

# **Bhagavad Gita**

## ***Introduction***

The Bhagavad Gita is a scripture on the topic of Self realization. Self realization is the hard and fast understanding that there is only one Self and that it is free of the crippling sense of limitation imposed upon it by a mind conditioned to believe in incompleteness, separateness, and inadequacy. An individual in whom this non-dual vision is established is untouched by existential suffering as he or she looks out through an ever-changing body at an ever-changing world.

The Gita is one of Vedanta's three source texts along with the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. Vedanta is an experience based means of Self knowledge, a systematic and profound body of teachings that provides a detailed map of the well worn road to liberation patiently removing doubt about the nature of the Self. Although it appeared after the Vedic Age it has the status of an Upanishad. The Upanishads are texts appended to each Veda that are humankind's most ancient documents concerning the non-dual nature of reality. In the Upanishads the Self is presented in its essential nature as nameless and formless Awareness. In the Gita it is personified and appears as a person with non-dual vision who is willing to reveal it to Arjuna, the quintessential human whose need for Self knowledge is revealed during an existential crisis.

Arjuna is the general of an army of righteous men confronted with an unsolicited civil war. When he sees teachers, friends and relatives in the opposing army and realizes he will have to destroy them he breaks down and turns to his lifelong friend, Krishna, the personified Self, for advice. The seven hundred verses that follow offer a subjective solution to the eternal inner war that each of us wages with the army of self-limiting thoughts that compromise our happiness in this world.

The Gita's verses are set toward the end of the Mahabharata, an epic poem that describes the causes of the war, the events leading up to it and later, after Arjuna gets his mind clear, the war itself. I have not rendered the first Chapter in English because it describes in detail the battlefield and the warriors whose names and complex pasts would only be appreciated by a lover of the Mahabharata itself. The first verse, however, is significant because it lets us know that the battlefield on which this war is about to be fought is the field of dharma. Dharma is the Self in

the form of the complex and intricate web of physical and moral laws that make up the world in which we live. It is the dharma or duty of each individual to appreciate this moral and physical order and respond appropriately...if he or she wishes to be happy.

Translations of the Gita fall roughly into two categories...those of intellectuals and those of Self realized souls. Although both mostly agree on the basic ideas...except the literalists who do not see the Gita as a scripture on liberation...most translations are done by Indians for whom English is a second language and an English that evolved in a transplanted Victorian environment at that. Charming as Indian English is, it is not the English of today.

One encounters problems with the translations of both the yogis and the intellectuals. Although the intellectuals tend to be well versed in English they are rarely Self realized and often miss the implied meanings. And while the yogis tend to understand the true meaning, they are almost invariably not writers. Their interpretations and commentaries on the verses are inevitably transcribed from discourses. Those who do the transcriptions are certainly well meaning but are not always endowed with the highest understanding nor are they particularly good writers. Extreme reverence for the scripture also compounds the problem and results in stilted, unfeeling and inaccurate translations; most feel uncomfortable altering even a single word of the text or of the master's commentary.

I am not a Sanskrit scholar but have heard the Bhagavad Gita in English by two Self realized yogis who were Sanskrit scholars and spoke excellent English. I have read many English translations and have been a student of Vedanta for more than thirty five years, having studied in depth scores of major and minor Vedantic works. The excellent two thousand page translation and commentary by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a traditional Vedantic sage and the most highly respected scriptural master in India today entitled 'Bhagavad Home Study Course' has been the final arbiter when I had a doubt about the meaning of a verse.

Self realization does not generally hit one like a bolt of lightning but is usually the result of a long process of Self inquiry which is definitely facilitated by scriptural knowledge. This is not to say that only those with Sanskrit knowledge who study Vedantic scriptures get enlightened. The teachings that remove Self ignorance are ideas before they become spoken or written. It is the meaning of the words that removes doubt about the nature of the Self, the mind and the world, not the words

themselves. None of the ideas of the science of Self realization are particularly difficult to understand for anyone with a reasonably clear mind. The difficulty comes when one tries to apply them to one's mind because...oddly...truth is so counterintuitive. The mind's beliefs and opinions seem quite natural while the truth...which should be easy...seems difficult to grasp.

It so happens that since the Sixties many Westerners have put their feet on the spiritual path and have done good work. They will never go to India, sit at the feet of a Vedantic sage and realize the Self...which is still possible today. This is not to say that they should be deprived of the wisdom of the East for want of accessibility. Therefore, I have tried to make the Bhagavad Gita available to them in clear modern English.

## Chapter 2

### Suffering

*1. To Arjuna who was overwhelmed by compassion, distressed and tearful, Krishna spoke these words, "to behave like this is not becoming for a righteous man. It does not enhance your reputation, nor does it lead to heaven. A successful warrior does not give in to unmanliness. It does not benefit you. Overcome this emotional state, get up and fight!"*

*4. Arjuna replied, "Oh Destroyer of Demons, how can I fight against these men who are worthy of worship? It would be better to beg for food than to kill these exalted men who taught me everything I know. Whatever wealth and pleasure I will gain from this war would be stained with blood. It is impossible to tell whether it is better if we should conquer them or they should conquer us. How can we continue to live once we have slain these brave men facing us?"*

*Even if I were to obtain an unrivalled and prosperous kingdom by winning this war I do not see anything that will take away this pain that disturbs my senses. You are right. I am emotional and confused. I am your student. I take refuge in you. Tell me what I should do."*

*Then the great warrior said, "I shall not fight" and fell silent.*

## Self Knowledge

*Standing between the two armies, Krishna, as if smiling, replied,*

*11. "The wise grieve neither for the dead, nor for the living. There was never a time that I did not exist, nor you nor these kings. Nor will any of us cease to exist in the future. Because those who live in a body experience birth, childhood, youth, old age and the gaining of another body it is foolish to grieve. Sense contacts give rise to ever-changing sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain. You have no choice but to experience them. Only a respectable person unaffected by pleasure and pain is fit for liberation.*

*16. What is unreal does not exist. What is real never ceases to exist. This knowledge will set you free. Know That to be indestructible which pervades this entire universe. No one can bring about the destruction of That which never changes. The Self...which is not an object of knowledge...is indestructible even though it lives in dying bodies. Anyone who thinks that the Self kills or that it can be killed does not know the truth. It is not born so how can it die? It is ever present and not subject to time. When the body dies it does not die. How can you say that you are a killer if you know the Self as it is? Just as a person changes old clothes for new the Indweller gives up its old body for a new one.*

*23. Weapons cannot destroy the Self. Fire can't burn it, nor can water wet it. The wind cannot dry it. It is changeless, all pervading, immovable, and eternal. Knowing that it is not an object of thought, and not subject to change, you should not grieve. Even if you see the Self caught in a constant cycle of births and deaths you should not grieve because what is born dies and what dies is reborn. It is foolish to worry about what cannot be changed.*

*28. All beings are unmanifest in the beginning, become manifest in the middle of their life cycles and return to the unmanifest condition in the end. What is there to grieve about, Arjuna?*

*29. Some people see the Self as a wonder. Others speak of it as a wonder and some hear of it as a wonder. Yet, even after hearing about It people do not understand It at all. This Self, the one who dwells in the bodies of all beings, is always indestructible. Therefore you ought not to grieve for these people.*

31. Also, if you consider this situation from the standpoint of your duty, you should not waver. Nothing is more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war. Only lucky warriors are given the opportunity to fight an unsolicited war. It is an open gate to heaven. But if you forfeit your honor and refuse to do your duty you will incur sin. People will speak of your unending infamy. For the honorable person, dishonor is worse than death. Your peers, the great warriors, who esteem you now, will see you as a coward. They will mock and ridicule you. They will belittle your talents and say unforgettable things. What could be more painful? Consider this: if you die you will gain heaven. If you win you will enjoy the world. Therefore, stand up and fight! See pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat in the same light and prepare for battle. You will incur no sin.

### Karma Yoga

39. So far I have told you the wisdom of Self knowledge. **Now listen to the wisdom of yoga which will free you from bondage to action.** In this yoga, no effort is wasted, nor are any unsuitable results produced. Even very little karma yoga protects one from great fear.

41. You should have a clear understanding about the nature of liberation. Those who lack discrimination entertain many erroneous notions. Full of desire and believing there is nothing better, non-discriminating people engross themselves in rituals for the purpose of gaining pleasure or power or heaven. They utter flowery words concerning various practices that are meant to make them happy. Because those seeking power and pleasure are easily led astray by the promises of ritual activities, discrimination does not take place.

45. The subject matter of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas is related to the three qualities. Realize yourself to be free from the three-fold qualities and from the sorrow that arises from contact with the pairs of opposites. Be ever established in sattva, free from the anxiety to acquire and protect. Be a master of yourself. For the one who knows the Self the Vedas are of as much use as a small puddle when the land is flooded.

47. You can choose which actions you wish to perform but you have no control over the results. Don't think of yourself as the author of the results of your actions and don't be attached to inaction. Remain steadfast in yoga and act without attachment to the results. Remain the same in success and failure alike. This steadiness of mind

*is called yoga.*

*49. Desire prompted action is inferior to action performed with the karma yoga attitude. Take refuge in this attitude. Those who perform action only for the desired result are misers.*

*50. The karma yoga attitude causes steadiness of mind and frees one of good and bad karma in this world. Therefore, commit yourself to karma yoga. Karma yoga is discretion in action. With the karma yoga attitude the wise, no longer concerned with the results of their actions and free from the bondage of rebirth, accomplish the result that is free from limitation.*

*52. When your intellect is no longer deluded you will become dispassionate concerning what has happened and what will happen. When your mind is no longer concerned with the results promised in the Vedas it remains steady and becomes established in the Self. This leads to Self knowledge.”*

### **The Self Realized Person**

*54. Arjuna said, “Oh Krishna, will you please describe a person of steady wisdom, one whose mind is not disturbed by anything and abides in the Self? How do such people interact with the world?”*

*55. Krishna replied, “When a person gives up desires as they appear in the mind, Arjuna, and remains happy with only in his or her Self, he or she is a discriminating person. The one who is unaffected by adversity, who doesn’t yearn for pleasure and is free from longing, fear and anger, is one of steady wisdom. A discriminating person is unattached to the outcome of all situations and does not rejoice when the circumstances are pleasant. Nor is he or she uncomfortable in unpleasant situations. And if a person is able to withdraw his or her sense organs from the sense objects like a turtle withdraws its limbs, his or her knowledge is steady.*

*59. For one who does not feed the senses, the senses come back to the Self, leaving the longing behind. When the Self is known to be one’s self even the longing goes away. Even for a person who practices yoga and whose goal is clear the senses can pull the mind away from the Self. Keep your senses under control and contemplate on Me with a discriminating mind. Self knowledge becomes established in a discriminating controlled mind.*

62,63. *When you dwell on objects attachment arises. Attachment causes desire and when desire is obstructed anger arises. An angry mind is easily deluded and delusion leads to the loss of memory. When memory goes the mind is incapacitated. And when the mind no longer functions properly one's life is destroyed.*

64. *Even when you move in the world of objects it is possible to attain tranquility if the sense organs are controlled and you stand apart from your likes and dislikes. Self knowledge, easily established in a tranquil mind, destroys existential sorrow. But for the agitated mind there is no Self knowledge. Contemplation does not take place and without contemplation on the Self there is no peace. Without peace how can there be happiness? Self knowledge will not stick in a mind distracted by changing sensations. They carry it away just as a strong wind carries a small boat across the water. Therefore, Arjuna, the Self knowledge of one whose senses are free of their respective objects is steady.*

69. *In that dark daylight world in which all beings sleep, the wise person who has mastered the senses, is awake. Just as water flows into an ocean leaving the ocean unchanged, objects arising in the mind of a Self realized person leave it unchanged. But the desirer of objects is never peaceful. The one who abandons the belief in 'I' and 'mine' and moves through life without longing is peaceful. This is steadiness in The Self. The Self realized are not deluded appearances. A mind that is fixed on the Self at the time of death is freed.*

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Karma Yoga**

1. *Arjuna said, "You say that knowledge is superior to action, but if this is true why do you encourage me to do this gruesome deed? You are confusing me with seemingly contradictory words. Decide what is best and reveal the one path to liberation."*

3. *Krishna said, "I ordained a two-fold lifestyle for beings in this world...the path of knowledge for renunciates and the path of action for doers. You cannot get free of action merely by the nonperformance of action. Nor can you attain liberation simply by renunciation. Indeed, you cannot avoid action even for a second because*

*sattva, rajas and tamas compel you to act.*

*6. A person who controls the sense organs yet still craves sense pleasures is confused. It is better to control the senses and act with the karma yoga understanding. Because action is superior to inaction you should do what has to be done. It is even impossible to maintain the body without action.*

### **Karma Yoga Spirit**

*9. Actions other than those done in a sacrificial spirit bind you to karma. The Creator instilled this spirit in the beginning and said, "By sacrifice you shall multiply. It will fulfill your desires." Honor life with this spirit and it will honor you. This attitude leads to freedom. When you honor life it supplies desirable things...but if you enjoy its gifts without offering something in return you are a thief. Those who eat the remnant of the sacrifice incur no guilt but those who eat only for themselves verily eat guilt.*

*14. Living beings are born of food, food comes from rain, rain comes from the effects of sacrifice and sacrifice is born of action. The Vedas encourage a sacrificial religious attitude and the Vedas come from the imperishable Self. If you keep this attitude you are always in harmony with the Self. The lives of those who do not live in harmony with the cosmic order but pursue sense pleasures instead are wasted.*

*17. Nothing need be done by those who delight in the Self, are satisfied with the Self alone and whose lives are centered on the Self. They have no reason to do or not to do...nor do they depend on objects for their happiness. Do what is to be done well without attachment and you will attain the highest good. Not only will you attain liberation by acting in this spirit you will inspire others to act in this way. Because whatever a role model does is done by others.*

*I need not act. As far as I am concerned everything in the three worlds is perfect so there is nothing for me to do. Yet I act because if I become lazy and refuse to act people would follow my example. They would become confused. The social bonds that keep a society healthy would unravel and it would deteriorate.*

*24, 25. Just as the unwise who are attached to the results of their actions act only for themselves, the wise should perform action without attachment for the good of others. They should not lecture the unwise concerning action and its results.*

*Instead they should encourage them to act in the right spirit by example.*

*27. It is a delusion to think “I am the doer” because actions are caused by the gunas influencing the body, mind, and senses. The wise, however, remain free because they understand that body mind-sense-complex engages its objects automatically. Those unaware of how the gunas affect action get caught up in the actions of the body-mind-sense-complex. One who knows the Self should not disturb the understanding of the indiscriminating ones who don’t.*

*30. With a discriminating mind free of anger, expectation and a sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ offer your actions to me and fight! If you faithfully follow this teaching without finding fault you will be freed from the results of your actions. But if you are doubtful and do not follow it you will not progress. It is wise to act in harmony with your own nature. Because all beings follow their own natures automatically what use is control?*

*34. Attachment and aversion to sense objects are your intractable enemies. It is better to die imperfectly performing one’s duties according to one’s own dharma than to live performing the dharma of another well. The dharma of another is fraught with danger.*

### **The Power of Desire**

*36. Arjuna said, “What is that terrible force that causes self insulting actions even though there is a strong desire to the contrary?”*

*37. Krishna said: “Rajas produces desire and anger. It is a great glutton and an inveterate sinner. Know it be an intractable foe. Just as fire is often covered by clouds of smoke, as a mirror may be covered by dust or a fetus is hidden in the womb, Self knowledge is hidden by Desire. The insatiable fire of Desire is the constant enemy of the wise because it prevents Self knowledge. Situated in the senses, mind, and intellect, it deludes the person and obscures his or her wisdom. Therefore, Oh! Arjuna, control the senses at the outset and destroy this force, the killer of wisdom.*

*42. The sense organs are subtler than the body; the mind is subtler than the sense organs; the intellect is subtler than the mind and the Self is subtler than the intellect. Know That which is beyond the intellect, steady your emotions and destroy*

*this hidden enemy.*

## **Chapter 4**

### **Knowledge and the Renunciation of Action**

#### **Giving up Karma by Knowledge**

*1. Krishna said, "I taught this eternal yoga to Visvasan who taught it Manu who taught it to the kingly sages. It was handed down from generation to generation but as time passed it has been almost completely forgotten. Because you are my friend I will reveal this secret path to you."*

The purpose of this verse is to praise the sampradaya, to point out that self knowledge came from Isvara, that it is not a human invention.

It also unfolds the style of teaching...friendship.

This avatar idea is a literary device employed by Vyasa to make the idea of the sampradaya understandable to common people. It is a personification of an impersonal perennial process of knowledge.

*4. Arjuna said, "You were born recently but Visvasan lived thousands of years ago. It doesn't seem likely that you taught Visvasan in the beginning."*

Arjuna is surprised that he has never heard of this knowledge before because he does not understand that it only comes into one's life when one is ready for it. Arjuna had known Krishna for a long time but never knew that Krishna had the knowledge because he was not ready to hear it. The qualification for self knowledge is the implied meaning of this verse.

Vedanta is a secret knowledge, not because it is deliberately kept from you by someone or something else but because you are not prepared to understand it. One should be very careful to whom one teaches because it is very easy to misunderstand owing to the fact that the knowledge contradicts one's experience of one's self.

The point of this question is to state that the Gita is a conversation between Jiva

and Isvara, not between two specific human beings. Even if it is taken as a literal conversation between two human beings, the meaning is the same.

*5. The Lord replied, "Many births have passed for both of us, Arjuna! I know them all but they are unknown to you. Even though I am the unborn Lord of all beings and my Self knowledge is unshakable I seemingly come into being through the power of my own Maya. Whenever there is a decline in right living and people become addicted to corrupt ways I assume a physical body and appear in the world to establish dharma by encouraging and protecting those committed to it and destroying those who violate it."*

"I know them all" means that Isvara is omniscient, that jiva only knows its limited specific life. It means that Isvara is not a doer or enjoyer subject to rebirth based on the results of Its action, as is jiva. Jiva is a doer/enjoyer entity of limited knowledge that is reborn over and over as a result of its notion that it is only a doer/enjoyer subject to vasanas. The omniscience of Isvara is not mind-based as is jiva's knowledge. It is knowledge that creates everything by bringing the mind into being.

"Seemingly come into being" means that what Arjuna is seeing...a friend named Krishna...is only a projection of Maya, ignorance. It means that a jiva that sees other jivas as real does not understand that everyone is just Isvara. Krishna is above Maya and Arjuna is below it. From Isvara's point of view, the body is only a projection, from Arjuna's it is real.

Avatara is India's idea of immaculate conception. It is not a physical birth.

"Decline of right living" means that owing to an abuse of free will adharma has created a situation where it is not possible to work out one's karma. Since jiva's are here to work out their karma, this is not an acceptable situation. Therefore they desire for things to return to normal i.e. dharma. Because the field of dharma is conscious, it responds to the collective desires arising in it, and 'creates' individuals...avatars, jnanis, etc....who live and teach the value of dharma, thus re-establishing it. These avatars are not do-gooders motivated by personal dissatisfaction looking for evil to fight. They only respond to situations that are already present and then without attachment. They are not angry self righteous people. They know that the dharma field responds to their actions appropriately and therefore they are agents of change without the idea of doership.

Dharma is just the desire for a level impersonal playing field in which jiva's can work out their karma.

"Destruction.." means conversion of values by precept and example, not physical destruction of bad people (adharmis).

*9. Those who understand the reality of my divine birth and my purpose here, let go of attachment to the body, realize who I am and are not born again. Free of craving, fear and anger, happy with only Me and purified by the discipline of Self knowledge many come back to Me.*

An avatar is someone whose body and mind are empirically, apparently real but who is born without the force of individual karma. It is someone who appears on the basis of the needs of the total mind to solve a dharma/adharma problem. But solving a dharma/adharma problem does not require an avatar. A jnani can solve such problems, even though he or she is apparently under the force of prarabdha because there is no identification with the doer and therefore with the prarabdha. This verse is meant to reveal the fact that collective as well as individual karma can cause birth. However, this is all within the realm of the apparent reality and of no particular significance in so far as the purpose of the teaching is to establish the jiva as paramatma, the only 'factor' beyond the apparent reality i.e. Maya. Jnani's can do what Avatars do in so far as establishing dharma is simply a matter of modeling the right values and/or revealing the self through a means of self knowledge. An avatar plays a certain role, like an actor, as do jnani's because they know that the body/mind/sense complex is not real.

"Come back to me" means that one's sense of individuality dissolves and the jiva 'become's' Isvara, non-separate from the the total.

*11. In whatever way people worship Me I bless them according to their worship. People follow my path in many ways. If they desire the results of their actions they worship the world. In the world results come quickly.*

Invoking Isvara has nothing to do with the presence of an avatar. It is simply a matter of performing actions appropriate to the desired result in so far as the field of action is Isvara. If a jiva wants moksa it should approach a teacher and expose its mind to the teaching. If it want money, it should get a job or rob a bank. If it robs a bank it will be blessed with a prison sentence. As you sow, so shall you reap.

“quick results...” People don’t worship the self because they want quick results. If the result you want is the self, then you may have to wait until your mind is mature enough to realize that you want yourself.

Injustice lies with the jiva, not with Isvara because Isvara can only deliver results appropriate to jiva’s actions. One jiva does not get another jiva’s karma.

*13. The four social divisions based on qualities and duties is created by Me. Even though I am its author, know Me as a changeless non-doer. Actions do not affect Me nor do I long for results. If you know Me clearly you will not be bound by your actions. Be like those who know Me and perform action.*

Isvara, the gunas, creates the field that structures the karma of individuals but it is not responsible for specific karmas accrued by individuals. “Injustice” is brought about by the choices of individuals. Isvara is just because it does not make choices.

*16. Even sages are sometimes confused about action and actionlessness. If you understand my teaching about action you will be released from samsara. You should know which actions are sanctioned and which are forbidden by scripture. You should also understand actionlessness. Karma is difficult to understand.*

### **The Self Realized Person**

*18. The one who sees actionlessness in action and action in actionlessness is wise and has done everything that is to be done.*

With reference to action the wise can see inaction and with reference to inaction the wise see action. In the absence of action the wise see action (boat) and in the so-called action they see inaction (train). As an ego/doer, when you are doing nothing, you are doing something (boat)...it is impossible for the body/mind not to act because the self illumines the vasanas. And when you are doing something, you are doing nothing (train) because you are actually the non-dual self...it is impossible for you to do because you have no instruments of action and you pervade everything. Where will you move to, in so far as you are already always everywhere. So, acting, the enlightened don’t act.

Because the wise know then are not doers, they know that when action is happening it is only happening for the doer, not for the self. This is inaction, i.e. no action for the self and no actual action for anything else because there is nothing other than the self. Action is apparent, not real.

The verse means that the wise know the difference between satya and mithya. Reality is only consciousness so there is no actual action. But if Maya is taken into account, the self appears to act. The actor is the self but the self is not an actor.

Vedanta is the knowledge of karma and knowledge. When both are understood in their nuances, you are free.

*19. The sages say that a person is wise if his or her actions have been burned in the fire of Self knowledge. Such people act without desire for the results of their actions. Consequently they are content because they do not depend on results to make them happy.*

Actions are like roasted seeds; they cannot germinate (create *punya* and *papa*) but they can be enjoyed.

*They are free of doership even when they act. Those who are free of expectations, whose bodies, minds and senses are well disciplined, who are free of attachment to possessions and act only to sustain the body are happy with what comes by chance, unaffected by the opposites, without envy, even-minded in success and failure and free of the need to act while acting. The karma of those who are free from attachment, whose minds have been liberated by Self knowledge and who perform action as an offering is completely cleared.*

*“whose bodies, minds and senses are well disciplined...” They are not driven by their likes and dislikes and therefore their lives are not chaotic. They understand the fact that life is orderly and they align themselves with Isvara’s psychological order; the respective inner centers...mind, intellect and ego...are in an harmonious relationship, serving the same master, the self.*

The six-fold problems are: karma - desire, krodha - anger, lobha - greed, moha – delusion or false values, mada - vanity, and finally jealousy - matsara. The jnani has

none of these.

### **Sacrificial Spirit**

*24. The means of offering is the Self. The offering is the Self offered by the Self into the sacrificial fire...which is also the Self. The Self is indeed obtained by the one who sees everything as the Self.*

Everything is consciousness/awareness. The means of knowledge is the vision of non-duality gained by exposing one's mind to Vedanta.

We see, then, that all the *karakas* are covered here. The first *kataka*, the *karta*, the one who offers, is *Brahman*; the second *kataka*, the *karma* or object, is *Brahman*; the third *kataka*, the *karana* or instrument, is *Brahman*; the purpose that takes the fourth case is *Brahman*; and the fifth *kataka*, from where the action comes, is *Brahman*. Because the sixth *kataka*, the possessive or genitive case, generally does not relate to an action, it does not generally represent one of the six *karakas*. The sixth *kataka*, which takes the locative case is also here in the verse. Here, it is said, 'in the fire of *Brahman*, *brahmagnau*.' Therefore, the fire into which the offering is made is also *Brahman*.

*25. Karma yogis perform rituals to invoke the deities, while contemplative renunciates offer their lives into the fire of Self knowledge.*

Worldly people who perform rituals for anything other than purification of the mind are called *kamya-yogis*, desire prompted yogis. *Yogi* means someone who wants to gain something.

*Others sacrifice their senses to the idea of self control or the sense objects into the fire of the senses. Still others offer the activities of the senses and the organs of action into the fire of self-mastery ignited by Self knowledge. Some sacrifice wealth and some commit to religious disciplines like the practice of yoga while others devote themselves to the study of sacred texts. There are those committed to the control of the mind though the breath who stop the flow of inhalation and exhalation and offer the outgoing breath into the incoming breath and the incoming breath into the outgoing breath. To control the intake of food others offer their desire to eat into the digestive fires. Irrespective of the type of discipline one follows the sacrificial attitude burns the impurities of the mind.*

The sacrifices mentioned now are not rituals. They are disciplines whose purpose is to accomplish *moksa* by purification so they are considered sacrifices in so far as the doer can do something else. These can accomplish 1) a certain composure and steadiness of mind and 2) maturity, a freedom from likes and dislikes.

*31. Those who drink the nectar of the sacrifice realize the eternal Self.*

The result of discipline is a pure mind and since these people want *moksa* they now have the means in hand.

*Nothing truly beneficial is gained in this world without the spirit of sacrifice. How then can anything be gained in the next? Various religious disciplines are offered in the Vedas. Knowing that they are born of karma liberates. Sacrifice motivated by Self knowledge is superior to sacrifice with material objects because action itself is resolved by Self knowledge.*

“knowing they are born of karma...” indicates that they have a limited result, unlike knowledge because the need to act is resolved by self knowledge. The implied meaning is that the self is *akarta*. Self knowledge negates the doer.

### **The Value of Self Knowledge**

*34. Realize the Self through prostrating, inquiring and service.*

“prostration..” appreciating the value of self knowledge above and beyond one’s own personal knowledge/experience, keeping an open mind,

*The wise...who have the vision of the truth...will teach you Self knowledge. When it removes your Self ignorance you will see all beings in yourself and in Me. Self knowledge can redeem even the greatest sinner.*

Sometimes sinners realize who they are quite easily because sin is suffering and suffering can become a powerful motivator. But self knowledge is available to anyone at anytime because it is just knowledge of the self and everyone has/is the self.

*Just as fire reduces wood to ashes the fire of Self knowledge reduces the results of actions to ashes.*

Except *prarabdha*, karma already in the pipeline, which plays out. No *sanchita* remains because a *jnani* does karma without doership. *Agami* karma is laid to rest completely, meaning that you are not driven by what happened in the past.

*There is no purifier equivalent to Self knowledge. Prepare the mind with the karma yoga attitude and Self knowledge will automatically arise in it.*

*39. Self knowledge comes when your senses are controlled, you are committed to it and you have faith in the teachings of scripture and the words of the teacher. It brings complete peace.*

But the peace referred to here is not a state of mind. It is rather the nature of the self which is always silent regardless of the state of mind.

Because the service you perform to the teacher may be nothing more than an act. Therefore, outward service must be backed by faith in the teaching and the teacher. Without it Vedanta does not work.

*But if you lack faith in the scripture you will not succeed because there is no happiness for doubters. O Arjuna, action does not bind the person whose doubts about the nature of reality have been removed by Self knowledge. Therefore, take to karma yoga, take up the sharp sword of Self knowledge and slay this deeply rooted doubt about yourself.*

*Summary Chapter 4 – Renunciation through knowledge.*

The topic is giving up one's sense of doership because one understands that the self is not a doer and performing action even though it is known to be unreal. When the actionless nature of the self is appreciated everything associated with action... the factors that produce action...are sublated, resolved. They are: the *karta*, the agent, *karma*, the object, *karana*, the means or instrument, the purpose, *apadana*, the source from where the action is produced, and *adhikarana*, the location of the action.

## Chapter 5

### Renunciation of Action

*1. Arjuna said, "O Krishna, you praise renunciation of action and karma yoga. Tell me definitely which is better."*

There is no choice because karma yoga is the means (purification) and renunciation of action (in terms of knowledge) is the goal. Arjuna is thinking only in terms of what to do i.e. lifestyle. He wonders why he should purify with karma yoga when jnana yoga is the best purifier.

Karma yoga is more complicated than sanyass because there are many roles to play whereas sanyassa requires a single role...inquirer.

The renunciation of action and the performance of action can only be performed serially because they are mutually exclusive. Krishna does not praise lifestyle sanyass, only sanyass as a means to moksa and the fruit of moksa.

Karma Yoga is right for Arjuna because he has likes and dislikes and therefore karma. He is not indifferent to the results of action. A sanyassi is indifferent to the results of action irrespective of his lifestyle.

Both karma yogis and sanyassis are knowledge seekers.

*2. Krishna replied, "Both renunciation of action and the performance of action as yoga lead to liberation. But the performance of action as yoga is better than renunciation of action. A renunciate is free from likes and dislikes and therefore is free of bondage."*

The verse is not praising one lifestyle over another. It points out that while sanyass as a lifestyle is apparently simpler and more direct, it is not the appropriate means for Arjuna owing to his rajasic temperament and his complicated life. Renunciation is freedom from likes and dislikes, not lifestyle with little to do. You are definitely a renunciate when you are happy because you don't need anything to make you happy. Sanyass does not work if it is an escape. You have to face your life.

*4. Some argue that Self knowledge and karma yoga are different but both lead to*

*liberation. Therefore the wise see karma and knowledge as one. Renunciation of action is difficult without karma yoga but if you are discriminating and committed to karma yoga you will quickly realize your limitless nature. If your sense organs are restrained, your mind is purified by karma yoga and you know that your Self is the Self in all beings you will not be affected by karma.*

*“karma yoga and knowledge are one” because they both lead to moksa.*

*“you will quickly realize your limitless nature” because karma yoga will have prepared you.*

*“sense organs restrained” so that a minimum of vasanas are expressed...to restrain them completely is repression.*

*“mind purified by karma yoga...” only actions in harmony with dharma are done.*

There is no conflict between thinking and doing if one's goal is clear. Karma yogis can discriminate and sanyassis can perform action. The purpose of this discussion is to elucidate the relationship between karma and knowledge.

*8. The organs automatically contact their objects so you should not think “I am doing” while you are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, talking, releasing, grasping, opening and closing the eyes.*

The gunas do everything.

*10. If you act after you have offered your actions to Me you will not be affected by agitation, just as a lotus leaf is untouched by water. Karma yogis let go of attachment to results and act with the body, mind and intellect to purify the mind. The life of karma yoga leads to inner freedom while a life motivated by desire for worldly objects leads to bondage.*

### **The Self not a Doer**

*13. When the Indweller is self controlled and indifferent to the results of its actions, it lives happily in the body, neither acting or causing others to act.*

‘lives happily in the body’ to point out its location because many people think they

live in some external place and that the self is somewhere other than where they are. In fact the body is in the self.

It doesn't cause action because it is free of desire.

*The Self doesn't create a sense of doership, nor is It directly or indirectly responsible for the results of your actions. The idea that you are incomplete and inadequate causes doership and willful action. The Self is indifferent to good and bad karma. Because Self knowledge is covered by ignorance you take yourself to be a doer.*

Karma yoga is not a technique, an action. It is an attitude.

*16. Just as the sun reveals objects previously hidden in darkness, Self knowledge destroys Self ignorance and reveals the Self to be limitless and complete. When the intellect is aware of the limitless nature of the Self and is solely committed to Self realization its impurities are eventually destroyed by Self knowledge and you will no longer be troubled by self limiting thoughts.*

"Self knowledge..." I am whole and complete actionless non-dual awareness.

### **The Self Realized Person**

*18. Those who see no difference between a humble Brahmin endowed with knowledge and a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dog eater are wise. When the mind is rooted in the Self the cycle of births and deaths is neutralized. The wise abide in the Self alone because it is free of defect and always the same. Those who are established in the Self as the Self by virtue of hard and fast Self knowledge do not rejoice when their desires are satisfied nor are they disturbed by undesirable karma.*

"The cycle of births and deaths..." the incessant unconscious recycling of desires and fears that motivate the jiva to act"

"Abide in the self alone..." a wise person always understands that he or she lacks nothing because as the self he or she is always full. If there were any defect in the self, one's thoughts would go elsewhere.

**21. When the mind no longer tries to connect the sense organs with their respective objects it becomes permanently fulfilled. Pleasure arising from the**

*contact of the organs and their objects is a source of pain because it begins and ends. The wise do not celebrate it. The karma yoga attitude brings happiness because it purifies desire and anger.*

But the purification never ends because desire lasts until death. Self mastery is accomplished by having a disciplined life, a sound value structure and a prayerful attitude.

*24. If you are awake to the Self, revel in the Self and are satisfied with the Self alone you are free. When your impurities are removed, your doubts resolved and you are happily engaged in serving all beings you will easily gain liberation. A mind free of desire and anger is liberated here and hereafter. If the senses are shut down and inhalation and exhalation are balanced liberation happens for the meditative person who is not a slave to the body-mind-sense complex and for whom freedom is the only goal. Know Me as the sustainer of rituals and disciplines, the Lord of all the worlds, friend of all beings, and be free.*

“will easily gain...” The verse treats the characteristics of the wise as a means of knowledge.

Wise people are non-competitive because they appreciate the dharma of non-injury.

Knowing that the doer, the enjoyer and the results of action are Isvara frees the jiva of the belief that it is a doer, enjoyer. It then understands that it is not separate from Isvara. Isvara is a friend because It gives what you need according to your actions. Actions are prayers to Isvara.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Meditation**

*1. If you renounce proscribed rituals but perform no other actions you are not a karma yogi. A karma yogi does action without attachment to the result. Renunciation is actually karma yoga because you can't become a karma yogi without giving up attachment to results.*

The verse just means that a person who is willing to sacrifice his or her likes and

dislikes to conform to the dharma of a given situation is both a karma yogi and a renunciate, not just sanyassis who have no results to give up. They have no results to surrender because they don't want anything except liberation. Doing what has to be done irrespective of one's likes and dislikes is renunciation and karma yoga.

The difference between karma yoga and sanyassa is: karma yogis have to perform certain religious rituals and play a variety of roles but sanyassis don't. A sanyassi plays only the role of an inquirer.

*2. Karma yoga is renunciation because you have to give up desires for objects which produce limited results.*

A karma yogi gives up the vasanas but keeps performing action to purify the mind. If only the activities are given up and not the vasanas, the person is a hypocrite, neither a *karma-yogi* nor a *sannyasi*. A *karma-yogi* renounces likes and dislikes that are opposed to *dharma* and *adharma*. A *sanyassi* gives up both the *vasana* and the *action* by giving up the notion of doership.

*3. For a discriminating person who wishes to obtain a contemplative disposition karma yoga is the means. For someone who is already contemplative, complete renunciation is the means.*

Karma yoga is partial renunciation because the doer remains. Sanyassa is complete renunciation because the doer is renounced by knowledge of the nature of the self and the karakas. These verses are just saying that liberation is understanding the relationship between awareness and action.

You can give up specific actions but not action. You can give up the desire to act. You can give up the one for whom action is a problem by understanding the nature of action and actionlessness. Complete renunciation is attained only by knowledge. It is synonymous with self knowledge i.e. knowledge of satya and mithya.

### **The Self Realized Person**

*4. You have attained liberation when you are no longer attached to the sense objects or to action and you have removed the cause of desire.*

*Lift yourself up by yourself. Do not destroy yourself. You are your best friend if you master yourself. If not, you are your worst enemy. The self-controlled mind is composed in the face of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, praise and criticism.*

You are the beneficiary and the benefactor. You have a choice whether to practice meditation/contemplation or not. To get out of the samsaric pickle you need to question your life and your value structure. To get out you have to appreciate your helplessness in certain situations, not try to fix them by doing. Don't look down on yourself. You have these powers to use: the power to think, to gather information, inquire, will, etc.

**8. You are Self realized when you no longer try to connect the senses with their objects and the mind sits still because it knows that it is the Self.** *This mind sees no difference between a clod of earth and a lump of gold. Exalted is the mind that sees no difference between a friend and an enemy, a saint and a sinner.*

Knowledge attained from the scripture is called jnana. Vignana is totally assimilated knowledge i.e. the binding vasanas have been neutralized.

**10. The meditator who is free of longing for objects should remain relaxed and alone and constantly unite his or her mind with the Self.** *To meditate for the purification of the mind one should keep the senses in check, sit in a clean quiet place on a firm seat and focus the mind on the Self. When the mind is pure, fearless and focused on the silence, continually contemplate on the Self. Liberation happens when the mind is completely absorbed in the Self.*

The mind is quietened by meditation, which can be either contemplative meditation or purely prayerful meditation. Prayerful meditation is on *Brahman* with qualities, *saguna-brahma*, whereas contemplative meditation is on *Brahman* without qualities, *nirguna-brahma*.

The nature of *atma* is revealed either by saying that *satya-jnana-ananta* is *Brahman* or by saying that *sat-cit-ananda* is *atma*. It is the same revelation in that both are one and the same. The words that reveal the nature of the self or the *paramatma* by implication are always the same. But there is also the equation between the *jiva* and *Isvara*, the equation itself being the *upadesa*, the teaching.

Thus, there are these two types of *vakyas* - *vastu-svarapa-para-vakya*, a statement revealing the nature of *atma*, and *ekatva-para-vakya*, a statement revealing the identity between the individual and the Lord, such as, 'You are that *Brahman* - *tat tvam asi*,' or I am *Brahman* - *aham brahma asmi*.

16. *Meditation does not work for gluttons, fasters, insomniacs and excessive sleepers. However, it destroys the sorrow of a person with moderate habits who does not work too much or is too lazy. The mind of an accomplished meditator does not long for objects because it has gained composure through its contemplation on the Self. Just as a candle protected from the wind does not flicker, the mind of an accomplished meditator does not waver.*

20. *When the mind is mastered by the practice of meditation it abides in the Self. It rejoices in the Self alone. And when the happiness that is beyond the senses is recognized, the intellect becomes rooted in the Self and never moves away from It.*

For the recognition of *atma* also, there must be a *vr̥tti*. This *vr̥tti* is created by the *Sastra* and it destroys self-ignorance. And this *vr̥tti* is brought back by the contemplator in *nididhyasana*. In the recognition of the *svariipa* of the self, the *vr̥tti* assumes the very *svariipa* of *atma*, without objectifying it. This is not similar to knowing an object such as the pot. In the recognition of the *svariipa* of the *atma* there is only one operation involved; whereas in the objectification of a pot, there are two operations. One operation is the *vr̥tti* assuming the form of the pot and the second operation is the recognition of that *vr̥tti*, thereby recognising the pot. One is the objectification of the object (by the *vr̥tti*) and the other is the recognition of the *vr̥tti*. The objectifying *vr̥tti* is recognised by another *vr̥tti*, which is the *drasta*, the seer. I become the seer, the knower of the pot. Therefore, this I-thought, the *aham vr̥tti*, assuming the status of the knower, recognises an object through a *vr̥tti*, the *ghata-vr̥tti*, and says, 'This is a pot – *ayam ghatah*.'

Any piece of knowledge - where there is this peculiar connection, *atmaanatma-sambandha*, between the self, the knower, you, and the object that is objectified by that knower - takes place by these two operations. That is, the object is objectified by the *vr̥tti* and you cognise the *vr̥tti*. This is why you can say, 'This is a pot.' But, you cannot say, 'This is *atma*.' Who is there to say it? I am the one who has to say it and, if it were to be so, then, the self, *atma*, would become an object of the self who is objectifying it. Therefore, it would become *anatma*, not *atma*., just like any other object of your knowledge.

## SEEING ATMA IS DIFFERENT THAN SEEING AN OBJECT

Naturally, then, when *Krsna* said, 'seeing *atma*,' in the last verse, some difference was definitely implied. The difference is that in the number of operations involved. Seeing *atma* implies only one operation; there is no second operation at all as there is when one sees an object. Only the first operation is there, the *vr̥tti* that objectifies *atma*, that assumes the very form of *atma*. If I say *atma* is pure consciousness, *kevala-caitanya*, *Suddha-caitanya*, and the recognition of this fact takes place, that recognition implies that the *vr̥tti* assumes the very form of consciousness and there is no other object involved. That particular form destroys the ignorance with reference to the *sva-rūpa* of the *atma* and then disappears. This, then, is the only operation that takes place, meaning that there is no second operation in the form of the recognition, 'This is *atma*,' as there is in the cognition of other objects. The one operation that does take place is only with reference to one's confusion about oneself, the self-ignorance that was there; that ignorance is destroyed by the *vr̥tti*. This is what happens in self-knowledge, in knowing the self, more of which we shall see later.

*After gaining this happiness, if you do not try to attain a greater happiness and are even unaffected by tragic events, this transcendence of sorrow is yoga. Pursue this yoga with unflinching clarity of purpose.*

*24. With all thought-motivated desires renounced and the senses restrained by the mind, hold the mind on the Self with great perseverance and think of nothing else. Gain control of the mind by bringing it back to the Self over and over again.*

*27. Indeed, the most exalted happiness arises in the meditator who becomes the Self through Self knowledge. All impurities are reduced to ash in the fire of Self knowledge and life is seen to be free of defects. If you remain free from conflicts produced by improper contact with the world and constantly reconnect the mind with the Self until you realize the non-separation of the mind and the Self unconditioned happiness arises.*

*29. One whose mind is resolved by the contemplation on the Self sees the Self abiding in all beings and all beings in the Self. The one who sees Me in all beings and sees all beings in Me is Me. This vision remains no matter what you do. With*

*this vision you will regard pain and pleasure equally.”*

*33. Arjuna said, “My mind is a mess and I do not see this yoga of non-duality you speak of. The mind is nothing but agitation, Krishna, an entrenched tyrant. It is impossible to control.”*

*35. “Yes, yoga is difficult” Krishna replied, “if the mind is not mastered by repeated practice and objectivity.”*

Acceptance of the mind is the first step, not trying to change it.

The practice is the practice of yoga just discussed by Krsna, through which a certain distance is gained between your mind and yourself. This distance enables you to look at yourself positively, to see yourself exactly as you are, to see what the nature of 'I' is. In this way, you come to understand that every thought is you, no doubt, but that you are free from thought. Seeing this particular fact more and more, seeing it inside very clearly, is what is meant by abhydsa, practice. Seeing this particular situation - thought being 'I,' while 'I' is not any thought - is what is called nididhyasana. And doing the same thing again and again is called abhydsa, which enables you to gain mastery over your mind - abhyasena grhyate.

Objectivity is knowing that an object is just an object.

### **Rebirth Yogis**

*37. Then Arjuna said, “What happens to me if I have faith in the scriptures but am unsuccessful keeping my mind fixed on the Self? Am I not lost if I can neither understand who I am though Self knowledge or am unable to keep my mind fixed on the Self? You are the only one who can eliminate this doubt.”*

*40. “You are not lost, Arjuna, because anyone who performs actions for yoga never reaches a bad end. Such people go to the world where such people go and enjoy until they are reborn into families of cultured people committed to dharma. Or they are born into a family of wise yogis. Such a birth is difficult to gain in this world. In the new life the vasanas from your previous efforts at yoga will sprout and you will strive for success in yoga once more. The momentum from your previous practice will carry you smoothly along, just as someone who sees the limitations of ritualism is lead to Self knowledge.*

45. *If you persevere in your practice your mind will become pure and you will eventually realize the Self. A yogi is superior to those who live a life of meditation, superior to the scholars and superior to those who perform action. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi! The one who has faith and whose mind is absorbed in Me is the most exalted yogi. This is My vision.*

Yogi...one who has the knowledge

Superior to meditators...those doing tapas who are seeking moksa as an experience

Superior to the scholars....those with intellectual knowledge

Superior to those who perform action...doers

### *Topics for Chapter 7*

1. How does the *yogi* become the one whose mind is absorbed in *ISvara*?
2. What is the nature of *Krsna*, the Lord?

## Chapter 7

### Direct and Indirect Knowledge

1. *O Arjuna, if you wish to know Me without doubt, commit your mind to Me, surrender to Me and take refuge in yoga. I will teach you indirect knowledge and immediate knowledge, knowing which there is nothing more to know. Among many thousands of people, only a rare person seeks freedom. And among those who make an effort to be free, an equally rare person comes to know Me in reality.*

In the verses that follow, *Krsna* unfolds the two types of *prakrti* to prove that *iAvara* is everything and his *svaripa* is you

#### **PRAKRIYA - A TEACHING MODEL**

Using a particular model like this to teach the nature of the creation is using a *srsti-prakriyd*. A *prakriyd* is a particular discussion which is useful for understanding the vision. The intention of using any *prakriyd* is only to point out that there is nothing other than param *brahma*. So, the intention of a *prakriyd* dealing with creation, *srsti*, is not to reveal the creation but to establish that there is nothing other than *Brahman*.

4. *Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and the sense of doership constitute the eight principles of my lower nature. Other than this is my essential nature... which is also the nature of the individual... by which this world is sustained. All beings and the insentient elements come from the union of these two natures.*

*Therefore I am the one from whom this entire world comes and I am the one in whom everything resolves. O Arjuna, there is no source other than Me. Everything has its being in Me.*

Everything comes from consciousness. It is the only source of the objects.

*8. I am the taste in the water; I am the light in the moon and the sun; I am Om in all the Vedas; I am sound in the space and the vitality in human beings. I am the sweet fragrance in the earth and the heat in fire. I am the very life force in all beings. I am discipline in an ascetic and the result of discipline. Know Me as the eternal seed in all beings. I am the capacity of discrimination in the intellect and the brilliance in a brilliant mind. I am the strength that is free from desire and attachment. In all beings, **I am the desire that is not opposed to dharma.***

Consciousness is the essence of every object. It is desire without need, pure creativity. All beautiful and good things come about through ignorance-free desire. Desires against dharma belong to a self ignorant jiva. Maya twists pure desire into an ugly grasping force that is capable of violating dharma.

*12. The things and beings that come from sattva, rajas, and tamas come from me alone. They are in Me but I am not in them. The entire human world is deluded by the modifications brought on by these three changing qualities. Consequently I am not known to be separate from them. My projection, the gunas, is difficult to penetrate. Only those who seek Me can remove it. Undiscriminating people of limited capacity deluded by my Maya become conditioned to negative behavior, revel in the pleasures of the senses and consequently do not seek Me.*

Whenever we use the word *Paramesvara*, it covers both the *svarilpa* of the Lord as well as his status of being *sarva-karana*, the cause of everything.

Throughout the *sastra*, the *jiva* is never said to have been created - a very important thing to understand. The physical body, the mind, the senses are all created because they are assembled. But *thejiva* is never created. It is the changeless *atma*, the very *atma* of every being. After the entire process of creation, *atma* remains the same as the 'I' of everything. And that 'I' is independent of all the three *gunas*.

### **Types of seekers**

*16. However, four types of good people come to Me: the distressed, those seeking security and pleasure, those who want to know me and those who know me as I*

*am. Among them, the one with non-dual devotion who knows me as I am is always united with Me. We unconditionally love each other. All are exalted, but the one who knows Me is Me alone. With a mind absorbed in Me he or she reaches me, the end beyond which there is no other end. At the end of many births, the one with Self knowledge reaches Me by knowing that I am everything. Such wise people are very rare.*

All of them have sufficient recognition of *Isvara* to be devotees but among them there is a gradation. The degree of recognition, their attitude, approach, prayers, etc., all determine the four types.

The distressed: So, whenever he wants to accomplish something, he invokes the grace of *Isvara* to control certain factors that he cannot control or even know. He will perform rituals in order to invoke *Isvara's* grace to help him gain whatever he wants. This is *kamyakarma*, a *karma* done with a desire to accomplish a given end within *samsara*. The one who does *kamyakarma* is an *artharthi*. But he is also an *irta*, a devotee in trouble.

Pleasure seekers: *kamis*

Knowledge seeker: He wants to know the truth of *Isvara*, the ultimate cause of everything. And *thisjijhsu* is a great devotee. He is a *karma yogi*

*Jnani*: The *jnani's* devotion is what we call *sadhya-bhakti*. There are two types of *bhakti*. One is *sidhana-bhakti*, a devotion to *Isvara* as a means. This is the devotion of a *jijhsu*. But the *bhakti* of one who understands *Isvara*, who recognises the truth of *Isvara* as *atmd*, is *sadhya-bhakti*. It is a *bhakti* that has fulfilled itself, a devotion in the form of absolute love -*parama-prema-svari pa-bhakti*.

What is this absolute love? Between the object of love and the person who loves, there is no difference at all. Love consumes all the differences. That is what we call absolute love and it is only in the form of knowledge. The non-difference is already accomplished because *Isvara* is *atmd*. This is a fact which has only to be recognised. When there is already non-difference, its recognition is called *ananya-bhakti*

## HOW THE SASTRA REVEALS IDENTITY

### BADHAYAM SAMANADHIKARANYAM

To reveal this, *aistra* uses a linguistic method called *badhya.mt samanadhikaranyam*. The word *samana* means 'the same.' The word *adhikarana* means 'locus.' When two things have the same locus, then one is said to be a *samana adhikarana* with reference to the other. The condition in which two objects enjoy the same locus is called *samanadhikaranyam*. There are two types of *samanadhikaranyam*. In a blue pot, both the blue colour and the pot are in the same locus; they have the same *adhikarana*. Similarly, when you say, 'Rama is a musician,' both Rama and the property of being a musician reside in the same locus. Rama is the musician and the musician is Rama. A is B and B is A. Therefore, there is *samanadhikaranyam* between A and B.

But when we say the world is *Brahman*, the situation is different. The world is

*Brahman* alright but *Brahman* is not the world. A is B but B is not A. This kind of *samanadhikaranya* is called *badhaydm samanadhikaranyam*. To illustrate, let us consider the following situation. Suppose a stump of a tree is mistaken for a person. Then someone who knows that it is not a person, points out that it is not a person but a stump of a tree. He says, '*sthanuh ayam purusah* - this person is a stump of a tree.' It means - what you see as the person is a stump of a tree. In Sanskrit, both the word 'person,' *purusa*, and the word 'stump,' *sthanu*, have the same case ending. This indicates that they have the same locus. But are there two things here? No. What is referred to as a person, *purusa*, is the stump of a tree, *sthanu*. First you see it as the person and then the person resolves into the stump. The person does not qualify the stump, like blue qualifies the pot; the person resolves into the stump. This kind of *samanadhikaranya* in which one is negated, that is, one resolves in to the other is called *badhaydam samanadhikaranyam*. And the *Sdstra* uses this technique of *badhaydm samanadhikaranyam* to explain the fact that what we perceive as the pluralistic world is in fact one non-dual *Brahman*.

### **Worship of Forms**

*20. When you are driven by your lower nature desire destroys your discrimination and you worship gods. If you worship a god with faith I will fulfill your prayers to make your faith firm irrespective of your motivation.*

This kind of worship leads to inquiry because you become curious who the Lord that gives you all these things is. You need faith for inquiry because the teachings are counterintuitive.

*What comes through the gods comes only from Me. Worship with limited understanding brings limited results. But if you worship Me you will definitely get Me. Although my nature is limitless, changeless and formless and there is nothing other than it, the undiscriminating only see me in a form.*

*25. Because my Maya covers the intellects of nearly everyone I am not known as unborn and changeless. I know all things that have happened, are happening, and will happen but almost no one knows Me. Desire and aversion create the opposites. The opposites delude. But those committed to freedom seek Me. Bring your negative tendencies to an end through karma yoga and you will be released from the spell of the opposites. If you seek freedom from change and take refuge in Me you will come to know me as your own self. You will also understand karma in all its nuances. Even nature lovers who see Me in the physical world...or those who invoke Me through rituals aimed at other gods...eventually come to know Me.*

### **Chapter 8**

## The Unchanging Self

1. Arjuna said, "O Krishna, What is the Self and what is the individual? What is karma and how does it relate to beings? What are the gods? What is the object of religious rituals? And how are you known at death by those with steady minds?"

3. Krishna replied, "The Self is limitless and unchanging. Associated with a body it is called an individual. **Karma is an offering that creates bodies for beings.** The individual is subject to change but the gods are relatively eternal. I alone am the object of all rituals.

5. If an individual dies thinking of Me, he or she realizes non-difference from Me. There is no doubt about this. But if at that time something else enters the mind, he or she goes there.

7. Offer your heart and mind to Me at all times and fight! There is no doubt that you will reach only Me. If you reflect on the teachings of non-duality with a mind fortified by yoga...a mind that does not wander to other objects...you will realize your limitless self-effulgent nature. If you contemplate on what is all knowing, most ancient, the ruler and ordainer of everything, subtler than the subtlest, of inconceivable form, and beyond knowledge and ignorance you will realize your true nature. If your mind is steady with the devotional strength gained through yoga and you place your breath properly between your eyebrows, you will reach the limitless effulgent Self.

11. I will tell you briefly about the Self which is the topic of the Vedas and which is realized by renunciates who pursue a life of self study and discipline.

12. Shut down the sense organs, withdraw the mind into the heart, place your breath at the top of your head and hold it there by yoga while chanting the syllable Om...which is the Self. If you then let go of the body you will realize your identity with Me.. A mind that constantly sees no other easily realizes Me. If you successfully realize Me you will not take another miserable limited birth. Up to the level of the Creator you will come back to earth from any world in which beings exist. But you will not be reborn to Self ignorance if you know who I am.

## The Unmanifest

17. *One of the Creator's days lasts a thousand eons, as does one of its nights. At the beginning of the day all things and beings arise from the Unmanifest and become manifest. And when night begins they are again resolved into the Unmanifest. But eternal Consciousness is beyond the manifest and the Unmanifest. It does not change when all beings are destroyed. It is what is to be known. When you realize It you no longer see yourself as a limited being. The Self is limitless and can be obtained by a devotion which knows no otherness. It is that in which all beings are rooted and by whom all are pervaded.*

### **Two Paths**

23. *Oh, Arjuna I will explain to you the paths of return and no return by which yogis go.*

24. *Meditators on the Self travel for six months through the lands of the god of fire, the god of light and time, the god of the day and the god of the light fortnight and arrive at the abode of the Self. But the yogi whose mind is elsewhere travels for six months through the lands of the deity of smoke, the deity of night, the deity of the dark fortnight, when the sun is in the south. He or she gains the world of the moon and returns to earth. It is well known that both the dark and the bright paths are eternal. By the bright path one gains liberation and does not return, by the other one returns again to bondage. Knowing these two paths, be not deluded. Therefore, at all times may you be in yoga, Arjuna. The one who knows this no longer needs to follow the injunctions in the Vedas concerning the results of actions, rituals, disciplines and charities and attains my supreme abode.*

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **The King of Secrets**

1. *Krishna said, 'Because your heart is pure I will explain clearly and in detail the secret and immediate knowledge which will release you from inauspiciousness. This easily accomplished knowledge, the king of all knowledges and secrets, is not opposed to dharma. It is the greatest purifier. Those who lack faith in Self knowledge, do not realize Me and remain caught in the whirlpool of samsara.*

4. *I cannot be experienced yet I pervade the whole universe. Everything has its*

*being in Me but I am free of everything. No beings exist in Me. Such is my nature that although I create and sustain all things and beings, I stand apart from them. As the wind travels everywhere in space, all beings live and move in me.*

### **The Unmanifest**

*7. At the end of the creation cycle all beings return to my Unmanifest and I will them to emerge from it again at the beginning of the creation cycle. With the aid of the Unmanifest, which I control, I create all beings over and over irrespective of their wishes. O! Arjuna, no karmas bind Me. I am unconnected and indifferent to them. Because I shine on the Unmanifest, sentient beings and insentient objects are created and are subject to constant change.*

### **Worship of Forms**

*11. When I am in a body people do not realize that I am the limitless Lord of everything.*

*12. Aggressive, godless, self-centered people, their faces turned from the sun, hope in vain that the fruits of their actions will fulfill them; lacking discrimination they pursue innumerable kinds of knowledge. But noble souls with spiritual tendencies fix their minds on me and wholeheartedly seek Me because they know that I am the imperishable source of everything. Because they appreciate Me as I am they wholeheartedly worship Me, surrendering and consistently making an effort to unite with Me. Not only do they worship and seek me as the One but they worship my manifold forms, knowing that these forms are not separate from me.*

*16. I am the sacrificial ritual and the sacred fire. I am the offerings, the sacred chants and the ones who chant. I am mother and father of the universe. I am the uncaused cause. I sustain and nourish everything. I am what is to be known and the great purifier. I am Om and I am the Vedas. I am the nourisher and sustainer of everything. I am the results of all actions and the giver of the results. I am the witness and that for which everything strives. I am the refuge and the friend of all. From me the whole creation evolves and into Me it is resolved. Everything has its being in Me. I am the imperishable seed. I am the heat in the sun. I withhold and release the rains. I am death and immortality. I am the cause and the effect, O! Arjuna.*

20. *Those who propitiate me by religious rituals, who offer the soma and are purified of their sins go to heavenly realms where they enjoy the results of their meritorious deeds. They enjoy until their good karma is exhausted and then return back to samsara, the world of coming and going. But those who inquire into Me and understand that they are non-separate from Me, realize their identity with Me. I protect what they acquire and value.*

24. *Arjuna, even those who faithfully worship other gods unknowingly worship me. I receive the offerings of all rituals because I am the only Lord. Because they do not know who they really worship, they do not come to Me. If they worship the gods they reach the world of the gods. If they worship the ancestors they reach the world of the ancestors. Spirit worshippers gain the spirit world but those who worship and seek Me, get Me.*

27. *I happily receive a pure hearted offering no matter how humble: a leaf, flower, fruit, even a drop of water. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever rituals you perform, whatever you give, or whatever religious discipline you follow, Arjuna, please do it as an offering to Me. This will release you from desireable and undesirable karmas. This karma yoga attitude will endow your mind with the spirit of renunciation and you will come to Me.*

29. *I am the same in all beings. I dislike no one nor do I play favorites, but those who devotedly seek me realize that they exist in me and I in them. Even sinners who know they are non-separate from me should be respected because their understanding is clear. With this non-dual understanding the mind quickly conforms to dharma and becomes peaceful. You can know for certain that anyone sincerely devoted to me will never be destroyed. Indeed, even women, business people, the lower castes or those born into families of improper conduct who take refuge in me ultimately realize who I am. Not to mention how easy it is for those who have fortunate births. If you find yourself in this impermanent unhappy world may you seek Me. May you devote yourself to realizing who I am, offer your actions to me, and surrender the fruits of your actions to Me. If you understand that I am the only desirable goal and prepare yourself in this way, you will reach only Me.*

## **Chapter 10**

### **The Glories of the Self**

1. Krishna said, "Since you are pleased with my words I will reveal my limitless glories. Because I am the uncaused cause neither the gods nor the sages understand how I manifest my glory in this world. The undeluded mortal who knows Me as unborn, beyond cause and effect, and as the limitless Lord of the world is released from merit and demerit.

4,5. The capacity to understand, knowledge, freedom from delusion, the ability to accommodate, composure, truthfulness, restraint in behaviour, the ability to think clearly, pleasure, creation, destruction, fear and fearlessness, harmlessness, equanimity, satisfaction, religious discipline, charity, fame, and infamy come from Me alone.

6. The seven ancient seers and the four progenitors whose minds are resolved in me are born of my mind. All the living beings issue from their minds. If you see these glories of mine here in this world there is no doubt that your vision of Me is steady. You are wise if you see Me as the creator and sustainer of everything.

9. Those whose minds are fixed on Me, who live by what they see, who teach one another and talk continually about Me are always satisfied because they revel in Me. I grant the vision of non-duality to those who seek me with love and deep commitment. Out of compassion I extinguish the dark thoughts of limitation with the shining lamp of Self knowledge."

12. Arjuna said, "O! Krishna, you are limitless Awareness, the light of lights, the great purifier. The sages and the gods say you are their source...eternal, transcendent, unborn and all pervasive...as you yourself have said. I believe all that you have told me so far. Neither the gods nor the demons know who or what you are. You know who you are with your own mind. Indeed you are the most exalted being, the creator and ruler of all beings, including the gods. Only you are capable of revealing the extent of your extraordinary glories. What is the best way to meditate on you, O greatest of yogis? Because I am still not satisfied please describe in greater detail your wonders and glories."

19. Krishna said, "Because there is no end to them I will only enumerate the most important ones.

20. I am the master of sleep, O! Arjuna. Meditate on Me as your own Self because I

am the one who dwells in the hearts of all beings, creating, sustaining and destroying everything. Among the Adityas I am Visnu; among the luminaries, the Sun, the one who has rays. Among the Maruts, I am Marici; among the nocturnal luminaries I am the Moon. Among the Vedas I am the Samaveda; among the gods I am Indra; among the sense organs I am the mind, and in the Subtle Body I am the intellect. Among the Rudras I am Sankara; I am Kubera among the yaksas and ksasas. Among the Vasus I am Fire. I am Meru among the snow-capped mountains. Arjuna, may you know Me to be Brhaspati, the chief among the priests. Among the commanders-in-chief I am Skanda; among bodies of water I am the ocean. Among the sages I am Bhrgu, among the words I am the syllable Om, among rituals I am japa and among the mountains, the Himalayas. I am the sacred banyan among the trees and among the celestial sages, I am Narada. Among the gandharvas, I am Citraratha and among the siddhas I am the sage Kapila. May you know Me Uccaisravas among the horses and Airavata among the elephants who both appeared when the milky ocean was churned by the gods and the demons. Among men I am the kings. Among the weapons I am Vajra; among the cattle I am the wish-fulfilling cow. I am Kandarpa, the God of love, who causes children. Of the poisonous snakes I am Vasuki. And I am Ananta among the many headed snakes. I am Varuna among water gods; among the ancestors I am Aryama; I am Death among those who enforce discipline. And I am Prahlada among the daityas, the asuras born of Diti. **Among things that think, I am Time** and among wild animals I am the lion. I am the eagle among the birds. Among the purifiers, I am air. I am Rama among the warriors. And among the fish I am shark; among the rivers I am Ganga. I am indeed the beginning, the middle, and the end of the creation, Arjuna. Among the disciplines of knowledge, I am the knowledge of the Self. Of those who reason, I am the reasoning that leads to truth. Among the letters I am `a' and I am the dvandva among the compounds; I am indeed eternal time. I am the all pervasive giver of the results of all actions. I am Death that takes away everything and I am the cause of prosperity for those yet to be. Among the feminine words I am fame, wealth, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude, and equanimity. So too, I am the brhatsama among the samas, gayatri among the metres; among the months, Margairsa, and among the seasons, the spring. I am the game of dice among the things that deceive; of the brilliant I am the brilliance. I am the victory of the victorious. I am the clarity in clear thinkers. Of those with contemplative dispositions I am sattva. Among the Yadavas, I am Krishna and among the Pandavas, Arjuna. Among the seers I am Vyasa and the preceptor Usana among the sages. I am the discipline in the enforcers. I am the dharmic order that makes success possible. I am silence among the secrets. Of those who have knowledge, I am that knowledge. And

*I am the cause of all things. Nothing sentient or insentient can exist without me.*

*40. There is no end to my extraordinary glories, Arjuna. I have listed only a few important ones. Whatever glorious thing there is, whatever is endowed with value, distinguished or mighty reveals only a mere fraction of my glory. Strictly speaking, Arjuna, what use is such a short list because I pervade the entire creation with only one tiny ray of my Awareness.*

## Chapter 11

### Vision of the Cosmic Form

1. Arjuna said: *“Your compassionate words concerning the nature of the supreme Self have dispelled my delusion, My Lord. You have described in detail the creation and dissolution of things and your eternal majesty. I am certain you have described yourself correctly but now I would like to see your divine form as the Lord of all things and beings. If it is possible to reveal your imperishable Self please do so now.”*

8. Krishna replied, *“Since it is impossible to for you to see with ordinary eyes I will now give you an extraordinary eye, one that will allow you to see all my glory!”*

9. The One whose grace destroys all sorrow showed his transcendent form as the sovereign Lord of everything and said, *“Behold hundreds, and thousands of my various divine forms in many shapes and colors! See all the elemental powers: earth, wind, fire and sky. Observe the sun, moon and stars and all the subtle forces playing in the universe, myriad wonders never revealed before! See everything moving and unmoving united in my limitless body...and anything else you wish to see.”*

10. Arjuna saw Krishna’s infinite body smeared with sandal paste, adorned with celestial malas and shining ornaments. He observed countless faces looking in every direction, each with countless mouths and eyes. He saw millions of hands held aloft gripping wondrous objects and extraordinary weapons. Should a thousand suns burst forth simultaneously in the sky it would be but a faint reflection of the radiance of the Self.

13. Arjuna saw an infinite diversity of objects united as one in the body of the Lord. Overcome with awe, his head bowed, hair standing on end and hands clasped in salutation he spoke the following words. *“In your body, O! Lord, I see the powers of nature, the myriad creatures of the world, the Creator on his lotus throne, the celestial sages and shining angels. You have infinite forms with infinite arms, legs and mouths and eyes looking in every direction. There is no beginning, middle or end to your cosmic form. I see you with a bejeweled golden crown holding a mace and a discus in a blaze of Awareness so brilliant I can hardly look at you. You cannot be known as one knows objects.*

18. *I now completely appreciate you as the imperishable, limitless, Self, the one to be known. You are support of the whole universe and yet unaffected by it. You lay down and protect the eternal moral and physical laws by which the creation operates. You are eternal complete being. You have no beginning, middle or end. Your endless arms embrace everything. The sun and the moon are your eyes and your face, radiant with the fire of Awareness, illumines the whole cosmos. You pervade the space between heaven and earth and every direction. The three worlds tremble at the sight of this wondrous frightening form of yours.*

21. *Indeed, the heavenly hosts enter into you. Some are frightened and pray with joined palms. Great sages and yogis praise you profusely. The five elements, the sun, moon and stars, the angels, guardians of the universe, divine healers, the fathers, the Self realized and even atheists stare at you with amazement. Seeing your incredible form with many faces, eyes, hands and feet causes people great fear, O mighty armed one...particularly me!*

24. *You cannot imagine how terrifying it is to see someone so huge that they surpass the heavens, someone with millions of devouring mouths and eyes burning with the fire of Consciousness. It is deeply disturbing and I cannot collect myself. These awesome mouths with huge protruding fangs destroying everything in sight completely disorient me. Please, Lord, be merciful!*

26. *Your voracious mouths eagerly devour all the sons of Dhritarastra, Bhishma, Drona, and Karna and all the other kings. Some, their heads crushed by your mighty molars, stick between your teeth. As flood-swollen rivers flow into the ocean or confused moths incinerate themselves in a fire, these great heroes...and indeed all living beings...mindlessly fling themselves into your devouring mouths. You swallow them all and lick your chops over and over again as the universe is scorched by your brilliant cruel flames. Salutations to you, Oh, Exalted among the gods! Please tell me who wears this terrible form. Be gracious and remove this vision. I do not understand why you gave me this experience."*

32. *Krishna replied, "I am Time. I lay waste to the worlds. Even without you to kill them, the warriors standing in the opposing army are doomed. Therefore, stand and conquer! Destroy your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. Be the instrument of my destruction. Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, and Karna and all their fighters are as good as dead. Fear not and fight!"*

36. Arjuna, his palms folded and his limbs trembling, saluted Krishna and spoke in a voice choked with emotion. "It is quite natural, Krishna, that the world rejoices and sings your praises. Demons fly in fear and the saints extol your glories. O Lord, they should surrender to you because you are even greater than the Creator. You are the God of gods, the one in whom the worlds exist, beyond cause and effect. Before creation you were here and now you fill it with being. Everything resolves in you. You are the knower and what is to be known and the ultimate abode. Your forms are endless.

39. You are the Lord of the Winds, Lord of Death, Lord of fire, Lord of Water, the presiding deity of the moon. You are the Creator and the uncreated Creator of the Creator. Honor and glory to you a thousand times! Salutations a thousand times! I bow in front of you. I bow in back and on all sides. You have infinite all pervading power. You are everything.

41. Please forgive any rash statements or slights or inappropriate jests I may have made when I did not know who you were. You are difficult to know. Your glories are unrivaled. You are the father of everything movable and immovable. You are the first teacher. In the three worlds no one equals you, nor is anyone superior. Therefore bless me and forgive me as a father forgives a son, a friend a friend, a lover a lover.

45. O Lord, I am happy to have seen what no one has seen before but I am also overwhelmed with fear. Please assume that pleasing form of yours once again and appear before me wearing your crown with the scepter and discus in your hands, Oh you of countless forms!"

47. Krishna said, "Because you are my friend I have revealed my original radiant form for the first time. Not by study of the Vedas or religious rituals, nor by charity or severe austerities can anyone other than you see me in this form, O bravest of the Kurus. Do not be frightened and confused by this awesome form of mine. Now see me in my normal form."

50. Then Krishna reappeared in his human form and Arjuna became cheerful once more.

52. Krishna continued, "You have seen what is very difficult to see. Even the gods

*desire this vision. As I just mentioned I cannot be seen in this form through study of the Vedas, ascetic practices, charity, or worship. You alone have seen Me in this way. But with devotion in which there is no other, it is possible to see and know and enter into Me. Those who dedicate their actions to Me because I am their only goal, those who are free from attachment and enmity come to realize who I am.*

## **Chapter 12**

### **Devotion**

- 1. Arjuna said, Which devotee has the best understanding of Yoga: the one who meditates on You as a personal god in your divine form or the one who sees you impersonally, not subject to decline and unavailable for objectification?*
- 2. Krishna replied, "Those who always keep their minds and hearts fixed on me with unflinching concentration and faith are the best."*
- 3. Assuming they have mastery over the senses, view everything with equal vision, and take delight in the welfare of all beings, those who contemplate upon That which is not subject to decline, indescribable, unavailable for objectification, all pervasive, not an object of thought, which abides unmoving in Maya and is eternal also realize Me. But they encounter greater hardships because of identification with the body.*
- 6. However, the way is easier for those who want only Me, consistently offer all their actions to Me and keep their minds fixed only on Me. I liberate them quickly from the ocean of life and death. If your heart clings to me and your intellect continually inquires into Me, there is no doubt that you will come to abide in Me alone.*
- 9. If, however, you are unable to keep the mind continually absorbed in Me, then seek to reach me through the yoga of constant practice. In the event that you do not have the capacity to practice yoga, devote yourself to my service by offering all your actions to Me. You will succeed. Even if you are unable to do this, take refuge in Me and train your mind to give up the results of all your actions to Me.*
- 12. Knowledge is better indeed than action and meditation is superior to knowledge but renunciation of the results of action is better than meditation because peace*

*comes immediately when results are renounced.*

### **The Self realized devotee**

*13. The one who has no hatred for others, who is kind, compassionate and accommodating, free of pride, possessiveness, and the 'I notion', the same in conducive and unconducive circumstances, who is satisfied with what he or she is and has, whose mind is controlled, and whose intellect constantly inquires into Me, is my beloved.*

*15. The one because of whom people do not get disturbed and who does not get disturbed by people and who is unaffected by elation, intolerance, fear and anxiety, is beloved to Me.*

*16. The one from whom the world does not shrink, nor who shrinks from the world, who is independent and stable, uninclined to initiate self-centered actions, who is not carried away by joy, anger or fear, is unmoved by good and bad karma and indifferent to the satisfaction of his or her worldly desires is beloved to Me.*

*18. The one who treats enemies and friends alike, sees success and failure in the same light, remains unchanged when honored or disgraced, views pleasure and pain, heat and cold equally, and stands free of objects is beloved to Me.*

*19. Those who are disciplined in speech, satisfied with whatever comes, have no place to call their own, whose Self knowledge is firm and are devoted to Me are beloved to Me.*

*20. Those faithful ones whose lives are in harmony with dharma and whose lives are centered on Me are exceedingly beloved to Me.*

## **Chapter 13**

### **The Knower and the Known**

*1. Arjuna said: What is the field and what is the knower of the field? What is the means of knowledge and what is to be known?*

2. Krishna said, This body is matter and is called the 'field'. The Self, Awareness, is the knower of the field. I am the Knower of the body and of all bodies. Self knowledge is knowing both the field and the Knower.

4. I will now briefly discuss the nature of the field, the modifications that take place in it and where it comes from. I will also explain the Knower and its powers. It is to be known through the mantras of the Vedic seers in many ways. And it is indeed explained by the sentences of the sutras on Brahman which clearly reveal It by implication and reason.

6. The five subtle elements, ego, intellect and the Unmanifest, the mind, the ten senses and their objects constitute the structure of the field. Modifications that take place in the field are desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body and cognition.

Other than the following modifications all else is ignorance: fortitude, absence of conceit, absence of hypocrisy, harmlessness, accommodation, straightforwardness, reverence for the teacher, cleanliness, steadfastness, self-discipline, dispassion with reference to the sense objects, absence of pride, seeing clearly the defects of pain, birth, death, old age and disease, absence of ownership, absence of excessive affection regarding family, sex and home, evenness of mind regarding gain and loss, unswerving devotion to Me, love of solitude, indifference to social life and constant pursuit of Self knowledge.

12. The Self, pure Awareness, beginningless, limitless, neither existent as an object, nor non-existent, is what is to be known. Everywhere are its hands and feet, everywhere it has eyes that see, minds that think and mouths that speak. It listens everywhere. It dwells in everything and pervades everything. Though free of the senses It shines through every sense organ. It is connected to nothing but supports and sustains everything. It stands apart from the three gunas yet it enjoys them all.

15. This Self to be known is within all beings yet outside them too. It moves without moving. Too subtle to be perceived it is the nearest of the near. It is indivisible but seems to be made of parts. It creates, sustains, and devours all beings. The light of lights, it is beyond ignorance. It is what is worth knowing. It is knowledge, the means of knowledge and the object of knowledge. It is present in the hearts and minds of all beings.

18. *I have now briefly explained the field, the Knower of the field and what is to be known. The one who understands this clearly and is devoted to actualizing it will realize Me. **You should also know that the field and the knower have no beginning and that the modifications taking place in the field are born of the field alone.** The field generates the physical body and its instruments. The Knower makes it possible to experience pleasure and pain. Because the experiencer obtains in the field, it enjoys the modifications and attributes of the field. Attachment to the attributes is the cause for births in higher and lower wombs. The one obtaining in the body is the limitless Self, the seer, permitter, sustainer, and enjoyer.*

23. *Irrespective of your lifestyle you will not be born again if you understand the nature of the field and its knower. Some, with the aid of a purified mind realize the Self by meditation, some by inquiry guided by the means of knowledge, some through karma yoga. But others, by applying what they have heard from qualified teachers, also realize the Self. Living and non-living things are born because the Knower illumines the field.*

27. *The one who sees the Self unchanging in the midst of the changing field, alone sees. If you see the Self in all things equally you will not fall from the path which leads to Self realization. If you understand that the field alone is responsible for action and that the Self is not a doer you know the truth. Liberation is seeing clearly that the manifold beings and objects in the field are a projection of the non-dual Self. Though it obtains in the body, the Self, limitless Awareness, does not act. Just as subtle all-pervasive space is unaffected by what takes place in it, the Self is unaffected by the modifications taking place in it. Just as the sun illumines the entire world the Self illumines the entire field. The knowledge that distinguishes the field from the Knower is liberation.*

## **Chapter 14**

### **The Three Gunas**

1. *Krishna said, "Self knowledge is the most exalted form of knowledge because it frees the Self from attachment to the body. Those who have realized My non-dual nature do not come into being when creation happens, nor do they die when the world is dissolved.*

3. *When I illumine the Unmanifest all beings are created. In whatever material womb beings are born, Arjuna, the Unmanifest is the mother and I am the father.*

5. *Three qualities color the Unmanifest and bind the Self to the body: sattva, rajas, and tamas.*

6. *Sattva, of the nature of Awareness, binds by attachment to bliss, purity, beauty and knowledge. Rajas, colors the mind with passion and attachment, afflicting the Self with a binding need to act. Tamas the child of ignorance confuses and deludes the Indweller. It stupefies the mind and binds by sleep, indolence, indifference and sloth. Sattva causes bondage to pleasure, rajas to action, and tamas to apathy.*

10. *When sattva predominates rajas and tamas recede. When rajas predominates sattva and tamas recede. And when tamas predominates sattva and rajas recede.*

11. *When the senses and the mind are particularly aware and capable of clear knowledge sattva is predominant. When rajas predominates the Indweller is overtaken by extroversion, greed, restless craving, and an intense desire for enjoyment. Darkness, inactivity, confusion and lethargy are experienced when tamas predominates.*

14. *If sattva is predominant when the body dies, the Indweller enters the pure worlds of those who know the truth. If rajas is predominant when the body dies, the Indweller is reborn as a doer, committed to karma. If tamas predominates at death the Indweller is reborn without discrimination.*

16. *Sattva is the cause of virtuous activities, motivated by a pure mind free of distress. Pain and sorrow is the result of rajas and ignorance is caused by tamas. From sattva is born knowledge and wisdom, from rajas greed. Apathy, ignorance and delusion come from tamas. Those who cultivate sattva evolve upward, those who cultivate rajas remain the same, and those who cultivate tamas degenerate.*

19. *When the Seer sees the gunas as the doer and realizes that it is beyond the gunas, it attains freedom. Going beyond the three gunas which cause of the body, The Embodied One is released from birth, death, old age and sorrow and realizes its immortal nature.*

## **The Self Realized Person**

21. *Arjuna said, "How do you recognize people who have transcended the gunas, O! Lord?"*

22. *Krishna replied, "Such people are not averse to any state of mind...even tamas... when it predominates. Nor do they long for any state of mind when it is gone.*

23. *They are not affected by their tendencies but stand fast in Awareness, understanding that the gunas are causing the actions. They view conducive and unconducive circumstances equally, stand fast in Awareness as Awareness, and see no difference between a clod of earth and a lump of gold. They no longer initiate undertakings, are unaffected by praise and blame and see no difference between a friend and an enemy. Those who seek and worship Me with unswerving devotion transcend the gunas and are qualified to realize the Self.*

27. *Indeed, I am the home of the limitless immortal Self, the eternal dharma and that happiness that is not subject to decay.*

## **Chapter 15**

### **Supreme Being**

1. *Krishna said, "Maya is like a great imperishable tree with its roots in Awareness, its branches stretching far below into the world of men. The Vedas are its leaves. The one who knows it is a knower of the Vedas. Nourished by the gunas its foliage spreads both upwards and downwards. The sense objects are its buds. Secondary roots stretch down into the world of men binding them to the karmic wheel.*

3. *In this world it is not possible to understand its nature because it has no end and no beginning and seemingly no source. Cut its well entrenched roots with the firm axe of non-attachment and the path from which there is no return...Self inquiry...will open to you. To succeed on that path surrender to that Being from whom this eternal creation is projected.*

5. *To gain that imperishable end from which there is no return fix your mind on the Self and free yourself from the need for respect, from attachment to objects and*

*from the push and pull of the opposites. Do not feed your desire for objects.*

*6. Neither the sun, nor moon, nor fire, illumines That from which one does not return. That is My limitless abode.*

*7. In the world a part of Me exists as the Indweller, the eternal individual. When the Indweller leaves the body, it gathers the five senses and the mind and enters a new body, just as the wind carries the fragrance of a flower far afield. Presiding over the ear, the eye, the senses of touch, taste, and smell, and the mind, this eternal person experiences the sense objects.*

*10. The deluded do not see the guna-driven one experiencing through the body now or when it departs. But those with the eye of wisdom see. By making an effort yogis apprehend this Self shining in the mind. But immature people who lack discrimination do not see the Self shining there... even if they make an effort.*

*12. The light because of which the sun and the moon shine, the light illumining all the worlds is Me. I also enter the earth and sustain beings with my energy. I nourish all vegetation and am the essence, the soma, of all things. I am the digestive fire in the bodies of all living beings and I cook the food. I have entered the hearts of all beings. Because I am in them they gain knowledge, remember and forget. I alone am the object of Vedic knowledge. I am the author of the Vedanta sampradaya and the knower of the Vedas.*

*16. Two selves, one perishable and the other imperishable, exist in the world. The conscious beings and matter are perishable, the Unmanifest is imperishable. But other than these is the Self beyond the selves, the limitless changeless Awareness that has entered the three worlds and sustains them. Because I am beyond change and changelessness I am indestructible. Therefore I am renowned as the supreme being. If you know me in this way you become a knower of everything, the Self of all.*

*20. O! Arjuna, this is the most profound teaching. Knowing this you are enlightened and have accomplished all that needs to be accomplished in this life.*

## **Chapter 16**

## Helpful and Unhelpful Mentalities

1-24. Krishna said, "In this world, two basic dispositions prevail, the sattvic and the rajasic/tamasic. The sattvic inclines one to freedom, the rajasic/tamasic to bondage.

Know the sattvic personality by the following signs: fearlessness, clarity of mind, steadiness in contemplation, charity, judicious restraint, performance of sacred rituals, love of knowledge, love of austerity, alignment of thought, word and deed, absence of hurting, truthfulness, renunciation, ability to resolve negative emotions, absence of calumny, compassion, absence of ardent longing, softness, modesty, absence of physical agitation, brilliance, composure, fortitude, cleanliness, and lack of exaggerated self-opinion.

Now I will describe in detail the impulses and thoughts of a sunless personality: hypocrisy with reference to dharma, a tendency toward anger and frustration, a need for respect from others, a lack of discrimination, an inability to know what needs to be done, an inability to remove oneself from uncondusive situations, inner turmoil, a tendency toward improper unbecoming conduct.

These people are born out of lustful unions and are consequently driven by passion and little else. They believe the universe was an accident, that it serves no purpose and that there is no God. Materialists to the core, they see themselves as the body and believe that creation is merely a matter of a sperm inseminating an egg. Ethics mean nothing to them; they play fast and loose with the truth and are so obsessed with what they want they readily bend the rules to suit their purposes.

These enemies of the world are incapable of reason and exhibit a tendency toward deceit and cruelty. Because they are pretentious and grandiose they desire things that are nearly impossible to obtain and are therefore continually frustrated and disappointed. Filled with pride, they demand respect from others.

They live on hope and engage themselves in the pursuit of material goals for the purpose of sense enjoyment. Willful to the core, they feel that what they have is the result of their own cleverness and depend for their self esteem on whatever material goods they have managed to accumulate. They think of themselves as masters of the universe and revel in the destruction of those who stand in their way. "I am an

*enjoyer, a big success, powerful and happy. I am from a good family, a classy cultured person. I am generous. I will perform acts of charity to show the world how good I am," is how they think. Because of their arrogant self-glorifying delusions they continually suffer pain.*

*These hateful and cruel wrongdoers are the barely human and birth after birth I repeatedly dispatch them into the lowest and most painful wombs. As long as they continue to think this way, they will never realize who I am.*

*The three doorways to this mentality are desire, anger and greed. Impelled by these unholy urges and contemptuous of the scriptures, these souls rarely mature. Nor do they find happiness in the world, much less a higher life.*

*But the one who avoids these three gates to darkness follows what is good and reaches a higher life. Should you have a doubt about what to do in this life let scripture guide you in what is to be done."*

## **Chapter 17**

### **Three Religious Dispositions**

- 1. O! Krsna, what is the basis of the priorities and values of people who perform rituals according the scripture? Is it the three gunas?*
- 2. Sri Bhagavan said: People's priorities and values depend on whether their minds are sattvic, rajasic or tamasic. People are little more than their priorities and values.*
- 4. People in whom sattva predominates worship for knowledge of God and the purification of the mind. Rajasic people worship to gain certain things in the world. Tamasic people worship out of fear or to achieve ignoble ends.*
- 5. Those with sunless dispositions are riddled with pretension and self importance, motivated by passion and longing, lack discrimination and perform physically harmful religious disciplines not enjoined by the scriptures. Not only do they violate the rules of the body they injure themselves spiritually.*
- 7. The way one eats, performs religious rituals, disciplines one's self and gives*

*charity depends on the predominance of a particular guna.*

*8. Foods, which increase longevity, mental clarity, strength and health and are pleasing to taste and look at are loved by sattvic people. Bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, astringent, and burning foods that give pain and regret and cause health problems are sought after by rajasic people. Leftovers, putrid and inadequately cooked food from which the energy has gone and is unfit as an offering is preferred by tamasic people.*

*11. Rituals enjoined by the scripture performed dutifully without expectation of a result other than the feeling of purity they engender is sattvic. Rituals offered to gain something in this world or to proclaim one's religiosity are rajasic. Rituals not sanctioned by the scripture whose mantras are not properly recited and do not involve the distribution of food and wealth are tamasic.*

*14. Physical discipline involves serving wise spiritual teachers, keeping the body clean and healthy, and non-injury to others. Speech which does not cause agitation to oneself and others, which is true, pleasing and beneficial...including daily repetition of one's own Veda...comprise speech discipline. Cheerfulness, lack of a compulsion to speak, mastery of the mind through observation, and straightforward intent are called mental discipline.*

*17. Self discipline that is observed by those who expect no result other than mental purity is called sattvic. Inconsistent and short-lived self discipline or discipline done ostentatiously to obtain the high opinion of others is rajasic. Discipline done from a deluded state of mind that involves bodily affliction or whose intent is to destroy is tamasic.*

*20. Charity dutifully given at the appropriate place and time to a worthy recipient without expectation of return is sattvic. Charity that is painful to give and is intended to benefit oneself is rajasic. Charity given contemptuously at inappropriate times and places to unworthy recipients is tamasic.*

23. 'Om tat sat,' are three words uttered in the beginning by the Creator that reveal the Self and created the Vedas and their ritual sacrifices. Therefore Vedic rituals, charities, and religious disciplines always begin with Om.

25. After saying 'tat' rituals, religious disciplines and charitable activities are performed by those who want liberation without the expectation of a result other than a pure mind. The word 'sat' is used to help create a righteous life and sanctify one's karma. Performance of ritual, religious discipline, and giving is called 'sat,' and actions done for the sake of the Self are also called 'sat.' 'Asat' refers to rituals, disciplines and charity performed without faith that produce no results now or later.

## Chapter 18

### Liberation and Renunciation

1. Arjuna said: "I would now like to know the truth concerning sannyasa and tyaga."

2. Krishna replied: "The wise say sannyasa is renunciation of actions for desired objects and that tyaga is the renunciation of the results of action.

3. Some of the wise say that action, which is inherently defective, is to be given up, and others that ritual and charitable actions and religious disciplines should not be given up. It is my considered opinion that ritual and charitable actions and religious disciplines should not be given up because they purify the mind. But these actions should be done without attachment to the results.

7. It is tamasic to give up scripturally enjoined obligatory action. It is rajasic to give up scripturally recommended action out of fear of physical discomfort. If one does so he or she will not gain the result of renunciation. It is sattvic to do scripturally recommended karma without the idea of personal gain but simply because the scripture recommends it.

10. The one who does not hesitate to perform a disagreeable action nor is attached to doing agreeable actions is a true renunciate because he or she is free of confusion concerning the purpose of renunciation. As long as you have a body you cannot

avoid performing actions, but renunciation is letting go of the results of one's actions. If you do not renounce the fruits of your actions the results will be desirable, undesirable and a mixture of the two. But there are no results for renunciates.

13. Vedanta says five factors are necessary to produce the result of an action: the physical body, the doer, organs of action, the five physiological functions and the vasanas. The activities that a person undertakes with the body, speech or mind will be the result of these five factors. When someone is ignorant of the actual causes of action he or she believes his or herself to be the cause of action...or takes the Self, which is free of action, to be the cause of action. The one who has no sense of doership does not kill even though he kills. And the results of those actions do not affect him or her.

18. Knowledge, the thought corresponding to an object, the object of knowledge, and the knower are the cause of action. The doer, the instruments used by the doer and the action itself are the threefold constituents of action.

19. Knowledge, action and the doer are conditioned by the gunas.

20. That non-dual knowledge by which the many beings are understood to be the one being is sattvic. That knowledge by which non-dual being is understood to be many different beings is rajasic. And that unreasoning dogmatic knowledge which takes one limited thing among the many to be everything is tamasic.

23. An action done without attachment and not motivated by one's likes and dislikes with no binding desire for the result is sattvic. But intense effort done with a sense of self importance and a binding desire for the result is rajasic. That action done on a whim without considering the consequences...loss to oneself or injury to others, for example...or one's own capacity is tamasic.

26. The doer who is free from attachment and egoism, who is endowed with resolve, enthusiasm and confidence, and is unperturbed in success and failure, is sattvic. The rajasic doer is attached to results, greedy, aggressive and impulsive. He or she is capable of hurting others and subject to elation and depression. A tamasic doer is undisciplined, vulgar, immature, irreverent, deceptive, cruel, lazy, procrastinating and given to depression.

29. *Now please listen to how the gunas affect the intellect and one's resolve.*

30. *The intellect which knows the difference between the pursuit of happiness through karma and the renunciation of karma, which knows what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, and the difference between bondage and freedom is sattvic. That intellect which is confused about what is right and what is wrong, what is to be done and what is not to be done is rajasic. The perverse intellect that thinks that what is wrong is right and takes a contrary stand on every issue is tamasic.*

33. *The patient resolve with which one controls the activities of the mind, one's energy level, and the organs of action and knowledge is sattvic. Whereas, Arjuna, the opportunistic resolve with which a result oriented person changes the mind according to prevailing circumstances in the pursuit of religious merit, pleasure and security is rajasic. That clinging persistent resolve motivated by improper thinking which refuses to give up sleep, fear, sorrow, depression and harmful habits is tamasic.*

36. *Listen to Me now, Arjuna, concerning the threefold happiness. That gradual happiness that comes from the application of Self knowledge to the mind and transforms suffering into sweet nectar is sattvic. That happiness arising from the contact with desired objects that is laden with pleasure in the beginning but gradually becomes painful is rajasic. That sensual narcotic happiness which is born of sleep, laziness and indifference and is self-deluding from start to finish is tamasic.*

40. *No being anywhere in the creation is free of these three gunas.*

41. *The duties of the spiritual, warrior, commercial and service class are determined by the predominate guna.*

42. *Because of a predominance of sattva it is the duty of spiritual types to be composed, restrained, religious, clean, accommodating, and straightforward. They should accept the truths contained in scripture and be committed to the ready assimilation of knowledge.*

43. *Because of a predominance of rajas and some sattva in their minds it is the duty of the warrior and political class to protect dharma. They should provide courageous self-confident leadership, be resolved, fair-minded, generous and adroit.*

*They should not avoid conflict.*

*44. Because of preponderance of rajas and some tamas it is the duty of the commercial class to provide and preserve wealth for the society through agriculture and commerce. Because of a preponderance of tamas in their minds...which limits their ability to think clearly and initiate actions...it is the duty of the working class to serve.*

*45. One actualizes his or her full potential by doing his or her duty with enthusiasm. Listen to how this happens.*

*46. By worshipfully dedicating one's actions to the Creator, the One by whom all this is pervaded, a human being becomes successful.*

*47. **One's own duty, devoid of merit, is better than the duty of another, well-done.** Doing action enjoined according to one's nature, one incurs no blame. The karma that comes as a result of following your nature should not be abandoned even though it is not to your liking...because every action is imperfect.*

*49. The one whose mind is free from attachment and longing and who has sublimated the impulses of the mind into the quest for Self realization gains the most exalted end...freedom from action...through renunciation.*

*50. Now briefly hear how the one who has gained a pure mind becomes ultimately established in Self knowledge.*

*51. With firm and patient resolve one sublimates the desire for sense gratification into mastery of the mind by purifying one's likes and dislikes. One lives a quiet life committed to self inquiry, eats lightly, disciplines the body, speech and mind and no longer expects objective circumstances to complete one's self. As one lets go of the vain ideas of doership, ownership and the quest for power over objective circumstances the mind becomes increasingly confident in its innate wholeness, completeness and non-separation from Me. This cheers the mind and it no longer grieves or longs concerning things over which it has no control. At this time the limitless vision of non-duality arises in the mind and it gains the devotion in which there is no otherness. This intense devotion stimulates continuous inquiry into who I am which leads to the hard and fast realization that the 'I' is non-dual.*

56. *When the totality of one's actions are dedicated to the pursuit of Self knowledge through karma yoga one gains Self realization by My grace. May your mind always rest in the non-dual understanding that I am you and you are Me. With this kind of mind life becomes free and easy. But if you do not always live according to the vision of non-duality you will suffer.*

59. *This resolve of yours not to fight is egoic and motivated by your disposition. If you stubbornly stick to this refusal to do your duty which has arisen from your own nature you will end up doing what you do not want to do.*

61. *The Self is seated in the Heart of all all beings, Arjuna. By its Maya it causes them to helplessly dance as if they were puppets on a string.*

62. *Whole heartedly surrender to the Self alone, Arjuna. By its grace you will be completely fulfilled.*

63. *I have now told you the secret of secrets. Think about it carefully and do as you will.*

64. *Because you are dear to me I will repeat the secret by which you will attain what is always good.*

65. *If you fix your mind and heart on Me with a devotion that knows no otherness you will realize your identity with Me. This is my promise.*

*66. Give up all karmas and take refuge in only Me. I will release you from all karma.  
Fear not.*