *yajña* is of the nature of *rajas*.
13. And when it is performed without regard for the proper rules, without food offerings, chanting of the hymns, payment to the priests, or any real faith in the process, they say that *yajña* is of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 14–19: Austerity in relation to the gunas

14. Austerity of the body is said to consist of worship of the gods, brahmins, teachers, and wise men, cleanliness, honesty, celibacy, and not harming (*ahimsa*).
15. Austerity of speech is said to consist of speaking words that do not disturb others and which are true, loving, and beneficial, as well as the regular recitation of the Vedas.

16. And austerity of the mind is said to consist of mental serenity, benevolence, silence, self-control, and a pure disposition.
17. When men engaged in yoga undertake this threefold austerity with the highest faith and without desire for any result, that austerity is said to be of the nature of *sattva*.
18. But when the austerity is undertaken for the sake of gaining respect, reputation, and honour, or out of vanity, it is said to be of the nature of *rajas*; this indeed is unstable and impermanent.
19. And that austerity by which one inflicts pain on oneself due to foolish notions, or which is intended to bring destruction to others, is declared to be of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 20–22: Charity in relation to the gunas

20. Charity given with the thought, ‘This should be given’, presented to a suitable recipient from whom nothing is expected in return, and at the right time and place, is of the nature of *sattva*.
21. But that charity which is given with the expectation of getting something in return, with the hope of some future reward, or with reluctance is of the nature of *rajas*.
22. And that charity which is given at the wrong place and wrong time, to an unworthy recipient, or which is given without respect and with contempt, is known to be of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 23–28: The sacred words ‘om tat sat’

23. The words *om tat sat* are understood as a threefold designation of Brahman. It was with this *mantra* that the brahmins, Vedas, and *yajñas* were established in ancient times.
24. Therefore, in accordance with the prescribed rule, the followers of the Veda always recite the syllable *om* when they perform ritual acts of *yajña*, charity, and austerity.

25. Without desire for the fruit of their action, persons who seek liberation from rebirth recite the syllable *tat* when they perform various ritual acts of *yajña*, austerity, and charity.
26. This term *sat* is used to designate both reality and virtue. The word *sat* is also used to denote a righteous act, Partha.
27. Hence dedication to *yajña*, austerity or charity is referred to as *sat*; the action by which these are undertaken is also designated as *sat*.
28. However, if an act is performed without faith, be it a sacrificial offering, a gift in charity or an act of austerity, it is referred to as *a-sat*, Partha. It has no effect either in the world to come or here in this world.

Chapter 18



Verses 1–6: Samnyasa and tyaga – Two types of renunciation

1. Arjuna said: I wish now to learn about the subject of *samnyasa*, O mighty Hrishiksha, and about the distinction between *samnyasa* and *tyaga*, O slayer of Keshin.
2. The Lord said: Learned men understand *samnyasa* to be the giving up of any action motivated by selfish desire. The wise further define *tyaga* as the renunciation of the fruits of all action.
3. Some of those endowed with wisdom assert that all action must be abandoned because it is inherently flawed. But others say that ritual acts of *yajña*, charity, and austerity must not be abandoned.
4. Now hear my verdict on this debate over renunciation, O best of the Bharatas. It has been asserted that renunciation is of three types, O tiger amongst men.
5. The ritual acts of *yajña*, charity, and austerity must not be abandoned. Rather they should be performed, for *yajña*, charity, and austerity can purify even men of wisdom.
6. But even these types of action should be performed only after renouncing attachment to them and the reward they bring. This is my ultimate conclusion, Partha.

Verses 7–12: Renunciation in relation to the gunas

7. The renunciation of prescribed action is improper. The renunciation of such action due to ignorance is proclaimed to be of the nature of *tamas*.

8. If action is given up as painful and because of fear of the suffering it might cause to one's body, that renunciation is of the nature of *rajas*; one will not gain the fruit of renunciation in that way.
9. But if one thinks, 'This must be performed' and then discharges his prescribed duty whilst renouncing attachment and the fruits of action, Arjuna, that renunciation is known to be of the nature of *sattva*.
10. The renouncer who is predominated by *sattva* never loathes action when it is not pleasing and is not attached to pleasant action. He is a wise man and his doubts are dispelled.
11. It is impossible for any being who has a body to completely give up action, but one who renounces the fruits of action is said to be *tyagin*, a true renouncer.
12. Undesirable, desirable, and mixed are the three types of result that come from action. After death these befall those who are not renouncers, but never those who are renounced (*tyagins*).

Verses 13–18: Five causes of the results of action

13. Now learn from me about these five causal factors, O mighty one, established by the Samkhya system as determining the results of all actions.
14. These are the situation, the performer, the various instruments employed, and the different motions enacted. Destiny is then the fifth factor.
15. Whatever action is undertaken with body, words, or mind, be it proper or perverse, these five are its causes.
16. As this is the case, anyone who due to an undeveloped understanding sees himself alone as the performer of action has the wrong idea and does not see at all.
17. If a person has no sense of being the performer of action and if his consciousness is not absorbed in the action, then even if he kills all these people he does not kill and he is not bound.

18. Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower represent the threefold impulse for action. The instrument, the deed, and the performer represent the three constituents of an action.

**Verses 19–22: Knowledge in relation
to the *gunas***

19. Knowledge, action, and the performer of action are all threefold according to the *gunas*. This can be shown by analysis in relation to the *gunas*, so now listen to the way these are arranged.
20. When one changeless existence is seen in all beings, undivided in their diverse forms, you should know that knowledge to be of the nature of *sattva*.
21. But when knowledge displays an understanding based on distinction, and recognises varying types of existence in different living beings, you should know that knowledge to be of the nature of *rajas*.
22. And that knowledge which is not based on reason, which attaches itself to a single causal factor as if it were everything, which is unaware of the truth and thus limited in scope, is regarded as being of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 23–25: Action in relation to the *gunas*

23. Action that is ordained, performed without attachment, and undertaken without passionate endeavour, hatred, or desire for the fruits, is said to be of the nature of *sattva*.
24. But action performed due to hankering for a desired object, with a sense of pride, or with excessive endeavour, is regarded as being of the nature of *rajas*.
25. And action undertaken due to delusion and without regard for consequences, damage, harm, and ability, is said to be of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 26–28: The performer of action in relation to the gunas

26. When he is free of attachment, never speaks with any sense of 'I', is endowed with resolve and fortitude, and is unmoved by success or failure, the performer of action is said to be of the nature of *sattva*.
27. But if he is desirous and seeks the fruit of action, is greedy, violent by nature, and impure, and is beset by feelings of delight and sorrow, that performer of action is regarded as being of the nature of *rajas*.
28. And that performer of action who is negligent, vulgar, obstinate, deceitful, vicious, indolent, uninspired, and procrastinating is said to be of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 29–32: Intelligence in relation to the gunas

29. Now hear about the threefold divisions of intelligence and of resolve in relation to the *gunas*, which I shall fully explain to show the differences between them, Dhanamjaya.
30. That which understands prescribed action and the renunciation of action, what should be done and what should not be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, as well as bondage and liberation, is intelligence under the influence of *sattva*.
31. But that by which *dharma* and *adharmā* are not clearly understood, nor indeed ordained duty and forbidden action, is intelligence under the influence of *rajas*, Partha.
32. But that understanding which is covered by ignorance and so thinks *adharmā* to be *dharma*, and has wrong conceptions on all subjects, is intelligence under the influence of *tamas*.

Verses 33–35: Resolve in relation to the gunas

33. That resolve by means of which one holds the activities of the mind, breath, and senses in undeviating yoga practice is of the nature of *sattva*.

34. But that resolve by which a person adheres to the goals of dharma, *kama*, and *artha*, seeking results from each of these attachments, is of the nature of *rajas*.
35. And that resolve due to which a man with perverse ideas does not give up sleep, fear, grief, depression, and vanity is of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 36–39: Happiness in relation to the gunas

36. Happiness is also of three types. Now hear from me, O best of the Bharatas, about the happiness a person finds due to his repeated practice, which puts an end to sorrow.
37. That which is like poison in the beginning but at the end is like nectar is said to be happiness of the nature of *sattva*. It arises due to the serenity of one's intellect.
38. But that happiness which is obtained through the contact of the senses with their objects, and is like nectar in the beginning but like poison in the end, is understood to be of the nature of *rajas*.
39. And that happiness which simply deludes the self in both the beginning and the end, being based on sleep, indolence, and stupidity, is of the nature of *tamas*.

Verses 40–44: The qualities of the four varnas

40. Neither on earth nor in heaven amongst the gods is there any form of existence that is free of these three *gunas*, which are born of *prakriti*.
41. The duties of brahmins, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas*, and *shudras*, O scorcher of the foe, are designated in accordance with the *gunas* and which arise from the inherent nature of each.
42. Tranquillity, restraint, austerity, purity, patience, honesty, theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, and faith in the Vedic revelation are the duties of a brahmin, born of his inherent nature.
43. Heroism, energy, resolve, expertise, never fleeing

from battle, charity, and displaying a lordly disposition are the duties of a *kshatriya*, born of his inherent nature.

44. Agriculture, tending cows, and trade are the duties of a *vaishya*, born of his inherent nature, whilst work consisting of service to others is the duty of a *shudra*, born of his inherent nature.

Verses 45–49: Karma-yoga

45. A man can attain perfection by devoting himself to his own particular duty. Now hear how a man who dedicates himself to his specific duty achieves that perfect state.
46. He is the one out of whom all beings have evolved and he pervades this whole world. It is by worshipping the Deity through the performance of his proper duty that a man achieves that perfect state.
47. Even though it may have faults, one's own dharma is still superior to accepting the dharma of another, even if that dharma is perfectly observed. By performing the action prescribed in accordance with his inherent nature, a person never incurs any sin.
48. Even if it be beset by faults, a person should never give up the type of action he is born to perform, Kaunteya. All endeavours are tainted by some fault, as fire is tainted by smoke.
49. His mind is detached from everything, he has conquered his own self, and he is free from hankering; it is by means of such renunciation that a person attains the supreme state, free from the results of action.

Verses 50–53: The path of knowledge

50. Now learn from me in brief, Kaunteya, how one who has achieved this success then attains Brahman, which is the culmination of realised knowledge.
51. It is by properly engaging his purified intellect,

controlling himself by his resolve, renouncing the objects of the senses such as sound, and setting aside both desire and hate;

52. Living in a deserted place, eating only a small amount, regulating his speech, body, and mind, constantly dedicating himself to the yoga of meditation and maintaining a mood of detachment;
53. Giving up egotism, physical power, pride, desire, anger, and any sense of possession, having no conception of 'mine', and remaining always at peace; it is thus that he becomes fit to attain the state of being that is Brahman.

Verses 54–56: The way of bhakti

54. Existing as Brahman, with his mind made tranquil, he neither laments nor hankers for anything. He is equal to all living beings. Such a person achieves the highest state of devotion to me.
55. And it is through this devotion that he gains knowledge of me, of what and who I am. When he thus properly understands me, he then immediately enters my being.
56. Though he always performs his prescribed duties, he remains dependent upon me and through my grace he attains the eternal, changeless position.

Verses 57–60: Advice to Arjuna

57. Mentally renouncing all your actions to me, dedicating yourself to me, and resorting to the *buddhi-yoga*, you should keep your mind always fixed on me.
58. By keeping your mind fixed on me you will overcome all these difficulties through my grace. But if through pride you do not listen, you will surely perish.
59. If you surrender to your sense of ego and think, 'I will not fight', this determination will be of no avail for your inherent nature will surely exert its control over you.
60. Bound to your specific duty, Kaunteya, which arises

from your inherent nature, you will be compelled to perform the action that because of illusion you do not wish to perform.

Verses 61–63: The Lord within every being

61. The Lord is situated in the region of the heart of all beings and he causes every being to revolve through life, mounted on the machine conducted by his mystical power (*maya*).
62. You should surrender your entire being to him alone, Bharata. Then by his grace you will attain that eternal position which is absolute peace.
63. I have now revealed to you this wisdom, which is the deepest of all mysteries. After fully considering what you have heard, you should then act as you see fit.

Verses 64–66: Absolute devotion to Krishna

64. Now listen again to the ultimate teaching, which is indeed the deepest mystery. You are very dear to me, this is certain, and therefore I will reveal this for your benefit.
65. Fix your mind on me, become my devotee, worship me, and bow down to me. Then you will come to me; this is my certain promise, for you are dear to me.
66. Abandoning all types of dharma, take shelter with me alone. I will deliver you from all sins so do not grieve.

Verses 67–71: Teaching the gita to others

67. You should not reveal these teachings to anyone who lacks austerity or is bereft of devotion, nor to one who does not wish to hear it or one who is envious of me.
68. But one who imparts this supreme mystery to my devotees, thereby displaying the highest devotion to me, will come to me. There is no doubt about this.
69. There is no one amongst men who can perform a deed

more pleasing to me than this, and nor will there be any person more dear to me than he.

70. And if anyone studies this conversation between us, which is based on dharma, then he is in fact worshipping me through the *yajña* of knowledge. That is my view.
71. Any man endowed with faith and free of malice who listens to this discourse is liberated thereby and attains the auspicious worlds gained by those of righteous deeds.

Verses 72–73: Arjuna accepts Krishna’s instruction

72. Have you listened to this instruction with a focused mind, Partha? Is your confusion, based on ignorance, now dispelled, Dhanamjaya?
73. Arjuna said: The confusion is dispelled and through your grace I have regained my understanding. I am now resolute, my doubts have vanished, and I am ready to act in accordance with your instruction.

Verses 74–78: Samjaya’s conclusion

74. Samjaya said: Thus I have heard this wonderful conversation between Vasudeva and the high-souled Partha, which makes my hair stand on end.
75. It is through the grace of Vyasa that I have heard this supreme mystery, this doctrine of yoga, as revealed by Krishna himself who is indeed the master of yoga (*yogeshvara*).
76. O king, as I constantly recall this enthralling and sacred conversation between Keshava and Arjuna, I repeatedly experience this sense of ecstasy.
77. And as I repeatedly recall the magnificent form displayed by Hari, great is my sense of wonder, O King, and again and again I feel a thrill of supreme delight.
78. Wherever there is Krishna, the master of yoga, and

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wherever there is Partha who bears the bow, there will also be good fortune, victory, success, and good judgment. That is my opinion.

Names of Krishna and Arjuna



Names of Krishna

- Acyuta – He who never fails His devotees and who never falls down from His position. (1.21, 11.42, 18.73)
- Adhiyajña – the Lord of sacrifice; the Super-soul, the plenary expansion of the Lord in the heart of every living being. (8.2, 8.4)
- Adideva – the original Supreme God. (11.38)
- Adikarta – the supreme creator. (11.37)
- Amitavikrama – having unlimited strength. (11.40)
- Ananta – He who is unending; He who has no limit. (11.37)
- Ananta-rupa – unlimited form. (11.38) *See also:* Vishvamurti, Vishvarupa.
- Anantavirya – having unlimited potency. (11.19, 11.40)
- Aprameya – who is immeasurable. (11.17, 11.42)
- Apratimaprabhava – whose power is immeasurable. (11.43)
- Arisudana – killer of the enemies. (2.4)
- Bhagavan – who possesses all opulences; the reservoir of all beauty, strength, fame, wealth, knowledge and renunciation. (10.14, 10.17, (*shri-bhagavan uvaca:* 2.2, 2.11, 2.55, 3.3, 3.37, 4.1, 4.5, 5.2, 6.1, 6.35, 6.40, 7.1, 8.3, 9.1, 10.1, 10.19, 11.5, 11.32, 11.47, 11.52, 12.2, 13.2, 14.1, 14.22, 15.1, 16.1, 17.2, 18.2))
- Bhutabhavana – source of all manifestations; origin of everything. (9.5, 10.15)
- Bhutaḥrt – maintainer of all living entities. (9.5)
- Bhutesha – Lord of everything; the supreme controller of everyone. (10.15)

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- Deva – God. (11.14, 11.15, 11.44, 11.45)
- Devadeva – Lord of all demigods; God of gods. (10.15, 11.13)
- Devavara – great one amongst the demigods; best of gods. (11.31)
- Devesha – Lord of all lords; God of the gods. (11.25, 11.37, 11.45)
- Govinda – giver and object of pleasure to the cows and to the senses. (1.32, 2.9)
- Hari – who removes all inauspiciousness and steals the hearts of His devotees. (11.9, 18.77)
- Hrishikeshā – the Lord who directs the senses of the devotees; the master of the senses. (1.15, 1.20, 1.24, 2.9, 2.10, 11.36, 18.1)
- Ishā – the Supreme Lord. (11.44)
- Ishvara – the Supreme Lord; the Supreme Controller. (4.6, 15.17, 18.61)
- Jagannivāsa – refuge of the universe. (11.25, 11.37, 11.45)
- Jagatpati – Lord of the entire universe. (10.15)
- Janardana – maintainer of all living entities; chastiser of the enemies. (1.35, 1.38, 1.43, 3.1, 10.18, 11.51)
- Kalā – time (another form of Krishna). (11.32)
- Kamalapatrakṣhā – lotus-petal-eyed one. (11.2)
- Keshava – the Supreme Lord, Krishna, who has fine, long black hair; killer of the demon Keshi. (1.30, 2.54, 3.1, 10.14, 11.35, 13.1, 18.76)
- Keshinīshudana – killer of the Keshi demon. (18.1) *See also* Keshava.
- Krishna – ‘dark blue’; the two-armed form of the Supreme Lord; the all-attractive person. (1.28, 1.31, 1.40, 5.1, 6.34, 6.37, 6.39, 11.35, 11.41, 17.1, 18.75, 18.78)
- Madhava – husband of the goddess of fortune; He who appeared in the Madhu dynasty. (1.14, 1.36)
- Madhusudana – killer of the demon Madhu. (1.34, 2.1, 2.4, 6.33, 8.2)
- Mahabahu – having mighty arms. (6.38, 11.23, 18.1) *See also* (*Names of Arjuna*) Arjuna, Mahabahu.
- Mahatma – the great Lord; the great soul. (11.12, 11.20, 11.37, 11.50, 18.74)
- Mahayogeshvara – the most powerful mystic. (11.9)
- Parameshvara – the supreme controller. (11.3, 13.28)

Names of Krishna and Arjuna

- Prabhu – the Lord, or the Master. (9.18, 9.24, 11.4, 14.21)
- Prajapati – the Lord of creatures (Vishnu). (3.10)
- Purushottama – the most exalted person. (8.1, 10.15, 11.3, 15.18, 15.19)
- Sahasrabahu – thousand-handed one. (11.46)
- Sakha – dear friend. (11.41)
- Ugrarupa – whose form is fierce. (11.31)
- Varshneya – descendant of Vrishni. (1.40, 3.36)
- Vasudeva – son of Vasudeva; proprietor of everything, material and spiritual. (7.19, 11.50, 18.74)
- Vishnu – the Personality of Godhead; He who pervades the entire universe. (10.21, 11.24, 11.30)
- Vishvamurti – personification of the universe. (11.46)
- Vishvarupa – whose form is the universe. (11.16)
- Vishveshvara – Lord of the universe; the ultimate controller. (11.16)
- Yadava – He who appears in the Yadu dynasty. (11.41)
- Yajña – the personification of sacrifice; the goal and enjoyer of all sacrifices. (3.9, 4.23)
- Yogeshvara – the supreme master of all mystic powers. (11.4, 18.75, 18.78)
- Yogi – supreme mystic. (10.17)

Names of Arjuna

- Anagha – sinless one. (3.3, 14.6, 15.20)
- Arjuna – ‘silver white’; the third son of Pandu and intimate friend of Lord Krishna. (1.46, 2.2, 2.45, 3.7, 4.5, 4.9, 4.37, 6.16, 6.32, 6.46, 7.16, 7.26, 8.16, 8.27, 9.19, 10.32, 10.39, 10.42, 11.47, 11.50, 11.54, 18.9, 18.34, 18.61, 18.76, (*arjuna uvaca*: 1.4, 1.21, 1.28, 2.4, 2.54, 3.1, 3.36, 4.4, 5.1, 6.33, 6.37, 8.1, 10.12, 11.1, 11.15, 11.36, 11.51, 12.1, 13.1, 14.21, 17.1, 18.1, 18.73))
- Bharata – descendant of Bharata. (2.14, 2.18, 2.28, 2.30, 3.25, 4.7, 4.42, 7.27, 11.6, 13.3, 13.34, 14.3, 14.8, 14.9, 14.10, 15.19, 15.20, 16.3, 17.3, 18.62)
- Bharatarshabha – chief amongst the descendants of Bharata; best of the Bharatas. (3.41, 7.11, 7.16, 8.23, 13.27, 14.12, 18.36)
- Bharatasattama – best of the Bharatas. (18.4)
- Bharatashreshtha – chief of the Bharatas. (17.12)
- Dehabhrtavara – best of the embodied. (8.4)
- Dhananjaya – conqueror of wealth. (1.15, 2.48, 2.49, 4.41, 7.7, 9.9, 10.37, 11.14, 12.9, 18.29, 18.72)
- Dhanurdhara – carrier of the bow and arrow; carrier of the Gandiva bow, which can never be defeated in war. (18.78)
- Gudakesha – Arjuna, the master of curbing ignorance. (1.24, 2.9, 10.20, 11.7)
- Kapidhvaja – he whose flag was marked with Hanuman. (1.20)
- Kaunteya – son of Kunti. (1.27, 2.14, 2.37, 2.60, 3.9, 3.39, 5.22, 6.35, 7.8, 8.6, 8.16, 9.7, 9.10, 9.23, 9.27, 9.31, 10.23, 10.27, 10.31, 13.2, 13.32, 14.4, 14.7, 16.20, 16.22, 18.48, 18.50, 18.60)
- Kiriti – diademed one. (11.35)
- Kurunandana – beloved child of the Kurus. (2.41, 6.43, 14.13)
- Kurupravira – best among the Kuru warriors. (11.48)
- Kurusattama – best amongst the Kurus. (4.31)
- Kurushreshtha – best of the Kurus. (10.19)
- Mahabahu – having mighty arms. (2.26, 2.68, 3.28, 3.43, 5.3, 5.6, 6.35, 7.5, 10.1, 14.5, 18.13) *See also (Names of Krishna) Mahabahu.*

Names of Krishna and Arjuna

- Pandava – the son of Pandu. (1.14, 1.20, 4.35, 6.2, 10.37, 11.13, 11.55, 14.22, 16.5)
- Parantapa – chastiser, subduer, conqueror of the enemy. (2.3, 2.9, 4.2, 4.5, 4.33, 7.27, 9.3, 10.40, 11.54, 18.41)
- Partha – son of Prtha (Kunti). (1.25, 1.26, 2.3, 2.21, 2.32, 2.39, 2.42, 2.55, 2.72, 3.16, 3.22, 3.23, 4.11, 4.33, 6.40, 7.1, 7.10, 8.8, 8.14, 8.19, 8.22, 8.27, 9.13, 9.32, 10.24, 11.5, 11.9, 12.7, 16.4, 16.6, 17.26, 17.28, 18.6, 18.30, 18.31, 18.32, 18.33, 18.34, 18.35, 18.72, 18.74, 18.78) *See also* Kaunteya, Pandava;
- Purusharshabha – best among men. (2.15)
- Purushavyaghra – tiger among men. (18.4)
- Savyasaci – ambidextrous archer. (11.33)
- Tata – My (Krishna's) friend. (6.40)