

Chapter 1: Arjuna's Dilemma

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for explanation of selected verses)

The King Dhritarāshtra inquired: O Sanjaya, please, now tell me in detail, what did my people (the Kauravas) and the Pāndavas do in the battlefield before the war started? (1.01)

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

O Master, behold this mighty army of the Pāndavas, arranged in battle formation by your other talented disciple! There are many great warriors, valiant men, heroes, and mighty archers. (1.03-06)

Also there are many heroes on my side who have risked their lives for me. I shall name a few prominent commanders of my army for your information. All are skilled in warfare. (1.07-09)

The army protecting our commander-in-chief, Bheeshma, is insufficient, whereas my archrival, Bheema, on the other side is well protected. (1.10)

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

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

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

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

Krishna blew His conch; then Arjuna and all other commanders of the army of Pāndavas blew their respective conches. The uproar tore the hearts of your sons. (1.15-19)

Seeing the sons of Dhritarāshtra standing; and the war about to begin; Arjuna, whose banner bore the emblem of Hanumāna, took up his bow; and spoke these words to Lord Krishna: (1.20)

O Lord, please stop my chariot between the two armies until I see those who stand here eager for battle and with whom I must fight this war. I wish to see those who are willing to serve the evil-minded sons of Dhritarāshtra. (1.21-23)

Sanjaya said: O King, Lord Krishna placed the best of all the chariots in the middle of the two armies facing Bheeshma, Drona, and all other Kings; and said to Arjuna: Look at these assembled Kurus! (1.24-25)

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

After seeing fathers-in-law, all those relatives, and other dear ones standing in the ranks of the two armies, Arjuna became very kind and sorrowfully said: (1.27)

O Krishna, seeing my relatives standing with a desire to fight, my limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry. My body shakes and my hairs stand on end. (1.28-29)

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

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

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

I do not wish to kill my teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives even for the kingdom of the three worlds, let alone for this earthly kingdom, O Krishna. (1.34-35)

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

Therefore, we should not kill our cousin brothers. How can we be happy after killing our own relatives, O Krishna? (1.37)

They are blinded by greed and do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being disloyal to friends. (1.38)

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

Eternal family traditions and codes of moral conduct are destroyed with the destruction of the head of the family in a war. And immorality prevails in the family due to the destruction of family traditions. (1.40)

And when immorality prevails, O Krishna, people become corrupted. And when people are corrupted, unwanted children are born. (1.41)

This brings the family and the slayers of the family to hell because the spirits of their ancestors are degraded when deprived of ceremonial offerings of love and respect by the unwanted children. (1.42)

The everlasting qualities of social order and family values of those who destroy their family are ruined by illegal and sinful acts of illegitimacy. (1.43)

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

Alas! We are ready to commit a great sin by trying to kill our relatives because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom. (1.45)

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

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

Chapter 2: Transcendental Knowledge

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna spoke these words to Arjuna whose eyes were tearful and sad, and who was confused and very sorry. (2.01)

Lord Krishna said: How did sadness come to you at this time? This is not fit for a noble man. It is shameful, and it does not lead one to heaven, O Arjuna. (2.02)

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

Arjuna said: How shall I strike Bheeshma and Drona with arrows in battle? They are worthy of my respect. (2.04)

It would be better, indeed, to live by begging in this world than to kill these noble gurus, because, by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures polluted with their blood. (2.05)

I do not know which alternative —to fight or to quit — is better for us, nor do we know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us. We should not even wish to live after killing our own cousins who are standing in front of us. (2.06)

My senses have become weak due to sympathy, and my mind is confused about my duty (Dharma). I request You to tell me, definitely, what is better for me. I am Your disciple, and depend on You. (2.07)

(Expert guidance should be sought during the moment of crisis.)

I do not see how by gaining wealth and kingdom on this earth, or even lordship over the gods will remove the sorrow that is drying up my senses? (2.08)

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

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

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

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

Just as the Atmā (spirit, soul) gets a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life, similarly Jeevātmā (individual soul) acquires another body after death. The wise are not worried about death. (See also 15.08) (2.13)

(Atmā or Atman means consciousness, spirit, soul, self, the source of life and the cosmic power behind the body-mind unit. Just as our body exists in space, similarly our thoughts, intellect, emotions, and awareness exist in Atmā, the space of consciousness.)

The contacts of the senses with the sense objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, and pain and pleasure. They come and go and are temporary. Therefore, one should learn to face them bravely. (2.14)

A calm person, who is not bothered by these feelings and remains balanced in pain and pleasure, becomes fit for nirvana, O Arjuna. (2.15)

The real (Sat, Atmā) always exists and the unreal (Asat, body, creation) has a temporary (or Mithyā) existence. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of truth. (2.16)

(Sat exists at all times — past, present, and future. Atmā is called Sat. Asat is a feeling that does not exist at all, like the water in a mirage. The one that has a beginning and an end is neither Sat nor Asat; it is called Mithyā. Human body, like the universe or Jagat, is called Mithyā.)

The Spirit by whom this entire universe is filled with, is indestructible. No one can destroy the Spirit. (2.17)

Physical bodies of the everlasting, permanent, and mysterious soul are temporary. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna. (2.18)

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

Atmā always exists. It is neither born nor does it die at any time. It is unborn, endless, permanent and ageless. The Atmā is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. (2.20)

O Arjuna, how can a person — who knows that the Atmā is permanent, beginningless, endless, unborn, and indestructible — kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed? (2.21)

Just as a person puts on new clothes after discarding the old ones, similarly individual soul takes new bodies after giving up the old bodies. (2.22)

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

This Atmā cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried up by any other means. It is permanent, unchanging, immovable, and ageless. (2.24)

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

If you think that this physical body always takes birth and dies, even then, O Arjuna, you should not feel sad like this. (2.26)

Because, death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is sure for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not feel sorry for the unavoidable. (2.27)

All beings are invisible to our eyes before birth and after death. They become visible between the birth and the death only. What is there to grieve about? (2.28)

Some look upon this Atmā as a wonder, another describes it as wonderful, and others hear of it as a wonder. Even after hearing about it no one really knows what the spirit is? (2.29)

O Arjuna, the Atmā that dwells inside the body of all beings never dies. Therefore, you should not mourn for any body. (2.30)

Also considering your duty as a soldier you should not hesitate. Because there is nothing better for a warrior than doing his duty by fighting a war. (2.31)

Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for a just war that is like an open door to heaven for a warrior. (2.32)

If you will not fight this battle of good over the evil, you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin by not doing your duty. (2.33)

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

The people will think that you have left the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly honored you will lose respect for you. (2.35)

Your enemies will speak many bad words and ridicule your ability for ever. What could be more painful to you than this? (2.36)

You will go to heaven if killed in the line of duty, or you will enjoy the kingdom if you win. Therefore, get up with a firm determination to fight, O Arjuna. (2.37)

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

The wisdom of Sāmkhya (or the knowledge of the Self, AtmaJnāna) has been given to you. Now listen to the wisdom of Karma-yoga. By practicing which you will free yourself from the bondage of Karma. (2.39)

In Karma-yoga no effort is ever wasted and it is safe to practice. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear of birth and death. (2.40)

(Karma-yoga is also referred to as Nishkāma Karma-yoga, Sevā, selfless service, Buddhi yoga, science of proper action, and yoga of calmness or equanimity.)

A Karma-yogi works for the Lord only as a matter of duty without any personal desire to enjoy the fruits of work, or attachment to results.)

Those who are sincere seekers desire only Self-realization, but desires of others are endless and too many, O Arjuna. (2.41)

The misguided ones who delight in the melodious chanting of the Vedas — without understanding the spiritual meaning or purport — think there is nothing else in the Vedas except the rituals for the sole purpose of obtaining heavenly pleasures. (2.42)

They are dominated by material desires and consider going to heaven as the highest goal of life. They engage in specific rituals for the sake of material prosperity and enjoyment. Rebirth is the result of their action. (2.43)

Those who are full of material desires perform various specific rituals for the attainment of pleasure and power, and think going to heaven as the highest goal of life. The rebirth is the fruit of rituals. (2.43)

The firm goal of Self-realization is not formed in the minds of those who are attached to sense-pleasures and power; and whose vision is blinded by ritualistic activities for fulfillment of material desires. (2.44)

A portion of the Vedas deal with three Gunas or modes of material nature. Become unaffected by the pairs of opposites such as joy and sorrows, remain calm and free from thoughts of getting more wealth and saving it. Rise above the three Gunas, and always remain soul-conscious that you are not this body, but the soul inside the body. (2.45)

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

To a Self-realized person the Vedas are as useful as a small well when a huge lake becomes available. (2.46)

You have Adhikāra over doing your individual duty only, but no control or claim over the results. To enjoy the fruits of work should not be your only motive. You should never be inactive either. (2.47)

(The word Adhikāra means ability and privilege, prerogative, jurisdiction, discretion, right, preference, choice, rightful claim, authority, control.)

Do your duty to the best of your ability, O Arjuna, with your mind attached to the Lord. Give up worry and selfish attachment to the results, and remain calm in both success and failure. The calmness of mind is the fruit of Nishkāma-Karma-yoga. (2.48)

Work done with selfish motives is very inferior to the selfless service or Karma-yoga. Therefore be a Karma-yogi, O Arjuna. Those who work only to enjoy the fruits of their labor remain mostly unhappy, because no one has control over the results. (See also 10.10, 18.57) (2.49)

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

Karma-yogis enjoy mental peace by giving up attachment to the fruits of work. They are freed from the bondage of rebirth and attain the blissful divine state. (2.51)

When the cover of ignorance is removed by Self-knowledge, you will become unconcerned to what you have known and what remains to be known from the scriptures. (2.52)

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

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what are the marks of a Self-realized person whose mind and intellect are steady and merged in super conscious state? How does such a person speak? How does such a person behave? (2.54)

Lord Krishna said: When one is completely free from all desires and is satisfied in the Self by the joy of knowing the Self, then one is called a Self-realized or an enlightened person. (2.55)

A person is called an enlightened whose mind is not disturbed by difficulty, who does not go after sense pleasures, and who is completely free from attachment, fear, and anger. (2.56)

The mind and intellect become steady in a person who is not attached to anything, who is neither excited by getting desired results nor disturbed by undesired results. (2.57)

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

The desire for sensual pleasures diminishes if one abstains from sense enjoyment, but the thirst for sense enjoyment remains in subtle form. The thirst also disappears from the one who has known the Supreme. (2.59)

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

One should sit with mind firmly focused on Me as the Supreme goal after bringing the senses under control. One's intellect becomes steady when one's senses are under control. (2.61)

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

Delusion or deception arises from anger. Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is deluded. One falls down from the right path when reasoning is destroyed. (2.63)

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

All sorrows are destroyed upon becoming peaceful. The mind and intellect of such a peaceful person soon become steady and united with the Supreme. (2.65)

There is no Self-knowledge for those who are not united with the Supreme. Without Self-knowledge there is no peace; and without peace there can be no happiness. (2.66)

When mind is controlled by restless senses, it steals away the intellect as a storm takes away a boat on the sea from its destination — the spiritual shore of peace and happiness. (2.67)

Therefore, O Arjuna, one's intellect becomes steady when senses are controlled by the intellect, and are not under control of their mind and sense objects. (2.68)

A yogi is aware (awake, conscious) of Atmā about which others are unaware. A yogi is unaware of the experience of sense objects about which others are aware. (2.69)

(A sage is awake or detached in the night of routine existence of life because they are in quest of the highest truth. One is considered awake when one is free from worldly desires.)

One attains peace when all desires disappear from the mind without creating any mental disturbance, just as river waters disappear the ocean without creating any dis-

turbance. One who desires material objects is never peaceful. (2.70)

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

(The feeling of 'I' 'my' and 'me' is also called Ahankāra or ego. Ahankāra is used in the Gita in the sense of independent individual existence and inability to identify one's self as an integral part and parcel of the universe as a whole. The self-negation or 'getting rid of ego' is a process of spiritual growth. Ego can also mean pride.)

O Arjuna, this is the Brāhmi or super-conscious state of mind. Attaining this state, one is no longer confused. Gaining this state, even at the end of one's life, a person attains the goal of human life and becomes one with the Supreme. (2.72)

Chapter 3: Path of Nishkāma Karma

Arjuna asked: If You consider acquiring spiritual knowledge is better than working, then why do You want me to engage in this horrible war, O Krishna? (3.01)

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

Lord Krishna said: I had stated a twofold path of spiritual discipline in the past — the path of Self-knowledge for the thinking persons and the path of unselfish work (Sevā, KarmaYoga) for all others. (3.03)

(Jnāna-yoga is also called Sāmkhya-yoga, Samnyāsa-yoga, and yoga of knowledge. A Jnāna-yogi does not consider oneself the doer of any action, but only an instrument in the hands of divine for His use. The word Jnāna (or Atma-Jyāna, Self-knowledge) means metaphysical or transcendental knowledge of the spirit.)

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

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

Anyone who controls the senses but mentally thinks of sense pleasures is called a pretender or a hypocrite. (3.06)

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

Perform your necessary duty, because working is indeed better than sitting idle. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible without work. (3.08)

Human beings are bound by work that is not done as a selfless service to others or Yajna. Therefore, do your duty

very well as a service or Sevā to Me without attachment to the fruits of work. (3.09)

(Yajna means sacrifice, selfless service, unselfish work, Sevā, meritorious deeds, giving away something to others, and a religious rite in which a tribute is offered to gods through the mouth of fire.)

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

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

(Deva means a deity, a semi-god, a god, a celestial person, the agent of God, one who fulfills desires and protects and supports life.)

The Devas, nourished and pleased by Yajna, will give you the desired objects. One who enjoys the gift of Devas without sharing with others is, indeed, a thief. (3.12)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, always perform your duty to the best of your abilities without worry and selfish attachment to results. By doing work without attachment one attains the Supreme goal of life. (3.19)

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

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

O Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds — earth, heaven, and the lower regions — that should be done by Me, nor there is anything I need to gain, yet I engage in action. (3.22)

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

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

The ignorant work with attachment to the fruits of work for themselves, but the wise should work without attachment for the welfare of the society. (3.25)

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

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

The one who knows the truth about the role of Gunas in getting work done, does not get attached to the work. Because he knows that it is the Gunas that get their work done by using our organs as their instruments. (3.28)

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

Do your prescribed duty, dedicating all work to Me with a spiritual frame of mind, free from desire, attachment, and mental grief. (3.30)

Those who always practice this teaching of Mine — with full faith and without criticism — become free from the bondage of Karma. But those who find fault with this teaching or do not practice it, should be considered ignorant, senseless, and confused. (3.31-32)

All beings follow their nature. Even the wise act according to their own nature. If we are but slaves of our own nature, then what is the value of sense-control? (3.33)

Rāga and Dvesha (or likes and dislikes) for the sense objects remain in the senses. One should not come under the control of these two, because they are two major road blocks on one's path of Self-realization. (3.34)

(Unfulfilled expectation from a person creates dislike for that person. Thus, likes and dislikes are another form of fulfilled and unfulfilled desires respectively. Desires must be kept under proper control. Uncontrolled, selfish, sensual desires are the root of all evils and misery in the society.)

One's inferior and defective natural work is better than superior unnatural work. Even death in carrying out one's natural work is useful. Unnatural work produces too much stress and prevents one's growth. (See also 18.24, 18.47) (3.35)

(Natural work (Svadharmā, duty) is defined as work or study that one really enjoys performing and comes naturally, without creating undue stress.)

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

Lord Krishna said: It is the lust (material and sensual desire, Kāma). Lust becomes anger if it is unfulfilled. Lust is unsatisfiable and is a great devil. (3.37)

Kāma is the intense desire for sensual pleasures, power and wealth. As the fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by the membrane, similarly the Self-knowledge gets covered by Kāma. (3.38)

O Arjuna, Jnāna gets covered by this impossible to satisfy fire of Kāma, the eternal enemy of the wise ones. (3.39)

The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be the seat of Kāma. Kāma — with the help of the mind and senses — misleads a person by covering Jnāna. (3.40)

Therefore, by controlling the senses first, kill this devil of material desires (Kāma) that destroys knowledge and reasoning. (3.41)

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

Thus, knowing the Self to be the highest, and controlling the mind by the intellect (that is purified and made strong by Self-knowledge), one must kill this mighty enemy, lust with the sword of true knowledge of the Self. Don't let this spoil your soul's journey. (3.43)

Chapter 4: Path of Samnyāsa with Knowledge

Lord Krishna said: I taught this eternal science of right action (or Karma-yoga) to King Vivasvān. Vivasvān taught it to Manu. Manu taught it to Ikshavāku. (4.01)

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

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

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

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

Though I am eternal, unchangeable, and the Lord of all beings; yet I voluntarily take avatar or manifest by controlling material nature, using My power of Yoga-Māyā. (See also 10.14) (4.06)

Yoga-Māyā is the origin of Māyā; the mystic power of Brahman. The word Māyā means unreal, illusory, or untrue image of the creation. Due to the power of Māyā one considers the universe and individual body as separate from Brahman, the Supreme spirit.

Brahman is invisible potential energy; Māyā is kinetic energy, the force of action. They are inseparable like fire and heat. Māyā is also a metaphor used to explain the visible world or Jagat to common people.

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

One who truly understands My divine birth and activities of creation, maintenance, and destruction, is not born again after leaving this body and attains My abode, O Arjuna. (4.09)

Many have become free from attachment, fear, anger, and attained nirvana by gladly accepting My will, by becoming fully absorbed in My thoughts and by getting purified by the fire of Self-knowledge. (4.10)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The one who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is a wise person. Such a person is a yogi and has achieved everything. (See also 3.05, 3.27, 5.08 and 13.29) (4.18)

(The simple meaning of seeing inaction in action, and action in inaction is: Not to consider oneself — but, the three Gunas or the powers of Nature — as the doer of an action. Attached action is selfish work that produces Kārmic bondage, detached action is unselfish work or Sevā that leads to nirvana, and forbidden action is harmful to both the society as well as the doer of the action.)

One whose desires have become selfless by being roasted in the fire of Self-realization, is called a sage by the wise. (4.19)

One who has abandoned attachment to the fruits of work, who is ever content and dependent on no one but Krishna; such a person does nothing at all though engaged in activity and incurs no Kārmic reaction. (4.20)

One who is free from desires, whose mind and senses are under control, and who has given up the feeling of ownership, does not incur sin — the Kārmic reaction — by doing any work. (4.21)

A KarmaYogi — who is content with whatever gain comes naturally by His will, unaffected by pairs of opposites such as victory and defeat, free from envy, even-minded in success and failure — is not bound by Karma. (4.22)

All Kārmic bonds of a KarmaYogi — who is free from attachment, whose mind is fixed in Self-knowledge, and who does work as a service to the Lord — dissolve away. (4.23)

The divine Spirit (Brahma or Eternal Being) has become everything. Divinity (Brahma, Self or Spirit) shall be realized by one who considers everything as a manifestation (or an act) of Brahma. (Also see 9.16) (4.24)

Some yogis perform the service of worship to celestial controllers (Devas), while others offer selfless service to the Eternal Being. (4.25)

Some offer their sight, hearing and other senses (as sacrifice) in the fires of sense control, others offer appearance, taste or other sense objects as sacrifice in the fires of the sense control. (4.26)

Others offer all the functions of the senses and the functions of Prāna (or the five bio-impulses) as sacrifice in the fire of the yoga of sense control that is kindled by knowledge. (4.27)

Others offer their wealth, their discipline, and their practice of yoga as sacrifice, while others offer their study of scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice. (4.28)

Some practice Prānāyāma by breathing in, then stopping the breath for a while (called in Kumbhak) before breathing out using yogic breathing techniques. (4.29)

(Deep spiritual meaning and interpretation of the practical yogic techniques mentioned in verses 4.29, 4.30, 5.27, 6.13, 8.10, 8.12, 8.13, 8.24, and 8.25 should be acquired from a qualified master and practiced under expert supervision and/ or guidance to avoid hidden dangers of meditation.)

Others restrict their diet and stop the breath after breathing out (known as out Kumbhak). All these are the knowers of sacrifice, and their minds become purified by their sacrifice. (4.30)

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

Many types of spiritual disciplines (sacrifices) are described in the Vedas. Know them to be the action of nature using our body, mind, and senses. **Understanding this, one shall attain nirvana. (See also 3.14) (4.32)**

The acquisition and propagation of Self-knowledge are superior to any material gain or gift, O Arjuna. Because all actions leads to Self-knowledge. (4.33)

Acquire this Self-knowledge from a Self-realized master by humble respect, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The wise who have realized the truth will teach you. (4.34)

After knowing the Truth, you shall not again get confused like this. With this knowledge you shall see the entire creation within your own higher Self or in Brahman. (See also 6.29) (4.35)

Even if one is the most sinful of all sinners, yet one shall easily cross over the river of sin with the help of the raft of Self-knowledge. (4.36)

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

Truly, there is no purifier in this world like the true knowledge of the Supreme Being. One discovers this knowledge in due course of time (when one's mind is

cleansed of selfishness by KarmaYoga). (See also 4.31, 5.06, and 18.78). (4.38)

The one who has faith in God, is sincere in Sādhanā, and has control over the senses, gains this knowledge. Having gained this knowledge, one soon attains the supreme peace. (See also 18.55) (4.39)

But the ignorant, faithless, doubtful and atheist or disbeliever takes birth again and again. There is neither this world nor the world beyond nor happiness for the one who doubts the existence of God. (4.40)

Work does not bind one who has given up the fruits of work through Karma-yoga; whose all doubts are completely destroyed by Self-knowledge; and who is Self-realized, O Arjuna. (4.41)

Therefore, cut the ignorance-born confusion (about our true nature as Spirit) by the sword of Self-knowledge, follow the path of KarmaYoga, and do your duty, O Arjuna. (4.42)

Chapter 5: Path of Samnyāsa

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

(Karma-Samnyāsa means denial of doership, ownership, personal motive, and attachment behind an action, and not the denial of work, or worldly objects. Karma-Samnyāsa comes only after the dawn of Self-knowledge. Therefore, words Jnāna, Sāmkhya, Samnyāsa, and Karma-Samnyāsa are used interchangeably throughout the Gita. Samnyāsa is considered the goal of life, and Karma and Jnāna are the necessary means to achieve the goal.)

Lord Krishna said: Karma-Samnyāsa, and Karma-yoga both lead to the Supreme goal. But, of the two, Karma-yoga is superior to Karma-Samnyāsa for most people. (5.02)

A person should be considered a true Samnyāsi (renunciant) who has no like or dislike for anything. One is easily liberated from Kārmic bondage by becoming free from desire-born likes and dislikes. (5.03)

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

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

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

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

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

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

One who does all work as an offering to God — abandoning attachment to results — remains untouched by Kārmic reaction or sin, just as a lotus leaf never gets wet by water. (5.10)

A Karma-yogi performs action by body, mind, intellect, and senses, without attachment and feeling of doership, only for sense-purification. (5.11)

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

A person, who has given up the attachment to the fruits of all work from his mind, dwells happily in this world, neither performing nor directing any action. (5.13)

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

The Lord does not take the responsibility for good or evil deeds of anybody. When Self-knowledge gets covered by the curtain of ignorance, people are misled to do evil deeds. (5.15)

Transcendental knowledge destroys the ignorance of the Self and reveals the Supreme Being like the sun reveals the beauty of objects of the world. (5.16)

Persons whose mind and intellect are totally merged in the Eternal Being, who are firmly devoted to the Supreme, who have God as their supreme goal, and whose impurities are destroyed by the knowledge of the Self, do not take birth again. (5.17)

An enlightened person looks at a learned and humble Brāhmana, an outcast, even a cow, an elephant, or a dog with an equal eye, because he sees God in all. (5.18)

Everything has been accomplished in this very life by those whose mind is set in equality. Such a person has realized

Brahman because Brahman is perfect and impartial to all. (See also 18.55) (5.19)

One who neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant nor grieves on obtaining the unpleasant, who is not confused, who has a steady mind, and who is a knower of Brahman; such a person abides in Brahman. (5.20)

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

Material and sensual pleasures become the source of misery and have a beginning and an end. The wise, O Arjuna, do not rejoice in such pleasures. (See also 18.38) (5.22)

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

One who finds happiness with the Self, who rejoices the Self within, and who is purified by the Self-knowledge, attains nirvana. (5.24)

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

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

One is liberated by renouncing all sense enjoyments, focusing the eyes and the mind between the eye-brows, equalizing the breath moving through the nostrils by using yogic techniques; (5.27)

Keeping the senses, mind, and intellect under control, having liberation as the prime goal, and by becoming free from lust, anger, and fear. (See also 4.29, 6.13 and 8.10) (5.28)

One attains permanent peace by knowing Me, the Supreme Being, only as the enjoyer of all your services and Sādhanā, as the great Lord of the entire universe, and as the friend of all beings. (5.29)

Chapter 6: Path of Meditation

Lord Krishna said: One who performs the prescribed duty without seeking its fruit for personal enjoyment is both a Samnyāsi and a KarmaYogi. One does not become a Samnyāsi merely by not cooking his own food, and one does not become a yogi merely by abstaining from work. (6.01)

O Arjuna, know that Samnyāsa and Karma-yoga produces same end results. No one becomes a Karma-yogi who has

not given up the selfish motive behind an action. (See also 5.01, 5.05, 6.01, and 18.02) (6.02)

Karma-yoga is said to be the means of attaining the peace of mind. And a peaceful mind is necessary for Self-Realization. (6.03)

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

One must elevate — and not degrade — oneself by one's own mind. The mind alone is one's best friend as well as the worst enemy. (6.05)

The mind is the friend of those who have control over it, and the mind acts like an enemy for those who have no control over it. (6.06)

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

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

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

A yogi — seated in solitude and alone having mind and senses under control and free from desires and attachments for possessions — should contemplate on the Supreme Self. (6.10)

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

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

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

(A simple meditation technique is given here: (1) Fix your gaze and the mind inside the chest center, the seat of the causal heart, and breath normally. Imagine a white lotus with a light blue baby form of Lord Krishna the center of the lotus. Quietly watch the breath coming in and going out of this lotus. Do not try to control your breathing. (2) Mentally chant your mantra, or 'So' as you inhale and

'Hum' as you exhale. Meditate calmly on Krishna and watch the thought waves of the mind, and feel the peace and serenity.)

The meditator should control his mind and senses, think of Me with peaceful mind, and set Me as the supreme goal. (6.14)

Thus, by always keeping the mind fixed on Me, the yogi whose mind is disciplined attains the peace of nirvana and unites with Me. (6.15)

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

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

A person is said to have achieved yoga, union with the Self, when his perfectly disciplined mind becomes free from all desires and gets completely united with the Self in trance (Samādhi). (6.18)

A lamp in a spot protected from the wind does not flicker; this example is used for the controlled mind of a yogi practicing meditation on Brahman. (6.19)

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

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

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

Vanishing of sorrow from mind is called yoga. This yoga should be practiced with firm determination, without any mental reservation or doubt. (6.23)

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

one gradually attains peace of mind by keeping the mind fully absorbed in the Self by means of a well-trained and purified intellect, thinking of nothing else. (6.25)

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

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

Such a perfect yogi constantly engages the mind with the Self and enjoys the infinite bliss of contact with Brahman. (6.28)

A yogi who is in union with the Supreme Being sees every being with an equal eye because he sees the same Self in all beings and all beings in the Supreme Being. (See also 4.35, 5.18) (6.29)

One, who sees Me everywhere and in everything and beholds everything in Me, is not separated from Me, and I am not separated from him. (6.30)

(One should always remain soul-conscious by thinking: I am not this body, but the soul inside the body, and thus try to get rid of body-consciousness.)

Such people who adore Me remaining in all beings, remain in Me irrespective of their mode of living. (6.31)

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

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

Because the mind, indeed, is very unsteady, restless, powerful, and very difficult to control, O Krishna. I think controlling the mind is as difficult as controlling the wind. (6.34)

Lord Krishna said: Undoubtedly, the mind is restless and difficult to restrain, but it is subdued by Abhyāsa (or constant vigorous spiritual practice with firm determination), and Vairāgya (or detachment), O Arjuna. (6.35)

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

Arjuna said: What happens to a faithful person who deviates from the spiritual path and fails to attain yogic perfection due to uncontrolled mind, O Krishna? (6.37)

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

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

Lord Krishna said: There is no wasted effort in any spiritual practice either here or hereafter. A yogi never takes lower than a human birth, My dear friend. (6.40)

The less advanced unsuccessful yogi is reborn — after attaining heaven and living there for many years — in the house of a pure and wealthy family. (6.41)

The highly evolved unsuccessful yogi does not go to heaven, but is born in a spiritually advanced family. A birth like this is very difficult to get in this world. (6.42)

The unsuccessful yogi regains the knowledge acquired in the previous life and strives again to achieve perfection from where he had left his Sādhanā. (6.43)

The unsuccessful yogi is automatically carried towards Brahman by virtue of his Samskāra. Even the inquirer of Brahman surpasses those who just perform Vedic rituals. (6.44)

A yogi who sincerely tries, gradually becomes perfect after many incarnations and reaches the supreme goal of Self-realization. (6.45)

The yogi is superior to ascetics who practice sever self-torture. The yogi is superior to the Vedic scholars. The yogi is superior to the ritualists. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi. (6.46)

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

Chapter 7: Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization

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

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

Scarcely one out of thousands of persons tries for perfection of Self-realization. Scarcely one of the successful strivers truly understands Me. (7.03)

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

(That which creates diversity, and all that can be seen or known is called Prakriti. Prakriti is also the material cause or the material out of which everything is made. Prakriti is the original source of the material world consisting of three Gunas, and eight basic elements out of which everything in this universe has evolved according to Sāṃkhya doctrine. Prakriti is also referred to as Asat, perishable, body, matter, nature, material nature, nature, Māyā, MahatBrahma, field, creation, and the visible world.)

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

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

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

There is nothing higher than Me, the Supreme Being, O Arjuna. Everything in the universe is linked with Me like different jewels are linked with the thread in a necklace. (7.07)

O Arjuna, I am the juiciness in the water, I am the glow in the sun and the moon, the sacred syllable OM in all the Vedas, the sound in the space, and the manhood in men. (7.08)

I am the sweet scent in the earth. I am the heat in the fire, the life in all living beings, and the sense-purification (or Tapa, austerity) in yogis. (7.09)

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

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

Know that the three Gunas, Sāttvika, Rājasika, and Tāmasika, also originate from Me. I am not affected by the three Gunas, but the Gunas dependent on Me. (See also 9.04 and 9.05) (7.12)

Human beings are misled by these three Gunas of nature; therefore, they do not know Me who am above these Gunas. (7.13)

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

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

Four types of virtuous ones worship or seek Me, O Arjuna. They are: the distressed, the seeker of Self-knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise one who knows the Supreme. (7.16)

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

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

After many births the wise ones surrender unto My will by realizing that everything is, indeed, another form of Brahman. Such a great soul is very rare. (7.19)

Persons whose wisdom has been carried away by their Samskāra-born desires, depend on other gods (or deities) and practice various religious rites. (7.20)

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

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

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

The ignorant think of Me, the Para-Brahman, as having no form or personality and I can take any form; because human mind can never comprehend My Supreme form (Divya Roopa) and existence. (7.24)

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

Hidden by My divine Māyā, I am not known or seen by all. Therefore, the ignorant one does not know Me, the unborn and eternal Brahman. (7.25)

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

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

Persons of unselfish deeds, whose Karma has come to an end, become free from likes and dislikes and worship Me with firm determination. (7.28)

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

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

Chapter 8: Eternal Brahman

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

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

Lord Krishna said: Brahman is the Supreme Being or Sat that always exists. The basic nature of Brahman is called Adhyātma. The creative power of Brahman that causes expansion of all beings is called Karma. (8.03)

(Jeevātmā or Jeeva is defined as Atmā accompanied by the subtle (or astral) body consisting of the six sensory faculties and five vital forces (Prāna). It is also called the living entity or the individual soul enclosed in the physical body.)

All mortal beings are called Adhibhoota, and various expansions of the Supreme Being are called Adhidaiva or Divine Beings. I am Adhiyajna residing as Ishvara in all beings, O Arjuna. (See also 18.61) (8.04)

One who remembers Me exclusively, even while leaving the body at the time of death, attains the Supreme Abode; there is no doubt about it. (8.05)

Whatever object one remembers as one leaves the body at the end of life, that object is attained. Thought of whatever object prevails during one's lifetime, one remembers only that object at the end of life and achieves it. (8.06)

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

By contemplating Me with a firm mind that is disciplined by spiritual practice, one attains the Supreme divine spirit, O Arjuna. (8.08)

The one who meditates on Brahman — at the time of death with firm mind and devotion — as the all-knower, the controller, smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest, the sustainer of everything, and unimaginable; (8.09)

And make the flow of Prānic impulse rise up to the middle of two eye brows by the practice of meditation and hold

there; attains the Supreme divine spirit. (See also 4.29, 5.27, and 6.13) (8.10)

I shall briefly explain the process to attain the Supreme goal which the sages who are freed from attachment achieve; and desiring which people lead a life of celibacy. (8.11)

When one leaves the physical body — by controlling all the senses, focusing the mind on God and bringing the inhalation to the top of the head, (8.12)

while meditating on Me and uttering AUM, the sacred sound of Brahman — attains the Supreme goal. (8.13)

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

After attaining Me, the great souls do not incur rebirth in this miserable world because they have attained the highest perfection. (8.15)

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

Those who know that the duration of creation lasts 4.32 billion solar years and that the duration of destruction also lasts 4.32 billion solar years, they are the knowers of the cycles of creation and destruction. (See also 9.07) (8.17)

(It is said in Vedic cosmology that the day of Brahmā or the creative cycle lasts one thousand Yugas (or 4.32 billion solar years) and Brahmā's night or destructive cycle also lasts one thousand Yugas)

All expansions come out of the subtle body of Brahmā (or Prakriti) during the creative cycle, and they merge into the same during the destructive cycle. (see also 9.07, 15.18) (8.18)

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

There is another eternal state of existence or Purusha (the Spirit) that is higher than changeable material nature, Prakriti, that does not perish when all beings perish. (8.20)

This state is also called the eternal Brahman. This is said to be the ultimate goal. Those who reach My Supreme abode do not take rebirth again. (8.21)

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

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

Passing gradually after death, through Devas of fire, light, daytime, the bright lunar fortnight, and the six months of the northern solstice of the sun, yogis who know the Self attain supreme abode (and do not come back to earth). (8.24)

Passing gradually after death, through Devas of smoke, night, the dark lunar fortnight, and the six months of southern solstice of the sun, the righteous person attains heaven and comes back to earth again. (8.25)

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

Knowing these two paths, O Arjuna, a seeker is not confused at all. Therefore, one should be resolute in attaining salvation — the goal of human birth — at all times. (8.27)

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

Chapter 9: Supreme Knowledge and the Big Mystery

Lord Krishna said: Since you have faith in My words, I shall reveal to you the most profound, secret, supreme knowledge, together with supreme experience. Knowing this, you shall be freed from the miseries of worldly existence. (9.01)

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

O Arjuna, a person who has no faith in this knowledge does not attain Me and follows the cycles of birth and death. (9.03)

This entire universe is filled with Me, the eternal Brahman. All beings depend on Me (like a wave depends on the ocean). I do not depend on or become affected by them, because I am the source of all. (See also 7.12, 15.18) (9.04)

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

Similarly, everything is an expansion of Brahman only. (Gita 7.19)

Look at the power of My divine mystery; in reality, I — the sustainer and creator of all beings — do not depend on them, and they also do not depend on Me. (9.05)

(In reality, the wave does not depend on ocean; the wave and the ocean are nothing but water. Similarly, everything is Brahman only. Also, matter and energy are different as well as non-different.)

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

All beings merge into My Prakriti at the end of a MahāKalpa (or a cosmic cycle of just over 311 trillion solar years), O Arjuna, and I create them again at the beginning of the next Kalpa. (9.07)

I create the entire multitude of beings again and again with the help of My material Nature. These beings are under control of the modes of material Nature. (9.08)

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

The divine kinetic energy (Māyā) — with the help of Prakriti — creates all living and non-living beings under My supervision; thus, the creation keeps on going. (See also 14.03) (9.10)

The ignorant ones, not knowing My supreme nature as the great Lord of all beings, are unable to recognize Me when I take avatar in human form. (9.11)

The ignorant people having false hopes, false actions, and false knowledge, possess demonic (or Tāmasika) qualities (See 16.04-18) of wicked persons. (9.12)

But great souls, O Arjuna, who possess divine qualities (See 16.01-03) know Me as the source of creation and eternal, and worship Me with single-minded loving devotion and contemplation. (9.13)

Persons of firm mind worship Me with devotion by always singing My glories, trying to attain Me, and bowing down before Me. (9.14)

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

I am the ritual, I am the Yajna, I am the offering, I am the herb, I am the mantra, I am the Ghee, I am the fire, and I am the act of pouring out of the offering. (See also 4.24) (9.16)

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

I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the end, the foundation, the support, and the prime cause. (See also 7.10 and 10.39) (9.18)

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

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

After enjoying heavenly sense pleasures they return to this mortal world upon the end of their good Karma (or Punya). Thus the performers of Vedic rituals take repeated birth and death. (See also 8.25) (9.21)

I personally take full responsibility for the welfare— both material and spiritual — of those firm minded devotees, who always remember and adore Me with single-minded contemplation. (9.22)

O Arjuna, even those devotees who worship Devas with faith, they too worship Me, but in an improper way (if they do not fully understand that Devas represent a small fraction of My (or Brahman's) power). (9.23)

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

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

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

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

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

The Self is present equally in all beings. There is no one hateful or dear to Me. But, those who worship Me with

love and devotion, they are close to Me and I am also with them. (See also 7.18) (9.29)

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

Such a person soon becomes righteous and attains permanent peace. Be aware, O Arjuna, that My devotee never fails to reach the supreme goal. (9.31)

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

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

Always think of Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow down to Me. Thus uniting yourself with Me, and setting Me as the supreme goal and sole shelter, you shall certainly come to Me. (9.34)

Chapter 10: Expansion of the Absolute

Lord Krishna said: O Arjuna, listen again to My supreme word that I shall speak to you for your welfare because you are very dear to Me. (10.01)

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

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

Intellect, knowledge, clarity, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the mind and senses, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness; (10.04).

Nonviolence, impartiality, contentment, sense-control, charity, fame, and ill fame; all these diverse qualities in human beings arise from Me alone. (10.05)

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

One who truly understands My expansion and yogic powers, is certainly united with Me by firm devotion. (10.07)

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

My devotees remain ever satisfied and happy. Their minds remain absorbed in My thoughts, They gladly accept My will, and always discuss about Me. (10.09)

I give contemplative power—to those who are ever united with Me and lovingly adore Me— by which they come to Me. (See also 2.49, 18.57) (10.10)

I destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of Self-knowledge out of compassion for them. (10.11)

Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the supreme shelter, the supreme purifier, the eternal divine spirit, the ancient god, the unborn, and the omnipresent. (10.12)

All saint and sages, including Yourself, have thus described You. (10.13)

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

O Creator and Lord of all beings, God of all gods, Supreme person and Lord of the universe, You alone know Yourself. Nobody can know You, the Source, fully. (10.15)

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

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

O Lord, explain to me again in detail, Your yogic power and glory; because, I am not fully satisfied by hearing Your sweet words. (10.18)

Lord Krishna said: O Arjuna, now I shall explain to you My major divine expansions, because My expansions are endless. (10.19)

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

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

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

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

I am the chief priest Brihaspati. Among the army generals, I am Skanda; I am the ocean among the bodies of water. (10.24)

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

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

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

I am thunderbolt among the weapons, Kāmadhenu among the cows, and the cupid for procreation. Among the serpents, I am Vāsuki. (10.28)

I am Sheshanāga among the Nāgas, I am Varuna among the water gods, and Aryamā among the manes. I am Yama among the controllers. (10.29)

I am Prahlāda among devotees, time or death among the healers, lion among the beasts, and the Garuda among birds. (10.30)

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

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

I am the letter ‘A’ among the alphabets, among the compound words I am the dual compound, I am the endless time, I am the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all, and I am all knowing. (10.33)

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

I am Brihatsāma among the Vedic hymns. I am Gāyatri among the mantras, I am Mārgsirsha (November-December) among the months, I am the spring among the seasons. (10.35)

I am the brilliance of the brilliant and fraud of the gambler; I am victory of the victorious; I am resolution of the resolute; I am the goodness of the good. (10.36)

I am Krishna among the Vrishni family, Arjuna among the Pāndavas, Vyāsa among the sages, and Ushanā among the poets. (10.37)

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

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

There is no end of My divine expansions, O Arjuna. This is only a brief description of My prominent divine expansions. (10.40)

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

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

Chapter 11: Vision of the Cosmic Form

Arjuna said: My confusion is cleared by Your thoughtful words, that You spoke out of kindness towards me, about the supreme secret of the Self. (11.01)

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

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

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

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

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

O Arjuna, now see the entire creation; living, no-living, and whatever else you like to see; all at one place in My body. (11.07)

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

Sanjaya said: O King, having said this; Lord Krishna, the great Lord of the yogic power, showed His glorious form to Arjuna. (11.09)

Arjuna saw the glorious form of the Lord with many mouths and eyes, and many wonderful faces, with numerous divine ornaments, and holding divine weapons. (11.10)

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

If thousands of suns were to shine all at once in the sky, even that would not compare with the shine of the Supreme Being. (11.12)

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

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

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

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

I see You with Your crown, club, discus; and a mass of glow, difficult to see, shining all around with huge brightness of the sun and the burning fire. (11.17)

I believe You are the immortal, the Supreme to be realized. You are the ultimate shelter of the universe. You are the protector of eternal Dharma, and the everlasting spirit. (11.18)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The sons of Dhritarāshtra along with the hosts of kings; Bheeshma, Drona, and Karna together with chief warriors

on our side are also quickly entering into Your fearful mouths with terrible teeth. Some are seen caught in between the teeth with their heads crushed. (11.26-27)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why should they not bow to You, the original creator who is even greater than Brahmā? O God of all gods, O abode of the universe, You are both Sat and Asat, and the everlasting Brahman that is beyond both Sat and Asat. (11.37)

You are the only God, the most ancient Person. You are the final resting place of the entire universe. You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme abode. The entire universe is filled with You, O Lord of the infinite form. (11.38)

You are Vāyu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Shashānka, and Brahmā as well as the father of Brahmā. Salutations to You a thousand times, and again and again salutations to You. (11.39)

My salutations to You from front and from behind. O Lord, my prayers to You from all sides. You have infinite power and the boundless might. You are inside everything, and therefore You are everywhere and in everything. (11.40)

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

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

You are the father of both living and non-living world, and the greatest guru to be worshipped. No one is even equal to You in the three worlds; how can there be one greater than You? (11.43)

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

I am delighted by seeing that which has never been seen before, and yet my mind is distressed with fear. Show me Your four-armed Vishnu form. O God of gods, have mercy on me! (11.45)

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

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

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

Do not be disturbed and confused by seeing such a terrible form of Mine. With fearless and cheerful mind, now see My four-armed Vishnu form. (11.49)

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna, having thus spoken to Arjuna, showed His four-armed form. After that He took His gentle human form and cheered up Arjuna who was quite terrified. (11.50)

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 12: Path of Devotion

Arjuna said: Sincere devotees who worship a personal God with form, and those who worship the formless or impersonal Brahman which of these is a better yogi? (12.01)

Lord Krishna said: Those sincere devotees who worship with full faith and love by fixing their mind on a personal God; I consider them to be the best yogis. (See also 6.47) (12.02)

But those who worship the formless, the omnipresent, the unthinkable, the unchanging, the eternal Brahman; controlling all the senses, remaining calm under all circumstances, and engaged in the welfare of all creatures, they also attain Me. (12.03-04)

Self-realization is much more difficult— specially for the beginners — who fix their mind on the formless Brahman, because to develop love for the formless Brahman by the average human being, is very difficult. (12.05)

But to those who worship Me as their personal God, offering all actions to Me; setting Me as their supreme goal, and meditating on Me with single minded devotion; I quickly become their savior from the cycles of death and transmigration. (12.06-07)

Therefore, focus your mind on My personal form and let your mind and intellect remain connected to My thoughts through meditation and contemplation. Thereafter you shall certainly come to Me. (12.08)

If you are unable to focus your mind steadily on Me, then try to reach Me by practice of any other spiritual discipline (or Sādhanā) of your choice. (12.09)

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

If you are unable to work for Me then just surrender unto My will with controlled mind, and give up —the attachment to and the anxiety for— the fruits of all work

by learning to accept all results, as God-given, without being upset. (12.11)

Knowledge of scriptures is better than ritualistic practice, meditation is better than scriptural knowledge, detachment from the fruit of work is better than meditation, peace immediately follows detachment to the fruit of work. (See more on Samnyāsa in Chapter 18) (12.12)

One who does not hate any creature, who is friendly and kind, free from the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘my’, calm in pain and pleasure, forgiving and content, who has control over the mind, whose willpower is firm, whose mind and intellect are engaged in thinking about Me; such a devotee is dear to Me. (12.13-14)

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

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

One who is calm, neither likes nor dislikes a person, place or thing; who is neutral towards both the good and the evil persons, and who is full of devotion, such a person is dear to Me. (12.17)

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

The one who remains calm in criticism or praise, content with anything, unattached to a place (country, or house), peaceful, and full of devotion; that person is dear to Me. (12.19)

But those sincere devotees, who set Me as their supreme goal of life and make sincere effort to achieve it, are very dear to Me. (12.20)

Chapter 13: Creation and the Creator

Lord Krishna said: Human body and the universe may be called the field or creation of Atmā. One who knows the creation is called the creator by the seers of truth. (13.01)

I am the creator of all creation, O Arjuna. The true understanding of both the creator and the creation is considered to be spiritual or metaphysical knowledge. (13.02)

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

The sages have described Him in many ways, in various Vedic hymns, and also in other scriptures. (13.04)

The five basic elements, the 'I' consciousness or the feeling of independent individual existence (ego), the intellect, the subtle Prakriti, the ten senses, the mind, and the five sense objects; (See also 7.04) (13.05)

Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the physical body, consciousness, and willpower. Thus the field (the creation or body) has been briefly described with its expansions. Human body is also a miniature universe. (13.06)

Humbleness, modesty, nonviolence, patience, honesty, service to guru; purity of thought, word, and deed; firmness, sense-control and (13.07)

Dislike for sense objects, absence of I, me and mine, constant reflection on the agony and suffering inherent in birth, old age, disease, and death. (13.08)

Detached attachment with son, wife, and home; unflinching mental balance upon attainment of the desirable and the undesirable; and (13.09)

Unshakable devotion to Me by the practice of selfless devotion, love for living alone, distaste for social gossips; and (13.10)

Sincere search for Self-knowledge, seeing the presence of God everywhere — these are said to be the means of gaining Self-knowledge. That which is contrary to this is ignorance. (13.11)

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

(The Absolute (or Source, Brahman) is all three — neither Sat (eternal) nor Asat (temporal), beyond both temporal and eternal, as well as both temporal and eternal — at the same time.)

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

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

He is inside as well as outside all beings — living or non-living. He is beyond human understanding because of His subtle form. He is very near as well as far away. (13.15)

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

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

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

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

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

The Purusha (Spirit) associates with Prakriti (or matter) and enjoys the Gunas of Prakriti. Attachment to the Gunas (due to ignorance caused by previous Karma) is the cause of the birth of Jeevātmā in good and evil wombs. (13.21)

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

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

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

Some do not understand Brahman at all. But having heard of God from others, they perform deity worship with faith and devotion. They also go beyond birth and death due to their devotion and firm faith to what they have heard. (13.25)

Whatever is born— living or non-living — know them all to be born from the union of the field (or Prakriti) and the field knower (or Purusha), O Arjuna. (See also 7.06) (13.26)

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

Seeing the same Lord existing in every being, one does not injure anybody or anything and thereupon attains the Supreme goal. (13.28)

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

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

The Supreme Self is beginningless and without Gunas of material Nature. Dwelling in the body as Jeevātmā, it neither does anything nor gets affected, O Arjuna. (13.31)

As the all-pervading space is not polluted because of its subtlety, similarly the Self, seated in everybeing, is not affected. (13.32)

Just as one sun lights this entire world, similarly the creator gives life to and supports the entire creation. (13.33)

Those who understand the difference between the creation (or the body) and the creator (or the Atmā) and know the technique of liberation of Jeeva from the trap of Māyā with the help of Self-knowledge, attain the Supreme. (13.34)

Chapter 14: Three Gunas of Nature

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

Those who have taken shelter in this knowledge attain unity with Me, and are neither born at the time of creation nor suffer at the time of cosmic destruction of the universe. (14.02)

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

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

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

Of these, Sattva, being calm, is enlightening and ethical. It binds human beings (or Jeevātmā) by attachment to happiness and knowledge. (14.06)

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

Tamas, born of inertia, confuses Jeeva. It binds by ignorance, laziness, and excessive sleep. (14.08)

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

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

When the lamp of knowledge shines and purifies all the organs of our body, then it should be known that Sattva is predominant. (14.11)

Greed, activity, restlessness, passion, and undertaking of selfish deeds takes place when Rajas is predominant, O Arjuna. (14.12)

Ignorance, inactivity, carelessness, and confusion are born when Tamas is predominant, O Arjuna. (14.13)

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

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

The fruit of good action is said to be Sāttvika and pure, the fruit of Rājasika action is pain, and the fruit of Tāmasika action is ignorance. (14.16)

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

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

When one perceives no doer other than the power of Brahman (or the Gunas); and know the Supreme which is above and beyond the Gunas; then a person attains nirvana. (See also 3.27, 5.09, and 13.29) (14.19)

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

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

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

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

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

The one who is indifferent to honor and disgrace; who is the same to friend and foe; who has given up the sense of doership; such a person is said to have risen above the Gunas. (14.25)

The one, who offers service to Me with love and unshakable devotion, rises above the Gunas and becomes fit for God-realization. (See also 7.14 and 15.19) (14.26)

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

Chapter 15: Supreme Spirit

Lord Krishna said: The sages compare this creation to an everlasting, ever-changing tree having its Source above (in the Supreme Being) and countless cosmos as its branches. The Vedic hymns are the leaves. One who truly understands this tree is a knower of the Vedas. (See also KaU 2.3.01) (15.01)

The human life on the earth may be also compared to a tree. The branches of this tree spread all over the cosmos. This tree is nourished by the three Gunas of material Nature and the sense objects are its sprouts. It's sustaining roots of personal desires and ego due to ignorance stretch deep in human world causing Kārmic bondage. (15.02)

One should cut these firm sustaining roots of this mysterious tree of human life by the mighty ax of Self-knowledge and detachment, and seek nirvana, the goal of life, by surrendering to the will of God, the creator. (15.03-04)

Those who are free from pride and ignorance, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are always soul-conscious with all desires completely controlled, who are unaffected by pleasure and pain; reach the eternal goal. (15.05)

The sun does not light My supreme abode, nor the moon, or the fire. Having reached there one does not come back to earth. (15.06)

Atmā in the body is eternal indivisible fragment of Paramātmā or God. Atmā associates with the six senses of perception, including the mind, and it is then called Jeeva or Jeevātmā. (15.07)

Just as the air takes aroma away from the flower; similarly, the individual soul takes out the causal and subtle bodies from the physical body it leaves during death to the new physical body it acquires in reincarnation. (See also 2.13) (15.08)

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

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

The yogis striving for perfection feel Atmā abiding in their heart; but the ignorant, whose intellect is not purified by Self-knowledge, do not feel even though striving. (15.11)

The light that comes from the sun and which is in the moon, and in the fire; know that light to be My energy. (See also 13.17 and 15.06) (15.12).

I enter the earth and support all beings with My energy. I become the sap-giving moon and nourish all the plants and animals. (15.13)

I remain in the body of all living beings as digestive fire. Uniting with vital breaths, the Prāna and Apāna, I digest all varieties of food. (15.14)

I am seated in the subtle hearts of all beings. The memory, knowledge, and the removal of doubts and wrong ideas about the Self by reasoning or in Sāmādhi come from Me. I am known by the study of the Vedas. I am, indeed, the author of the Vedānta as well as the student of the Vedas. (See also 6.39) (15.15)

There are basically two beings in this world: The changeable and the everlasting. The physical bodies of all beings are changeable, and the Atmā or spirit is everlasting. (15.16)

There is the third being called Ishvara or Paramātmā, the Supreme Spirit, who is ever present in the three worlds and sustains them. (15.17)

I, the Supreme Being, am higher than both Atmā and body. Therefore, I am known in this world and in the Vedas as Paramātmā, or the Supreme Spirit. (15.18)

The wise, who truly understand Me as the Supreme Being, know everything and worship Me wholeheartedly. (See also 7.14, 14.26, and 18.66) (15.19)

Thus, I have explained this most secret transcendental science of the Absolute. Having understood this, one becomes enlightened, one's all duties are accomplished, and the goal of human life is achieved, O Arjuna. (15.20)

Chapter 16: Divine and Demonic Qualities

Lord Krishna said: Fearlessness, purity of heart, firmness in acquiring Self-knowledge, charity, sense control, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, mind control, honesty;

nonviolence, truthfulness, absence of anger, samnyāsa, calmness, abstaining from mean talk,

compassion for all creatures, freedom from greed, gentleness, humility, absence of indecision;

intelligence, forgiveness, courage, cleanliness, absence of hatred, and absence of pride; these are the qualities of those endowed with divine virtues, O Arjuna. (16.01-03)

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

Divine qualities lead to nirvana, the demonic qualities are said to be for rebirth. Do not grieve, O Arjuna, you are born with divine qualities. (16.04-05)

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

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

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

Holding such views, these lost souls, with small intellect and cruel deeds, are born as enemies for the destruction of the world. (16.09)

Filled with desires that are never satisfied, hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance; holding wrong views due to confusion; they act with impure motives. (16.10)

Such persons are troubled with great anxiety until death, and consider sense pleasure as their highest aim and everything. (16.11)

They are bound by hundreds of ties of desire and enslaved by lust and anger. They strive to obtain wealth by unlawful means for the fulfillment of material desires. (16.12)

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

That enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others also. I am the Lord. I am the enjoyer. I am successful, powerful, and happy; I am rich and born in a noble family.

I am the greatest. I shall perform sacrifice, I shall give charity, and I shall rejoice. They are misled by ignorance. (16.14-15)

Mislead by many fancies; trapped in the net of confusion; addicted to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures; they fall into a foul hell. (16.16)

Arrogant, stubborn, filled with pride and joy of wealth; they perform Yajna only in name, for show, and not according to scriptural command. (16.17)

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

These haters, cruel, sinful, and mean people of the world are thrown into the wombs of demons again and again. (16.19)

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

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

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

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

Therefore, let the scripture be your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. One should perform duty using scriptures as a guide. (16.24)

Chapter 17: The Power of Faith

Arjuna said: What is the state of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with faith, but without following the scriptural guidance, O Krishna? Is it Sāttvika, Rājasika, or Tāmasika? (17.01)

Lord Krishna said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three types: Sāttvika, Rājasika, and Tāmasika. Hear that from Me. (17.02)

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

The Sāttvika persons worship Devas, the Rājasika people worship Devas and demons, and the Tāmasika persons worship ghosts and spirits. (17.04)

Those who practice severe disciplines — for show and with and pride, without following the scriptures— are impelled by lust, and attachment. (17.05)

Those who senselessly torture the five elements in their body by severe ascetic practices (Tapa) and also Me who dwell within the body, are ignorant persons of demonic nature. (17.06)

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

The foods that promote long life, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy; are juicy, smooth, satisfying, and agreeable to the stomach. Such foods are dear to the Sāttvika persons. (17.08)

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

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

Yajna mentioned in the scriptures, performed with a firm belief that it is a duty, and without a desire for personal gain, is Sāttvika Yajna. (17.11)

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

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

The respect for Devas, spiritualists, guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, celibacy, and nonviolence—are said to be the sense-control of deed. (17.14)

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

The peace of mind, gentleness, silence, sense-restrain, and the purity of thought are called the sense-control of thought. (17.16)

Threefold sense-control or austerity —of thought, word, and deed mentioned above— practiced by yogis with supreme faith, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be Sāttvika sense-control. (17.17)

Sense-control that is done for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for show, is said to be Rājasika, unsteady, and impermanent. (17.18)

Sense-control performed without proper understanding, or with self-torture, or for harming others, is declared as Tāmasika sense-control. (17.19)

The charity — given as a matter of duty, to a deserving person or organization who does nothing in return; when and where help is needed — is called a Sāttvika charity. (17.20)

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

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

‘OM TAT SAT’ is said to be the threefold name of Brahman or God. The Brāhmana, the Vedas, and the Yajna were created by Brahman in the ancient time. (17.23)

Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and sense-control prescribed in the scriptures are always started by uttering ‘OM or AUM’ by the knowers of Brahman. (17.24)

Various types of sacrifice, charity, and sense-control are performed by the seekers of nirvana by uttering ‘TAT’ (or He is all) without seeking a reward. (17.25)

SAT is used in the sense of Reality and goodness. The word ‘SAT’ is also used for a good act, O Arjuna. (17.26)

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

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

Chapter 18: Nirvana through Samnyāsa

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

Lord Krishna said: The sages define Samnyāsa as abstaining from work for personal gain. The wise define Tyāga as giving up attachment to the fruits of all work. (See also 5.01, 5.05, and 6.01) (18.02)

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

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

Acts of sacrifice, charity, and sense-control should not be abandoned, but should be performed, because sacrifice, charity, and discipline purify our mind. (18.05)

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

Giving up necessary duty is not proper. The giving up one’s duty is due to ignorance, and is declared to be Tāmasika Tyāga. (18.07)

One who gives up duty merely because it is difficult, or because of fear of bodily trouble, does not get the benefits of Tyāga by performing such Rājasika Tyāga. (18.08)

Work performed as duty, without attachment to the fruit, is alone regarded as Sāttvika Tyāga, O Arjuna. (18.09)

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

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

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

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

The physical body or the seat of Karma, various instruments or the eleven bodily organs of perception and action, the doer or the three Gunas, five Prānas or bio-impulses, and the fifth is the presiding deities of the eleven organs. (18.14)

These are the five causes of all action, whether right or wrong, one performs by thought, word, and deed. (18.15)

Therefore, the one who considers one's body or the Spirit (Atmā, soul) as the sole doer, does not understand due to imperfect knowledge. (18.16)

One who is completely free from the feeling of doership (or ego) and whose intellect is not polluted by the desire to reap the fruit for personal gain — even after slaying all these people — neither slays nor is bound by the act of killing. (18.17)

The subject, the object, and the knowledge of the object are the threefold driver of action. The eleven organs of the body, the act, and the Gunas are the three components of action. (18.18)

Knowledge, action, and doer of an action are said to be of three types according to the Guna theory of Sāmkhya doctrine. Hear duly about these also. (18.19)

The knowledge by which one sees the same eternal reality in all beings; such a knowledge is considered to be Sāttvika. (18.20)

The knowledge by which one sees each individual as different and separate from one another — such knowledge is in the mode of passion. (18.21)

The illogical, baseless, and worthless knowledge by which one thinks that this body is everything; such knowledge is declared to be Tāmasika. (18.22)

Duty performed without likes, dislikes, and attachment by a person who does not desire fruits for personal enjoyment is said to be Sāttvika action. (18.23)

Action performed with selfish motives and ego that 'I am the doer', and with too much effort; is declared to be Rājasika action. (18.24)

Action that is undertaken due to ignorance; disregarding outcome, loss or injury to others, as well as one's own ability is said to be Tāmasika action. (18.25)

A person who is free from attachment, is selfless, has willpower and enthusiasm, and remains calm in success or failure, is called good. (18.26)

A person who desires the fruits of work, who is greedy, violent, impure, and affected by joy and sorrow, is called passionate. (18.27)

A person who is undisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, cruel, lazy, depressed, and who always postpones doing things; is labeled as ignorant. (18.28)

Now hear Me explain the threefold division of intellect and willpower, based on modes of material Nature, O Arjuna. (18.29)

The intellect by which one understands the path of work and the path of samnyāsa, right and wrong action, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that intellect is Sāttvika. (18.30)

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

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

The willpower by which one regulates the activities of mind, Prāna (or the bio-impulses), and senses for Self-realization; that willpower is Sāttvika, O Arjuna. (18.33)

That resolve — by which a person hankering for the fruits of work sticks to duty, wealth, and pleasure with great attachment — is in the mode of passion. (18.34)

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

And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, about the threefold pleasure. The pleasure one enjoys from spiritual practices ends all sorrows. (18.36)

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

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

Pleasure that befools a person in the beginning and in the end as a result of sleep, laziness, and carelessness, is in the mode of ignorance. (18.39)

There is no being, either on the earth or among the celestial controllers (Devas) in the heaven, who can remain free from these three modes of material Nature. (18.40)

The division of human labor into four categories — Brāhmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra — is also based on the qualities inherent in peoples' nature. (See also 4.13) (18.41)

Those who have calmness, discipline, sense-control, purity, patience, honesty, knowledge, Self-realization, and belief in God are labeled as Brāhmanas, the intellectuals. (18.42)

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

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

One attains spiritual perfection by devotion to work suited to one's own nature. Listen to Me how one attains perfection while engaged in doing natural work. (18.45)

One attains perfection by worshipping the Supreme Being — from whom all beings originate and by whom all this universe is pervaded — through performance of one's work as worship, dedicated to God. (See also 9.27, 12.10) (18.46)

One's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work. One who does the work suitable to one's nature (without selfish motives) incurs no Kārmic bondage. (See also 3.35, 5.10, 18.07, 18.09, 18.17, 18.23) (18.47)

One's natural work, even though defective, should not be given up; because all works have some bad aspects as fire has smoke, O Arjuna. (18.48)

The person who has control over his mind and senses, and is free from desires, attains the perfection of freedom from the bondage of Karma by giving up attachment. (18.49)

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

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

Living in solitude, eating lightly, controlling the thought, word, and deed; ever absorbed in soul-consciousness, practicing detachment; and (18.52)

Giving up body-consciousness, violence, pride, lust, anger, and desire for possession; free from the feeling of 'I and my', and peaceful; one becomes fit for attaining oneness with Brahman. (18.53)

The peaceful one who is absorbed in Supreme Being neither grieves nor desires. He becomes non-judgmental and obtains the highest devotional love for God. (18.54)

By supreme devotion (also called Parā Bhakti or the highest stage of Self-knowledge) one truly understands what and who I am in essence. Having known Me in essence, one immediately merges with Me. (See also 4.38, 4.39) (18.55)

One attains Supreme abode by My grace, even while doing all duties, just by completely surrendering unto My will. (18.56)

Mentally offer all actions with love to Me and set Me as the highest goal. Always reflect on Me by keeping the mind ever absorbed in My thoughts. (See also 2.49, 10.10) (18.57)

You shall overcome all difficulties by My grace when your mind remains absorbed in Me. If you do not listen to Me due to self-identity (ego), you shall not attain nirvana. (18.58)

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

O Arjuna, you are bound by your own nature-born Kārmic impressions (Samskāra). Therefore, you shall do — even against your will — what you do not wish to do out of ignorance. (18.60)

The Lord abides in the causal heart of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings to act (or work out their Karma) by His power of Māyā as if they are (puppets of Karma) mounted on a machine. (18.61)

Depend on Him alone with loving devotion, O Arjuna. By His grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal abode. (18.62)

Thus I have explained the knowledge that is more secret than the secret. After fully reflecting on this, do as you wish. (18.63)

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

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

Setting aside doership and attachment to all works, just joyfully surrender to My will. I shall liberate you from all bonds of Karma or sins. Do not grieve. (See also 7.14, 7.15, 7.19, 7.29, 9.32, 15.04) (18.66)

(In surrender one lets the divine plan rule one's life without giving up one's best effort.)

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

The one who shall study and help propagate this supreme secret philosophy amongst My devotees, shall be performing the highest devotional service (Parā Bhakti) to Me and shall certainly come to Me. (18.68)

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

Those who study our sacred dialogue shall be performing a holy act of Jñāna-Yajna, the acquisition and spreading of self-knowledge. This is My promise. (18.70)

Whoever even hears this sacred dialogue with faith and without finding faults becomes free from sin, and attains heaven. (18.71)

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

Arjuna said: By Your grace my confusion or identity crisis about our true nature as Spirit is destroyed, I have gained knowledge, my confusion with regard to body and Atmā is dispelled and I shall obey Your command. (18.73)

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

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

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

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

Wherever there will be both Krishna (or Dharma in the form of the scriptures), and Arjuna, the embodiment of duty and protection, there will be permanent prosperity, victory, happiness, and morality. This is my conviction. (18.78)