

## CHAPTER 18

### || *RELEASE* ||

O my Master! You are pure and all auspicious to your devotees, glory to you. You are the strong wind, which dispels the clouds of birth and old age. O powerful God, you destroy all that is inauspicious and dispense the fruit of the scriptures. You are perfect and love your devotees, who are free from sensuous desires. You destroy the play of time and are beyond all modifications. O God, you are motionless and you have become big-bellied, by gulping the fickle minds of your devotees. To create the world over and over again is your loving sport. You possess pure nature and inspire happiness. You are destroyer of all sins and the cause of this universe (1-5). O Lord, you are self-illuminated and support the clouds, in the form of worlds, like the sky. You are the first pillar on which is erected the pavilion of the created world, and you are also its dissolution. Free from the conditioning factors, you are the elephant, which destroys the garden of empirical knowledge. You are also the sea of compassion, which destroys desire and pride, with the aid of self-control and restraint of the senses. God, you are one and single, who averts the pride of the snake, in the form of desire. You are the lamp in the temple of devotee's hearts and the redresser of their worldly troubles and tribulations. O Lord, you are simply unique and you love your devotees, who have become perfected in their dispassion. You are beyond the sway of *Maya*, but are accessible to your devotees and fit for their devotion.

O Master, you are the wish-yielding tree, who showers gifts beyond imagination and you are the fertile soil in which grows the seed of the tree, in the form of Self-knowledge (6-10). With what words can I describe you, who are devoid of any attribute? I know that the adjectives with which I try to describe you, do not represent your true nature. I, therefore, feel embarrassed to praise you. The sea is said to have its limits; but this fame of its lasts only to the rise of the moon. The moonstone does not ooze and offer oblations to the moon, because it is the moon which makes it ooze. The trees do not know how the advent of spring makes them put forth foliage (11-15). Just as the lotus creeper blossoms at the first touch of the sun's rays without embarrassment or the salt dissolves at the touch of water, so when I think of you, I forget myself. I am reduced to the state of a person, who belches again and again after a satisfying full meal. You have made me forgetful of myself and crazy about singing your praise. If I were to give up my body-consciousness and praise your qualities, it will mean that I am making a distinction between the qualities and qualified. But you are a single entity, so how can I make such a distinction? Is it not better to keep the pearl intact, instead of cutting it into two parts and then rejoining them (16-20)? To call you the parent of the world is not to praise you, because it would mean, that I defile you by ascribing to you, the attribute of possessing me as your child. I could call myself your servant, but how can I falsely attribute proprietorship to you? How can I describe you in a form, which is defiled by conditioning factors? O Master, if I call you indiscriminately as the Self, it would mean that I am expelling you from my interior. For this reason, I see no scope to praise you in this world or to decorate you with any ornament, other than silence. Therefore, to say nothing constitutes your praise, to do nothing is your worship and to associate with you is

to negate one's personality by getting merged in you (21-25). Like the chatter of an infatuated person, is this my praise of you; so bear it, O Master, patiently with a mother's love. Now put your firm seal on my discourse on the *Gita*, so that it will be acceptable to this audience. Then *Shri Nivrittinath* said, "Why do you need to say all this again and again? Is it necessary to rub the philosopher's stone with iron over and over again, to turn it into gold?" On this *Jnanadeva* said, "I have received your grace, O Master, now listen to the interpretation of the *Gita*, which I am going to narrate."

Now the *Gita* is a temple studded with jewels, of which, this chapter is the very pinnacle, constructed with the philosopher's stones, in the form of insights. It will instruct you in the interpretation of the *Gita* (26-30). There is a custom in this world, that if you get a vision of the pinnacle from a distance, it is as good as seeing the deity in the temple. The same parallel holds here also. For if you read carefully this chapter, you comprehend the whole teaching of the *Gita*. It is for this reason, that I say that *Vedavyasa* has composed this chapter, as a pinnacle to the temple of the *Gita*. Just as after the erection of the pinnacle, no construction work remains to be done, this eighteenth chapter suggests that with it, the *Gita* has come to an end. *Vyasa* was a skillful artisan, who excavated the mountains of gems, in the form of the *Vedas* and formed rocky plains, in the form of the *Upanishads* (31-35). From this excavation became available, many well-shaped stones of different shapes, in the form of duty (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*) and passionate love (*kama*). With these, he built a big rampart in the form of the *Mahabharata* and in that he selected with great skill, the polished stones in the form of the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, relating to the knowledge of the Self. Then using the plummet in the form of renunciation and, taking the help of other religious texts, he fixed the layout of the temple. On this cleared ground, the temple building was constructed with fifteen stories, in the form of fifteen chapters. The chapter sixteen provided a dome on the top of the temple, while chapter seventeen furnished a round frame for building the pinnacle there on (36-40). Then sage *Vyasa* set up securely, the pinnacle in the form of chapter eighteen and unfurled the flag of the *Gita* on it. So all the previous chapters form the floors, one over the other. The present chapter is indicating their completion. This pinnacle testifies that the temple is finished and nothing remains to be done. So this eighteenth chapter gives a clear exposition of the *Gita* from beginning to the end. Thus sage *Vyasa* skillfully completed the temple in the form of the *Gita* and has come to the rescue of all beings in every way. Some walk round the temple by reciting the *Gita*, while others take shelter in the shade and hear the *Gita* recited (41-45). Still others take the roll of betel leaves and a pice in the form of attention and enter the sanctuary of the temple, in the form of the knowledge of the *Gita*. The last-named get access to Lord Krishna through the knowledge of the Self. But all of them get the same access to the temple of salvation. In a dinner given by a rich person, all those seated at the head or at the end of a row, get the same kind of sweet dish. In the same way, all attain liberation by hearing, by reciting or knowing the meaning of the *Gita*. So as this, *Gita* is the temple sacred for the devotees of *Vishnu* and the eighteenth chapter is its pinnacle, I have made this distinction deliberately.

Now, I shall explain to you how this chapter is linked with chapter seventeen (46-50). Even though the currents of the rivers *Ganga* and *Yamuna* are different, they are one, because of their common element, water. In the case of *Lord Shiva* in the form of half male and half female (*Ardha-nari-nateshwara*), although the male and female forms have distinctive features, they have one and the same body. The phases of the moon go on increasing, during the bright half of the lunar

month, yet they do not appear distinct in the full moon. So although the stanzas appear different because of their four parts and the chapters appear different because of their different stanzas, they form a unity in regard to their import. Just as the thread on which gems are woven is the same (51-55), or the necklace made up of many pearls has the same luster, or the flowers and their wreaths can be counted on fingers, but not so their fragrance, so is the case with the stanzas and the chapters (i.e. they point to the same common Truth). The *Gita* consists of seven hundred stanzas divided into eighteen chapters, but the theme taught by the God is the same without any difference. I have given the exposition of the *Gita*, without departing from its meaning. I am now explaining the eighteenth chapter also on the same lines.

At the end of chapter seventeen, the Lord had said (56-60), "O Arjuna, any actions performed without uttering the name of *Brahman*, prove worthless." Hearing these words of the Lord, Arjuna felt happy. He thought that it was good that the Lord disparaged the activist. Poor fellow blinded by ignorance, he could not realise God, then how could he know the secret of the name of *Brahman*? So long as the qualities of *rajas* and *tamas* are not got rid of, his faith remains feeble; then how could it remain fixed in the name of *Brahman*? Just as embracing a spear or running on a horizontally suspended rope, or playing with a female cobra (61-65) is fatal to life, so these actions are noxious, as they lead to the insurmountable dangers of birth and death. If luckily the actions are properly performed, then they conduce to knowledge, otherwise they lead to hell. There are many obstacles in the successful execution of works; so how can a man of action get his chance to attain liberation? It would be, therefore, better to abandon all actions altogether, in order to get rid of the suffering resulting from action and adopt faultless renunciation (66-70).

Renunciation and relinquishment are the two paths, which are free from the fear of being affected by actions and which conduce to knowledge. They are incantations of invocation to knowledge, or are the fields of growing knowledge, or are the very ropes for hauling up knowledge. So, I should request the Lord to explain, which of these two paths can bring salvation. Deliberating like this, Arjuna asked Lord Krishna to enlighten him about the nature of these two. Chapter eighteen contains the reply of the Lord to this question of Arjuna. In this way, according to the law of cause and effect, one chapter gives birth to another.

Now, listen well to the question which Arjuna asked. What the Lord said at the end of the last chapter made Arjuna sad (71-75). He had understood perfectly well, the knowledge of the Self imparted by the Lord. Yet he could not bear to see that the Lord remained silent without resuming his talk. Even when the calf has drunk the milk to its heart's content, it does not wish to be separated from the cow. Such is the case of single-minded love. That one should wish to talk to a beloved person without cause, to see and go on seeing him or her, love expands with such experience of love – love is of this kind. Arjuna was verily love incarnate, so he felt miserable at the Lord's silence (76-80). Just as one looks into the mirror and enjoys seeing one's own form in it, so Arjuna was enjoying the highest spiritual reality i.e. *Brahman* through the medium of this conversation. When the dialogue ended, this enjoyment also came to an end. How, could Arjuna, who had become accustomed to this blissful experience, bear to see it stopped? On the plea, therefore, of questioning him about the distinctive natures of relinquishment and renunciation, he reopened the folded cloth. So this is not the eighteenth chapter, but the *Gita* itself in one chapter. When the calf makes the cow to release its milk, how could there be any delay? So when the *Gita* was about to end, Arjuna brought it back to its former state. Has it ever happened that the

Master does not reply when questioned by his servant (81-85)? Then Arjuna said, "Let the Lord hear my request."

*Arjuna said:*

1. *I wish to know the essence of renunciation, O mighty-armed (Krishna), as also relinquishment, O Hrishiksha, severally, O slayer of (demon) Keshi*

O Lord, in truth, renunciation and relinquishment seem to connote the same meaning as 'combination' and 'combine' mean the same thing. I, therefore, think that both these words mean the same thing, namely relinquishment. If they have any distinctive meanings, please explain them to me. Then Lord Krishna said," O Arjuna, they are two different words, but if they appear to you to convey the same meaning, that too is true in one sense (86- 90). It is true that both these words are used in the sense of relinquishment. But they are distinct in the sense that renunciation is the abandonment of all actions, while relinquishment is the abandonment of the fruit of actions. Now I shall explain to you the actions of which the fruit should be abandoned and the actions, which should be abandoned totally. Listen to it carefully. Whereas numerous trees grow of their own accord in the forests and on the mountains, the paddy or garden plants do not grow there. Grass grows plentifully without sowing seeds, but the paddy seedlings can be obtained only from the soil, which is burnt (91-95). Even if the body grows naturally, ornaments have to be fashioned. Even if the river becomes available naturally, a well has to be sunk. So the day-to-day and occasional actions take place in the natural course; but the optional (*kamya*) actions are not undertaken without a motive."

*The blessed Lord said:*

2. *Renouncing of actions motivated by desire, the wise know to be renunciation; the abandonment of the fruits of all actions, the learned declare, is relinquishment.*

Actions prompted by desire, involve the performance of sacrifices such as the horse-sacrifice, sinking of wells with or without steps, laying out pleasure gardens, or making grants of lands or new towns, observing diverse vows with ceremonies – all these actions consisting of sacrifices and social works (*Ishtapurta*) spring from desire. Such actions involving enjoyment of their fruit lead to bondage (96-100). O Arjuna, an embodied person cannot avoid the occasions of birth and death. One cannot escape his destiny (i.e. what is written on his forehead), nor can he wash off his complexion. In the same way, one cannot evade the experience of the fruit of a motivated action, as one cannot become free unless he pays off his debt. Even if a motivated action gets casually performed without any motive, even then it has the natural power to make one experience its fruit. This is in the same way as a mock fight with blunt weapons causes an injury, or jaggery put in the mouth tastes sweet, or the foot placed on a live coal thinking it to be ashes, burns (101-105). Therefore, the seeker should not perform such actions even out of fun. Just as one should vomit poison which has entered the stomach, one should abandon motivated actions. Such abandonment is called renunciation, so said Lord Krishna, who dwells in our hearts and is the witness of all our actions. Then he added, just as the abandonment of riches removes fear of thieves, so the renunciation of motivated actions, destroys all desires too.

The occasional works are those, which are performed on the festive occasions of solar or lunar eclipse, or at the time of offerings to the dear departed (106-110) or in extending hospitality to a guest. The clouds thunder in the sky during the rainy season, or the trees get into blossoms during the spring, the body becomes comely in youth, or the moonstone oozes at the touch of the moonbeams or the lotuses bloom in the sunlight. In all this, whatever exists originally is revealed; nothing new is created. In the same way, when obligatory work has to be performed on special occasions, it receives the high-sounding name of 'occasional' (*naimittika*) action and whatever requires to be done in the morning, at noon or in the evening, know that to be the obligatory work (*nitya*). Just as the eye-sight does not contain anything extra added to it (111-115), or the feet have their natural movement or the lamp has its natural light, or the sandal-wood has its natural fragrance, this action has its natural prerogative. This, O Partha, is called the obligatory action. In this way, I have explained to you both the obligatory and occasional actions. Some consider these actions as barren, as they have to be necessarily performed. But as a meal satisfies hunger and makes one contented, so these actions become fruitful (116-120). When an alloyed gold is burnt in fire, its alloy gets burnt and it becomes pure gold; such is the case with these actions. Because of them, the mental defects are destroyed, the spiritual status of the doer improves and he attains to a perfect state. Even though these actions come to such good fruition, their fruit should be abandoned like the child born under an inauspicious star. The spring makes the creepers blossom and the mango trees bear abundant foliage, but goes without touching them. In the same way, one should perform these obligatory actions without transgressing their limits, but treat their fruit as worth forsaking like vomit (121-125). The learned men call this abandonment of the fruit of action as relinquishment. So I have explained to you the nature of both renunciation (*sanyasa*) and relinquishment (*tyaga*).

When the motivated action is renounced, it does not bind and the prohibited action does not get performed, because of its prohibition. Just as when the head is cut off, the body falls down, so with the relinquishment of fruit, the obligatory action gets destroyed. As with the harvesting of the crop the growth of the plant stops, so when all actions are destroyed with the relinquishment of their fruit, the knowledge of the Self, comes in search of such relinquishes. In this way, those who relinquish the fruits of all obligatory actions and renounce the optional actions, they become fit for the knowledge of the Self (126-130). If any try to abandon the actions somehow, they will not be able to do so, but will get more and more involved in actions. If a physician prescribes medicine without a proper diagnosis of the disease, the medicine proves fatal, like poison. Or if one does not partake of food, will he not die of hunger? Therefore, one should not give up action, which is not fit to be abandoned and one should not pursue out of greed that action, which is fit to be abandoned. The abandonment of action without knowing the trick of relinquishment becomes a burden; but men who are indifferent to the world, do not even take a look at such actions.

3. *Some thinkers say that action should be abandoned, being tainted. Acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be abandoned, so say others.*

Some say that action leads to bondage, as one can never get rid of desire for the fruit of action. If a person calls a naked person nude, the latter in turn calls him quarrelsome (131-135). One who is fond of food gobbles all kinds of food and suffering from indigestion finds fault with it. A leper, instead of blaming his rotting body, gets angry with the flies which hover

round him. In that way the feeble-minded persons, who are greedy of the fruit of action and reluctant to relinquish it, denounce action as wicked and favour its total renunciation. Others declare that actions such as sacrifice ought to be performed; otherwise there is no other means for the purification of the mind. If one wishes to bring about early purification of the mind, one should not be sluggish in performing actions. If one wishes to purify gold, one should not neglect to burn it, in the crucible. If one wishes to see his face in a copper mirror, he should not neglect to keep ashes ready to polish it (136-140). If one wishes to get his clothes washed, he should not call the laundry-trough unclean. In the same way, even if actions cause trouble, one should not abandon them. For can anybody get tasty food to eat without cooking it? Some people advocate the performance of actions by such arguments. In this way, relinquishment of actions has become the subject of controversy. I, therefore, wish to explain to you the true nature of relinquishment and clear the controversy.

4. *Hear then My conclusion regarding relinquishment, O Bharata. For relinquishment, O tiger among men, is declared to be three-fold.*

O Arjuna, this relinquishment of fruit is of three kinds. I shall now explain to you these kinds with their distinctive features (141-145). Even though there are three kinds of relinquishment, their gist is the same, which you should bear well in mind. I am all-knowing and so hear My definite opinion on this matter. The seeker, who is diligent about his salvation, should by all means act thus.

5. *Acts of sacrifice, charity and austerities ought to be performed, not renounced; for sacrifice, charity and austerities purify the wise.*

Just as a wayfarer should not give up walking, so one should not abandon the obligatory duties such as sacrifice, charity and austerities. Just as the search cannot be abandoned until the lost thing is recovered, or the dish-plate cannot be set aside, until after a full meal (146-150), or the boat cannot be abandoned in mid-stream, or the banana tree cannot be cut before it bears fruit or the light cannot be extinguished before finding the required thing, so one should not be indifferent to performing sacrifices etc. until one becomes convinced about the knowledge of the Self. On the contrary, one should perform sacrifices, charity and austerities with greater zeal and diligence. He who walks fast gets time for rest; so performance of duties conduces to freedom from action. If a patient takes medicines regularly, he becomes free from his ailment before long (151-155). In the same way, actions performed early, according to the scriptural injunctions, destroy the *rajas* and *tamas* qualities. Gold treated with acid becomes purified, with the elimination of its alloy. So action performed with dedication, destroys the *rajas* and *tamas* qualities and reveals the majesty of a pure mind. So, O Arjuna, good actions attain the efficacy of the holy water, in bringing about purification of existence. The holy water cleanses only the external dirt, but the mental impurities are washed off, only through good actions (156-160). Just as a thirsty person should find springs of nectar in a waterless place, or a blind man should receive the luster of the sun in his eyes, or the river itself should come to the rescue of a drowning person or the earth should clasp to her bosom the falling man, or the god of death himself should confer longevity on a dying person, so the actions, O Arjuna, release a person from the bonds of actions. Just as the science of alchemy knows how to convert the poison into a life-saving drug, so there is a skillful way of performing

actions in such a way that instead of leading to bondage they conduce to liberation. Now I shall explain to you the device by which actions will destroy themselves (161-165).

6. *But even these actions should be performed O Partha, without attachment and (the desire for) reward. This is My firm and best view*

When these actions such as sacrifices, are being performed according to scriptural rules, he does not become puffed up with pride. If anyone performs a pilgrimage at the cost of another, he cannot boast of having performed the pilgrimage. He who, under the authority of a powerful king, defeats another king and brings him as a captive, cannot feel proud of his conquest. He who swims taking the help of a swimmer cannot boast of being a swimmer. The sacrificial priest, who gives gifts on behalf of the sacrifice, cannot take the credit of being the donor. In the same manner, he should perform all obligatory actions from time to time, according to the scriptural injunction without the egoistic feeling of being the doer (166-170). He should not, O Arjuna, crave for the fruit, resulting from his action. O winner of wealth, he should, on the contrary, undertake the action without hankering after its fruit, in the same manner, as a wet nurse brings up a child not her own. No one waters a holy fig tree for its fruit; so one should perform actions without desiring their fruit. A cowherd looks after the cows of a village, without the desire of their milk, so one should be disinterested in the reward of his actions. A person who performs action in this way, attains to the knowledge of the Self (171-175). My best message to all is, that they should perform actions without expectation of a reward and attachment to the body. He who is dead tired of the bonds of existence and is anxious for his deliverance, should not transgress this command of Mine.

7. *Now to renounce an obligatory function is not proper; its abandonment through delusion is declared to be derived from *tamas* quality.*

If a person trips up in the dark, he angrily pierces his nails in his own eyes, in the same way a person abandons all actions as they lead to bondage. I call this abandonment, as of *tamas* quality. It is like cutting one's own head angrily, on account of a shooting headache. O Arjuna, if the road is rough, one must walk over it anyhow. Does anyone cut off the feet, on the ground that the road is bad (176-180)? If hot food is served to a hungry person and he kicks it away, because it is hot, he will have to go without food. A *tamas-dominated* person does not know, because of delusion, the trick as to how to destroy the bondage of actions through actions. He, therefore, abandons actions, which fall to his lot, according to his natural disposition. Do not allow such a *tamas-dominated* person, even to touch you.

8. *He who abandons work as irksome, from fear of physical suffering, his abandonment is based on *rajas*; and so he does not reap the fruit of relinquishment.*

Even though he knows his own qualification and the duties to be performed by him, he becomes indifferent to them on the ground that their performance is troublesome. One feels it a burden to carry one's food for use in travel. In the same way, action seems difficult when it is begun (181-185). Just as a *neem* fruit tastes bitter and a *myrobalan* astringent, so the action seems hard at its commencement and end. The cow gives milk, but it has vicious horns, the chrysanthemum flower grows on a thorny plant and although a meal gives satisfaction, there is the bother of cooking it. In the same way, action entails physical exertion on the part of

its agent and so appears difficult in its initial stage. If not, he begins to perform it as his prescribed duty, but drops it as soon as he suffers pain. He says to himself, I am lucky to have such a good thing as the human body; then why should I tax it with work (186-190)? If I have to work to gain happiness, I would much rather do without it. Why not enjoy the pleasures which are already within my grasp? Such relinquishment, O Arjuna, on the ground of physical pain, is *rajas-dominated* relinquishment. This is also abandonment of work, but it does not bear the fruit of relinquishment. If boiling ghee falls into fire, it does not become an oblation. If a person is drowned, it does not amount to voluntary death by *yogic* self-immersion, but is an accidental death. If one, therefore, gives up his prescribed duties because he is attached to physical comforts, he does not gain the fruit of relinquishment (191-195). Just as all the stars vanish in the morning light, all activity, along with its cause, as well as ignorance, ceases with the dawn of knowledge and then this relinquishment of actions bears fruit in the form of liberation. The abandonment of action through ignorance, does not lead to emancipation and so being *rajas-dominated*, it is not true relinquishment. Now I shall tell you as the occasion demands, what kind of relinquishment will bring emancipation to you.

9. *When an obligatory duty is performed, O Arjuna, (with the thought) that it ought to be done, without attachment and desire for its fruit, that tyaga is known to be derived from sattva.*

Now the (*sattvic*) person performs actions, which have fallen to his lot, according to his status with proper decorum and in accordance with scriptural injunctions (196-200). But he does not perform them with egoistic feeling and does not expect their fruit. To show disrespect to the mother or to entertain passion for her leads to ruin. Therefore one should avoid both these things and render service to her. Does one discard a cow because its mouth is foul? Does one throw away one's favourite fruit, because its rind and stone are tasteless? In the same way the egoistic feeling of the doer and the desire for the fruit of action, contribute to the bondage of action (201-205). A father never entertains a passion for his daughter; in the same way, he who performs his obligatory actions with complete detachment, in these two respects does not suffer misery. This most excellent tree in the form of relinquishment bears a big fruit in the form of emancipation. So it is well-known in the world as *sattvic tyaga*. Just as one roasts the seeds making that species of tree extinct, so he renounces action by relinquishing its fruit. Just as with the touch of the philosopher's stone, both the rust and its black colour disappear, so with the relinquishment of the fruit of action, both *rajas* and *tamas* qualities are destroyed. Then with the purification of his *sattva*, he becomes enlightened in regard to the true nature of the Self. Just as the mirage vanishes as soon as the evening sets in (206-210), the deceptive appearance of the universe like that of the sky (which looks blue without being so) vanishes.

10. *The relinquisher imbued with sattva, who is enlightened and free from doubts, hates not evil action nor is he attached to good action.*

As the clouds appear and become dissolved in the sky, so whatever actions, good or bad, that he has to perform as a result of his past actions, are purified by his vision and so they are incapable of ensnaring him with pleasure and pain. He does not consider any action as auspicious or inauspicious and performs it without a feeling of joy or hate, as the case may be. He has no misgiving regarding such actions, as one does not doubt about the unreality



of things seen in a dream on waking up (211-215). He, therefore, does not entertain a sense of duality between the action done and its doer. Then it is known as a *sattvic tyaga*. If actions are relinquished in this way, they are relinquished entirely. If they are relinquished in any other way, they bring about greater bondage.

11. *Nor indeed can an embodied being renounce actions altogether. He who forgoes the fruit of action is said to be the relinquisher.*

O Arjuna, they who, having got the body, feel an aversion towards actions are boorish. How can an earthen pot abhor the clay? Can the cloth forsake the yarn? How can the fire feel troubled by its own heat? Can the lamp hate its own light (216-220)? Where can *asafetida* find fragrance, if it feels nausea for its bad smell? How can the water exist without its fluidity? In the same way so long as one identifies himself with the body in delusion, is it not a silly idea to forsake action? One can efface the mark of sandal-paste on his forehead, put by himself and put it again, but how can one erase the lines written on his forehead (one's destiny)? One can at the most forsake the action, which is fit to be undertaken according to the scriptures, but how could actions natural to the body be relinquished? For a man has to continue the action of breathing, even when asleep and this is so even if he sits quietly doing nothing (221-225). Action dogs the footsteps of a person because of his body and he cannot escape it, whether he is living or dead. There is only one device by which a person can relinquish it. He should not, while performing action, be tempted by the desire for its fruit. If he dedicates fruits of actions to God, he attains to knowledge through his grace. Then just as the true knowledge of a rope removes the delusive knowledge of its being a serpent, so the knowledge of Self destroys ignorance along with actions. If a person forsakes actions in this way, it is true relinquishment and he is the great relinquisher. When a patient goes into a swoon, others think that he is taking rest (226-230). In the same way, if a person gives up action out of fatigue, you may call it rest if you like. But it is like putting up with fist-cuffs in order to escape beating with a cudgel. I repeat again that in the three worlds, he is the only true relinquisher, who by relinquishing the fruit of actions, has turned action into non-action.

12. *Undesired, desired and mixed – such is the three-fold fruit of action; it accrues to the non-relinquisher after death, but never to those who renounce it.*

Action, O Arjuna, is of three kinds and it is required to be experienced only by those who do not relinquish the desire for the fruit of action. When the father gives away his daughter in marriage saying, 'she is no more mine', he becomes free from his responsibility for her, but the son-in-law who accepts her, becomes entrapped. Those who sell their stocks of poison, live happily on their sale-proceeds, but those who purchase it at a heavy price and swallow it, lose their lives (231-235). Action does not bind either him who performs it without egoistic feeling that he is doer or him who relinquishes its fruit. He who desires to obtain the fruit of a tree on the roadside gets it; in the same way, only he who craves for the fruit of action gets it. He who performs actions but relinquishes their fruit, is not reborn in any of the three worlds, because all the three worlds are the fruits of actions. Gods, men and the stationary things constitute the world and all the three result from the three kinds of actions. Action is of three kinds, undesired, desired and mixed (236-240). Those who are attached to sensuous pleasures perform evil actions, which are prohibited and are reborn into bodies of the very

lowest order such as vermin, insects and the earth. This is known as the undesired fruit of action. But those, O Arjuna, who perform religious works as enjoined in the scriptures, according to their status, attain the bodies of gods such as *Indra*. This is well-known as the desired fruit of action. But when sweet and sour juices are mixed, they produce a different but more tasty juice (241-245). When the exhalation of breath is stopped through the practice of Yoga, there results its suspension (*Kumbhaka*). The mixture of truth and untruth produces a queer combination of the two. So the action which is both auspicious and inauspicious in equal proportions gives rise to the human body. This is the mixed fruit of actions.

Such is the three-fold fruition of action in the world. Those persons who are ensnared by the expectation of the fruit of action have to experience that fruit. One's mouth waters and one derives great satisfaction while eating hot food. but ultimately it results in disease and death. The friendship of a polished thief is agreeable, so long as the forest is not reached. The company of a harlot seems good until one cohabits with her (246-250). So those who perform work while in the body prosper, but they have to suffer the fruits of their actions after death. When the creditor comes for the repayment of his loan as stipulated, he does not leave the debtor until the loan is recovered; in the same way, every being has to experience the fruit of his actions. When a grain falls on the ground from the ear of a corn, it germinates and produces another ear of corn and this process continues - ad infinitum. So when one is experiencing the fruits of his past actions, he goes on performing actions and creating more fruits of action, like a person who takes one step after another while walking. A ferry takes passengers from one bank to another and continuously moves between the two banks; in the same way, there is no end to the experience of the fruit of actions (251-255). This experience is ever on the increase, as the action, which ends (*sadhya*) becomes the means (*sadhana*) for a fresh action and so those who do not relinquish the fruit of actions, become entangled evermore in worldly existence.

On the other hand, just as the jasmine flower blossoms and withers, others relinquishing the fruit of actions make them infructuous. Just as the consumption of seeds puts a stop to further agricultural operation, so the relinquishment of the fruit of action, stops the future consequences of one's action. Then the knowledge of Self dawns upon one, as a result of the purification of his mind and the *ambrosial* shower of the *Guru's* grace, and it destroys the misery arising from the notion of duality. The three kinds of fruit which gives rise to the world appearance is destroyed and in this condition, the duality between the experience and the experiencer ceases (256-260). O greatest among warriors, those who have been able to relinquish action in this way through knowledge, become free from the sufferings of birth and death. And when their vision, through such relinquishment, reaches the Self, how can the actions appear different to them from the Self? When the wall collapses, the paintings on it also become reduced to dust. Will the darkness of the night outlast the rising of the sun? How can a shadow exist without a figure? If there is no mirror, where will the face get reflected? How can one dream after the sleep is over and will not all the talk whether the dream is true or false become redundant (261-265)? With the relinquishment of the fruit of actions, ignorance ceases and then who can receive or dispense the fruits of actions? Then all talk about actions and their fruits ceases, in the case of a relinquisher.

But so long as ignorance exists in the mind, so long as the soul undertakes good or bad actions

with the egoistic feeling that he is the doer, and so long as this vision continues to see distinctions among living beings, the notion of duality, O intelligent Arjuna, exists between the Self and the action. Just as there is, distinctness between the East and the West or between the sky and the clouds, the sun and the mirage, the earth and the wind (266-270), or between the river and the rock in it, between the water and the moss which grows on it, or between the lamp and the soot (literally, although both are connected, can we call the soot lamp?), or between the moon and its spots, or between the vision and the eyes, or between the way and the wayfarer, or between the current and the water which flows in it or the mirror and one who looks in it, so is the action distinct from the Self. But this will happen only if ignorance allows them to be seen as distinct (271-275). The lotus creeper blossoms and suggests thereby that the sun has risen and makes the bees enjoy the honey of its flowers; the same way, the embodied Self performs actions for other reasons, which are five in number and I shall describe them now.

13. *Learn, O mighty-armed (Arjuna), from Me these five factors, declared in the Sankhya doctrine for the accomplishment of all works:*

You might be knowing these five causes; for the scriptures have described them with upraised arms. They are proclaimed loudly through the beating of drums in the palace of the *Sankhya* system, in the capital town of the *Vedas*. These causes are absolutely necessary for the successful completion of any action, but don't you in any way, connect them with the unchangeable Self (276-280). These five causes have become well-known in this world, as they have been proclaimed by the beating of a drum. It is therefore, fitting that they should fall on your ears as they will benefit you. As you have the philosopher's stone as Myself, why should I put you to the trouble of finding someone else to talk about it? If a person has the mirror in front of him, why should he ask others to tell him how he looks? Wherever a devotee looks with a purpose in view, it becomes as he desires. So I have become a play-thing in your hands. When the Lord was saying this in the flush of affection, he lost consciousness. As for Arjuna, he became immersed in bliss (281-285). Even if there is a mountain of moon-stones, it oozes, to form a lake in bright moonshine; in the same way, Arjuna had become bliss incarnate, by the removal of the screen between the bliss and realisation. But the Lord, being strong, regained his senses and lifted up Arjuna from the ocean of bliss. The ocean of bliss had such a high tidal flow that Arjuna, the great warrior, with his high talent, was about to be drowned in it. The Lord checked the flow and said, "O Partha, do not lose sight of yourself and come to your senses."

At this, Arjuna heaved a sigh and nodded his head (286-290). He said, "O Lord, although I am so close to you, yet I am separate from you. I get tired of this and wish to attain unison with you. Since you are so affectionately fulfilling my desires, then why do you place me in a predicament by reminding me of my separate state?" Then the Lord said, "O you silly fellow, you have not yet come to know properly what I have told you. Are the moon and its splendour ever separate from each other? I am afraid to tell you what is in My mind. If one becomes displeased with one's beloved, their bond of love becomes stronger – this is love. So long as this love between us remains intact, our separateness is bound to remain. But let us not discuss it further (291-295). Arjuna, we were just now talking of actions being distinct from the Self." On this, Arjuna said, "O Lord, you have read my mind correctly and

broached the topic. You had promised to tell me the five causes responsible for action. The relationship between the Self and action is my favourite topic; so please explain it me.”

Hearing his words, Lord Krishna said with great pleasure, ‘Where else can I find a hearer, who is so persistent in asking questions (296-300)? I shall, therefore, tell you what I had intended, but this would mean that I shall place you under an additional debt of affection.’ Then Arjuna replied, ‘O Lord, have you completely forgotten what you said before? You said that in order to preserve this affection, you are maintaining the distinction between you and me.’ Then Lord Krishna said: Be it so, now hear attentively what I am going to say. O Arjuna, it is true that all actions originate from Five causes without the intervention of knowledge of the Self. These five causes combine to give shape to the action. The same causes also provide the reasons for the action (301-305). But there the Self remains neutral and is neither the material nor the instrumental cause of action and does not help in the successful implementation of action. Just as the sky is unattached to either night or day, so the good or bad deeds happen to the unattached Self. When water, heat and vapour combine, they produce the clouds; yet the sky knows nothing about it. The boat is fashioned out of wooden planks and the boatman steers it on the water, which is only a witness there. When a lump of clay is placed on the wheel and the wheel is turned round and round with a stick, it becomes a pot (306-310). Here it is the potter’s skill which causes it, and the earth does nothing except giving support to the wheel. Just consider all this. All the activities of the world are carried on, in the light of the sun, but is the sun concerned with any of them? So all these Five causes come together to grow the creeper in the form of actions; but the Self remains aloof from them. I shall now describe these Five causes, each one separately, in the same way as pearls should be picked up and weighed separately.

14. *The seat of action (body) as also the agent, various instruments (sense-organs and the mind), their manifold distinct functions and the fifth, their presiding deities.*

I say that the body is the first cause of action (311-315). It is called a seat, because the experiencer resides here, along with the objects of experience. All the ten sense-organs toil day and night and by reason of the *prakriti* present pleasure and pain for the experience of the *purusha*; there is no other place except the body, where he can experience them. Therefore, the body is called the seat of experience. This is the home of the twenty-four elements. and the tangle of bondage and release is unraveled here. The body gives support to the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, and so it has received the name of a body (316-320).

In the same way, the agent is the second cause of action. He is the reflection of the Self. When rain falls on the earth, it forms a puddle and when the sky is reflected in it, it assumes the form of the puddle. When the prince forgets himself in sleep and mistakenly dreams that he has become a pauper, so the Self forgets his essential nature and identifies himself with the body. The Self who has forgotten his own nature is well-known as *Jiva*, the embodied Self. The latter has entered into a contract, that he will ever associate himself with the body in all matters (321-325). Through delusion, he thinks that he has performed the actions which in reality are carried out by the body. It is for this reason that the embodied Self is called the agent.

Now even though the sight is the same, it appears split like a fly-whisker on account of the

eye-lashes. The lamp inside the house is one, but it appears more than one when seen through the interstices of a lattice. The same actor appears to be different, when he acts the nine different sentiments. In the same way, though the intellect is one, yet it displays itself in different forms through the different senses (326-330). The different organs of the body, therefore, constitute the third cause of action. Water flows separately towards the East and the West and even though it is one and the same, it appears as big or small rivers. In the same way the motive power of the wind is constant, but it appears different in different regions of the body. When it operates through the faculty of speech, we call it 'talking'. When it operates through the hands, we say that it functions as 'give and take'. When it operates through the feet, it is known as 'motion' and when it operates through the lower outlets, it throws out urine and excreta (331-335). When it operates between the regions of the navel to the heart and displays the word *Om*, it is known as *prana*. When it moves upwards, it takes the name of *udana*. When it goes, out through the lower outlet (anus), it is known as *apana* and when it pervades the entire body, it is called *vyana*. When it distributes the juice of the digested food in all parts of the body and pervades all the joints of the body, it is known as *samana* (336-340). Yawning, sneezing, belching etc. which are minor functions of this wind, are known as *naga*, *kurma*, *krukar* etc. In this way, O great warrior, although the motive power of the wind is the same, it takes different names according to its functions. Know that this power of the wind, which operates in different forms, is the fourth cause of action.

Then imagine that we have the best season in autumn, the rising of the moon in the night of the full moon, or an excellent park in the spring, the company of the beloved and all the requisite things of enjoyment (341-345), or that there should be a lotus in full bloom filled with pollens or that there should be poetical power in one's speech, with artistic charm added to it and that charm should be touched by the highest Truth, so there should be excellence, accompanied with all splendid mental states, the senses should have developed well as a result of that intelligence and the assemblage of deities which gives support to the senses, should be favourable. This assemblage of favourable deities consisting of the sun etc. (346-350), is the fifth cause of the action. The Lord added, "I have thus narrated to you the Five causes of action in such a way that you will be able to grasp them. Now I shall elucidate to you the five reasons (instrumental causes) by which these causes expand and give rise to a chain of actions."

15. *Whatever action a man performs with his body, speech and mind, whether right or wrong, these are its (instrumental) causes.*

Now the sudden advent of spring is the cause of the fresh foliage of trees, which results in flowers and fruits. The monsoon brings clouds, the clouds bring rain and the rain produces an abundant crop of grain (351-355). The East brings the dawn, the sun brings the light, and when the sun shines, there is the day-time. So, O Arjuna, the mind is the instrumental cause of decision of action. This decision finds expression in speech, and then in the light of that speech, the way of action becomes clear and the agent undertakes that action. Thus, the body and other organs become the instrumental causes of such body and organs through actions. Just as an article of iron is hammered out by an iron-hammer, or cloth is fashioned by weaving yarn in warp and woof (356- 360), or a diamond is shaped by cutting it with a diamond,

so the actions of mind, speech and body become the instrumental causes of mind, speech and body.

Now if the body etc. are the material causes of action, a doubt may arise how they can also become the instrumental causes of the body etc. Just as the sun is the cause, both material and instrumental of light, or the joints of sugar-cane promote the growth of the sugar-cane, or the faculty of the speech has to be employed to sing the praise of the goddess of speech, or the *Vedas* have to express the majesty of the *Vedas*, so everyone knows that the body, speech and mind become the cause of action; but there is no doubt that the same actions become the instrumental cause of the body, speech and mind (361-365). In this way, if the five causes of body etc. are supported by the external causes, then they both together produce actions.

If actions are performed according to scriptural injunctions, they become righteous actions and promote righteous conduct. The rain fallen in the paddy field, gets absorbed there and helps the growth of paddy. If a person leaves his home in anger and takes the road to *Dwarka*, he may feel fatigued by walking, but the steps he has taken do not become fruitless. Thus whatever action is undertaken through the combination of both causes, is simply blind action. But it becomes righteous if it is performed diligently according to the injunctions of the scriptures (366-370). If milk, while being poured into a glass spills outside, it is spent, but one cannot say that it is properly spent. If action performed contrary to the scriptures does not bear fruit, why should we not regard stolen riches as given in charity? O Arjuna, is there any incantation which does not contain the letters of the alphabet? And is there anyone who does not utter these letters? But as long as one does not understand the secret of incantation, he will not secure its fruit by uttering all the fifty-two letters of the alphabet. In that way, if an action is performed through the combination of causes wantonly, but not as prescribed by the scriptures, then it is as good as not done (371-375). Such an action is unrighteous and becomes an immoral action.

16. *That being so, he who sees the absolute Self as the agent through the lack of knowledge - such a perverse person sees not (truly).*

In this way, O celebrated Arjuna, there are five instrumental causes for the action, resulting from five causes. When the Self becomes associated with them, he becomes involved in that action. Just as the sun without taking any form reveals the forms, so the Self also reveals the action, without taking its form. O great warrior, just as without becoming either the mirror or the reflection, one sees both by looking into the mirror, or the sun makes day and night without being either, so the Self reveals action without being its agent (376-380). But when a person who is deluded by the egoistic feeling identifies himself with the body and becomes attached to it, he remains in total darkness as of midnight, in regard to the Self. He who does not recognise that Self, God and the Supreme Self exist beyond the body, is firmly convinced that the Self is the doer of action; nay, he thinks that he as body is the agent of actions. He has never even heard that he is the Self who is beyond the actions and only their witness. What is strange, therefore, is that he regards the limitless Self as limited by his body. Does not the owl close his eyes during the day and make it night (381-385)? If a person has not seen the real sun, will he not consider its reflection in water as the sun? He then believes that the sun exists when there is water in the puddle, the sun ceases to exist when the puddle

is dried up and that the sun has tremor when the water in the puddle is stirred by the wind. So long as the person who is asleep does not wake up, he is bound to feel as real what he sees in his dream. Is there any wonder that a person who has no knowledge of a rope mistakes it for a serpent and becomes frightened? The moon will appear yellow to a jaundiced eye, and who else but a deer is deceived by the mirage? He who keeps away from the scriptures and the *Guru* (literally, does not allow even the breeze of the mention of their name to touch his body), he lives in a fool's paradise (386-390). Just as the jackals impute the motion of the clouds to the moon and charge the moon with the motion, a person keeps the Self confined in the net of the body, in the mistaken belief that the body is the Self. Under this false impression, he shuts himself up in the prison of the body with the strong bonds of actions. When a parrot sitting on a tube holds it fast under the mistaken impression, that he is tied to it, so he who ascribes the actions of the *prakriti* to the pure Self, goes on counting his actions, through many epochs.

Now I shall tell you how one can recognise a person who remains untainted by actions even while performing them, like the sub-marine fire which remains untouched by the sea, even while dwelling in it (391-395). If we continue to meditate over an emancipated person, we attain liberation. Just as one sees a missing thing in the lamp-light, or one sees one's reflection in a clean mirror or the salt is dissolved when put in water, or why say more, as a reflection turns back to see the reflecting body merged in that body, in the same way by thinking of saints, one discovers one's Self. One should, therefore, describe and hear the merits of saints (396-400). The faculty of vision is not obstructed by the outer skin; in the same way, even when one is immersed in activity, one does not become tainted by its good or bad fruits. I shall now tell you by giving you good reasons, the signs of a person who has gone beyond actions.

17. *He who has no egoistic feeling, whose understanding is not polluted, even if he were to slay these people, he slays not, nor is he bound (by his action).*

O wise Arjuna, he who was experiencing for long the worldly happenings in a dream of ignorance heard the great proposition (*mahavakya*) '*tat tvam asi*', '*you are that*'. He was awakened from his dream of the world and deep slumber of ignorance into a blissful state by the grace of the *Guru*, who woke him up by placing his hand over his head and patting it (401-405). Just as with the moonbeams the mirage disappears or with the departure of childhood, the goblin does not remain an object of fear, or when the firewood is burnt it cannot be used as firewood, or a dream disappears as soon as one wakes up, so his mind does not entertain the notions of 'I' and 'Mine'. If the sun enters a cave in search of darkness, he can never see it there, so he who has realised the Self sees no distinction between the object seen and the seer (406-410). Just as a thing which catches fire becomes fire, obliterating any distinction between one who burns and one who is burnt, so when the notion of the action as separate from the Self and of the attribution of its agency to the Self disappears, then what remains is the pristine state of the Self. Will the Lord of this state ever think that he is the body? Will the flood of deluge identify itself with a brook? In the same way, how can one who has realised the Self identify himself with the body? Can the disc of the sun contain its light? Can the butter churned out of curds and separated from it again merge into the butter-milk (411-415)? Can the latent fire once released from the fire-wood re-enter it and

remain latent in it again? How can the sun who has come out of the womb of night ever cognize the night? In the same way, how can a person, in whom the knowable object and the knower have become one, entertain the egoistic feeling that he is the body? As the sky pervades wherever one goes, the Self also pervades all. So whatever work one does is his own Self. In what way then can he think himself to be the agent of any action (416-420)?

Just as there is no space apart from the sky, or the sea has no flow apart from it or the Pole star has no moon, similar is the state of the person (who has realised the Self). In the same way, a person, who has got rid of his egoistic feeling that he is the doer, continues to work so long as he is in the body. Even though the wind has ceased to flow, the (foliage of) tree continues to flutter for some time. Even though the camphor has completely evaporated, its fragrance remains in its casket for some time. Even though the musical concert has come to an end, the thrill it has caused in the hearers, does not abate all at once. The land retains moisture for some time even after the water has flowed away. Even after the sun has set, its light remains for some time in the form of twilight (421-425). The arrow moves forward with its momentum, even after hitting the target. Even though the potter has removed the pot from the wheel, the wheel keeps on rotating until its speed is spent up. In the same way, even after the egoistic feeling has disappeared, the *prakriti*, which has created the body, makes it perform actions. Just as a dream appears in sleep without any prior thought, or trees grow in forest even without being planted or imaginary cities are formed in the sky without any construction, so without the Self doing anything, actions continue to be performed because of the five causes consisting of the body etc. (426-430).

These five causes, both material and instrumental, combine together to cause the actions to be performed by reason of the latent impressions of the past actions in previous births. These actions may lead to the destruction of the world or give rise to new worlds. Just as the sun is not aware that because of him the night-lily withers and the day-lily blooms when it rises, or the sky does not know that the earth is blown to pieces by lightning or that it has grown green because of the showers of rain, so he remains in the body without body-consciousness (431-435). Just as a person who has woken up from sleep does not see dreams, so he is not aware of the worldly events which take place because of his body etc. But those who view him merely through their physical eyes, regard him as the doer of these actions. Does not the jackal think that the scarecrow of grass erected on the border of the farm, is the watchman of the farm? Only others know whether a lunatic wanders about dressed or in a naked condition. Other persons may count the wounds sustained by a warrior, who has died on the battle-field. The whole world sees with reverence the self-immolation of a *sati* (on the pyre of her deceased husband) while she herself is unconscious of the fire, her own person and the spectators (436-440). In the same way, he who is awakened to his real Self, and whose notion of being a seer has vanished along with the object to be seen, does not know what his senses are doing. If persons standing on the shore of the sea see a big wave swallowing a small one, yet from the standpoint of water, who has swallowed what? In the same way, a person who has attained perfection does not see anyone distinct from him, whom he can kill. Even if a devotee sees the gold idol of the goddess *Durga* killing the gold idol of a buffalo-demon with a three-pointed gold spear, in reality the idols and the spear are only pure gold (441-445). Again in a painting, the fire and water appear as if they are real, but there is neither



real fire nor moisture. In the same way, in the case of a person who is liberated while alive, the movements of his body take place according to the latent impression of his past life. But not knowing this, ignorant persons call him the doer. But then, if his natural actions lead to the destruction of the world, one should never say that he has caused it. Can the sun say that it will dispel the darkness after seeing it? So in the case of an enlightened person who has no sense of duality, there remains nothing different from him which he can destroy.

Just as a stream, which joins the river *Ganga*, does not remain impure, so his intellect is not polluted by merit and demerit (446-450). If fire, O Arjuna, catches fire, will it get burnt or will a weapon pierce itself? So he who does not consider his action different from himself, how can he be polluted by it? Since he has become action, agent and the instrument, all these three himself, he is not bound by the actions performed by his body etc. Because it is only the embodied Self, who imagining himself to be the agent, works skillfully in the mine of the body etc. with the implements of the ten senses. He raises in a moment, mansions of works, after fixing the boundaries of justice and injustice (451-455). But the Self plays no role in this great work. And if you say that he starts the work, that too is not the case. The Self is a mere witness and his essential nature, is knowledge itself. So how do you think that he gives his approval to the desire for activity? The activity, which holds the people in its grip, does not affect the Self. Therefore, he who had become one with the Self, does not become a prisoner of actions. But the picture of false knowledge is painted on the canvas of ignorance, as a result of the famous three-fold cause (456-460). For this triad of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge is the seed of and without doubt, the impulse to action. O winner of wealth, I shall now explain to you, in clear terms, the different forms of this triad.

18. *The impulse to action is three-fold knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower, while the totality of action consists of the senses, the action and the agent.*

As the sun sends out its rays and causes the lilies to bloom, so the embodied Self sends out its organs of knowledge, to enjoy the sense-objects. Or as a king rides out on a horse without a saddle and brings in the loot by attacking other countries with weapons, so the endowed Self enjoys the sensuous pleasure and pain brought in by the senses. In short, he whose cognisance makes the embodied Self experience pleasure and pain through the senses and vanishes in deep sleep (461-465) is called the knower, while that which is said to be experienced is knowledge. O Arjuna, this knowledge, which is born of ignorance, divides itself into three kinds. The knowledge plants in its run-way a hurdle, in the form of the knowable object and keeps the knower behind itself. Thus building a bridge of communication between the knower and the object of knowledge, it makes them carry on their activities. The knowledge comes to a halt as soon as it reaches the limit of the knowable object and gives different names to the different objects (466-470). This knowledge is undoubtedly the empirical knowledge. Now I shall tell you the characteristics of the knowable object. The knowable object becomes known in the five forms of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Just as one mango is known to the senses by its taste, colour, smell and touch, so the knowable object, though one, is known to the senses in five forms. Just as the flow of a river stops when it meets the sea, or walking stops when the destination is reached, or the growth of a crop stops when it bears fruit (471-475), so O Arjuna, where the knowledge running through the channels of senses stops, that O Arjuna, is the object of knowledge.

Thus I have told you the characteristics of the knower, the knowledge and the object of knowledge. These become the cause of three-fold action. Even though the object of knowledge such as sound is of five kinds, it is either agreeable or disagreeable. O winner of wealth, if the knower acquires even a little knowledge of the knowable object, the knower becomes inclined either to accept it or reject it. A heron watches to catch the fish after seeing it, or a poor man wishes to secure the treasure as soon as he sees it or a passionate person desires to win a woman whom he sees (476-480). Similarly water flows to the low lying lands, or the bee is attracted to the flower by its fragrance or the calf runs to its mother as the time of milking approaches. After hearing the description of the nymph *Urvashi*, people put up ladders in the form of sacrifices to the heavens. O Arjuna, a blue pigeon soaring in the sky, swoops down at the very sight of a she-pigeon or the peacock whirls in the sky, on hearing peels of thunder. In the same way, the knower rushes to the objects of knowledge. Therefore, O Arjuna, all actions commence from knowledge, the knowable object and the knower (481-485). If this object of knowledge is by chance agreeable to the doer, he cannot brook even a moment's delay in its enjoyment. If, on the other hand, the same object is not to his liking, each moment of delay in abandoning it, seems to him as long as an epoch. The same object creates joy or fear in one's heart according as it appears to him, as a necklace or a serpent. Similar is the state of the knower, when he sees an agreeable or disagreeable object and he starts action to secure it or to abandon it. A warrior, at the sight of an adversary worthy of him, becomes full of ardour and dismounts from the chariot to meet him in combat (486-490). In the same way the knower becomes the agent. Just as one used to eat a ready meal should have to start to cook, or the bee should have to begin to make a garden, or the touchstone should itself become the tester or the deity itself should have to build its own temple, so the knower, longing for the sense-object, makes his senses toil hard to get it and becomes the doer.

When the knower becomes the doer, then the knowledge becomes his instrument of action and the object of knowledge becomes naturally the action itself. O wise Arjuna, thus a change takes place in the original nature of the knower. Just as the sight becomes dim at night (491-495) or the luxuries of the rich diminish with bad luck or the moon goes on waning after the night of full moon, so when his senses become active, he becomes wrapped up in the pride of a doer. I shall tell you now his characteristics, please listen. Intellect, the mind, the seat of memory and egoism are the four states of the internal organ, and skin, ears, eyes, the tongue and the nose are the five external organs. With the aid of the internal organs, the agent makes an appraisal of what work he should undertake. If he thinks that a particular action will bring him happiness (496-500), then he makes all the ten sense-organs work hard, until the action bears fruit. Or if on the other hand, he anticipates trouble from such action, he persuades his sense-organs to forsake it. Just as a king makes his servants toil hard to collect his dues, so he makes the sense-organs labour hard, until the cause of misery is removed. Thus when the knower harnesses the sense-organs to perform or avoid some action, he is known as the agent (501-505). Since this agent employs the sense-organs like the plough, we call them the instruments of action. When the agent undertakes some activity by making use of these instruments, that which is pervaded by this activity is the action. Just as the mind of the goldsmith is pervaded by the ornaments, or the moon-light is pervaded by the moonbeams, or the creeper is pervaded by its growth, or the sunlight is pervaded by its

splendour, or the sugar-cane juice is pervaded by sweetness, or the sky is pervaded by space, so that which is pervaded by the activity of the agent, is the action. There is no doubt about this (506-510). Thus I have explained to you the characteristics of action, agent and the instrument. Here the knower, the knowledge and the object of knowledge constitute the three-fold impulse to action; similarly the agent, the instruments and the action, are the three constituents of action. Just as smoke is latent in fire, the tree in seed, or passion in the mind, or gold in the gold mine, so the triad of the doer, the deed and the instruments form the very essence of action. Therefore, when there arises the egoistic notion, 'this is the action, and I am its agent', then the Self stands aloof from all such actions (511-515). Therefore, O talented Arjuna, do I need to tell you more, that the Self is distinct from actions? You know it already.

19. *Knowledge, action and agent are three-fold based on the distinction of quality. Hear also about these as stated in the doctrine of the gunas.*

Now knowledge, action and agent, which I told you about, are of three kinds depending upon the three qualities. Do not place your faith in them, O Arjuna, because two of these qualities lead to bondage, while only the quality of *sattva* is conducive to liberation. As regards the quality of *sattva*, which is described in detail in the *Sankhya* texts, I shall explain to you its distinctive features, so that you will easily understand it. This *Sankhya* philosophy is the sea of right thoughts, the moon which makes the lotus plant in the form of Self-knowledge bloom, and the best among the metaphysical sciences, in the view of those who have the vision of knowledge (516-520). It is verily the sun, who distinguishes between the *prakriti* and *purusha*; which are mixed like day and night. In this, science is measured as the infinite mass of ignorance in terms of twenty-four principles which conduces to the uninterrupted enjoyment of higher Self. The characteristics of the different *gunas* extolled in this *Sankhya* system, are as follows, these three *gunas* have, with their strength, brought all perceptible things under their sway and stamped them in three ways. These *gunas*, namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are so grand, that they have distinguished all beings from god *Brahma* to insects, into three types (521-525). But I shall first explain to you, how this entire universe has fallen into the clutches of these three *gunas*; for if the vision is clear, everything can be seen with clarity. So with the attainment of pure knowledge, it becomes easy to comprehend the essential nature of things. I shall, therefore, describe the *sattvic* knowledge, please give your attention, so said Lord Krishna, who is essentially of the nature of liberation.

20. *That by which, one perceives in all beings a single immutable substance, indivisible though seemingly divided, know that knowledge arises from sattva.*

O Arjuna, that is pure *sattvic* knowledge in which, the knowable object is dissolved along with the knower. Just as the sun does not see darkness or the sea does not know the river or one cannot grasp one's shadow with one's hand (526-530), so this knowledge does not discern any distinction among beings, from *Lord Shiva* to a blade of grass. Just as a picture on the wall is lost when it is smeared with cow-dung, or salt is dissolved when washed in water or the dream disappears after waking up, so when the knowable is seen in the light of knowledge, the distinction between the knower, the knowledge and the knowable vanishes. One does not test the gold in ornaments by melting them nor does anyone strain the waves

to obtain water. In the same way, know that knowledge to be *sattvic*, which does not concern itself with the world of appearance (531-535). Just as one sees one's reflection in the mirror, so one who has attained the *sattvic* knowledge perceives the knowable, in the form of one's knowledge. This *sattvic* knowledge is verily the temple of the goddess *Lakshmi* in the form of liberation. Now I shall explain to you, the characteristics of *rajasic* knowledge.

21. *But that knowledge by which, one knows several manifold existences in all creatures as separate, know that the knowledge arises from rajas.*

O Arjuna, listen carefully. That knowledge is *rajasic*, which sees distinctions in all beings. That knowledge has fragmented itself, by the conception of diversity among beings and has bewildered the knower. Just as sleep places the veil of oblivion over the real state of things and makes one suffer troubles in a dream (536-540), so this knowledge spreads out *Maya* round the yard of Self-knowledge and makes the embodied Self go through the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. A child does not know the gold hidden in the ornaments, so this knowledge does not perceive unity, behind the names and forms. An ignorant person cannot recognise the earth of which earthen pitchers or pots are made or know fire by seeing it in a lamp state or yarn in the cloth shown to him or the canvas when he is shown a picture (painted on it), so his knowledge sees diversity in all beings, obscuring his notion of unity (541-545). Just as the fire appears distinct because of the diversity of fire-wood, or as the fragrance smells different on account of the diversity of flowers or as the moon appears as divided because of its reflections in moving waters, so the knowledge which sees distinctions as big or small in diverse things, is *rajasic* knowledge. If one wishes to avoid the house of a barbarian, one must know where it is. So I shall now explain to you, the characteristics of *tamasic* knowledge, so that you will be able to avoid it.

22. *That which is confined to one object, as though it were all and is causeless and trifling and lacking in truth and meaning, that (knowledge) is said to arise from tamas.*

That knowledge is *tamasic*, which stripped of all clothes in the form of ordinances, roams about naked, and on which the *Vedas* have turned their back. Other *shastras* too, which follow the path of the *Vedas*, have banished it to the mountain in the form of non-Aryan religion, after condemning it (546-550). O Arjuna, as that knowledge is seized by the demoness of *tamas*, it roams about like a mad person. That knowledge does not shrink from any kind of physical contact and does not consider any object as prohibited, like a stray dog left in a deserted place, which consumes everything, leaving only a thing which cannot be held in its mouth or which would burn its mouth. Just as a mouse does not know whether the gold stolen by it is pure or alloyed, or a meat-eater does not care whether the meat is red or white, or a forest conflagration does not discriminate between good or bad trees, or the housefly does not bother whether the body on which it lands, is dead or alive (551-555), or the crow does not stop to think whether the food before it is served or vomited, or whether it is fresh or rotten. So this knowledge, infatuated with sensual pleasures, does not know how to perform actions, which are prescribed and avoid actions which are prohibited. Whatever sense-object it sees, it takes it up for enjoyment and if it happens to be a woman or riches, it presents that object to the generative organ or the stomach. When it sees water, it does not stop to think whether it is pure or impure, but only sees whether it will quench his thirst and give

it pleasure. It thinks that whatever is to its liking is pure, without any consideration as to whether it is edible or inedible, or whether it is reproachable or irreproachable (556-560). That knowledge understands that the woman is only a fit object of enjoyment for the sense of touch and it is ever yearning to form an intimacy with her. It recognises only those as relatives who serve its self-interest and not those who are the blood-relations. Just as death considers every living creature as its fare or the fire thinks everything as its fuel, so the *tamasic* knowledge thinks that the whole world is there for its benefit. So that knowledge regards the whole world as its object of enjoyment and thinks that the sole fruit of action, is to feed the belly. Just as all the rain which drops from the sky, goes to join the sea, so it regards that all activity is to fill the belly (i.e. to support life) (561-565). This knowledge knows not about heaven and hell nor about activity and renunciation and is ignorant about what action it should undertake or avoid. This knowledge does not extend beyond the consideration that the Self is only the body and the God is the stone idol. According to this knowledge, the soul dies along with its actions, at the fall of the body and there remains nothing to enjoy the fruit of the actions. Further, if God exists as a witness to one's actions and dispenses their fruits in the form of pleasure and pain, then one should sell the God's image and use the proceeds for one's maintenance. If it is said, that the village deities will punish us for our actions, then why are the mountains, from whose rocks they are made, left alone (566-570)?

If it admits the existence of God, it regards the stone idol as God and the body as the Self. According to that knowledge, all ideas about merit and demerit are false and one's good lies in indulging in sensuous pleasures and consuming all things, like fire. It is convinced that whatever is perceptible to the physical eye or whatever is pleasing to the senses, is alone real. In short, O Partha, just as the masses of smoke go up in the sky, his thoughts, which grow on these lines, are of no avail. So this *tamasic* knowledge is worthless and infructuous like a flimsy tree, which, whether dry or fresh, grows and breaks (571-575), or like the ear of corn of a sugar-cane, or like an impotent person, or the grove of silk-cotton trees, or the mind of an infant or like the stolen money or the neck-nipple of a she goat. Knowledge which is hollow and lack-lustre, they call *tamasic* knowledge.

Now it is called knowledge for this reason: We say that one has broad eyes if one is born blind or that one has fine ears if one is deaf or that wine is a drink. In that way, the term knowledge applied to *tamasic* knowledge is a misnomer (576-580). In short, we should not call it knowledge, but darkness (*tamas*). O best among the hearers, I have thus explained to you, the three kinds of knowledge based on the *gunas* along with their characteristics. O archer, all actions are performed by the agent, in the light of these three kinds of knowledge. Like water flowing in currents, the action is also distributed in three parts, and a single action becomes three-fold because of the threefold knowledge, I shall tell you first, the characteristics of *sattvic* action (581-585).

23. *If a prescribed duty is done without attachment, and without passion and hate, by one who does not seek its fruit is said to be of sattva quality.*

*Sattvic* action devolves upon the doer, according to his qualification, in the way a chaste wife hugs her husband of her own accord. This obligatory action, which is performed always, becomes an ornament to the doer, as sandal-paste does to a woman of light complexion or *collyrium*

does to the eyes of a young woman. If it is combined with occasional duties, it is like adding fragrance to the ornament. Like a mother who never gets tired of bringing up her child at the cost of wealth, physical comfort and life, one performs actions, with heart and soul, without the desire for their fruit and dedicates them to the Supreme *Brahman* (586-590). The housewife, while serving food to a dear one, never feels bothered that it might get exhausted; in the same way he does not feel bitterness or anger if good work is left undone or partly done or does not become elated, if it is completed according to plan. The action performed skillfully like this, is said to be *sattvic* because of its predominant *sattva* quality. I shall tell you now, the true nature of *rajasic* action. Take care that your attention does not flag.

24. *But action, which is done with much effort by one who desires some gain from it or by one who is moved by egoism, that action is said to be of rajas quality.*

He (a *rajasic* doer) is like a fool, who never talks sweetly to his parents but is courteous to others (591-595). He is like one, who does not sprinkle water on the basil (*Tulsi*) plant but pours milk over the grape vine. He does not even get up from his seat to perform the obligatory actions, but if he undertakes work with a selfish motive, he does not feel any strain, even if he has to labour hard. He is not satisfied even if he sows large quantities of seed in the field or if he invests large amounts in the business of money-lending. Just as one who has acquired a philosopher's stone spends all his riches in the purchase of iron and becomes prosperous (596-600), so this *rajasic* doer, with an eye on their fruit, performs laborious works, but does not feel that he has undertaken enough work. He performs well, in anticipation of their fruits, a number of actions with a selfish motive and as laid down by the scriptures, but he blows his trumpet of having done so and gives gifts to earn the reputation of being a pious person. Puffed up by the works undertaken by him, he does not show proper respect to his parents or his preceptor, just as typhus fever is defiant of medicine. Then whatever actions he undertakes with an egoistic feeling and with the desire for their fruit, he exerts himself to perform them, like an acrobat who performs feats to earn his livelihood. A rat scoops up a mountain to gain one grain, a frog stirs up the sea for moss or the snake-charmer carries the burden of snakes though he gets nothing more than paltry alms. What a pity that such persons find pleasure in exertions of this kind! Like the white ant which digs the ground up to the nether world for the sake of a grain of corn, they labour hard to gain the celestial pleasures. Such laborious action, which is reward-oriented is *rajasic* action. Now hear the characteristics of *tamasic* action.

25. *And action undertaken from delusion without regard to one's capacity or consequences (such as death or injury is said to be of tamas quality.*

That is *tamasic* action, which is the sink of slander and because of which the prohibitions have fulfilled their life's purpose. The result of such action does not become perceptible, like the line drawn on the water. Such action is of no avail like the churning of butter-milk, the blowing of ashes, or the grinding of the sand in an oil-mill or winnowing the chaff or piercing the space, or placing a net to catch the wind (611-615). Otherwise such actions, which are performed by wearing out the valuable human body and by spending money, devastates the world. Just as when the lotuses are dragged with a thorny noose, the noose becomes worn out, but the lotuses also get torn, or just as the moth attacks the lamp with hatred and with

the loss of its life extinguishes the lamp and keeps the house in darkness, in the same way the *tamasic karma* not only proves injurious to the doer and his body, but also causes harm to others. The fly enters the belly of a person and dies, but it causes him agony by making him vomit: the *tamasic* action reminds one of this action of the fly (616-620). Such a person undertakes an action without thinking whether he has the capability to perform it. He sets out to perform the action thoughtlessly through egotism, without any thought about his resources, the occasion and his gain from such action. Fire burns its own dwelling-place (i.e. wooden sticks from which the fire is produced by friction) and spreads out and the sea swells transgressing its limits (621-625). Then they surge forward, without looking backward or forward and treating big and small and highways and by-ways alike. Know, O Arjuna, that the *tamasic* action is that, which does not distinguish between what is proper and improper, and between what is one's own and what is another's. So I have explained to you with reason, how action has become three-fold on account of the three *gunas*. Just as the same person becomes four-fold because of stages of life (*ashramas*) so the agent also, who has the egoistic feeling of being the doer, also becomes three-fold on account of the three distinct kinds of action. I shall now describe the *sattvic* agent, listen attentively (626-630).

26. *An agent free from attachment and egoism, possessing firmness and zeal, and unmoved by success or failure is said to be endowed with sattva.*

As the branches of the sandal-wood tree relinquishing desire grow straight, or the betel plant though without fruit is fruitful because of its leaves, so he performs the obligatory (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittica*) actions. But these should not be regarded as futile. These actions never are in vain. Oh Arjuna, how can a fruit bear another fruit? He performs many such actions sincerely, but as the cloud in the rainy season gives rain without a thunder, he feels no conceit as their agent. After resolving to perform actions to be dedicated to God (631-635), he chooses the proper time and place for their performance and in doubtful cases, he decides the matter by reference to the scriptures. By bringing harmony into the senses and his natural inclinations, he binds his feet with fetters of self-restraint and does not allow his mind to turn to the fruit of action. As long as he lives, he takes care to keep up fortitude of the best kind, in order to achieve self-restraint. He does not care for his physical comforts while working, out of love for the attainment of self-realisation. While doing such works he forgoes sleep, does not feel the pangs of hunger and is not touched by sensuous pleasures (636-640). As gold burnt in fire suffers loss of weight, but improves in purity. He feels even more enthusiastic about performing actions. If a person has disinterested love for something, he cares a two pence for his life for its sake. When the faithful wife leaps into the funeral pyre of her husband, she is covered with horripilation all over her body. Therefore, O Arjuna, if someone is enamoured of his Self, will he mind if his body suffers from love's labour? As desire for sensuous pleasures diminishes and he loses consciousness of his body, his joy in performing actions, is redoubled. In this way, if some action started by him comes to a stop by mischance (641-645), like a cart dashing down a cliff, he does not feel uneasy about it. On the other hand, if the work begun by him reaches its consummation, he does not parade his success. O Arjuna, only a person who displays these characteristics while performing actions, should be called a *sattvika* agent. O winner of wealth, now a sure sign of a *rajasic* agent is that all worldly desires dwell in him.

27. *An agent, full of passion and desirous of the fruit of actions, greedy, destructive and unclean and subject to joy and gloom, is said to be endowed with rajas quality.*

Just as a dung-hill is a place where all the village rubbish accumulates or the funeral ground is the place wherein all inauspicious things gather (646-650), so the *rajasic* agent is the place, where all desires and sins in the world wash their feet. Such a person undertakes only such works as yield the desired fruit. He is loth to spend even a *cowrie* out of his earnings, to preserve which, he is even prepared to risk his life. As a heron lies in wait to catch the fish, he is diligent in preserving his hoard, but is ever ready to pocket the property of others. If a person goes near a jujube tree, he is caught by its thorns, his body gets scratched if he tries to disentangle himself and his tongue smarts if he eats its fruit (651-655). Likewise he gives pain to others with his body, speech and mind, is indifferent to doing good to others and secures his own self-interest. He is not capable of completing the work undertaken, but he does not take dislike to action in any form. He is devoid of purity internally and externally, like the thorn-apple which has intoxicating pulp inside and thorns outside. If he comes into possession of the fruit of his action, he becomes overjoyed and mocks the world. On the other hand, if the work undertaken does not bear fruit, he grieves and rejects it disdainfully (656-660). Know for certain, that whoever performs actions in this manner is a *rajasic* agent. Now I shall tell you clearly the nature of the *tamasic* agent, who is a mine of bad deeds.

28. *An agent who is undisciplined, vulgar and stubborn, deceitful, dishonest and indolent, morose and procrastinating, is said to be endowed with tamas quality.*

The fire does not know how things coming into contact with it burn, or a weapon does not realise how its sharp edge takes the life of another or the poison is not aware how fatal it is to others. Likewise a *tamasic* agent readily undertakes wicked deeds, which tend to harm himself and others (661-665). He is not conscious about the kind of actions he is performing like a whirlwind blowing helter-skelter. So also, O Arjuna, his actions do not harmonise with his motives; and so the *tamasic* agent is not outmatched by a person of unsound mind. He lives in the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, like the ticks which suck the blood from the scrotum of a bull. As the child does not require any occasion to laugh or cry, so he is wayward in his behaviour. Since he is completely under the sway of *prakriti*, he becomes contented and puffed up with his wicked deeds like a dung-hill, which swells with rubbish (666-670). He does not bow down his head even before God and he looks askance at a hill, due to pride. His mind is always deceitful and his behaviour furtive, while his look is like that of a harlot, whose sole aim is to rob a person of all his wealth. His body, in fact, is full of deceit and his entire life is like a gambling den. Know that his appearance, is like the habitation of a criminal tribesman, and so one should not cross his path. He becomes indignant, when he sees that somebody is doing better. Just as salt when mixed with milk makes it unfit for drinking (671-675), or a cold thing put in fire catches fire and suddenly blazes forth, or a good dish after entering the colon turns into filth, so if the good deeds of others pass through his hands, they become just the opposite. He regards the virtues of others as vices, and just as milk served to a snake becomes poison, even nectar in his hand becomes deadly poison. When, however, a virtuous act, which would make his life here worthwhile and also lead him to heaven comes his way (676-680), at that time he is definitely overtaken by sleep. But the same sleep leaves him as if to avoid pollution, when the time comes to perform an evil deed. As the crow has



a mouth disease in the season of grapes or mangoes, or the owl suffers from blindness during daytime, so sloth overtakes him on holy days, but leaves him, as if in obedience to his order, when he is about to do some wicked deed. As the sub-marine fire remains burning in the belly of the sea, grief overtakes him (when fortune smiles on somebody). Just as fire made out of cow-dung gives out smoke or the anus ever throws out foul-smelling wind, he suffers from gloom throughout his life (681-685). O Arjuna, he starts transactions in the hope of a gain, beyond the present epoch and suffers from anxiety unknown to this world. But with all this effort not even a blade of grass comes into his hand. In this way, he who is a mass of sins in flesh and blood, is definitely a *tamasic* agent. Thus, O Arjuna, I have explained to you the three-fold characteristics of action, agent and knowledge.

29. *Now listen to the division of intellect and firmness, three-fold according to the qualities, to be described fully and severally, O winner of wealth (Arjuna).*

Now the intellect, which dwells in the hamlet of ignorance (i.e. the body), wears the new apparel in the form of infatuation and is decorated with the ornament in the form of doubt (686-690). That intellect, which is the mirror for revealing the true nature of the individual Self, is of three kinds. Is there anything in this world, which is not made three-fold by the three qualities? Where can we find the firewood which does not contain fire in it? So also where is the thing which is not three-fold in this visible world? And so this intellect, as also firmness, has become three-fold as a result of these three qualities. I shall tell you now, their distinct forms with their characteristics in detail (691-695). But of these two, I shall first relate to you the three kinds of intellect along with their qualities. There are three ways, namely the best, the middling and the worst, by which man comes into this world. These three well-known ways are performance of prescribed actions, motivated actions, and prohibited actions, because of which all living beings are subject to the fearful, mundane existence.

30. *That which knows when to act and when to desist, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, the cause of fear and fearlessness, that intellect, O Partha, arises from sattvic quality.*

The obligatory actions which you are qualified to do and which are enjoined upon you by the scripture, are the best. One should perform these actions with an eye on their fruit, namely attainment of the Self, just as a thirsty person drinks water (696-700). Their performance frees one from the danger of rebirth and facilitates the attainment of liberation. The wise person who performs such actions, becomes free from the fear of worldly existence and takes to the path of liberation. That intellect which has faith in the obligatory actions and resolves to perform them is sure to attain liberation. So why not leap into action by raising renunciation on the foundation of activity? A person afflicted by thirst, drinks water; one who has fallen into the flood saves his life by swimming; and one who has fallen in a dark well, comes out with the aid of sunlight (701-705). An ailing person who takes medicine and proper diet lives and if the fish gets the support of water, it does not have to fear for its life. So if a person performs the obligatory actions, he is sure to attain liberation. This intellect of *sattvic* quality is inclined to the performance of obligatory actions and knows also the actions, which are not fit to be performed. As regards those actions which are performed with a motive or which are tainted because of their being prohibited, the intellect does not turn to them, as they are not fit to be performed and are fraught with the fear of rebirth and death (706-710). O Arjuna,

one does not enter into fire, or leap into deep water or seize a red hot impaling stake in his hand or touch with one's hand a hissing cobra or go into a tiger's den. The intellect feels mightily afraid, after seeing such actions prohibited by the scriptures. One cannot escape death when served with poisoned food. In the same way, one cannot avoid the cycle of birth and death if one performs prohibited actions. When the intellect comes to realise that such actions lead to bondage, it turns away from them (711-715). Just as a jeweler can determine by a suitable test, genuine and counterfeit gems, so the intellect also makes a scrutiny of desirable and undesirable actions and then decides upon undertaking them or abstaining from them, respectively. That which knows clearly, what is good or evil action, is known as the *sattvic* intellect.

31. *That by which one knows wrongly what is right and what is wrong, what is one's duty and what is not, that intellect, O Partha, arises from rajas quality.*

Just as in the village of herons, they drink milk mixed with water, or a blind person cannot distinguish between day and night, or the bee which relishes honey in flowers is ready to scoop the wood without losing its status as a bee, so this *rajasic* intellect performs actions, without distinguishing between merit and demerit (716-720). If a person buys pearls without proper inspection, he can hardly secure the best ones; he will definitely get the bad ones. So if a prohibited action does not fall to his lot through a happy chance, it is left out; otherwise his intellect treats both kinds of actions as equal. Just as one invites the whole society to a ceremonial feast (without considering whether they are worthy of it or not), that intellect which does not know how to choose between pure and impure actions, is *rajasic* intellect.

32. *That which, obscured by darkness, mistakes the wrong to be right, and all matters in a perverted manner, that intellect, O Partha, arises from tamas quality.*

Just as a thief considers a highway as a by-way, or the demon's day begins with night-fall, or an unlucky person foregoes treasure found by him as a heap of charcoal, so this intellect considers all religious acts as sins and what is true as false (721-725). It construes all rules of *shastras* wrongly and considers all good qualities as defects. In short, whatever has the sanction of the *Vedas*, is considered perverse by this intellect. Such intellect should be known as *tamasic* intellect, without reference to anyone. How can a dark night be considered suitable for giving of alms? O you, who are like the full moon, which opens up the lotus, in the form of Self-knowledge, I have made clear to you, the three types of intellect (726-730). Now when this intellect decides to undertake any action, the steadiness, which sustains it, is also of three kinds. I shall now explain to you, with their respective characteristics, the three types of steadiness; please give your attention.

33. *That firmness, by which one upholds the activities of the mind, breath and senses by means of unfailing Yoga, that steadiness, O Partha, arises from sattva quality.*

When the sun rises all darkness vanishes and all thefts cease, and when the King so orders, all underhand dealings come to a stop. When a strong wind blows, all the clouds are swept out with their thunder or when the sage *Agastya* (*Sirius*) appears, the sea becomes calm. When the moon rises all the day-lotuses close (731-735). When an elephant in rut comes face to face with a roaring lion, he forgets to put his foot down, which he had raised (to attack an

enemy). So when the *sattvic* steadiness rises in the heart, all the activities of the mind, life-breath and senses come to a stop. Then the bond between the senses and their objects automatically ceases and all the senses enter the womb of their mother i.e. the mind (instead of turning to their objects). The *prana*, which moves upward and upward, being blocked, along with the nine different vital airs, enters the *sushumna nadi*, and the mind being stripped of its garments, in the form of desires and fancies, the intellect remains quiet behind it (736-740). In this way, that firm steadiness brings the functions of the mind, vital airs and senses to a standstill and confines them through the power of Yoga in the chamber of meditation. It then keeps them shut up there and prevents them from succumbing to any temptations, until it delivers them to their Lord, the Supreme Self. That is the *sattvic* steadiness, so said the Lord of goddess *Lakshmi* to Arjuna.

34. *But that firmness by which one holds fast, O Arjuna, to duty, pleasure and wealth, through attachment, desiring their fruit, that firmness, O Partha, arises from rajasic quality.*

When the embodied Self remains in the enjoyment of duty, wealth and sensual pleasures, in both the heaven (741-745) and the earth, he carries on his business of the above three aims of life in the sea of desires. When he sees that by investing capital in the form of actions, he reaps four-fold profit from it, he conducts his affairs with firmness. The firmness with which he exerts himself is called *rajasic* firmness. Now I shall tell you, the characteristics of *tamasic* firmness.

35. *That by which a dull-witted person does not forgo sleep, fear and grief, as also despair and delusion, that firmness, O Partha, arises from tamasic quality.*

This (*tamasic*) firmness is made up of all heinous qualities, as coal is formed of a black substance. Why then call such a mean and base thing as a quality? But, do we not describe a demon as meritorious person (*punyajana*) (746-750)? We also call the planet Mars, which burns like a live coal as auspicious (*mangala*). So the word quality is employed in respect of the *tamas* quality without much thought. It has a close relation with sloth; and sleep does not leave a *tamasic* person, as misery does not desert a person who nurtures sin. Just as a stone does not lose its hardness, so fear does not leave him, as he is attached to the body and wealth. As sin never deserts an ungrateful person, grief dwells in him because of his attachment to wordily things (751-755). As he harbours discontent in the heart day and night, melancholy is his constant companion. Foul smell never leaves garlic, or disease never leaves a patient who does not follow the prescribed diet; so despondency does not desert him till death. As his infatuation for youth, wealth and desire increases, arrogance makes its home in his heart. Just as fire does not shed its heat, or the snake his spite, fear which is the foe of all, dwells in him incessantly. Just as the god of death does not forget the body, so arrogance has a fixed abode in him (756-760). So know that the firmness, which is sustained by five flaws (ie. sloth, sleep, fear, despondency and arrogance) is steadiness of *tamas* quality, so said Shri Krishna, Lord of the world.

He further added: the intellect decides what action should be undertaken and firmness carries out that action to its successful end. Even though a person sees the way in the sunlight, he has to walk over it with his own feet, but he has to make up his mind to do so. So the intellect shows the way to action and makes available the means also (761-765). But one must have

steadiness to see it through. In this way, I have explained to you, three kinds of firmness.

Now when actions are performed, they bear the fruit, which is known as happiness, which is also three-fold, according to the actions. I shall now explain to you, in clear terms, how this happiness becomes different on account of the three qualities. But how can I describe it in a pure form? Because when the words describing it are heard, they are defiled by the wax in the ears. You should, therefore, discard the aid of the ears or even external attention and hear it with the aid of the heart (766-770). Saying this, the Lord began to describe the three-fold happiness, which I shall now explain.

36. *And hear from Me, O best of Bharatas, about the three kinds of happiness. That in which, one derives pleasure from practice and puts an end to sorrow;*

O intelligent Arjuna, now hear about the three-fold happiness, which I had promised to tell you. I shall explain to you in words by which you will be able to understand happiness, which results from the union of a human being with his Self. Even a patent medicine has to be taken in appropriate doses, tin has to be electroplated with silver by alchemy or water has to be poured twice or thrice to dissolve salt (771-775). In the same way, when a person secures a little pleasure and continues his *yogic* practice, all the miseries of his mundane life come to an end. The happiness of the Self, so attained by him, is of three kinds. I shall tell them one by one.

37. *That which is first like venom, but like nectar in the end, and which arises from the purity of the mind, that happiness is said to be of sattva quality.*

When the base of a sandalwood tree is encircled by serpents it causes fright, so does a hidden treasure when guarded by a spirit. One has to take the trouble of performing sacrifices in order to gain celestial pleasures. The childhood becomes intolerable because of suffering. One has to put up with the nuisance of smoke in lighting a lamp. And the tongue has to suffer the bitter taste of medicine before cure (776-780). As in all such ways, O Arjuna, in order to gain spiritual pleasure, one has to bear initially, the discomforts resulting from the practice of self-control and sense-restraint. It is only when intense dispassion towards worldly pleasures wells up in the heart, it pulls down the hedge between worldly existence and heaven. When he listens to discourses on discriminating knowledge and practices hard vows and rites, the intellect etc. are sorely tried. One has to swallow the currents of *prana* and *apana* by the mouth of the *sushumna nadi*. One has to suffer such great hardships from the very beginning. Intense grief is suffered by the *chakravaka* pair at their forced separation, by the calf when it is dragged away from the cow's udder, or by the beggar when he is removed from his dining plate (781-785) or by the mother whose only child is snatched away by death, or by the fish which is taken out of water. In the same way, the sense-organs feel that the end of the epoch has come, when they have to part from their objects. Yet being free from attachment, they face that pain with great courage. So by bearing hardships at the very beginning, they attain to Supreme bliss, as the gods secured nectar by churning the *Sea of Milk*. If steadiness in the form of *Lord Shiva*, comes forward to drink the venom in the form of asceticism, then it feasts upon the nectar of knowledge. The sour taste of unripe grapes is more burning to the tongue than the touch of a firebrand; yet the same grapes, when ripe, become sweet (786-790). So when dispassion becomes ripe in the light of the knowledge of Self, all pain born of ignorance

vanishes along with dispassion. As the river meets the sea, so intellect merges in the Self, revealing the mine of non-dual bliss. So that which is rooted in dispassion and culminates in the peace of Self-realisation is said to be *sattvic* happiness.

38. *That which arises from the contact of the senses with their object, which is like nectar at first but like poison in the end, that happiness is known to be of rajas quality.*

When the senses come into contact with the sense-objects, the *rajasic* happiness overflows on both banks. Just as people celebrate the visit of a high officer to their village, or a wedding is celebrated by incurring a heavy debt (791-795), or bananas and sugar taste sweet to a patient, though he is prohibited from eating them, or the poisonous root when in the mouth tastes sweet, so the contact of senses with their sense-objects gives pleasure at first, like the friendship of a polished thief, or the behaviour of a harlot or a mummer's performance. But that pleasure comes to an end and the wealth of merit, which he had earned dries up, ending with the loss of life much in the same way as the swan, mistaking the reflections of the stars in water as gems, makes a swoop to seize them and dashing against a rock, loses its life. Then all his sensual enjoyments vanish as if it was all a dream and all that remains for him to do is to rot in the ditch of pain (796-800). Thus this pleasure terminates in misfortune and becomes toxic even in the next world. When the senses are fondled by making over to them the orchard of religious merit, they destroy the religious merit and offer instead the festive sensuous enjoyments. In this way sins, getting stronger, take such persons to hell. Thus worldly pleasures cause harm in the other world. Although poison is called *mahur* ie. sweet, it becomes fatal in the end and reveals its true nature. Thus worldly pleasure, which tastes sweet in the beginning, proves bitter in the end. This pleasure, O Partha, is formed of the *rajas* quality; so take care not to touch it even with a long pole (801-805).

39. *That pleasure which is delusive to oneself, at first as well as in the end, which arises from sleep, sloth and heedlessness, is deemed to be of tamas quality*

O Partha, know that pleasure to be of *tamas* quality, which is derived by drinking wine, eating meat or in the company of a woman of loose character or by treachery, or by depriving somebody of his wealth or by flattery of a bard, or which is fed by sloth or slumber, and which, right from beginning to the end, deludes him and makes him go astray from the right path. I will not explain it to you in detail, because it is impossible to do so. Thus I have disclosed to you in accordance with the scriptures, the distinctive features of happiness, depending upon distinct actions (806-810). Whatever things there are in this world, big or small, none of them is without the agent, action and fruit. O Arjuna, as the cloth is made up of yarn, so this triad is woven by three qualities.

40. *There is not a thing on this earth nor yet among the gods in heaven, that is free from these qualities born of prakriti.*

Therefore, bear in mind that there is nothing in this world or in heaven which is not bound by these three qualities. How can there be a blanket without wool, a clod without clay, or waves without water? So no beings in this creation are free from being constituted by these qualities (811-815). So all things in this world are made up of these three qualities. It is these qualities, which have made one God into three gods (namely *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*), who

have created the three worlds (heaven, earth and the nether world), and have assigned different duties to the four castes.

41. *Of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, O oppressor of the foes, the duties have been distributed according to the qualities born of their natures.*

If you ask me, which are the four castes, the *Brahmins* are the foremost among them. Two other castes are the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*, who enjoy the same high position as the *Brahmins*. These three are authorised to perform the *Vedic* rites. O winner of wealth, the fourth caste consisting of the *Shudras*, is not so qualified and has to depend upon the other three castes (816-820). But because these *Shudras* are closely connected with the three castes, they are reckoned as the fourth caste. The scriptures have included the *Shudras* in the castes, as they have close connection with the twice-born, in the same way, as the rich smell the flowers of a garland along with its thread. Such is the arrangement of the four-fold caste system. I shall now tell you their respective functions, by performing which these four castes escape from the pair of scissors in the form of birth and death and attain to the Supreme Self. These functions have been distributed among the four castes according to the three qualities of the *prakriti* (821-825). Just as a father divides his property among his sons, or the sun shows the different paths to different wayfarers, or the master assigns different duties to servants, so the three qualities have distributed the functions among the four castes. There the *sattva* quality divides itself, into two irregular parts and creates the *Brahmins* and the *Kshatriyas*, the *Vaishya* caste came into being, through the mixing of the *sattva* and *rajas* qualities and the *Shudra* caste was formed out of the combination of the *rajas* and *tamas* qualities. In this way, O wise Arjuna though the entire humankind formed a single group, they were divided into four different castes, because of the three *gunas* (826-830). Then, just as a lamp shows a thing in the dark, so the scripture shows the functions as differentiated by the qualities. O Lucky Arjuna, I shall tell you, what the distinctive functions of these four castes are.

42. *Self-control, restraint of the senses, austerity and purity, forbearance and an upright nature, knowledge, realisation and belief in God are the duties of a Brahmin, born of his own nature.*

Just as a chaste wife embraces her husband in private, so the intellect of a *Brahmin* along with the senses meets the Self. This serene state of the intellect, is known as self-control and all his actions arise from that quality. The second quality chastises the unruly sense-organs, by showing them cudgels, in the form of scriptural injunctions and prevents them from going astray (831-835). This quality, which lends a helping hand to self-control, is known as restraint of the senses. Just as on the sixth day of the birth of a child, the flame of a lamp is watched during the night so that it does not get extinguished, so he keeps thinking of God all the time. This is known as austerity, which is the third function of a *Brahmin*. Among these functions is the quality of purity, which is two-fold. The mind is full of pure thoughts and the body is adorned with good actions, thus making the life pure, both internally and externally. This state is called purity, O Partha, and that is the fourth quality found in the actions of a *Brahmin*. Now the all-enduring power like that of the earth, is called forbearance (836-840). This is the fifth quality of the actions of a *Brahmin*, which is as sweet as the fifth musical note. The river flows straight to the sea, even if its currents are crooked, or the sugar-cane has the same sweetness, even if its joints are irregular, so to behave in a straightforward manner with even

a hostile person, is the sixth quality known as straightforwardness. Just as the gardener waters the tree at its root and labours over it in the full knowledge that his labour will find its reward when the tree bears fruit, so that by which one knows, that by performing actions strictly according to the scriptural injunctions, one attains the Supreme Self, is knowledge (841-845). This knowledge is the seventh quality in a *Brahmin*. Then when the intellect merges definitely in the nature of the Self, at the time of purification of the Self, resulting from scriptural knowledge or the power of meditation, it is said to be realisation. This is the eighth gem, in the form of quality. Belief in the existence of God, is the ninth quality. As the keeper of the royal seal, whoever he may be, is served by the public, so whoever follows the path laid down by the scripture, is endowed with this quality. The possession of this quality in an eminent degree, is the true function of a *Brahmin* (846-850). In this way, wherever these nine qualities are seen without a taint, that is the natural function of a *Brahmin*. Thus a *Brahmin* wears a necklace of these nine gems and is verily the ocean of these nine gems (*ratnakara*). Just as the sun is always endowed with his light, or the Jasmine tree is decorated with its own flowers or the sandalwood tree is permeated by its own fragrance, so these nine virtues are the spotless ornaments of a *Brahmin* and do not remain separate from the person of a Brahmin. Now, I shall tell you the proper duties of a *Kshatriya*, please listen with all your intelligence (851-855)

43. *Heroism, martial lustre, firmness, dexterity, as also non-retreating from battle, generosity and rulership are the duties of a Kshatriya, born of his own nature.*

The sun never expects any help in giving light nor does the lion seek anybody's company in hunting. In the same way, possession of innate strength without anybody's help is heroism, which is the foremost virtue of a *Kshatriya*. The sun with its light, makes numerous stars invisible, but the stars along with the moon, are not able to make the sun imperceptible. That which takes the whole world by surprise by its own grandeur, but does not lose its courage under any circumstance, is his adventurous spirit, which is the second virtue of a *Kshatriya*, known as majesty and firmness is his third virtue (856-860). Even if the sky were to come down with a crash, his mind and intellect do not become unsettled and this is real firmness. However deep the water may be, the lotus comes up and blooms over it or however high a thing is, the sky towers above it; so however serious the situation may be, he remains engaged in his work. This is the fourth virtue of a *Kshatriya* known as dexterity. Now the martial spirit is the fifth virtue of the warrior class. Just as the sunflower plant remains facing the sun, so a *Kshatriya* stands face to face, before his enemy and fights with him (861-865). Just as a pregnant woman avoids by whatever means, intercourse with her husband, so he does not retreat from the battlefield turning his back to the enemy. This is the fifth virtue of a *Kshatriya*, which surpasses the first four virtues, as devotion surpasses the four principal ends of human life. When a tree bears fruits and flowers, it drops them down, the bed of the lotus plants generously spreads out fragrance, and the moonlight can be enjoyed by everyone to his heart's content. In the same way, he gives gifts to those who beg for them, according to their wishes. This is the sixth virtue known as generosity. To become the only center from which flows authority (866-870) and to protect the subjects and enjoy life after keeping them contented, in the way as one nourishes one's organs and makes them robust enough to render service to oneself, is known as rulership. This power of governance, which is the prince among the

virtues of a warrior, is the seventh virtue. As the sky looks resplendent with the seven sages, so these seven virtues beginning with heroism adorn a warrior. The actions which are endowed with these seven virtues, are the natural qualities of a *Kshatriya* (871-875). Such a person is not only a warrior, but is the *Meru* mountain of gold, which supports seven heavens in the form of the seven virtues. He is like the earth surrounded by the seven seas or like the splendid holy Ganges formed of seven currents in the form of these seven virtues. But enough of this detailed description; actions which are endowed with these seven virtues, are natural to the warrior class. I shall now tell you duties proper to the *Vaishya* caste.

44. *Farming, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of a Vaishya, born of his own nature. Work consisting of service is the duty of a Shudra, born of his own nature.*

To make vast profits on the three-fold capital of land, seed and the plough (876-880), in short, farming, rearing of cattle and buying commodities cheap and selling them at higher prices and to maintain themselves by performing such actions, is the natural duty of the *Vaishya* caste. And to render service to the twice-born, viz. the *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and the *Vaishyas*, is the function of the *Shudras*. It is not for them to undertake any work other than service to the twice-born. Thus I have described to you, the duties prescribed for the four castes.

45. *Man attains to perfection by being devoted to his own duty. Hear (now) how one achieves perfection by being intent upon one's duty.*

O intelligent Arjuna, just as the organs have their proper objects such as sound, so these different duties are proper for the four castes (881-885). Rain water falling from the sky, has as its proper destination the river and the river the sea. In the same way, the performance of proper actions according to the caste (*varna*) and stage of life (*ashrama*) becomes the performer, as fair complexion becomes a handsome person. Please, therefore, fix your mind on performing your natural duties as laid down by the scriptures. Just as one should get one's jewel tested by a jeweler, one should know one's duty by reference to the scriptures. Even if one's vision is good, it is of no avail in the dark without lamplight.

If one does not know which way to go, of what use are the legs to him (886-890)? Therefore, one must know by reference to the scripture, what duty is proper for him, according to his caste. If the treasure in the house is shown by the lamplight, what problem is there in securing it? In the same way, he performs his prescribed duties, that have fallen to his lot and have the sanction of the scriptures. He is then engrossed in the performance of these duties, giving up lassitude and renouncing the fruit of action. Just as water flowing in a stream does not go any other way, so his actions are in accordance with the scriptures (891-895). He who performs his prescribed actions acquires non-attachment, which is an entrance to emancipation. Then he does not get involved in either prescribed or prohibited actions and so is freed from mundane existence. Just as one does not wish to place his foot on a stock made of even sandalwood, so he does not pay attention, even out of fun, to motivated action. Then he dissolves the obligatory duties which he performs by the renunciation of their fruit and reaches the border of liberation. In this way, he is released from good or bad affairs of worldly existence and acquires non-attachment, which is the threshold of liberation (896-900). This non-attachment, is the boundary of his good fortune leading to liberation and is the culmination of all his labours, in the path of action. It is the flower of the tree in the form of good actions,



which makes certain the attainment of liberation and the seeker gently places his foot on this flower like a bee. This non-attachment is like the dawn, which heralds the sun-rise in the form of Self-realisation. It is the Divine collyrium, which shows him the buried treasure in the form of Self-knowledge and he applies it whole-heartedly to his inward eye. In this way, O Arjuna, by performing prescribed actions, he makes himself worthy for the attainment of liberation (901-905). This prescribed duty, is the sole support to the seeker and its performance is the highest service to Me, the all-pervasive Supreme God. The chaste wife shares all pleasures with her husband and the work undertaken by her for her husband is a kind of austerity. A child cannot sustain itself without the help of its mother and so it becomes its bounden duty to serve her. The fish living in the holy waters of the Ganges, acquires the merit accruing from contact with all holy waters. When the seeker, therefore, performs his prescribed duties with the thought that he has no other choice, he places God under his obligation (906-910). It is the intention of God that everyone should perform the duties which are prescribed for him. If he does his appointed work properly, he attains to God without doubt. If a maid-servant passes the test of devoted service to her master, she attains the status of his mistress. If a servant is ready to sacrifice his life in the service of his master, he receives a grant of land in perpetuity from him. In the same way, to carry out the will of God, is to render great service to him. O Arjuna, any action other than this, is only a commercial transaction.

46. *He from whom proceeds the activity of beings and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping him through his action, man attains perfection.*

Therefore, in this way, he not only performs his prescribed duty, but follows the Will of the Supreme Self, who has created this universe. God prepares the puppets in the form of beings from rags, in the form of ignorance and makes them dance, by pulling the strings with three folds in the form of egoism, consisting of the three qualities (911-915). Just as the lamp is filled with light in and out, so this universe is pervaded by the Supreme Self. O brave Arjuna, this Supreme Self becomes pleased, if he is worshipped with flowers in the form of performance of prescribed duties. If the Supreme Self becomes propitiated with this worship, he grants the devotee the gift of non-attachment as a token of his grace. Then he only thinks of God, as a result of which, he feels nausea for the pleasures of the world, as for vomited food. Just as a faithful wife, suffering the pangs of separation from her husband, finds her life unbearable, so he feels all worldly enjoyments as painful (916-920). Thus, even before the attainment of knowledge of the Supreme, his mind thinks of Him and becomes identified with Him. For this reason, he who takes the vow of liberation, should perform his duties with zeal.

47. *Better is one's own duty, though defective; than another's duty well-performed. In doing work as dictated by one's own nature, one does not incur sin.*

Even though one's own duty is difficult to perform, one should keep in view its ultimate result. If one feels better by eating the seeds of the *Neem* tree, one should not mind its bitterness. Would it be wise to cut down the banana tree, before it has borne fruit (921-925)? In the same way, if a person were to give up his duty, on the ground that it is hard to perform, he would be deprived of the bliss of liberation. Even if a child's mother is ugly, the motherly love on which it is sustained is not ungainly. The mothers of other children may be more beautiful than the nymph *Rambha*, but of what avail are they to the child? O Arjuna, the

*ghee* has better qualities than water, but can the fish live in it? Look, what is poison to the world is like nectar to the germs and what is jaggery to the world, proves fatal to these germs (926-930). For this reason, a person should perform the prescribed duties, by which alone, he can hope to attain liberation, though it may be difficult to accomplish. If he were to perform another's duty, thinking it to be better than his own, it is like walking on his head instead of his legs. Therefore, if one performs one's duty, which has fallen to his lot according to his birth, he alone triumphs over the bonds of action. Then why should one not make it a rule, that one will observe only one's own *dharma* and not follow another's duty? Can one really stop work, before one has had the vision of Self? And if there is action to be performed, it is bound to entail physical labour (931-935).

48. *One should not abandon one's duty, O Son of Kunti, even though it may be faulty; for all actions are overlaid by defects, as fire is with smoke.*

Since every action involves labour in the beginning, then why should one find fault with one's duty, on the ground that it is laborious? O Arjuna, one becomes equally fatigued, even if one walks on a highway or a by-path. Whether one carries a stone or provision for the journey, the burden is the same. Therefore, one should carry the burden which will relieve fatigue caused by the journey at the rest-house. Pounding corn or chaff involves the same labour, so does cooking meat or cooking food for sacrificial purposes. O intelligent Arjuna, one has to toil equally in churning curds and water or in crushing sand and sesame in an oil-mill (936-940). One has to suffer from smoke, if one kindles fire for an obligatory sacrifice or for other work. One has to incur expenditure equally in supporting a wife or a kept woman. Why then incur the odium of a scandal by keeping a mistress? If one cannot avoid death by turning one's back to the enemy, then why should one not face the enemy and fight with him? If a lady from a good family has to bear the blows of a stick in another's house, does it not mean that she has made a mistake in leaving her husband because he beat her? If therefore, we cannot avoid physical labour in performing any action, even of our liking, then how can we complain that the prescribed action is difficult to perform (941-945)? Why not spend all we have, to get a little quantity of nectar that makes life immortal? Why should one buy poison, drink it and die and also incur the sin of committing suicide? In the same way, if a person accumulates sin by slogging his senses and wasting his life, what does he gain except misery? It is therefore, necessary that one should perform one's duty, which removes fatigue and helps one to attain liberation, which is the highest end of human life. O Arjuna, just as one should not forget the tested formula (*siddha mantra*) in a difficult situation, so one should not give up one's duty at any time (946-950). As one who wishes to cross the sea should not forget to take the barge or one who is suffering from leprosy should not forget to take the medicine, so his intellect should not forget to follow his duty. When God is propitiated by worship in the form of performance of one's duty, he destroys the *rajas* and *tamas* qualities of the worshipper, leads him along the road of *sattva* quality and makes him feel heaven and earth like poison. Then the seeker attains the plane of non-attachment described under the term perfection before (18.95). Now I shall state how the seeker behaves, after attaining this plane of Yoga and what position he secures, thereby (951-955).

49. *He whose intellect is unattached to all things, who is self-restrained and free from desire, attains through renunciation (of the fruit of action,) the highest perfection, which is freedom from action.*

As the wind is not entangled in a net, he is not entangled in the snares of mundane existence, such as the body. Just as when the fruit becomes ripe, it does not cling to the stem, nor the stem remains attached to the fruit, so his attachment to the worldly life, diminishes. Even though his son, wealth and wife act according to his wishes, he does not call them his own. Now his intellect, which had been scorched by sensual enjoyments, turns inward to the contemplation of the Self. Even if his mind wanders and comes into contact with sense-objects, he never forgets the oath he has taken, not to go after them (956-960). Then holding his mind in the grip of unity, he makes it cherish the Self. Just as the smoke is smothered by the dust covering the fire, his desire for sense-enjoyment in this and the next world, is destroyed. In short, he attains to this plane of Yoga. With the cessation of false knowledge, he remains absorbed in the knowledge of the Self. Just as stored water gets exhausted by gradual use, so his accumulated *karma* from past lives gets expiated by being enjoyed in his present body and his mind does not feel like doing fresh deeds (961-965). When he attains equanimity of the mind, through righteous actions, he meets his *Guru* without any effort on his part. When the four *prahars* (twelve hours) of the night are over, the sun, who is the enemy of the darkness, makes his appearance. When the plantain bears a bunch of bananas, its growth comes to a stop. In the same way, when the seeker meets the *Guru*, he becomes perfect (and his activity comes to an end). O great warrior, just as the moon goes into its full phase on the night of the full moon and lacks nothing, so he does not remain in want by the grace of the *Guru*. Just as darkness disappears along with the night, so through the favour of his Master, his ignorance vanishes (966-970). Just as with the slaughter of a pregnant woman, her foetus is also killed, so with the destruction of ignorance, the triad of action, agent and the instruments of action, also ceases. In this way, there is total renunciation of action. When ignorance, which is the root cause of action, is destroyed, even the name of mundane existence becomes obliterated and the knower himself becomes, that which is to be known. If a person dreams that he was drowning in deep waters in a river, will he make an effort after waking up, to save himself from drowning? In the same way, when the bad dream that 'I am ignorant, now I have attained knowledge', comes to an end, his notions of the knowing agent and the object of knowledge cease and he himself becomes all-pervasive knowledge (971-975). When the mirror is set aside, the reflection as well as the act of seeing in the mirror stop and the seer then remains alone. So when ignorance ceases, that act of knowing also ceases and only the inactive Self remains behind. O Arjuna, as the Self by nature is not active, this state is called actionlessness (*naishkarmya*). Until now, we thought ourselves to be different from our essential nature. But when the breeze stops, the waves in the ocean also get dissolved in the sea; so this state of cessation of activity, is known as the perfect state of actionlessness and it is the highest of all perfection (976-980). Just as the temple reaches its final stage, with the construction of the dome, or the flow of the Ganges stops when it joins the sea, or the gold is purified after it becomes twenty-four carat gold, so with the cessation of ignorance, knowledge also ceases and the stage is reached when all activity comes to an end. When this state is attained, nothing remains to be achieved and so it is called the highest perfection. But this state of self-realization, is attained by a lucky one, only through the grace of his teacher.

50. *Learn from Me in brief, O Arjuna, how after winning perfection, one attains to Brahman, which is the highest state of wisdom.*

When the sun rises, light envelops darkness from all sides. When *camphor* comes into contact with lamp, it becomes a lamp (981-985). When a granule of salt is dropped in water, it becomes water. When a person wakes up from sleep, his sleep along with dream ends and he resumes his conscious state. So if he hears the instruction of the Master through good fortune, his mind sheds the notion of duality and rests in the nature of Self. Then can anyone say, that there remains any action to be performed by him? Is there anything like coming and going possible in the case of the all-pervading sky? Without doubt, there remains nothing for him to do. But in the case of a particular seeker it so happens (986-990), that he does not become one with *Brahman* immediately after hearing the words of the preceptor. It may be that he has kindled the fire, in the form of the performance of his prescribed actions, by feeding it with the firewood in the form of innovated and prohibited actions and burnt the *rajas* and *tamas* qualities. Then he may have brought under his control, like a servant, his craving for sons, wealth and heaven. He may have cleansed in the holy waters of sense-restraint, his wayward senses defiled by the enjoyment of sense-objects (991-995). He may have followed all the paths of spiritual disciplines, to attain the vision of the pure Self. And lastly, after he met the preceptor, the latter may have instructed him in the knowledge of the Self, withholding nothing from him. But can a patient recover from his illness immediately after taking medicine and resume his former state? Or does it become noon immediately after sunrise? Or can one reap a harvest immediately after sowing seed in a fertile and well-watered field? All this requires time. Even if there is a straight road and a good companion, it requires time to reach the destination (996-1000). In this way, after attaining non-attachment, he meets the preceptor and discrimination rises in his mind; then he becomes convinced through discriminating knowledge, that *Brahman* alone is real and that the world is an illusion. Then all activity to secure liberation comes to an end in *Brahman*, which is all-pervading and Supreme, and he attains the knowledge of Self, which destroys the knowing agent, the knowable object and the means of knowledge. Then there remains only the oneness of unity and whatever particle of joy he had, also gets dissolved (1001-1005). But this union with Supreme *Brahman*, is attained only gradually. If a delicious meal is served to a hungry person, he attains satisfaction after taking every morsel; in the same way, the seeker attains the treasure in the form of Self, after lighting the lamp of discrimination. If the seeker wishes to attain fitness to enjoy the grandeur of self-knowledge, I shall describe to you, the stages by which he attains it (1006-1010).

51. *Endowed with pure intellect, controlling the Self with firmness and having abandoned the sense-objects such as sound and casting away passion and hatred,*

He follows the path indicated by the teacher and reaching the bank of holy waters in the form of discrimination, he washes off the impurity of his intellect. Just as the moonlight released by the demon *Rahu* (i.e. after the eclipse is over) embraces the moon, so his intellect, after being purified, becomes attracted to the Self. Just as a woman from a good family leaves the homes of her parents and parents-in-law and follows her husband, so his intellect, discarding the notion of dualism, becomes absorbed in the meditation of the Self. He has eliminated the five sense-objects, which he had prized so long in the life, of acquiring the desired knowledge, in the same way as the withdrawal of the rays by the sun (at sunset) destroys the mirage (1011-1015). Just as one, who has taken food unknowingly, in the house of a low-caste person is forced to vomit it, so he has banished sensuous desires from the senses. Then, after

withdrawing the senses from the sense-objects, he brings them to the bank of the *Ganga*, in the form of the mind and washes them clean through atonement. Then, after purifying the senses with *sattvic* fortitude, he keeps them engaged in the practice of Yoga. When he is required to experience the fruits of his past deeds, good or bad, he does not grieve over his sufferings or long for enjoyments (1016-1020). Thus, he does not feel joy or grief at good or bad happenings and resorts to a cave or recess on a mountain.

52. *Dwelling in solitude, eating sparingly, subdued in speech, body and mind, ever intent on the practice of meditation, and resorting to dispassion,*

He dwells in solitude in a forest, far from the maddening crowd in company of his own body and organs. Restraint of the senses and self-control become his recreation and he observes silence. He is not even conscious how his time passes in meditating, over the instruction of his *Guru*. He never gives any thought at the time of taking his food, as to how he should maintain his strength, satisfy his hunger or cater to the peculiar taste of his palate. The contentment, which he derives from a frugal meal is beyond measure (1021-1025). He is afraid, that if he does not feed the abdominal fire, it will take away his life, and so he eats in moderation, to sustain life. He does not disturb his posture, in the same way as a chaste woman does not succumb to a person (who is not her husband), who expresses a desire for her. His body touches the floor, only when he prostrates it before God; otherwise he does not commit the wanton act of rolling on the floor. He makes the movements of his hands and feet to the extent necessary to maintain himself. In short, he keeps his mind and senses under his control. He does not allow his inclinations even to reach the threshold of the mind (i.e. rise to consciousness). Then what scope is there for giving expression to them in words (1026-1030)? After conquering body, speech and mind, he turns to the sky of concentrated meditation. Just as one sees one's face clearly in the mirror, he then scrutinizes the nature of his Self, as instructed by his *Guru*.

Meditation ordinarily consists of the meditator, the state of meditation and the object of meditation. O Son of *Pandu*, one has to meditate until the object of meditation, the act of meditation and the meditation all become one. Therefore the seeker who is intent upon attaining the knowledge of Self, takes recourse to the Yoga of meditation (1031-1035). Then, pressing the heel of his right foot against the perineum between the genital organs and the rectum and contracting the lower region, he practices the three *bandhas* (physico-psyhic postures) and he unites the life-breaths. With the control of breath, the *Serpent Power* wakes up and when the passage of *Sushumna* opens up, she ascends, by piercing all the six centers from the *Muladhara* to the *Ajna*. Then, the cloud in the form of thousand petalled lotus, in the *brahmarandhra* sends showers of nectar, which flows through the *sushumna* passages, until it reaches the *Muladhara* center. Then the *Kundalini* places in a broken piece of a pitcher, a hotch-potch of cooked rice and pulses, in the form of the mind and the breaths before the terrible deity (*Bhairava*) dancing on the mountain of *Brahmurandhra* (1036-1040). In this way, he practices the *yogic* discipline steadily for the attainment of Self-knowledge and in order to ward off obstacles in the way, he makes friends with non-attachment. This non-attachment keeps him company, in all the *yogic* states. If one has a lamp in hand, why should there be any delay in seeing the desired thing? So long as the seeker has the company of non-attachment, how can he meet with obstacles in his *yogic* practice (1041-1045)? Therefore,

that fortunate person who practices Yoga combined with non-attachment, becomes qualified for the attainment of *Brahman*. Such a one, who wears the armour of non-attachment and rides on the horse of *rajayoga*, arms himself with the sword of meditation, in order to slash any obstacles, big or small, which come in the way. In this way, as the sun enters darkness, he enters the battlefield in the form of worldly existence, in order to gain victory in the form of deliverance.

53. *Forsaking egoism, strength, arrogance, desire, anger and possessions, free from the sense of 'Me' and 'Mine', and serene, one becomes fit for the state of Brahman.*

He then destroys all the faults which are hostile to him. The foremost among them, is egoism (1046-1050), which does not release him even after death. Nor does it let him live peacefully, but keeps him bound in the stocks of bones and makes him miserable. He raises to the ground the citadel in the form of the body, which is the abode of this egoism. He also destroys his second enemy, which is strength. This enemy waxes strong, at the very mention of sense-objects and blots out the whole world. It is the narrow pond of poison, in the form of sense-objects, as also the chief among the faults. But even this enemy cannot bear the strokes of the sword, in the form of meditation. Then he destroys the enemy, arrogance, which under the pretext of giving him happiness, entices him in agreeable sense-objects (1051-1055). This third enemy (arrogance) deludes him and makes him miss the path of virtue and enter the jungle, in the form of unrighteousness, only to fall into the jaws of a tiger, in the form of hell. He destroys this enemy arrogance, which after inspiring trust in it, ruins a person. He then destroys the enemy 'desire', which makes even the ascetics tremble, begets the vicious fault of wrath and remains famished, the more it is fed. With the destruction of desire, wrath is automatically destroyed. Just as when the tree is uprooted its branches get destroyed, so the eradication of desire brings about the destruction of wrath (1056-1060). When the desire is stilled, the stirring of anger also comes to an end. Just as a person in authority makes the offender carry the stock (in which his ankles are to be bound) on his head, so his enemy by name 'possession' rides on his head, (corrupts his mind), makes him addicted to vices and compels him to carry the stick of attachment. Because of 'possession', even a detached ascetic becomes entangled in the snares in the form of 'this is my disciple', 'this is my book', 'this is my hermitage'. That possession, which was shaken off after leaving the family, appears in the form of sylvan things in the forest and pursues even a nude ascetic (1061-1065). By knocking off the bottom of this invincible enemy named 'possession', he experiences the joy of victory, over worldly life. Then all the means of knowledge, such as absence of pride and others come to pay homage to him, like princes in the country of liberation. They offer him tribute, in the form of mastery over true knowledge and remain as his retinue. When he proceeds along the highway of activity, young ladies in the form of wakefulness dream and deep sleep wave around him salt and mustard, in the form of pleasure. As he proceeds along, discrimination marches ahead of him, bearing the scepter in its hand and clears the crowd in the form of manifest things of the world. Then the *yogic* stages, as it were, come forward to wave five tiny lamps placed on a platter to felicitate him (1666-1070). The miraculous powers come there, to bathe him with a shower of flowers. With the approach of self-government, in the form of union with Supreme *Brahman*, he feels as if all the three worlds are full of bliss. In this state, O *Dhananjaya*, there remains none, whom he can call as his friend or as his enemy.

Even if he calls one on a rare occasion as his friend, even then he entertains no idea of duality; he has become so identified with all people. He has pervaded the whole universe by his majesty, with the result, that no attachment of the form 'This is mine' affects him; for he has given up attachment already (1071-1075). Thus having conquered all his enemies, he regards the whole universe as a non-entity and then the horse in the form of his *yogic* practice on which he was riding, becomes steady. Then he loosens for a moment his impregnable armour of non-attachment and he slackens his hand, as nothing remains for the sword in the form of meditation to slash. Just as the medicine, after serving its purpose, becomes superfluous, similar is his state. Just as walking comes to a halt, after reaching the destination, so his *yogic* practice stops, after the attainment of *Brahman* (1076-1080). The holy Ganges slackens its speed, after it joins the sea or an amorous wife calms down after meeting her husband. A plantain stops its growth, after bearing fruit or a journey ends after reaching the destination. In the same way, after he knows that he is about to realise the Self, then he lays down slowly his arms in the form of spiritual practices. O Arjuna, when the time comes when he is to attain union with *Brahman*, then his *yogic* practice comes to an end. Then he attains perfect peace, which is the consummation of non-attachment, the end of the study of knowledge and the fulfillment of his *yogic* practice and becomes qualified to become *Brahman* (1081-1085). The difference between the Supreme *Brahman* and the perfected soul qualified to become *Brahman*, is the same as between the moon on the full moon night and the moon on the previous night or between the 24-carat gold and 22-carat gold or between the calm waters of the sea and that part of it, into which a river rushes. Then he soon becomes *Brahman* on account of the perfect peace of mind, which he has achieved. This experience of *Brahman* without becoming one with it, is known as the fitness for becoming Supreme *Brahman* (1086-1090).

54. *Becoming one with Brahman and having a serene mind, he neither grieves nor desires, and being same to all creatures, he attains Supreme devotion to Me.*

O Arjuna, he who has become fit for the attainment of the knowledge of *Brahman*, gains serenity of the mind. Just as the food cooked by heating, becomes enjoyable only when it cools down or the Ganges becomes calm in winter after the floods cease, the musical instruments cease when the vocal music stops, all the labour put in the attainment of knowledge, receives its reward. This state, which is attained by the realisation of the Self, is well known as serenity - and the enlightened person attains to it (1091-1095). When he is flooded with this state of equanimity, he does not grieve over the loss of a thing or crave for anything. Just as the stars become dim on the rising of the sun, so wherever he looks, he does not entertain the notion of distinction between beings. Just as the alphabets written on a slate can be wiped off, all distinctions become obliterated in his view. So the false knowledge, which existed in the states of waking and dream, becomes merged in ignorance (1096-1100). When the knowledge of the Self increases, the ignorance goes on diminishing and finally merges in that knowledge. The hunger gradually diminishes with each morsel of food eaten and ceases when it is fully satisfied. When one marches, the road to be covered gradually diminishes and when the destination is reached, the distance is fully covered. As a person begins to wake up, the sleep gets reduced by and by and ceases altogether, with the return of the wakeful state. After the moon remains in full phase on the full moon night, it begins to wane and then the bright fortnight comes to an end (1101-1105). In the same way, when the objects of knowledge cease

and the knower becomes merged in Me along with the knowledge, then all ignorance disappears. At the time of deluge, all distinctions of sea, river etc. vanish and the whole world is covered with water. When the limiting conditions such as the earthen pot or the hermitage disappears, only the sky remains or when the firewood is burnt then only fire remains. When the ornaments are melted in a crucible with heat, they lose their name and form and only gold remains. When a person wakes up, the dream vanishes and only the dreamer remains (1106-1110). So My devotee does not see anything, except Myself. He thus attains the fourth form of devotion. This is called the fourth kind in order to distinguish it from the devotion of one in distress, of the seeker of knowledge and of the seeker of riches. If you reflect upon it, there is no such devotion as third or the fourth, or even the first and the last. In fact that which is My innate state, is devotion. But a devotee is misled by ignorance, in that he conceives Me in a form different from My essential nature and worships it. The devotee who conceives Me thus, maintains his faith in that form (1111-1115). Just as the appearance or non-appearance of a dream depends on the existence of one (dreamer), so the natural light by which one sees the existence or non-existence of the universe is what is known as devotion. When this devotion takes the form of a strong desire in an afflicted person, I become the object of that desire. O great warrior, when this devotion takes the form of desire for knowledge in a seeker of knowledge, I become the object of that desire for knowledge. O Arjuna, when this devotion takes the form of desire to achieve an end, I become that end, all-in-all for him (1116-1120). In this way, this devotion operates through ignorance, to show Me, who am the seer as the object to be seen. When one's face is reflected in the mirror, the apparent duality (constituted by the face and its reflection) is due to the mirror. The normal sight sees only one moon, but if one suffers from a disease known as *timir* (an affliction of the optic nerve), then he sees two moons. So although I am worshipped everywhere, because of ignorance, men conceive Me as an object of knowledge. When the mirror is taken away, the reflection merges itself into its original; so when the ignorance vanishes, then the state of seeing, inherent in the seeing agent, merges into Me (1121-1125). Even when gold is mixed with an alloy, it remains as pure gold and when the alloy is burnt out, the residue remains as pure gold. Is not the moon endowed with all its phases, before the full moon night? But it appears in all its phases on that night. In the same way, I too am seen as distinct from the seeing agent, because of the mental states. When the state of seeing disappears, I become My true Self. So, know, O Partha, that which is known as the fourth kind of devotion, transcends others (which involve the dualism between the seer and the seen).

55. *Through devotion he knows Me truly, who I am and how great; then having known Me in essence, he forthwith enters into the Supreme.*

You have heard before, that the devotee who attains union with Me, through this knowledge-cum-devotion, becomes one with Me (1126-1130). For, O Arjuna, I declared to you, with outstretched arms, in the seventh chapter, that this *jnani-bhakta* is My very soul. I taught this devotion, as the best to God *Brahma*, in the form of *Bhagavata Dharma*, at the beginning of the epoch. The *Sankhyas* call it 'the knowledge of the Self', the *Shaivites* call it 'the Power of God (*Shakti*)' and we call it, Supreme devotion. One who travels step by step, on the path of Yoga, becomes one with Me and attains this devotion. Then he comes to know that this universe is pervaded by Me (1131-1135). Then non-attachment along with discrimination,



bondage along with salvation and activity along with renunciation come to an end. Just as the sky remains behind, swallowing all the four elements (at the time of dissolution), he becomes one with My spotless and pure state which is beyond the means and the end and enjoys Supreme bliss. Just as the river Ganges meets the sea and shines in this mingled state, similar to it is this enjoyment of the Supreme bliss. As a mirror sees its own reflection in a mirror placed in front of it, so he experiences the bliss of *Brahman*. But when the mirror is kept aside, the reflection vanishes and the seeing agent remains alone in the enjoyment of himself (1136-1140). After the dream disappears in the wakeful state, then a person remains conscious of himself, and he enjoys his single state all alone.

One may raise a doubt and say that there cannot be any experience after union with *Brahman*. We ask such a doubter, "How can a word utter a word? Is it that in the country of such a person, one can see the sun in the light of a lamp or is it necessary to make a canopy for the sky? Can a king enjoy his royal position, if he does not possess the royal attributes? How could a thing have a conception of the sky, unless it is the sky itself? How can ornaments of gold, equal an ornament made of gems (1141-1145)? So how can one who has not become one with Me, know what I am? If not, how can one say, that he is devoted to Me? For this reason, he who practices Yoga step by step, becomes one with Me and enjoys the bliss of My Self." As a maiden enjoys her youth, or the ripples kiss the water, or the splendour of the sun shines in the sun's disc, or the space pervades the sky, so he becomes one with Me and worships Me, without overt action. Just as gold is inherent in the ornament, the fragrance is diffused in the sandalwood, or the moonlight abides in the moon (1146-1150), non-dual devotion takes place even though he does not perform any action. This cannot be expressed in words, it can be realised only through experience. Then whatever he says, because of the latent impressions of his past actions or calls Me, I respond to his call; but there the one who says or calls, is also Myself. If the speaker is also Myself, then no conversation is possible, and so his silence amounts to praising Me. So when he calls Me and I respond to his call, his calling and praising Me, is affected through silence. Whatever the devotee sees with his vision of intellect, that seeing does not show him any visible object, but his own Self (1151-1155). Just as the seeing agent sees the same face, which was there before he looked into the mirror, so the seeing on the part of the seer, makes him view himself. In the absence of an object to be seen, what the seeing agent sees is his own Self. Since there remains nothing but the seeing agent, the seeing has no focus. Just as a person who sees his beloved in a dream and moves forward to embrace her and on waking up, finds that he is alone, or as the fire which is ignited by the friction of two sticks, burns both the pieces and remains only as fire, or as the sun goes to seize his reflection in water, then the reflection disappears along with his disc (1156-1160), so he who, after becoming one with Me, goes to see the object, then the act of seeing as also the object to be seen, disappear. As the sun sheds his light on the darkness, there remains no darkness on which to shed light; in the same way, the seeing agent does not remain separate from Me, to see the object.

This state, which is not the result of seeing or not seeing, is My real vision. O Arjuna, he retains this vision, when he comes across any visible object and enjoys this state, which transcends the seeing agent and the object to be seen. As the sky does not slip, being all-persuasive, so he remains unshaken, being merged with the Self (1161-1165). As water fills

the whole earth at the time of deluge and so does not flow, so the Self who is filled with the Supreme Self, remains still. How can the feet go in advance of themselves, how can the fire burn itself and how can water bathe in itself? Since I am all-pervasive, all movements (of the devotee who is merged in Myself) stop and this absence of movement, becomes his pilgrimage to My non-dual state. However swiftly the wave moves on water, it cannot leave the water and encroach upon the land. The place which it leaves and the place it goes to, its movement and the means of movement, are nothing but water (1166-1170); wherever the wave moves it is all water, and so the oneness of the wave with water, remains undisturbed. So when he starts from the state of oneness with Me and again returns to Me, then this movement of his, constitutes his pilgrimage and he becomes My pilgrim. If he performs any action according to his disposition, I myself go to meet him under the pretext of that action. In this state, O Arjuna, the distinction between the deed and the doer disappears, and seeing Me in himself, he becomes one with Me. If a mirror sees into another mirror, it is no seeing at all; or if gold is covered with gold, it is not covered at all (1171-1175); for a lamp, it is not possible to give light to another lamp. So if a person performs any action after becoming one with Me, can we say that the action is performed? If he, while performing action, does not have the egoistic feeling that he is the agent of that action, the doing of that act is tantamount to 'not doing it.' Since he has become one with Me, his 'doing' amounts to 'not doing' and that is a special characteristic of My worship. So, O Arjuna, whenever he performs any action as prescribed, he does nothing and that is My solemn worship. In short, whatever he says is singing My praise, whatever he sees, is My vision and wherever he goes, that is his pilgrimage to non-dual Me (1176-1180). O Arjuna, whatever he does becomes My worship, whatever he thinks is muttering My name and whatever state he abides in, is his absorption (*samadhi*) in Me. Just as a gold bangle is non-different from gold, so he has become one with Me, through the Yoga of devotion. Just as the wave is not different from water, or the *camphor* from its odour or the jewel from its glitter, in short, as the cloth inherent in the thread or the earthen pot in clay, so My devotee remains united with Me. O Arjuna, he sees Me in every object, by means of this exclusive devotion (1181-1185).

When he realises that the visible world which appears in the form of the Field and knower of the Field, through the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep is none else but Me, he dances (in great ecstasy) like a big wig. Just as after viewing the rope, one becomes convinced that it is not a serpent, although at first sight it appeared to be so, or after the ornaments are melted, it is known to be only gold, or that the wave is nothing but water, so he is not deceived by its form (1186-1190). When one wakes up, one knows that the things which he saw in the dream, were not different from him; so he experiences, that whatever becomes manifest as existent and non-existent is he, the knower. Then he says to himself, "I am unborn, ageless, immutable, imperishable, the unique and boundless Bliss. I am the one, who does not move or drop down, the infinite, the non-dual, the origin of all, the formless and with form; I am the controller as well as the wielder of power, beginningless, imperishable, fearless, the support as also the object of support (1191-1195). I am the Lord of all, the one who abides everywhere always, easily and continuously and also beyond everything. I am what is new, what is old; I am the Void, I am complete, I am the infinite, as also the most subtle; I am actionless, love and griefless, I am that Supreme Person, who abides in all things and in whom all things abide. I am beyond speech, without ears, form and kin; I am even,

self-dependent, the Supreme *Brahman*." In this way, whoever becomes one with Myself, knows Me through devotion centered in non-dualism and that whatever knowledge he attains is, also Myself (1196-1200). When he is awakened, he knows that he is all alone, that he is the sun the light-giver, as well the object lighted and that these two are not different from each other.

When the object of knowledge disappears, only the knower remains and he realises that one who knows, is also Myself. He realises that this knowledge of non-dualism is also Myself, the Supreme spirit. Then the knowledge dawns upon him, that he himself is the Supreme Self, who is beyond dualism and non-dualism and then that knowledge turns into realisation (1201-1205). Thus, as the state which one attains, after waking up disappears, he does not know what state he has entered into, or as the gold ornaments appear as gold without their being melted, or when the salt is dissolved in water, the water acquires the salty taste and when that water becomes evaporated that salty taste too disappears, so when the term 'he' ceases to exist, how can the term 'I' subsist? In this way, the notions of 'he' and 'I' cease to exist, and he merges into My being (1205-1210). Just as when the *camphor* is burnt up, both the *camphor* and fire also vanish and only the sky beyond them remains or when one is deducted from one the remainder is zero, so what remains after subtracting what is and what is not, is Myself. In that state, all talk about *Brahman*, the Self and the Lord becomes meaningless and even refraining from speech, also has no scope there. As it can be described fully without talking, about not talking, so it is known by discarding the notions of knowledge and ignorance. In that state, knowledge is to be known through knowledge, bliss is to be enjoyed through bliss and happiness is to be experienced through happiness (1211-1215). In that state, benefit gains more benefit, lustre combines with lustre and wonder is fully drowned in wonder. In that state, peace of mind becomes peaceful, rest becomes restful and experience becomes frenzied with experience. What more can I say? As the beautiful creeper of *kramayoga* is nourished, it produces the winsome fruit, in the form of Myself. O Arjuna, I am the crown of that sovereign *kramayoga* and he in his turn becomes the jewel in the form of knowledge. Or this *kramayoga* is like a temple and he becomes like the expanse of the sky over the dome of this temple (1216-1220). Or he treads the royal path of *kramayoga* in the forest of the world and reaches the town, in the form of union with Me. The Ganges in the form of his devotion and knowledge, flows along with the current of *kramayoga* and reaches the ocean of bliss in the form of Myself. O discerning Arjuna, such is the greatness of this *kramayoga*, that I am describing it to you, over and over again.

I am not such a one, as can be attained through such means as suitable time, place and material things; because I abide in all things (1221-1225). The traditional relation between the *Guru* and the disciple has been long in use, in order to know the way of attaining to me. O Arjuna, there exist in a ready form, treasure in the womb of the earth, fire in wood and milk in the udder of the cow and yet, one has to devise means to secure them. In the same way, even though I am self-existent, I can be attained only through suitable means. One may ask as to why, after discoursing so long on the fruit, the Lord is talking about the means of securing it. His opinion seems to be this, the merit of *Gita* lies in this, that liberation is attained, by all the means taught in it. The means stated in other scriptures are not necessarily authoritative (1226-1230). The wind scatters the clouds, which cover the sun, but cannot create the sun.

The moss can be set aside from the water by hand, but one cannot create water. In that way the scripture, can remove the dirt of ignorance, which obscures the knowledge of Self. Otherwise I am spotless and self-luminous, and so all the scriptures are of use in dispelling ignorance. Beyond this, they are not free to grant the knowledge of the Self. The *Gita* is the only scripture, where the other scriptures have to come to enquire about this knowledge. When the sun adorns the East, all other directions are also lit up. So all other scriptures have found a patron in the *Gita*, which is sovereign among them (1231-1235). This *Gita* has described the means to liberation, in the previous chapters in great detail. But the compassionate Lord thought, that Arjuna could hardly be expected to grasp his teaching at the very first hearing and so he is going to give a brief discourse on it to impress the meaning of the *Gita*, on the mind of his disciple. Now that the *Gita* is coming to a close, he is going to demonstrate the unity of its teaching, from beginning to the end. It is true, that many doctrines have been stated midway in the text, according to the qualifications of seekers (1236-1240), lest one should think without following the context, that all these doctrines have been expounded in the *Gita*, the Lord will now establish that all these doctrines are contained in the great doctrine of the *Gita* and will conclude the doctrine as stated in the beginning. Here the destruction of ignorance is the main topic, the attainment of liberation is its fruit, and knowledge is the means of achieving both. After describing that knowledge in great detail, earlier in this work, the Lord is briefly stating it again. Even though the end is in hand, the Lord is again describing the means of achieving it (1241-1245).

56. *Through performing all works taking refuge in Me, he wins through My grace, the eternal immutable state.*

Then the Lord said, O great warrior, the *kramayogi* thus becomes one with Me, through single-minded devotion and merges in Me. He worships Me thoroughly, with pure flowers in the form of the performance of duty and attains, through My grace, to the dedication of knowledge. With the attainment of this dedication of knowledge, his devotion to Me flourishes and he becomes blessed, through complete unity with Me. He follows Me, knowing Me as one, who illuminates the whole world, after pervading it. Just as salt takes recourse to water and forsakes its hardness, or the wind blowing in the sky, rests without motion (1246-1250), so he resorts to Me, with body, speech and mind. If perchance he does any prohibited act after the attainment of knowledge, all actions good or bad, become of a piece with Me, in the same way as the dirty street-water and river-water both become merged in the Ganges. The distinction between sandalwood and other smoky wood lasts, only until they are consumed by fire. The distinction between gold and its alloy lasts, only so long they do not come into contact with the philosopher's stone. In the same way, the distinction between auspicious and inauspicious things lasts, so long as they are not pervaded by My light (1251-1255). O Partha, so long as one does not enter the region of the sun, the distinction between night and day, is felt. So when he meets Me, all his actions disappear and he attains the state of unity, with Me. He attains to that eternal state, which does not get wasted through time, place and nature. O Arjuna, what merit would he not gain, after being blessed with the serenity of Myself?

57. *Resigning mentally all works to Me, and making Me your goal, and resorting to buddhiyoga, keep your mind constantly on Me.*

And so, O winner of wealth, surrender all your actions to Me (1256- 1260). But, O warrior, do not abandon your obligatory actions and fix your mental faculties in discriminating knowledge. You will come to know through this discriminating knowledge, My spotless nature, which is different from actions and that the *Maya*, which is the source of ignorance, is far away from you. Then, O Arjuna, you will realise that this *prakriti* too, is not distinct from the Supreme Self, as the shadow cannot remain without its original object. In this way, when this *prakriti* is negated, then there will result without any effort, total renunciation of action (1261-1265). With the elimination of all actions, only the Self will remain behind and your intellect will become united with him like a chaste wife. So when your intellect will enter Me, with unswerving devotion, then your mind will resort to Me, casting off the other objects of thought. So you should act in such a way, that your mind will give up all other thoughts and remain steady in Me.

58. *Thinking of Me you will surmount all obstacles through My grace. But if you, through egoism, will not listen, you will perish.*

When your mind becomes united with Me, through whole-hearted devotion, then you will have attained My grace, in full. Then all the miseries of birth and death, which every human being has to undergo, although hard to overcome, will conduce to your happiness (1266-1270). Who will care for darkness, if his vision receives the support of sunlight? In the same way, how will he, who has lost his body-consciousness, through My grace, be afraid of the goblin in the form of worldly affairs? Therefore, O Arjuna, you will be able to escape from the evil trap of worldly existence. But if, out of egoism, you will not listen to My words or pay attention to My teaching, then even if you are eternally free and imperishable, that will be of no avail to you, and you will have to bear the bullets dealt by the body (1271-1275). You will suffer from self-destruction at every step, in the bodily actions and will have hardly even a moment's respite from agony. If you do not pay any heed to what I say, you will have to face dreadful torments of a living death.

59. *If resorting to egoism you think that you will not fight, vain is this resolve of yours; (because) your nature will constrain you (to fight).*

If you nourish egoism through the hatred of discrimination, as fever is nourished by the hatred of prescribed diet or darkness is nourished by the hatred of light and if you were to label your body as Arjuna, and those of others as your kinsmen and the war as a sinful act, and if out of such notions you resolve not to fight (1276-1280), your inborn nature would defeat that resolve. Is there any substance other than *Maya* (illusion), in your statement that 'I am Arjuna, these are my kinsmen and killing them would amount to a great sin'? It is also queer, that you were ready to fight to start with, took up arms in your hands and now you swear that you will not fight. Therefore, this talk of yours that you will not fight, is all futile. Even from the worldly point of view, this talk of yours is unacceptable. It is true that you have resolved not to fight, but your inborn warrior's disposition, will compel you to fight (1281-1285).

60. *Bound by your sense of duty born of your own nature, O Arjuna, you will carry out helplessly, what through delusion, you do not wish to do.*

If a person is bent upon swimming towards the West, when the current is flowing Eastwards, the current will surely drag him to the East. If the paddy seed were to say, that it will not grow into a paddy plant, will it be able to go against its own nature? In the same way, O wise Arjuna, as your innate nature belongs to the warrior's tradition, how can you say that you will not rise to fight? Even if you say so, your nature will compel you to stand up and fight. O Arjuna, your warrior's nature has bestowed upon you bravery, indomitable spirit, mindfulness and other qualities at the time of your birth. O Son of *Pandu*, this inborn nature will not allow you to sit quiet, without performing your duties, in conformity with the group of your inherent qualities (1286-1290). O Arjuna, since you are bound by these qualities appropriate for a warrior, you will not be able to go against your inborn nature. If, without taking into account your innate nature, you take it in your head not to fight, you will be forced to fight like a person who, placed in a chariot with hands and feet bound, travels far without walking. Did you not fight, when *Uttara*, the eldest son of *Virata*, began to flee from the battlefield? That warrior's nature, which made you fight then, will compel you to fight now (1291-1295). You knocked down on the battlefield, eleven divisions of warriors alone; that *Kshatriya* nature of yours, will make you fight here too. O Arjuna, does a patient ever like illness or a poor man ever like poverty? Yet a powerful destiny, makes them suffer these. The same destiny acting according to the Will of God, will not allow you to do otherwise. That God abides in your heart.

61. *The Lord abides, O Arjuna, in the hearts of all beings, spinning them round by his Divine Power.*

The sun in the form of the Supreme Spirit, with his thousand rays, rises in the great sky in the form of hearts of all beings. He illumines the three states of wakefulness, the dream and deep sleep and inspires the wayfarers, in the form of embodied Selves, with false knowledge (1296-1300). He makes the lotuses in the form of sense-objects blossom, in the lake of knowable objects and feeds them to the bees, in the form of the beings with six feet consisting of the five senses and the mind. This metaphor apart, God abides in the hearts of all beings, taking the form of egoism. He pulls the strings from behind the curtain of *Maya* and makes the puppets in the form of eighty-four lakhs of species, dance. He invests all beings, from god *Brahma* to the worm, with body-forms, according to their deserts. Whatever being is invested with a body appropriate to it, rides the body with the notion 'I am the body' (1301-1305). Just as the thread should get entangled in the thread, or a blade of grass should bind another, or a child should try to catch hold of its reflection in water, so the Self adopts that body-form, though separate from him, with the notion of identity with it. In this way, by mounting the beings on the mechanism of the body, God pulls the strings, in accordance with their past actions. Then the being begins to move, by virtue of the string, which is exclusively earmarked for him, according to his past deeds. Just as the wind makes a blade of grass whirl round and round in the sky, so God moves it about between heaven and earth (1306-1310). Just as iron is set in motion by the magnet, so all the activities of beings, take place under the authority of God. O *Dhananjaya*, just as in the proximity of the moon, the ocean and others start their activities, viz. the ocean gets into full tide, the moon-stone begins to ooze, the night lotuses bloom, and *chakora* birds give up their reserve, in the same way, God goads the beings to act through the *prakriti*. The same God, abides in your heart. O son of *Pandu*, the feeling which rises in your mind, without allowing itself to be identified with Arjuna,

is the real aspect of God (1311-1315). Therefore, God will goad your *prakriti*, which will then compel you to fight. God is the Lord of all beings and the controller of *prakriti*. It is therefore, right, that you should make your sense organs to act freely, in accordance with your nature. The decision whether you should fight or not fight, should be left to the *prakriti*. Please keep in mind, that this *prakriti* is under the control of God, who dwells in your heart.

62. *Take refuge in him alone, with your whole heart, O descendent of Bharata. You will attain by his grace, Supreme peace and the eternal abode.*

Just as the *Ganga* surrenders itself to the sea, you should surrender yourself completely to God. Then through his grace, you will become the Lord of the lady in the form of peace, and you will revel in the blissful experience of the Self (1316- 1320). You will then, become the eternal Self, from which the creation starts, where rest becomes restful and experience gains experience. So said Shri Krishna, the Lord of the goddess of wealth, to Partha.

63. *Thus have I taught you wisdom, more secret than any other secret; fully ponder over it and do what you will.*

This famous sacred text, known as the *Gita* is the essence of *Vedic* literature and one gains the gem of Self, by its means. That which is current as knowledge and by praising whose glory, *Vedanta* became renowned in this world, of which all the intellectual subjects are a mere shadow, by which knowledge, I that behold all, am known (1321-1325) – that knowledge of Self, is the secret treasure of Mine, who am unmanifest. But how can I hide it from you? O Arjuna, because I am extremely fond of you, I am entrusting this secret treasure to you. Just as a mother, crazy because of her love for her child, talks to it in a lively mood, will not My affection for you, make Me talk like that? As though, by straining the sky or stripping the nectar off its rind, or making the lamp go through an ordeal or putting collyrium in the eyes of the sun, who illumines even the atoms in the nether world by his light (1326-1330), so after considering it from all angles, I, who am omniscient, have explained to you, the true knowledge. Now think well for yourself and do what you think proper.

After hearing this talk of the Lord, Arjuna kept quiet. Seeing this, the Lord said, “O Arjuna, you are so straight, that you are not deceitful. If a hungry person were to say, out of shyness, that he had enough, he will have to suffer from hunger and earn the fault of deception. In the same way, if after meeting an all-knowing teacher, one were to feel shy and not ask for enlightenment on the nature of Self (1331-1335), one would become liable to the sin of self-deception and miss a great opportunity. From your silence, I gather that you wish Me to summarise what I have said so far.” To this Arjuna said, “O Lord, you have truly read my mind. But why should I say this? Is there anyone else who knows all like you? This whole world is the object of knowledge, you alone are the knower. Is there any point in praising the sun by calling him the sun?” Hearing this, Lord Krishna said, “Why do you feel, that what you have said about Me, is insufficient praise (1336-1340)?”

64. *Listen further to My Supreme word, the most secret of all. You are exceedingly dear to Me, so I shall speak for your benefit.*

Now listen once again to My clear talk, with special attention. It is not that I shall speak, because it is worth communicating or that you should hear, because it is worth hearing. In

fact, fortune has favoured you, in the form of My talk. O *Dhananjaya*, the young of a tortoise is fed by the mere glance of its mother; and the sky pours rain for the *chataka* birds. In the same way, it is like securing the fruit, without undertaking any activity. Is there anything in this world, which man cannot secure, when fortune smiles upon him? This is the esoteric knowledge, in which one gets rid of dualism and enjoys the bliss of unity, in his very home (1341-1345). O dearest, that which is the object of our informal affection, is nothing else but the Self. When we cleanse the mirror, it is not for its sake but for our own sake, as we wish to look into it. In that way, O Arjuna, I am speaking for My own sake, making you an excuse. Now is there any duality between us? So I am telling you the secret of My heart. I am crazy about My single-minded devotees. The salt being enamoured of water surrenders itself completely to it and feels no shame in merging with it (1346-1350). In the same way, you do not keep back anything from Me and so why should I hide anything from you? Now listen to My great secret, before which all other secrets reveal themselves.

65. *Fix your mind on Me and be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow down before Me, (then) you shall come to Me alone, I promise, as you are dear to Me.*

Please make Me, the all-pervading God, the object of all your activities, both physical and mental. Just as the wind remains clinging closely to the sky, you remain centered in Me, while doing your work. Nay, you make your mind My exclusive dwelling-place and fill your ears with My praise (1351-1355). The saints who are purified by the knowledge of Self, are My aspects. Look at these saints, as fondly as an amorous husband looks at his beautiful wife. I am the dwelling-place of all things; so make your speech fond of uttering My name. Whatever you do or wherever you go, you perform all such actions for My sake. When you render help to your kinsmen or strangers, that will constitute My worship and your Will becomes worshipper of Me. How many things should I tell you one after another? You should assume the attitude of a servant and, seeing Me in all beings, serve them (1356-1360). Then you will get rid of hatred for all being and bow to them with the knowledge that I am in all of them. In this way you will secure full refuge in Me. And then there being no third party in this crowded world, we shall have complete privacy. Then we shall be able to enjoy each other's company which will enhance our happiness. When the barrier of a third party is removed, you will come to Me and become one with Me. When the water dries up, is there any obstacle in the way of the reflection of the sun, merging with its original (1361-1365)? Who is going to prevent the wind, from merging with the sky or the wave from getting dissolved into the sea? Whatever distinction is seen between you and Me, is due to the properties of our bodies. When the body-consciousness disappears, you will become one with Me. Do not entertain any doubt about what I say. I swear by you, that I am not saying anything, which is untrue. But to swear by you, amounts to swearing by My own Self, but real love makes one forget shyness. Otherwise why should I stoop down to swearing, when I am the knowable indifferent to the world, because of whom, this world appearance seems real, and whose command conquers even the Destroyer (1366-1370), whose Will comes to pass and who takes care of the welfare of the world like a father? As I have become crazy out of fondness for you, I have given up the insignia of My Godhead and become imperfect, while you, who have become one with Me, have become perfect. This is, O *Dhananjaya*, like a king, who swears by himself to achieve his own ends.



Then Arjuna said, "Please do not indulge in such unseemly talk. All our objects are achieved by the remembrance of your name alone. Even so, you give advice to me and while doing this, you resort to swearing. Is there any limit to your jesting (1371-1375)? The sun with his rays, makes a garden of lotus flowers bloom and under that pretext, gives light to the whole world. The cloud sends showers of rain sufficient to flood the sea, in order to cool down the heated earth, but for that the *chataka* bird provides the pretext. So, O gracious donor, I have merely become the instrument for your generosity." Then the Lord replied, "Stop; you need not say all this. By adopting the means I have taught you, you will truly attain to Me. When the salt becomes dissolved the moment it is dropped in water, then is there any reason for it to remain separate (1376-1380)? When a person worships Me with true devotion and realises that I pervade all things, then he drops his egoistic feeling and becomes Myself. So I have explained to you, the method by which, one acquires knowledge through actions and ultimately attains to Me. O son of *Pandu*, first he should propitiate Me by dedicating all actions to Me. Then he will attain to My knowledge, through My grace and become merged in My Divine form. What I am saying is thrice true. Then in that person, the end to be achieved and the means to achieve it, get dissolved and nothing remains for him to do (1381-1385). By dedicating always, your actions to Me, you have won My grace. On the strength of this grace you will overcome all the obstacles in this war; I have become so fond of you. I have explained to you with reasoning as well as illustrations, in the form of the *Gita*, that knowledge dispels ignorance, along with worldly existence and sees Me alone, present everywhere. On the strength of this knowledge disclosed to you in various ways, get rid of your ignorance which gives rise to righteous and unrighteous actions."

66. *Abandoning all duties take refuge in Me alone. Grieve not; I shall release you from all sins.*

From hope springs misery, from slander, sin and from misfortune, poverty (1386-1390). In the same way, because of ignorance, religious and irreligious acts leading to heaven and hell, have come into being. Unroot this ignorance, with the help of knowledge. If you take the rope in your hand, the delusion that it is a serpent disappears. After rising from sleep, the mundane affairs along with the household seen in the dream, vanish. When the jaundice is cured, the moon does not look yellow, or when the fever subsides, the tongue loses its bitter taste. When the sun sets, the mirage disappears or when one discards firewood, the fire is snuffed out. In the same way, you should give up ignorance, which gives rise to the fad of religious and unreligious acts and then relinquish even meritorious acts (i.e. perform them without desire for their fruit) (1391-1395). When ignorance ceases, I alone remain. Just as, when the dream disappears along with the sleep, one remains alone; so there remains none except Myself. Then he becomes one with Me, with the knowledge that he is Myself.

To become one with Me, with the loss of one's distinct personality, is what is known as surrender to Me. Just as with the destruction of the earthen pot, the space within it, becomes merged in *akasha*, so when you surrender yourself to Me, you will become united with Me. Just as a gold bead merges into gold or the wave dissolves in the water, you surrender yourself to Me and attain perfect unity with Me (1396-1400). The marine-fire surrenders itself to the sea, but burns it. So give up the idea of surrendering to Me and still retaining your separate individuality. How is it possible for anyone to surrender to Me and still retain individual existence distinct from Me? Fie upon such talk. How does one not feel ashamed to talk like this?

O *Dhananjaya*, even a rustic maid, who succeeds in winning the love of a prince, is raised to his status. Do not lend your ears to the abominable talk, that when a person attains to Me, who am the Lord of the universe, his knots do not get snapped. When a seeker identifies himself with Me and renders service to Me, it constitutes devotion to Me. Then act in such a way, that you will attain knowledge through devotion (1401-1405). Just as butter, obtained from churning buttermilk, does not mix with it, so when you surrender to Me with the knowledge of unity with Me, then you will not be affected with religious or irreligious acts. When iron gets rusted, it is reduced to dust; but once it comes into contact with the philosopher's stone, it is transformed into gold and does not get rusted again. When fire is kindled by rubbing sticks against each other, it no longer remains confined in them. O Arjuna, the sun cannot see darkness or a person after waking up, is not deluded by his dream (1406-1410). In the same way, when one becomes completely identified with Me, is there any scope for his remaining distinct from My universal form? You should not feel anxious about it or about merit and sin. To remain separate from Me, is the sign of bondage. That sin will be destroyed by My knowledge. So when you surrender to Me with exclusive devotion, you will become one with Me. As salt fallen into water becomes water, O *Dhananjaya*, you will thus be released from all bondage. When you attain knowledge of Me, I shall deliver you (1411-1415). So, O talented Arjuna, you realise Me through knowledge and surrender yourself to Me. So said the omniform, omniscient and omnipresent Lord Krishna.

Then Lord Krishna of light complexion extended his right arm adorned with a bracelet and embraced Arjuna, the prince among devotees, who had surrendered himself to Him. The embrace was only a pretext to bestow on Arjuna that secret which is not within the reach of words, which have to beat a retreat along with the intellect before it (1416-1420). By mingling His heart with the heart of Arjuna, the Lord transferred the secret within His heart into the heart of Arjuna, and became united with him without the loss of duality. Like a lamp lighting another lamp, Lord Krishna made Arjuna one with Him, by this embrace without breaking up dualism. Then there swept such a great flood of happiness, that even the all-pervading Lord got drowned in it. When a sea meets another sea doubling its water, it rises high in the sky to accommodate itself; so when the two met, they could not control themselves. Who could know and tell how it happened? The whole universe was flooded with *Narayana* (Krishna) (1421-1425).

In this way, the Lord disclosed the sacred text of the *Gita*, which contains the quintessence of the *Vedas* and which everyone is qualified to study. Now you may ask, how I came to know that the *Gita* contains the original thread of the *Vedas*. I will explain to you clearly, the theory underlying it, which is well-known. The same Lord, whose breath gave birth to the *Vedas*, who is true to his word, narrated this *Gita* through his own mouth. It is therefore, proper to say, that the *Gita* has its origin in the *Vedas*. There is another reason for this; that whose essential form does not get destroyed, but in which its potential growth lies stored up, is called its seed (1426-1430). Just as the tree is stored up in the seed, so the *Vedas* with its three divisions, are stored up in the *Gita*. I, therefore, think that *Vedas* are contained in a seed-form in the *Gita* and this is also patent. Just as a body is adorned by jewelery, so the three divisions of the *Vedas*, appear distinctly in the *Gita*.

I shall now disclose to you, where these three dimensions of the *Vedas*, viz. ritualism, spiritual

practices and knowledge, occur. Chapter one tells us, how this *Gita* came to be taught. The chapter two affirms the existence of the Self (1431-1435) and says that the philosophy of the *Gita* is based on the knowledge of the Self, which is essential for securing salvation. Then in chapter three, it proceeds to teach the method of attaining deliverance, for the persons who are bound by ignorance. Here we are told that those who are bound by body-consciousness, should give up motivated and prohibited actions and perform assiduously the actions prescribed by the scriptures. So the Lord concludes the third chapter, by the statement, that the prescribed actions should be performed in good faith. This is how the first three chapters, contain the *karmakanda* of the *Vedas*. When a doubt arose as to how this performance of obligatory functions, would release one from the bonds of ignorance (1436-1440), Lord Krishna explains that when the bound person reaches the stage of a seeker, he should dedicate all his actions to the Supreme *Brahman*. He told Arjuna, that whatever prescribed actions he performs, through the agency of body, speech and mind, he should perform them in dedication to God. He proceeds to explain at the end of chapter four, that this Yoga of action, should end up in the worship and praise of God. The same theme has been continued till the end of chapter eleven, in which it is stated, that the Lord should be worshipped through work. In these eight chapters, he has described the *upasanakanda* i.e. the division relating to spiritual discipline, in which the *Gita* explains how one should avoid the obstacles in one's path (1441-1445). The true and compassionate knowledge, which springs through the grace of God and from following the sect of the *Guru*, has been described at great length from the verse 'He who is non-hostile to all creatures' in chapter twelve to the verse 'absence of pride' in chapter thirteen, and so I have included chapter twelve in *jnanakanda* i.e. the division of *Vedas*, dealing with knowledge. The theme of the four chapters beginning with the chapter twelve to the end of chapter fifteen, contain the *jnanakanda*, dealing with knowledge. In this way the *Gita*, which is a beautiful digest, consisting of three divisions, is telling all, in a thundering voice, that they should partake of this fruit in the form of liberation. In chapter sixteen, it expounds the nature of ignorance which is inimical to the means of knowledge. Chapter seventeen states, that this enemy of knowledge must be conquered, with the aid of scriptures. In this way, from chapter one to the end of chapter seventeen the Lord has explained the gist of *Vedas*, which were born from His very breath. The eighteenth is the crowning chapter, which contains the pith of the discourses in the previous chapters (1451-1455).

In this way, this discourse known as the *Bhagavad-Gita*, enshrined in seven hundred verses, constitutes the *Vedas* incarnate, but is superior to it on the point of generosity. The *Vedas* are a veritable treasure of knowledge, but none are so niggardly in imparting it. They whisper knowledge into the ears of the first three castes (viz. the *Brahmins*, the *Kshatriyas* and the *Vaishyas*). They are sitting tight without giving elbow room (in the temple of knowledge) to the women, shudras etc. who are equally affected by worldly misery (*Jnanadeva* says). So it seems to me, that to make up for this deficiency and to make this knowledge available to all, the *Vedas* have assumed the form of the *Gita*. More than the *Vedas*, this *Gita* enters into their minds in the form of its meaning, into the ears through hearing and into the mouths through reciting (1456-1460). Whoever recites it everyday or spends his time in the company of those who recite it or copies it and distributes it in a book form, opens a free eating place providing the food of liberation in the market-place of worldly affairs. Just as the sky provides open space for all to dwell in the firmament, to stay on the earth or to roam in the sunlight,

so the *Gita* welcomes all without discriminating between the best and the lowest and bestows upon them, the bliss and peace of liberation. Thus the *Vedas*, afraid of being called miserly, entered the womb of the *Gita* and got dazzling fame (1461-1465). Lord Krishna taught the *Vedas*, in the form of *Gita*, so that all can grasp them, with ease. Just as the entire household gets the supply of milk, which the cow releases for the sake of its calf, so the entire world becomes eligible for salvation, through Arjuna. The cloud sends rain out of kindness to the *chataka* bird, but the world gets satisfaction from it. The sun rises every morning, to make the helpless lotus blossom, but the eyes of all people become gratified by its light. Thus on the plea of Arjuna, Lord Krishna revealed the *Gita* to the world and lightened the heavy burden of its existence (1466-1470). He is thus, not only the Lord of *Lakshmi*, but, he is the veritable sun, who has illumined the three worlds, by the brilliance of the gem, in the form of *Gita-text*. Holy is that dynasty which gave birth to Arjuna, who became eligible for this knowledge and made its enclosure, free for all.

Then Lord Krishna, the worthy preceptor, saw that Arjuna had become dissolved in his Self and restored the sense of duality in him. The Lord asked Arjuna, "Are you now convinced, by what I have told you, in the form of *Gita*?" Then Arjuna said, "O Lord, I am convinced by your grace". Then the Lord said further, "O winner of wealth, one secures the good treasure through good fortune, but rarely one is able to enjoy it (1471-1475). O Arjuna, see what hard toil the gods and demons must have undertaken, to churn the uncoagulated milk, in the big pot of the *Milky Ocean*. That toil bore fruit and brought them nectar. But they could not take proper care of it and what was supposed to bring immortality, became fatal to the demons. Such is the tragic result of acquiring affluence, without the knowledge of how to enjoy it. Do you not know that King *Nahusha* became the Lord of the heaven, by performing sacrifices but was transformed into a snake by his lax conduct? Since you had earned abundant merit, you became eligible to hear this *Gita*, the best of all scriptures (1476-1480). You should, therefore, try to understand the tradition of this scripture and follow it according to the rules of that tradition. If you perform your religious duties without understanding that tradition, then you will secure the result like the churning of the *Milky Sea*. O Arjuna, even if you have got a good cow, you will get milk only if you know how to milk her. So even if a seeker secures a worthy preceptor and attains knowledge through his grace, that knowledge will be fruitful only if he observes the tradition of that knowledge. So I shall tell you now the proper tradition of this *Gita* scripture; hear it with due respect (1481-1485).

67. *Never is this to be told by you to a non-ascetic nor to one who is not a devotee, nor to one who does not wish to hear it, nor to one who cavils at Me.*

O Partha, you should not impart this knowledge of the *Gita*, which you have secured with great devotion, to one who is devoid of austerity. Even if he is an ascetic, but is lacking in devotion to his preceptor, you should shun him, as the *Vedas* have ostracized the members of the low-caste. Sacrificial food, which is left over, should not be given to a crow, even if he is old. So the teaching of the *Gita* should not be imparted to one who is austere, but is not devoted to his *Guru*. Even if a person is perfect in these two respects, but is not earnest about hearing it, he will be entitled to respect among men, but will not be eligible to hear it (1486-1490). Even if the pearls are precious, but have no holes in them, will you be able to thread them? Who can deny that the sea is deep, but does not the rain falling on it go

waste? Why not offer sweet dishes to a hungry person rather than waste it on a person whose belly is already full? Take care not to impart, even out of curiosity, this teaching of the *Gita* to a person, however worthy, if he has no liking for it. The eye can appreciate beauty, yet what is the use of placing sweet scent before it? A thing becomes fruitful, only when it is received with a liking (1491-1495). O husband of *Subhadra*, even if a person practices austerity and has devotion, avoid him if he has no liking for hearing the *Gita*. Even if a person possesses all these three things, namely austerity, devotion and liking for hearing *Gita*, but talks disparagingly of Me, who am the author of this *Gita* and the controller of the universe or reviles Me and My devotees, he is not fit to hear this teaching. Even if he is equipped with other qualities, it is like a lampstand without a flame (1496-1500). Just as a beautiful maiden is decked with ornaments but has no life in her, or a beautiful mansion is guarded by a female cobra at its entrance, or delicious dishes are mixed with venom, or there is deception under cover of friendship, so the austerity, devotion and understanding of a person who reviles Me and My devotee, is full of deceit. Therefore, O *Dhananjaya*, do not allow such a person to have anything to do with this scripture (1501-1505). Were such a reviler as great as god *Brahma*, do not impart this teaching to him, even out of fun. O archer, whoever has, after laying the foundation of stones in the form of austerity, has built a temple in the form of devotion to his preceptor, and after building a beautiful dome of gems in the form of non-slander, keeps open the front gate in the form of keen desire to hear the *Gita*,

68. *He who will tell My devotees this Supreme secret, after showing the highest devotion to Me, shall without doubt come to Me alone.*

And he who installs the Divine *Gita-gem* in the shrine of his heart, he becomes one with Me and attains equality with Me. The *pranava* was shut up in the form of *Om*, in the womb formed by the syllabic sounds of *a*, *u* and *m* (1506-1510). It is as though, that seed of the *Vedas* sprouted and spread in the form of the *Gita* or the *Gayatri* formula, bore flowers and fruits in the form of the *Gita* verses. Whoever tells My devotees the secret contained in the *Gita* verses and brings the devotee and the *Gita* together in the same way, as one brings together a mother with her infant, who has no other source of living except the mother's milk, he becomes one with Me after the fall of his body.

69. *Nor is there anyone among men who renders dearer service to Me than he. There will be none other than he, who is made beloved by Me on earth.*

I am extremely fond of such a narrator of the *Gita* even though he is adorned with a body and remains separate from Me. He is dearer to Me than a man of knowledge, a person engrossed in ritual works or an ascetic. O Son of *Pandu*, there is none on this earth who is dearer to Me, than one who narrates the *Gita* in a concourse of My devotees. He who, fixing his mind upon Me, through a longing for Me and gives lessons in the *Gita*, becomes an ornament in the assemblage of saints. I feel as if the spring has come in the form of this narrator of the *Gita*, in the garden in the form of devotees. Just as in the spring season, the trees in the garden get new foliage, the hairs on the bodies of the hearers stand on their end. Like the trees, which move in the soft breeze, the hearers sway to and fro, with great joy. Just as the flowers are covered with dew in the garden, their lotus-like eyes become moist with joyous tears. Just as the *cuckoos* sing in a sweet voice in the garden, so the hearers sing my name loudly, in

a faltering tone. Just as the moon after rising, fulfills the object of life of the *chakora* birds or the cloud answers the call of the peacocks and presents itself before them (1516-1520), so My devotee, in communion with Me, scatters in profusion the gems in the form of the *Gita*-verses in the assembly of saints. If I look around, I have not met such a worthy devotee in the past nor am I likely to meet one in future. In this way, he gives a feast of the teachings of the *Gita* to the saints. To such a devotee, I give a place in My heart.

70. *And whoever will study this sacred conversation between us, by him shall I be worshipped through knowledge-sacrifice; this is My view.*

This dialogue, which has taken place between yourself and Myself, has descended on this earth to win liberation. He who recites repeatedly this conversation between yourself and Myself, (1521-1525) which illumines the Truth in its entirety, without analysing the words or the stanzas, kindles the sacrificial fire of knowledge, and by giving therein, O wise Arjuna, the oblation in the form of knowledge, propitiates Me, the Supreme Self. Whatever capacity the wise acquire through study and experience of the *Gita*, is also attained by the devotees by singing and narrating the *Gita*. Thus one who recites the *Gita* secures the same fruit as is attained by one who knows its meaning. For Mother *Gita* does not make any distinction between a knowing child and a baby.

71. *And the man who might merely hear this with faith and without caviling, he too shall be freed from evil and attain the blessed worlds of righteous men.*

No sooner a person full of faith in the recital of the *Gita* hears it with piety, and without caviling, than the sins flee away from him (1526-1530). When the forest is burning in a conflagration, the animals and birds therein run helter-skelter, or with the rise of the sun on the horizon, the darkness in the sky is dispelled. In the same way, when the recital of the *Gita* enters the ears of a person, all his sins accumulated since the beginning of the world, get destroyed. In this way, his family-tree becomes purified and holy and it bears beautiful fruits. One acquires the merit of as many house-sacrifices as the letters of the *Gita*, which enter the heart through the ears (1531-1535). So one who hears the *Gita* gets rid of his sins, increases his merit and ultimately attains the kingdom of God. In his journey towards Me, he makes his first halt in the heaven, and after enjoying the celestial pleasures to his heart's content, he ultimately joins Me. In this way, O *Dhananjaya*, I give to the reciter and also the hearer of the *Gita*, the fruit in the form of bliss. Now I wish to ask you about your problem, for the solution of which, I had to narrate this *Gita* to you,

72. *Have you listened to this, O Partha, with one-pointed mind? Has your delusion due to ignorance been destroyed, O winner of wealth?*

Tell me, O Arjuna, have you imbibed all the doctrines of the *Gita* (1536-1540)? Whatever knowledge I poured into your ears, has it sunk in your mind? Or has some of it got scattered in the way or been ignored by you, through disrespect? If whatever I have told you has entered your heart, then give a straight and ready answer to my question. Have you now got rid of the infatuation, which arose in your mind due to ignorance? Do you still think that you will undertake some action or abstain from it at your sweet will (1541-1545)? The Lord asked Arjuna this question, in order to prevent him from being dissolved in the bliss of *Brahman*

and brought him back to the sense of distinctness. The Lord thought that if Arjuna became attuned to *Brahman*, he would not fulfill the object, which he has in view and so he did not allow him to transgress the boundary of his separate personality. Otherwise did he not, the omniscient one, know his own doing? But by asking him this question, the Lord restored his consciousness of the body and made him confirm whether he had attained perfection or not. Then just as the moon, rising from the *Milky Sea*, illumines the sky, remaining therein without separating from the sea (1546-1550), Arjuna had reached the frontier in which on the one hand he was getting forgetful of his *Brahmic* state, but on the other was seeing *Brahman* all around him, in which on the one side the world was fast vanishing, while on the other his *Brahmic* state was abating. Then he became forgetful of his *Brahmic* state and came back to the consciousness of his body, in the form 'I am Arjuna'. Then with trembling hands, he soothed the horripilation on his body and wiped the sweat dry. Then he supported his body, which was swaying on account of his heightened breathing and after steadying the movement of his body, he held back the joyful tears trickling down his eyes (1551-1560). Then he suppressed the emotions crowding in his heart, which produced a choking sensation in his throat and further recovering his faltering speech, he steadied his breath.

*Arjuna said:*

73. *My delusion is gone; I have now recollection (of my duty) through your grace, O Achyuta (Krishna). I stand secure with no doubts and shall do what you say.*

Then Arjuna said, "O Lord, why do you ask whether I still have that delusion? It has already left with bag and baggage. Will it be reasonable for the sun to approach and ask, "Do you see darkness?" In the same way, is not your very sight, sufficient to dispel this delusion (1556-1560)? You have explained to me in detail, the knowledge with affection greater than that of a mother. Now if you ask me whether I have got rid of my infatuation, I readily tell you that through your grace, I have accomplished my object. I had got entangled in the notion that 'I am Arjuna', but after becoming one with you, I have become free from it. Through your favour, I have come to realise the Self and got rid of my infatuation. It was through the notion of duality that I was bothered by the question, whether I should fight or not fight. Now I know nothing in this world except Yourself (1561-1565). I do not feel even a shadow of doubt about it. I have now reached that state in which nothing remains for me to do. I have realised my essential nature through You and there remains nothing for me to do except do Your bidding. You are my preceptor, my God, the sight of whom obliterates the visible universe, who, although dual, removes all duality, who although single pervades everything, whose very contact snaps all bonds, who when longed for destroys all longings, who, when met with, brings about one's meeting with one's own Self, who keeps company in solitude and leads one beyond the knowledge of non-duality (1566-1570). If after becoming *Brahman* and relinquishing all actions good or bad, I wish to serve You faithfully. You give the devotee a share of Your Divinity just as when the river Ganges goes to serve the ocean, it itself becomes the ocean. You are my worthy preceptor, fit for worship without any formality, who has laid me under a deep obligation by granting me, the vision of *Brahman*. You have removed the screen of distinctness which existed between You and me and You bestowed upon me the sweet joy of serving You. O God of gods, I shall do whatever You command me to do (1571-1575)."

Hearing these words of Arjuna the Lord danced madly with joy and said to himself. "I have secured in Arjuna, the best of all the fruits in the world." Does not the *Milky Sea* forget its limits and overflow after seeing its son, the full moon, complete in all its phases? *Sanjaya* was transported with joy seeing the union of Arjuna with Lord Krishna on the altar in the form of dialogue. Overflowing with that joy, *Sanjaya* said to *Dhritarashtra*, "O what luck! The merciful *Vyasa* has protected us in this war. You are now blessed with the vision of knowledge, although you lack the physical sight to deal with worldly affairs (1576-1580). I, whose profession is to yoke the horse to the chariot and drive it, got this opportunity to hear the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. On this dreadful occasion of a war, whichever party is defeated, it will be our loss. But even under this difficult situation, the favour of sage *Vyasa* has made it possible for us, to enjoy openly, this bliss of *Brahman*." *Sanjaya* said this, but *Dhritarashtra* sat quiet. Just as the rock does not ooze under moonlight, so the speech of *Sanjaya* had no effect on the heart of *Dhritarashtra*. Seeing this condition of his, *Sanjaya* came to know that his talk did not appeal to the king. But mad with great happiness, he began to speak again (1581-1585) in ecstasy of joy, but then he knew that the king was not worthy of hearing it.

*Sanjaya* said:

74. *Thus did I hear this dialogue, marvelous and thrilling, between Vasudeva (Krishna) and the high-minded Partha.*

*Sanjaya* said: O King, Lord Krishna was overjoyed to hear what Arjuna said. The eastern and the western seas bear different names, but their water is the same. In the same way, Lord Krishna and Arjuna are distinct with separate bodies, but this distinction disappeared in their conversation. If two objects, brighter than a mirror, are placed face to face they see their respective forms in each other (1586-1590). In the same way, Arjuna saw in the Lord, himself as well as Shri Krishna. Simultaneously, Shri Krishna saw himself as well as Arjuna in Partha. When the Lord was thinking of his devotee, he saw the form of the devotee in his own form. Since all distinction between the two disappeared, they became identified with each other. Since the distinction between the two vanished, how can there be any questioning between the two and how can there be any pleasure from their conversation? When they were conversing with each other in the plane of duality, I heard that conversation which ended with the loss of their distinction (1591-1596). If two mirrors are placed before each other, how can we say which saw which? Or if two lamps are kept one in front of the other, who can say which borrowed whose light? If another sun rises in the sky, who can say which one gives light and which one is lit? When we think about it, all thought comes to a standstill; both of them had become so engrossed in the conversation. If salt is placed between two currents of water to keep them separate, the salt too becomes water in no time (1596-1600). I was also reduced to the same state, when I was thinking of the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna.

As *Sanjaya* was talking like this, he was so overcome by the *sattvic* emotions, that he lost consciousness of being *Sanjaya*. He began to have horripilation on his body, his limbs had wrinkles, his body became still and was covered with sweat and tremour. He enjoyed the bliss of the non-dual state and his eyes shed copious tears of joy – nay, they were not tears, but the overflow of his heart. He could not contain this joy within his heart, his throat became



choked, his speech became stifled through suffocation (1601-1605). In short, these eight *sattvic* emotions made *Sanjaya* speechless and he became, as it were, the meeting-place of bliss arising from their conversation. That bliss was of such a nature, that it claimed his mind and made him conscious of himself.

75. *Through the favour of Vyasa I heard this secret and Supreme Yoga from Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, who proclaimed it himself in person.*

When his joy subsided, he said, I have heard through the favour of *Vyasa* the secret, which even the *Upanishads* do not know. After hearing it, I was enveloped by the *Brahmic* state, and the world with its distinctions of 'I-Ness' and 'You-Ness' disappeared. I could hear, through the favour of sage *Vyasa*, the words of Lord Krishna, in whom all the paths of Yoga became merged (1606- 1610). The Lord spoke only to himself, by assuming the form of Arjuna. How can I describe the marvelous power of my preceptor (*Vyasa*), because of whom my ears became qualified to hear this talk?

76. *As I recall again and again, O King, this marvelous and sacred dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I rejoice over and over again.*

When *Sanjaya* was talking like this to *Dhritarashtra*, he became wonder struck and lost his consciousness. Just as a jewel glitters one moment and stops flashing in the next moment or the lakes in the Himalayas freeze and become like sheets of crystal with moon-rise and melt again with the rising of the sun, so when *Sanjaya* regained consciousness, he would recollect the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna and wondering would again lose his consciousness. This state repeated itself off and on (1611-1615).

77. *As I recall to mind from time to time, that most marvelous form of Hari (Krishna), great is my amazement, O King; I go into raptures again and again.*

Then he stood up and said to the King: O King, how did you remain unmoved even after seeing the universal form of *Lord Hari*? How can you miss that which is seen without being perceptible, which looks like non-existent but is existence, which enters into your memory even though you forget it? There is no scope left even to be amazed about it; it is such a great flood of ecstatic joy which is carrying me away. I thus took a bath in the holy confluence of the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna and got rid of my egoism. In a rapturous state, he used to mutter a few strange words and with a choked throat he was repeating 'Krishna', 'Krishna', now and then (1616-1620). But King *Dhritarashtra* was totally unaware of this state of *Sanjaya* and was making different plans in his mind. Then *Sanjaya* absorbed within himself the ecstatic joy which he was experiencing and pacified his *sattvic* feelings. Instead of asking questions suitable for the occasion, King *Dhritarashtra* said to *Sanjaya*, "O *Sanjaya*, where are your manners? With what object did *Vyasa* post you here? What kind of irrelevant talk are you indulging in?" If you place a rustic person in a palace, he feels lost there. Just as with the daybreak a thief feels it as night-time (1621-1625), so one who could not appreciate the importance of something; he naturally felt to be wrong. It was, therefore, natural that, what *Sanjaya* was saying seemed improper to *Dhritarashtra*. Then the King said, "Tell me what is going on. Who will be victorious in this war? I guess that the valour of *Duryodhana* is more than that of others and his army also is one and a half times greater as compared with the

army of *Pandavas*. So I feel that his victory is certain. I do not know what your prediction is, but do tell me whatever it may be (1626-1630)."

78. *Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there is Partha, the archer, there is assured fortune as also victory, prosperity and statesmanship; such is my considered view.*

Hearing these words of the King, *Sanjaya* said: I do not know which of the two parties will be victorious. But it is clear that wherever there is longevity, there is life, where there is the moon, there is moonlight; where there is *Lord Shiva*, there is *Parvati* and where there are saints, there is discrimination. Where there is the king, there is the army; where there is warm feeling, there is good relationship; where there is fire, there is the burning power; where there is kindness, there is righteousness, where there is righteousness, there is happiness; and where there is happiness, there must be the Supreme Person. Where there is the spring season, there must be flowers; and where there are flowers; there must be swarms of black bees (1631-1635). Further where there is a preceptor, there must be knowledge; where there is knowledge, there must be Self-realisation; and with the realisation of Self, there must be self-satisfaction. Luxurious living goes with good fortune, high spirits go with happiness and light with the sun. Where there is Lord Krishna in whom the four aims of human life have found a protector, there is goddess *Lakshmi*, and where there is this Mother of the universe along with her Lord, how could there not be her maids, the eight marvelous powers (*siddhi*) such as the power to be as small as an atom? Lord Krishna is himself victory incarnate, and so victory will run post-haste to that party, which is favoured by Him (1636-1640). Arjuna is also well-known by the name *Vijaya* (victory) and Lord Krishna is victory personified and so wealth and victory will certainly go to them. Since Lord Krishna and *Lakshmi* are his parents, will not the trees in his country compete with *Kalpataru* trees? Will not the ordinary stones in his country become the philosophers' stones or will not the land there be of gold? Is it any wonder that the rivers of such a place should flow with nectar? O King, think for yourself. Why should we not call his mere utterances as the words of the *Vedas* and take him to be the existence-consciousness-bliss in human form (1641-1645)?

O king, both heaven and liberation will be subservient to him, who has Lord Krishna and goddess *Lakshmi* as his parents. So all miraculous powers will favour willingly that party which is backed by them. I know this much and nothing more. The cloud is more beneficial than its progenitor, the sea. Similar is the case of Arjuna. The philosopher's stone (the preceptor) transforms iron (the disciple) into gold, but all the transactions of the world are carried on the basis of gold. Because of this, one need not attribute an inferior status to the preceptor. Fire transforms itself into a lamp and gives light (1646-1650). In the same way, through the power of God, Arjuna became better than God and so to praise him, enhances the glory of God. Every father wishes that his son should surpass him in all qualities and that very desire bore fruit in the case of Lord Krishna – Nay, O King, that party, which has on its side Partha, who has received the favour of Lord Krishna, is bound to win victory in this war. Why should you have any doubt about it? If that party would not win this war, then victory itself would be meaningless. So wherever there is goddess of wealth, her Lord and Partha, the son of *Pandu*, there is bound to be victory and prosperity (1651-1655). If you have faith in the truthful utterance of sage *Vyasa*, then what I am saying is inevitable. Where there is the Lord of Goddess *Lakshmi* and Arjuna the master devotee, there abides happiness, as also gain of all that is auspicious. Should this speech of mine prove to be untrue, then I shall

forgo my claim to be 'disciple of sage *Vyasa*', so proclaimed *Sanjaya*, raising his arms.

In this way, *Sanjaya* brought the gist of the whole *Bharata* in one verse and delivered it into the hands of *Dhritarashtra*, the King of *Kurus*. Even though fire has unlimited power to burn, it is utilised to kindle the end of a cotton wick to dispel the darkness caused by sunset (1656-1660). In the same way, although the *Vedic* knowledge is infinite; it is contained in one lakh and twenty-five thousand verses of the *Mahabharata*, and the quintessence of the *Mahabharata* is contained in the seven hundred verses of the *Gita*. The last verse in this *Gita*, is the final utterance of *Sanjaya*, the disciple of *Vyasa*. Whoever holds fast to this verse in his heart will have conquered ignorance, root and branch. These seven hundred verses are the foot-steps of the *Gita* or they are, as it were, the showers of nectar, which have come down from the sky. I rather feel that these verses are the pillars of the court of the king in the form of Self (1661-1665). This *Gita* is like the blessed goddess propounded in the seven hundred *mantras*, who has become elated after killing the buffalo (*Mahisha*) demon in the form of infatuation. Therefore he who renders it devoted service through body, speech and mind, will become the sovereign in the kingdom of bliss. Lord Krishna has revealed the *Gita* in seven hundred verses, which have surpassed the sun's rays in dispelling darkness. These *Gita* verses are like grape-vines, forming a bower to provide a resting-place for those who suffer fatigue in the journey of worldly life or they are like the lotuses in bloom in a dark lake and saints are like bees, which enjoy their honey (1666-1670). In short, these are not verses, but are so many bards who sing the glory of the *Gita*. This *Gita* is like a beautiful city, which is enclosed in a wall in the form of seven hundred verses, within which all the *shastras* have come to dwell. These are not verses, but the outstretched arms of the *Gita*, with which she has come to embrace her Lord, the Supreme Self. These verses are like the bees on the *Gita-flower*, the waves on the *Gita-sea*, or the horses of *Shri Hari* yoked to the *Gita-chariot*. It is as though all the holy waters have come together to join the *Ganga*, in the form of the *Gita*, on the entry of the sun in the form of Arjuna, in the zodiacal sign Leo (1671-1675). This is not a row of verses but a row of philosophers' stones, which bestow peace of mind or a row of wish-yielding trees, which lead to the attainment of formless *Brahman*.

So every one of these seven hundred verses is excellent. So how could anyone take out some of them for special mention and praise? We cannot talk of the wish-yielding cow as a milch-cow or as a dry cow. How can one talk about the front or the rear of a lamp, or small or big in the case of the sun or deep or shallow in the case of the sea? In the same way, one cannot talk of *Gita* verses as at the beginning or at the end. Who can distinguish between the fresh and stale flowers of the coral (*Parijataka*) tree (1676-1680)? How much more then is my statement justified, that these verses are equally important, none being greater or lesser than others?

As regards this *Gita* scripture, there is no distinction between one who narrates it and one who hears it. Everyone knows that in this *Gita*, Lord Krishna is the one who narrates it and he it is who hears it, in the form of Arjuna. Whatever merit one has got by knowing the import of the *Gita*, is also secured by its recital. This scripture attaches the same importance to the meaning as well as the words, which give expression to it. Therefore, there is no topic left for me to prove or establish. Know that this *Gita* is the literary image of Lord Krishna. Usually a religious text becomes fruitful in explaining its import, and when it has achieved this purpose, it loses its *raison d'etre*. But this *Gita* scripture is not like that; it is verily of the nature of the Supreme Self (1681-1685). Out of compassion for the whole world, the blessed Lord brought the bliss of *Brahman*

within the reach of everyone, under the pretext of teaching Arjuna. The full moon cools down the affliction of the three worlds, by making the *chakora* bird an excuse. *Lord Shiva* brought the sacred *Ganga* (*Godavari*) to the earth, by making sage *Gautama* an excuse, in order to cool down the fever of people, caused by the advent of the *Kali Yuga* (*age*). In the same way, the Lord milked the cow in the form of *Gita*, using *Partha* as the calf and made the milk in the form of the Self-knowledge available to the whole world. If you become engrossed in the *Gita*, heart and soul and thoroughly wet your tongue by means of its recital, you will become one with the *Gita*. A recital of even one quarter of a verse (1686-1690) will make you rich in *Brahmic* knowledge, in the same way as contact of the philosopher's stone with even one part of a piece of iron turns it into gold. You will attain the same state if you hear it by turning your side and pulling a long face. Just as an affluent and generous donor does not send anyone with an empty hand, this *Gita* gives nothing short of liberation to one who hears it or recites it or grasps its meaning. Therefore, a wise person should only take recourse to the *Gita*. What will he gain by resorting to other religious texts (1691-1695)?

Sage *Vyasa* made it easy for others to grasp the meaning of the private conversation, which took place between *Shri Krishna* and *Arjuna*. If a fond mother sits down to feed its child, she serves him food in small morsels or a clever fellow makes a fan in order to utilise the wind. In the same way, through the medium of the *Anushtubh* metre, it has been made easy for the women, *shudras* etc. to grasp the knowledge of the Self, which it is difficult to express in words. If the pearls had not been formed by the raindrops falling into the shells under the fifteenth lunar asterism (*Swati*), how could the beautiful maidens bedeck themselves with them (1696-1700)? How could we have known the musical notes, if they did not come out of the musical instruments? If there were no flowers, how could anyone have smelled their fragrance? If the dainties were not so sweet, how could the tongue know their flavour? Were there no mirror, how could the eyes see their own form? How could the disciple worship the preceptor, if he did not appear in a manifest form? In the same way, if this infinite *Brahman* had not been encompassed within seven hundred verses, who could have comprehended it? The cloud, draining up water from the sea, sends showers of rain and so the whole world looks to them with hope. For who could look to the sea, which is unlimited and which does not increase or diminish (1701-1705)? Had not sage *Vyasa* written these beautiful verses, who could have heard or read this theme, which transcends speech?

Sage *Vyasa* has done a great favour to the world by giving the discourse of *Lord Krishna* in the form of a book and I am now bringing out the same book in the *Marathi* language, after a full scrutiny of the words of *Vyasa*. A meek person like me is babbling about the meaning of the *Gita*, which baffled even the intellect of *Vyasa*. But this *Divine Gita* is so guileless, that she accepts the floral wreath in the form of *Vyasa's* discourse, but would not reject the sacred *doob* grass offered by me (1706-1710). Herds of elephants go to the sea to drink water, but does that sea deny water to the sand-flies? The eagle with a mighty sweep soars in the sky, but the young birds with new wings, who are not able to fly, hover also in the same sky. If the swan walks with a stately gait, does it mean that others should not walk in their own style? If a pitcher takes in water according to its capacity, should not others take a mouthful of water? A torch sheds more light because of its greater size, but does not the wick give light according to its own capacity (1711-1715)? The sky has a large reflection in the sea, because of its wide expanse; but does it not get reflected in a small pond? In the same way, it does not stand to reason that talented persons

like *Vyasa* should interpret Lord Krishna's discourse and I should do nothing about it. Because aquatic animals as big as the *Mandara* mountain dwell in the sea, should not the smaller fish swim there? Arjuna (the Sun's charioteer) sees the sun as he is close to him; so should not the ant on the earth look at him? So it will not be improper if ordinary persons like me should write a commentary on the *Gita* in the local language (1716-1720). If a child follows the footprints of its father, will it not reach the same destination as its father? As I am following in the footsteps of sage *Vyasa* and consulting the commentator (*Shri Shankara*) which way to go, where can I, though unworthy, reach if not the right place?

In my heart dwells my mighty preceptor, *Shri Nivrittinatha*, who has placed the whole world under his obligation. Because of his forbearance the earth bears the movable and immovable world without complaint. The moon borrows his *ambrosia* and cools down the world and the sun takes over a part of his splendour and dispels the darkness. From him the sea derives its water, the water its sweetness, the sweetness its beauty (1721-1725), the wind its force, the sky its expanse and knowledge its brilliant sovereign glory, the *Vedas* their eloquence, happiness its fervour and all things their respective forms. Moreover my capable and worthy *Guru Shri Nivrittinath*, who favours all, has entered my heart and dwells in it. Then what wonder is there, if I tell in the local language the *Gita*, which is already there? *Ekalavya*, a hunter, made an idol of his preceptor *Dronacharya* and installing his image on the mountain, learnt archery from him and won fame in all the three worlds, for his valour (1726-1730). The trees, which are close to sandalwood trees, become fragrant like them and the ochre-coloured garment of sage *Vasishtha*, which was spread out for drying up, challenged the splendour of the sun. As for myself, I have an attentive mind, and my *Guru* is a great saint, who has the power to grant his disciple his status, by a favourable glance. If good sight is backed by sun's light, what thing is there, which cannot be seen? So even my respiration will produce metrical numbers. What cannot be wrought by the grace of the *Guru*? I have, therefore, explained the substance of the *Gita* in the local language, in a lucid style and brought it within the reach of everybody (1731-1735).

Even if this version of the *Gita* in the local language, is not sung, it would not suffer any deficiency. One who sings it, will earn great merit. But if one were to recite these verses (*ovis*) without singing, they would not lose their charm. The ornaments look beautiful as they are, even if, they are not worn by a beautiful damsel. But it is proper to wear them on a body. Whether the pearls are strung on gold or kept loose, they look equally gorgeous. The full-blown, roundish jasmine flowers, in the spring season are equally fragrant, whether they are formed into a wreath or kept loose (1736-1740). So I have composed this work in *ovi* metre which, if set to music, will be found captivating or if recited, will hold one spell-bound. In these verses, I have interwoven letters and given them such flavour of *Brahman*, that they will be appreciated by both the young and the old. Now just as it is not necessary to wait for the sandalwood tree to flower, in order to get its fragrance, so as soon as a person hears the recital of this metrical composition, he will get into *samadhi* (abstract meditation). Then will he not be enthralled by the exposition of its meaning? Even if he recites it casually, his learning will blossom and give him such sweet pleasure, that he will not even remember the sweetness of nectar (1741-1745). The poetical merit of this work, will give him more benefit than meditation and deep contemplation. Its mere hearing will yield to any person Divine bliss and also give satisfaction to the other senses. The clever *chakora* bird enjoys the moonbeams through its inherent power, but others also can enjoy the moonlight.

Only those who understand the inner purport of this metaphysical work, will become fit for its study; while ordinary people will enjoy its literary merit. I owe this all to my *Guru Shri Nivrittinatha* and so it is not my composition, but is the glory of his favour (1746-1750).

This secret *Lord Shiva* uttered in the ears of *Parvati* somewhere in the *Milky Sea* and it was heard by *Matsyendranath*, who was hiding in the stomach of a fish in that sea. *Matsyendranath* met crippled *Chouranginatha* on the *Saptashringi* mountain and by his mere glance, made him sound in all his limbs. Then in order to enjoy *samadhi* undisturbed, he transferred the *yogic* planes achieved by him to *Gorakshanatha*. He installed in his chair *Gorakshanatha*, who was the lake containing the lotus-creeper in the form of Yoga and the unique hero capable of vanquishing the sense-objects (1751-1755). Then *Gahininatha* received from *Gorakshanatha* the bliss of non-dualism, which had descended from *Lord Shiva*. Seeing that the people of the world were afflicted by worldly existence, he gave a mandate to his disciple *Shri Nivrittinatha* that he should embrace the tradition (*sampradaya*) which had come down through unbroken succession of teacher-disciple relation, beginning with *Lord Shiva* and protect immediately, all beings stricken with *Kali Yuga* (the age of Strife personified). *Nivrittinatha* was naturally tender-hearted, and had now received his mission from his *Guru*. He came forward like a cloud in the rainy season to cool the world (1756-1760). Then moved with compassion, at the sight of the people in distress, he showered the serene sentiment on them, under the pretext of narrating the purport of the *Gita*. At that time I stood before him, like a *chataka* bird in distress, and he raised me to the peak of fame. In this way, my Master entrusted to me, his wealth of *samadhi* and so this work has come to me, in succession from the *Guru* to the disciple.

I had neither recited nor read the scriptures, and nor did I know how to serve my Master; how then could I have attained the capacity to compose this work? But the *Guru*, by making me an instrument, has protected this world through this composition (1761-1765). If my narration has been superfluous or inadequate, you may please overlook it, as a mother would do. I hardly know how to use a word correctly, how to broach a subject methodically or how to employ figures of speech. I talk as my Master guides me, just as a puppet depends for its gesticulations upon the movements given to it (by the puppeteer). So I do not press you to praise the merits or forgive the lapses in this work, as I have been inspired by my *Guru* to compose it. And if my narration is found by this august audience of you saints to be deficient, it will be all your fault (1766-1770). If the iron does not lose its base quality even after it comes into contact with the philosopher's stone, who is to blame for that? All that the stream can do is to join the *Ganga*; then if it does not become one with the river, whose fault is it? Through my great good fortune, I have come to your feet, what then do I lack in the world? Through the grace of my preceptor, I am enjoying your company and so all my desires are fulfilled.

Having a parental home like yours, I have been able to finish this work and have fulfilled my cherished desire (1771-1775). It might become possible to make the earth-globe entirely of gold, or to create seven mountains out of wish-fulfilling gems or fill up the seven seas with nectar, nor would it be difficult to make all the stars into moons or to make pleasure-gardens of wish-fulfilling trees. But it is extremely difficult to relate the secret meaning of the *Gita*. It was because of you, that a dumb fellow like me, has been able to tell you, the import of the *Gita* in the local language, in such a way, that it will enchant all people. It is through your grace, that I have been able to cross this vast sea, in the form of this composition and to dance like a big-wig on the

other shore, parading the banner of victory (1776-1780). It is through your grace, that I have been able to build this temple, in the form of the interpretation of the *Gita*, which looks like the Mount *Meru*, with its high peaks and to install therein, the image of my preceptor and worship it.

The *Gita* is a guileless mother and I am its infant, who has been separated from her and has been wandering at random. It is your duty, O saints, to bring about a meeting between us two. *Shri Jnanadeva* says 'Whatever I have spoken is sound and the credit for all this goes to you. Because of you this festive occasion of the completion of this work has come to pass, fulfilling my life's dream. I had extreme faith in you and you have made me happy by fulfilling all my expectations (1781-1785). O my Master, you have made me create this second universe in the form of this work, and that makes me mock at sage *Vishwamitra*, who created a transient world for *Trishanku*, simply to demean god *Brahma*. But this literary creation of mine will live for ever.

*Lord Shiva* created the *Milky Sea* out of affection for *Upamanyu*; but this sea contained poison and so is not fit to be compared with this work. When the people sought protection from the sun, against the demon in the form of darkness, he gave them relief from their trouble; but while doing so, he made the people suffer from heat. The moon pours down moonshine to cool down the heat-stricken world; but how can we compare this work with the moon which has dark spots on it (1786-1790)? The work, which you saints have enabled me to compose, for the benefit of the three worlds, is peerless. It is due to your grace, that this sermon with music and singing (*kirtana*) has come to an end. All that remains to be done, is to render service to you.

*Now may the Supreme Self be pleased with the sacrifice in the form of this literary work and grant me this grace.*

*May the wicked drop their evil ways and become inclined towards good deeds and may all beings develop friendship for one another.*

*May the darkness in the form of sin in the world vanish and let there be the dawn of religious duty. May the desires of all beings be fulfilled (1791-1795).*

*May the concourse of saints who shower auspiciousness on the universe appear and visit perpetually all beings on this earth.*

*May these saints who are like walking wish-yielding trees, and the abodes of sentient philosophers' stones or talking oceans of nectar, and who are like spotless moons or heatless suns be the constant kinsmen of all.*

*In short, let all the three worlds be perfectly happy and may everyone desire to offer perpetual worship to the Primeval person (Brahman) and may those who follow the teachings of this work, have perfect happiness in this and the next world (1796-1880).*

*Hearing these words, the Lord of the Universe said, "I grant you this grace", at which Jnanadeva became very happy with this boon.*

In this *Kali* age, there is a holy and ancient place called *Panchakrosha* (*Newase*) on the southern bank of the river *Godavari*, in the state of Maharashtra, where dwells the goddess *Mahalaya* (also named *Mohiniraja*), who pulls the strings of the world. There rules most justly king *Ramadevray*, the crown gem of the *Yadu* race, who is the abode of all arts. At that time *Jnanadeva*, the disciple

of *Shri Nivrittinatha*, claiming succession of discipleship from *Lord Shiva*, gave the *Gita* the garb of Marathi language (1801-1805). This beautiful dialogue, which took place between Lord Krishna and Arjuna occurs in the *Bhishmaparva* of the *Mahabharata*. It contains the quintessence of the *Upanishadic* knowledge and is the parental home of all *shastras*. It is verily the *Manasa* lake, which is resorted to by the swans in the form of ascetics of the highest order (*Paramhansas*). I, *Jnanadeva*, the disciple of *Nivrittinatha*, now declare that this eighteenth chapter, which is the pinnacle of the dialogue, ends here. May the religious merit of this work, bring full happiness day by day, to all beings in this world. *Jnanadeva* composed this commentary on the *Gita* in the (*Shalivahana*) *shaka* year 1212 and *Sachchidanandababa* became his reverent amanuensis (1806-1810).

