

The Bhagavadgita

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Contents

CHAPTER I.....	5
CHAPTER II.....	8
CHAPTER III.....	13
CHAPTER IV.....	16
CHAPTER V.....	19
CHAPTER VI.....	21
CHAPTER VII.....	25
CHAPTER VIII.....	27
CHAPTER IX.....	29
CHAPTER X.....	32
CHAPTER XI.....	35
CHAPTER XII.....	40
CHAPTER XIII.....	42
CHAPTER XIV.....	45
CHAPTER XV.....	47
CHAPTER XVI.....	49
CHAPTER XVII.....	51
CHAPTER XVIII.....	53

Chapter I

Dhritarāshtra said:

What did my (people) and the Pāndavas do, O Sañjaya! when they assembled together on the holy field of Kurukshetra, desirous to do battle?

Sañjaya said:

Seeing the army of the Pāndavas drawn up in battle-array, the prince Duryodhana approached the preceptor, and spoke (these) words:

'O preceptor! observe this grand army of the sons of Pāndu, drawn up in battle-array by your talented pupil, the son of Drupada.

In it are heroes (bearing) large bows, the equals of Bhîma and Arjuna in battle — (namely), Yuyudhāna, Virāta, and Drupada, the master of a great car, and Dhrishtaketu, Kekitāna, and the valiant king of Kāsî, Purujit and Kuntibhoja, and that eminent man Saibya; the heroic Yudhāmanyu, the valiant Uttamaujas, the son of Subhadrā, and the sons of Draupadî — all masters of great cars.

And now, O best of Brāhmanas! learn who are most distinguished among us, and are leaders of my army. I will name them to you, in order that you may know them well. Yourself, and Bhîshma, and Karna, and Kripa the victor of (many) battles; Asvatthāman, and Vikarna, and also the son of Somadatta, and many other brave men, who have given up their lives for me, who fight with various weapons, (and are) all dexterous in battle.

Thus our army which is protected by Bhîshma is unlimited; while this army of theirs which is protected by Bhîma is very limited. And therefore do ye all, occupying respectively the positions assigned to you, protect Bhîshma only.'

Then his powerful grandsire, Bhîshma, the oldest of the Kauravas, roaring aloud like a lion, blew his conch, (thereby) affording delight to Duryodhana.

And then all at once, conchs, and kettledrums, and tabors, and trumpets were played upon; and there was a tumultuous din.

Then, too, Mādhava and the son of Pāndu (Arjuna), seated in a grand chariot to which white steeds were yoked, blew their heavenly conchs.

Hrishîkesa blew the Pāñkajanya, and Dhanañjaya the Devadatta, and Bhîma, (the doer) of fearful deeds, blew the great conch Paundra. King Yudhishthira, the son of Kuntî, blew the Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva (respectively) the Sughosha and Manipushpaka.

And the king of Kāsî, too, who has an excellent bow, and Sikhandin, the master of a great car, and Dhrishtadyumna, Virāta, and the unconquered Sātyaki, and Drupada, and the sons of Draupadî, and the son of Subhadrā, of mighty arms, blew conchs severally from all sides;

O king of the earth! That tumultuous din rent the hearts of all (the people) of Dhritarâshtra's (party), causing reverberations throughout heaven and earth.

Then seeing (the people of) Dhritarâshtra's party regularly marshalled, the son of Pându, whose standard is the ape, raised his bow, after the discharge of missiles had commenced, and O king of the earth! spoke these words to Hrishîkesa:

'O undegraded one! station my chariot between the two armies, while I observe those, who stand here desirous to engage in battle, and with whom, in the labours of this struggle, I must do battle.

I will observe those who are assembled here and who are about to engage in battle, wishing to do service in battle to the evil-minded son of Dhritarâshtra.'

Saṅjaya said:

Thus addressed by Gudâkesa, O descendant of Bharata! Hrishîkesa stationed that excellent chariot between the two armies, in front of Bhîshma and Drona and of all the kings of the earth, and said: 'O son of Prithâ! look at these assembled Kauravas.'

There the son of Prithâ saw in both armies, fathers and grandfathers, preceptors, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, companions, fathers-in-law, as well as friends.

And seeing all those kinsmen standing (there), the son of Kuntî was overcome by excessive pity, and spake thus despondingly.

Arjuna said:

Seeing these kinsmen, O Krishna! standing (here) desirous to engage in battle, my limbs droop down; my mouth is quite dried up; a tremor comes on my body; and my hairs stand on end; the Gândîva (bow) slips from my hand; my skin burns intensely.

I am unable, too, to stand up; my mind whirls round, as it were; O Kesava! I see adverse omens; and I do not perceive any good (to accrue) after killing (my) kinsmen in the battle.

I do not wish for victory, O Krishna! nor sovereignty, nor pleasures: what is sovereignty to us, O Govinda! what enjoyments, and even life?

Even those, for whose sake we desire sovereignty, enjoyments, and pleasures, are standing here for battle, abandoning life and wealth-preceptors, fathers, sons as well as grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, as also (other) relatives.

These I do not wish to kill, though they kill (me), O destroyer of Madhu! even for the sake of sovereignty over the three worlds, how much less then for this earth (alone)?

What joy shall be ours, O Janârdana! after killing Dhritarâshtra's sons?
Killing these felons we shall only incur sin.

Therefore it is not proper for us to kill our own kinsmen, the sons of Dhritarâshtra. For how, O Mâdhava! shall we be happy after killing our own relatives?

Although having their consciences corrupted by avarice, they do not see the evils flowing from the extinction of a family, and the sin in treachery to friends, still, O Janârdana! should not we, who do see the evils flowing from the extinction of a family, learn to refrain from that sin?

On the extinction of a family, the eternal rites of families are destroyed. Those rites being destroyed, impiety predominates over the whole family.

In consequence of the predominance of impiety, O Krishna! the women of the family become corrupt; and the women becoming corrupt, O descendant of Vrishni! intermingling of castes results;

That intermingling necessarily leads the family and the destroyers of the family to hell; for when the ceremonies of (offering) the balls of food and water (to them) fail, their ancestors fall down (to hell).

By these transgressions of the destroyers of families, which occasion interminglings of castes, the eternal rites of castes and rites, of families are subverted.

And O Janârdana! we have heard that men whose family-rites are subverted, must necessarily live in hell.

Alas! we are engaged in committing a heinous sin, seeing that we are making efforts for killing our own kinsmen out of greed of the pleasures of sovereignty.

If the sons of Dhritarâshtra, weapon in hand, should kill me in battle, me weaponless and not defending (myself), that would be better for me.

Saṅjaya said:

Having spoken thus, Arjuna cast aside his bow together with the arrows, on the battle-field, and sat down in (his) chariot, with a mind agitated by grief.

Chapter II

Saṅjaya said:

To him, who was thus overcome with pity, and dejected, and whose eyes were full of tears and turbid, the destroyer of Madhu spoke these words.

The Deity said:

How (comes it that) this delusion, O Arjuna! which is discarded by the good, which excludes from heaven, and occasions infamy, has overtaken you in this (place of) peril? Be not effeminate, O son of Prithâ! it is not worthy of you. Cast off this base weakness of heart, and arise, O terror of (your) foes!

Arjuna said:

How, O destroyer of Madhu! shall I encounter with arrows in the battle Bhîshma and Drona — both, O destroyer of enemies! entitled to reverence?

Not killing (my) preceptors — (men) of great glory — it is better to live even on alms in this world. But killing them, though they are avaricious of worldly goods, I should only enjoy blood-tainted enjoyments.

Nor do we know which of the two is better for us — whether that we should vanquish them, or that they should vanquish us.

Even those, whom having killed, we do not wish to live — even those sons of Dhritarâshtra stand (arrayed) against us.

With a heart contaminated by the taint of helplessness, with a mind confounded about my duty, I ask you. Tell me what is assuredly good for me.

I am your disciple; instruct me, who have thrown myself on your (indulgence).

For I do not perceive what is to dispel that grief which will dry up my organs after I shall have obtained a prosperous kingdom on earth without a foe, or even the sovereignty of the gods.

Saṅjaya said:

Having spoken thus to Hrishîkesa, O terror of (your) foes! Gudâkesa said to Govinda, 'I shall not engage in battle;' and verily remained silent.

To him thus desponding between the two armies, O descendant of Bharata! Hrishîkesa spoke these words with a slight smile.

The Deity said:

You have grieved for those who deserve no grief, and you talk words of wisdom. Learned men grieve not for the living nor the dead. Never did I not exist, nor you, nor these rulers of men; nor will any one of us ever hereafter cease to be.

As, in this body, infancy and youth and old age (come) to the embodied (self), so does the acquisition of another body; a sensible man is not deceived about that.

The contacts of the senses, O son of Kuntī! which produce cold and heat, pleasure and pain, are not permanent, they are ever coming and going. Bear them, O descendant of Bharata! For, O chief of men! that sensible man whom they (pain and pleasure being alike to him) afflict not, he merits immortality.

There is no existence for that which is unreal; there is no non-existence for that which is real. And the (correct) conclusion about both is perceived by those who perceive the truth. Know that to be indestructible which pervades all this; the destruction of that inexhaustible (principle) none can bring about.

These bodies appertaining to the embodied (self) which is eternal, indestructible, and indefinable, are said to be perishable; therefore do engage in battle, O descendant of Bharata!

He who thinks it to be the killer and he who thinks it to be killed, both know nothing. It kills not, is not killed. It is not born, nor does it ever die, nor, having existed, does it exist no more. Unborn, everlasting, unchangeable, and primeval, it is not killed when the body is killed.

O son of Prithā! how can that man who knows it thus to be indestructible, everlasting, unborn, and inexhaustible, how and whom can he kill, whom can he cause to be killed? As a man, casting off old clothes, puts on others and new ones, so the embodied (self) casting off old bodies, goes to others and new ones.

Weapons do not divide it (into pieces); fire does not burn it, waters do not moisten it; the wind does not dry it up. It is not divisible; it is not combustible; it is not to be moistened; it is not to be dried up. It is everlasting, all-pervading, stable, firm, and eternal. It is said to be unperceived, to be unthinkable, to be unchangeable. Therefore knowing it to be such, you ought not to grieve.

But even if you think that it is constantly born, and constantly dies, still, O you of mighty arms! you ought not to grieve thus. For to one that is born, death is certain; and to one that dies, birth is certain. Therefore about (this) unavoidable thing, you ought not to grieve.

The source of things, O descendant of Bharata! is unperceived; their middle state is perceived; and their end again is unperceived. What (occasion is there for any) lamentation regarding them?

One looks upon it as a wonder; another similarly speaks of it as a wonder; another too hears of it as a wonder; and even after having heard of it, no one does really know it. This embodied (self), O descendant of Bharata! within

every one's body is ever indestructible. Therefore you ought not to grieve for any being.

Having regard to your own duty also, you ought not to falter, for there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than a righteous battle. Happy those Kshatriyas, O son of Prithâ! who can find such a battle (to fight) — come of itself — an open door to heaven!

But if you will not fight this righteous battle, then you will have abandoned your own duty and your fame, and you will incur sin.

All beings, too, will tell of your everlasting infamy; and to one who has been honoured, infamy is (a) greater (evil) than death. (Warriors who are) masters of great cars will think that you abstained from the battle through fear, and having been highly thought of by them, you will fall down to littleness. Your enemies, too, decrying your power, will speak much about you that should not be spoken.

And what, indeed, more lamentable than that? Killed, you will obtain heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the earth.

Therefore arise, O son of Kuntî! resolved to (engage in) battle. Looking alike on pleasure and pain, on gain and loss, on victory and defeat, then prepare for battle, and thus you will not incur sin.

The knowledge here declared to you is that relating to the Sâmkhya. Now hear that relating to the Yoga.

Possessed of this knowledge, O son of Prithâ! you will cast off the bonds of action. In this (path to final emancipation) nothing that is commenced becomes abortive; no obstacles exist; and even a little of this (form of) piety protects one from great danger.

There is here, O descendant of Kuru! but one state of mind consisting in firm understanding. But the states of mind of those who have no firm understanding are many-branched and endless.

The state of mind consisting in firm understanding regarding steady contemplation does not belong to those, O son of Prithâ! who are strongly attached to (worldly) pleasures and power, and whose minds are drawn away by that flowery talk which is full of (ordinances of) specific acts for the attainment of (those) pleasures and (that) power, and which promises birth as the fruit of acts 1 — (that flowery talk) which those unwise ones utter, who are enamoured of Vedic words, who say there is nothing else, who are full of desires, and whose goal is heaven.

The Vedas (merely) relate to the effects of the three qualities; do you, O Arjuna! rise above those effects of the three qualities, and be free from the pairs of opposites, always preserve courage, be free from anxiety for new acquisitions or protection of old acquisitions, and be self-controlled.

To the instructed Brâhmana, there is in all the Vedas as much utility as in a reservoir of water into which waters flow from all sides.

Your business is with action alone; not by any means with fruit. Let not the fruit of action be your motive (to action). Let not your attachment be (fixed) on inaction. Having recourse to devotion, O Dhanañgaya! perform actions, casting off (all) attachment, and being equable in success or ill-success; (such) equability is called devotion.

Action, O Dhanañjaya! is far inferior to the devotion of the mind. In that devotion seek shelter. Wretched are those whose motive (to action) is the fruit (of action). He who has obtained devotion in this world casts off both merit and sin. Therefore apply yourself to devotion; devotion in (all) actions is wisdom.

The wise who have obtained devotion cast off the fruit of action; and released from the shackles of (repeated) births, repair to that seat where there is no unhappiness.

When your mind shall have crossed beyond the taint of delusion, then will you become indifferent to all that you have heard or will heard. When your mind, confounded by what you have heard, will stand firm and steady in contemplation, then will you acquire devotion.

Arjuna said:

What are the characteristics, O Kesava! of one whose mind is steady, and who is intent on contemplation? How should one of steady mind speak, how sit, how move?

The Deity said:

When a man, O son of Prithâ! abandons all the desires of his heart, and is pleased in his self only and by his self, he is then called one of steady mind.

He whose heart is not agitated in the midst of calamities, who has no longing for pleasures, and from whom (the feelings of) affection, fear, and wrath have departed, is called a sage of steady mind.

His mind is steady, who, being without attachments anywhere, feels no exultation and no aversion on encountering the various agreeable and disagreeable (things of this world).

A man's mind is steady, when he withdraws his senses from (all) objects of sense, as the tortoise (withdraws) its limbs from all sides.

Objects of sense draw back from a person who is abstinent; not so the taste (for those objects). But even the taste departs from him, when he has seen the Supreme.

The boisterous senses, O son of Kuntî! carry away by force the mind even of a wise man, who exerts himself (for final emancipation). Restraining them all, a man should remain engaged in devotion, making me his only resort. For his mind is steady whose senses are under his control.

The man who ponders over objects of sense forms an attachment to them; from (that) attachment is produced desire; and from desire anger is produced; from anger results want of discrimination; from want of discrimination, confusion of the memory; from confusion of the memory, loss of reason; and in consequence of loss of reason, he is utterly ruined.

But the self-restrained man who moves among objects with senses under the control of his own self, and free from affection and aversion, obtains tranquillity. When there is tranquillity, all his miseries are destroyed, for the mind of him whose heart is tranquil soon becomes steady.

He who is not self-restrained has no steadiness of mind; nor has he who is not self-restrained perseverance in the pursuit of self-knowledge; there is no tranquillity for him who does not persevere in the pursuit of self-knowledge; and whence can there be happiness for one who is not tranquil? For the heart which follows the rambling senses leads away his judgment, as the wind leads a boat astray upon the waters.

Therefore, O you of mighty arms! his mind is steady whose senses are restrained on all sides from objects of sense.

The self-restrained man is awake, when it is night for all beings; and when all beings are awake, that is the night of the right-seeing sage.

He into whom all objects of desire enter, as waters enter the ocean, which, (though) replenished, (still) keeps its position unmoved, — he only obtains tranquillity; not he who desires (those) objects of desire.

The man who, casting off all desires, lives free from attachments, who is free from egoism, and from (the feeling that this or that is) mine, obtains tranquillity.

This, O son of Prithâ! is the Brahmic state; attaining to this, one is never deluded; and remaining in it in (one's) last moments, one attains (brahma-nirvâna) the Brahmic bliss.

Chapter III

Arjuna said:

If, O Janârdana! devotion is deemed by you to be superior to action, then why, O Kesava! do you prompt me to (this) fearful action?

You seem, indeed, to confuse my mind by equivocal words. Therefore, declare one thing determinately, by which I may attain the highest good.

The Deity said:

O sinless one! I have already declared, that in this world there is a twofold path — that of the Sâmkhyas by devotion in the shape of (true) knowledge; and that of the Yogins by devotion in the shape of action.

A man does not attain freedom from action merely by not engaging in action; nor does he attain perfection by mere renunciation.

For nobody ever remains even for an instant without performing some action; since the qualities of nature constrain everybody, not having free-will (in the matter), to some action.

The deluded man who, restraining the organs of action, continues to think in his mind about objects of sense, is called a hypocrite.

But he, O Arjuna! who restraining his senses by his mind and being free from attachments, engages in devotion (in the shape) of action, with the organs of action, is far superior.

Do you perform prescribed action, for action is better than inaction, and the support of your body, too, cannot be accomplished with inaction.

This world is fettered by all action other than action for the purpose of the sacrifice. Therefore, O son of Kuntî! do you, casting off attachment, perform action for that purpose.

The Creator, having in olden times created men together with the sacrifice, said: 'Propagate with this. May it be the giver to you of the things you desire.

Please the gods with this, and may those gods please you. Pleasing each other, you will attain the highest good.

For pleased with the sacrifices, the gods will give you the enjoyments you desire. And he who enjoys himself without giving them what they have given, is, indeed, a thief.'

The good, who eat the leavings of a sacrifice, are released from all sins. But the unrighteous ones, who prepare food for themselves only, incur sin.

From food are born (all) creatures; from rain is the production of food; rain is produced by sacrifices; sacrifices are the result of action; know that action

has its source in the Vedas; the Vedas come from the Indestructible. Therefore the all-comprehending Vedas are always concerned with sacrifices.

He who in this world does not turn round the wheel revolving thus, is of sinful life, indulging his senses, and, O son of Prithâ! he lives in vain.

But the man who is attached to his self only, who is contented in his self, and is pleased with his self, has nothing to do.

He has no interest at all in what is done, and none whatever in what is not done, in this world; nor is any interest of his dependent on any being.

Therefore always perform action, which must be performed, without attachment. For a man, performing action without attachment, attains the Supreme.

By action alone, did Janaka and the rest work for perfection. And having regard also to the keeping of people (to their duties) you should perform action.

Whatever a great man does, that other men also do. And people follow whatever he receives as authority.

There is nothing, O son of Prithâ! for me to do in (all) the three worlds, nothing to acquire which has not been acquired. Still I do engage in action.

For should I at any time not engage without sloth in action, men would follow in my path from all sides, O son of Prithâ!

If I did not perform actions, these worlds would be destroyed, I should be the cause of caste interminglings; and I should be ruining these people.

As the ignorant act, O descendant of Bharata! with attachment to action, so should a wise man act without attachment, wishing to keep the people (to their duties).

A wise man should not shake the convictions of the ignorant who are attached to action, but acting with devotion (himself) should make them apply themselves to all action.

He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks himself the doer of the actions, which, in every way, are done by the qualities of nature.

But he, O you of mighty arms! who knows the truth about the difference from qualities and the difference from actions, forms no attachments, believing that qualities deal with qualities.

But those who are deluded by the qualities of nature form attachments to the actions of the qualities. A man of perfect knowledge should not shake these men of imperfect knowledge (in their convictions).

Dedicating all actions to me with a mind knowing the relation of the supreme and individual self, engage in battle without desire, without (any feeling that this or that is) mine, and without any mental trouble.

Even those men who always act on this opinion of mine, full of faith, and without carping, are released from all actions.

But those who carp at my opinion and do not act upon it, know them to be devoid of discrimination, deluded as regards all knowledge, and ruined.

Even a man of knowledge acts consonantly to his own nature. All beings follow nature. What will restraint effect?

Every sense has its affections and aversions towards its objects fixed. One should not become subject to them, for they are one's opponents.

One's own duty, though defective, is better than another's duty well performed. Death in (performing) one's own duty is preferable; the (performance of the) duty of others is dangerous.

Arjuna said:

But by whom, O descendant of Vrishni! is man impelled, even though unwilling, and, as it were, constrained by force, to commit sin?

The Deity said:

It is desire, it is wrath, born from the quality of passion; it is very ravenous, very sinful. Know that that is the foe in this world.

As fire is enveloped by smoke, a mirror by dust, the foetus by the womb, so is this enveloped by desire. Knowledge, O son of Kunti! is enveloped by this constant foe of the man of knowledge, in the shape of desire, which is like a fire and insatiable.

The senses, the mind, and the understanding are said to be its seat; with these it deludes the embodied (self) after enveloping knowledge.

Therefore, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! first restrain your senses, then cast off this sinful thing which destroys knowledge and experience.

It has been said, great are the senses, greater than the senses is the mind, greater than the mind is the understanding. What is greater than the understanding is that.

Thus knowing that which is higher than the understanding, and restraining (your)self by (your)self, O you of mighty arms! destroy this unmanageable enemy in the shape of desire.

Chapter IV

The Deity said:

This everlasting (system of) devotion I declared to the sun, the sun declared it to Manu, and Manu communicated it to Ikshvâku. Coming thus by steps, it became known to royal sages.

But, O terror of (your) foes! that devotion was lost to the world by long (lapse of) time.

That same primeval devotion I have declared to you to-day, seeing that you are my devotee and friend, for it is the highest mystery.

Arjuna said:

Later is your birth the birth of the sun is prior. How then shall I understand that you declared (this) first?

The Deity said:

I have passed through many births, O Arjuna I and you also. I know them all, but you, O terror of (your) foes! do not know them.

Even though I am unborn and inexhaustible in (my) essence, even though I am lord of all beings, still I take up the control of my own nature, and am born by means of my delusive power.

Whensoever, O descendant of Bharata! piety languishes, and impiety is in the ascendant, I create myself. I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, and the establishment of piety.

Whoever truly knows thus my divine birth and work, casts off (this) body and is not born again. He comes to me, O Arjuna!

Many from whom affection, fear, and wrath have departed, who are full of me, who depend on me, and who are purified by the penance of knowledge, have come into my essence.

I serve men in the way in which they approach me. In every way, O son of Prithâ! men follow in my path.

Desiring the success of actions, men in this world worship the divinities, for in this world of mortals, the success produced by action is soon obtained.

The fourfold division of castes was created by me according to the apportionment of qualities and duties. But though I am its author, know me to be inexhaustible, and not the author.

Actions defile me not. I have no attachment to the fruit of actions. He who knows me thus is not tied down by actions.

Knowing this, the men of old who wished for final emancipation, performed action. Therefore do you, too, perform action as was done by men of old in olden times.

Even sages are confused as to what is action, what inaction. Therefore I will speak to you about action, and learning that, you will be freed from (this world of) evil.

One must possess knowledge about action; one must also possess knowledge about prohibited action; and again one must possess knowledge about inaction. The truth regarding action is abstruse.

He is wise among men, he is possessed of devotion, and performs all actions, who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction.

The wise call him learned, whose acts are all free from desires and fancies, and whose actions are burnt down by the fire of knowledge.

Forsaking all attachment to the fruit of action, always contented, dependent on none, he does nothing at all, though he engages in action.

Devoid of expectations, restraining the mind and the self, and casting off all belongings, he incurs no sin, performing actions merely for the sake of the body.

Satisfied with earnings coming spontaneously, rising above the pairs of opposites, free from all animosity, and equable on success or ill-success, he is not fettered down, even though he performs (actions).

The acts of one who is devoid of attachment, who is free, whose mind is fixed on knowledge, and who performs action for (the purpose of) the sacrifice are all destroyed.

Brahman is the oblation; with Brahman (as a sacrificial instrument) it is offered up; Brahman is in the fire; and by Brahman it is thrown; and Brahman, too, is the goal to which he proceeds who meditates on Brahman in the action.

Some devotees perform the sacrifice to the gods, some offer up the sacrifice by the sacrifice itself in the fire of Brahman.

Others offer up the senses, such as the sense of hearing and others, in the fires of restraint; others offer up the objects of sense, such as sound and so forth, into the fires of the senses.

Some again offer up all the operations of the senses and the operations of the life-breaths into the fire of devotion by self-restraint, kindled by knowledge.

Others perform the sacrifice of wealth, the sacrifice of penance, the sacrifice of concentration of mind, the sacrifice of Vedic study, and of knowledge, and others are ascetics of rigid vows.

Some offer up the upward life-breath into the downward life-breath, and the downward life-breath into the upper life-breath, and stopping up the motions of the upward and downward life-breaths, devote themselves to the restraint of the life-breaths.

Others, who (take) limited food, offer up the life-breaths into the life-breaths. All of these, conversant with the sacrifice, have their sins destroyed by the sacrifice.

Those who eat the nectar-like leavings of the sacrifice repair to the eternal Brahman. This world is not for those who perform no sacrifice, whence (then) the other, O best of the Kauravas!

Thus sacrifices of various sorts are laid down in the Vedas. Know them all to be produced from action, and knowing this you will be released (from the fetters of this world).

The sacrifice of knowledge, O terror of (your) foes! is superior to the sacrifice of wealth, for action, O son of Prithâ! is wholly and entirely comprehended in knowledge.

That you should learn by salutation, question, and service. The men of knowledge who perceive the truth will teach knowledge to you.

Having learnt that, O son of Pându! you will not again fall thus into delusion; and by means of it, you will see all beings, without exception, first in yourself, and then in me.

Even if you are the most sinful of all sinful men, you will cross over all trespasses by means of the boat of knowledge alone.

As a fire well kindled, O Arjuna! reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes.

For there is in this world no means of sanctification like knowledge, and that one perfected by devotion finds within one's self in time.

He who has faith, whose senses are restrained, and who is assiduous, obtains knowledge. Obtaining knowledge, he acquires, without delay, the highest tranquillity.

He who is ignorant and devoid of faith, and whose self is full of misgivings, is ruined. Not this world, not the next, nor happiness, is for him whose self is full of misgivings.

Actions, O Dhanañjaya! do not fetter one who is self-possessed, who has renounced action by devotion, and who has destroyed misgivings by knowledge.

Therefore, O descendant of Bharata! destroy, with the sword of knowledge, these misgivings of yours which fill your mind, and which are produced from ignorance. Engage in devotion. Arise!

Chapter V

Arjuna said:

O Krishna! you praise renunciation of actions and also the pursuit (of them). Tell me determinately which one of these two is superior.

The Deity said:

Renunciation and pursuit of action are both instruments of happiness. But of the two, pursuit of action is superior to renunciation of action.

He should be understood to be always an ascetic, who has no aversion and no desire. For, O you of mighty arms! he who is free from the pairs of opposites is easily released from (all) bonds.

Children — not wise men — talk of sankhya and yoga as distinct. One who pursues either well obtains the fruit of both.

The seat which the sânkhyas obtain is reached by the yogas also. He sees (truly), who sees the sânkhya and yoga as one.

Renunciation, O you of mighty arms! is difficult to reach without devotion; the sage possessed of devotion attains Brahman without delay.

He who is possessed of devotion, whose self is pure, who has restrained his self, and who has controlled his senses, and who identifies his self with every being, is not tainted though he performs (actions).

The man of devotion, who knows the truth, thinks he does nothing at all, when he sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes, talks, throws out, takes, opens or closes the eyelids; he holds that the senses deal with the objects of the senses.

He who, casting off (all) attachment, performs actions dedicating them to Brahman, is not tainted by sin, as the lotus-leaf (is not tainted) by water.

Devotees, casting off attachment, perform actions for attaining purity of self, with the body, the mind, the understanding, or even the senses — (all) free (from egoistic notions).

He who is possessed of devotion, abandoning the fruit of actions, attains the highest tranquillity. He who is without devotion, and attached to the fruit (of action), is tied down by (reason of his) acting in consequence of (some) desire.

The self-restrained, embodied (self) lies at ease within the city of nine portals, renouncing all actions by the mind, not doing nor causing (any thing) to be done.

The Lord is not the cause of actions, or of the capacity of performing actions amongst men, or of the connexion of action and fruit. But nature only works.

The Lord receives no one's sin, nor merit either. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, hence all creatures are deluded.

But to those who have destroyed that ignorance by knowledge of the self, (such) knowledge, like the sun, shows forth that supreme (principle).

And those whose mind is (centred) on it, whose (very) self it is, who are thoroughly devoted to it, and whose final goal it is, go never to return, having their sins destroyed by knowledge.

The wise look upon a Brāhmaṇa possessed of learning and humility, on a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a Svapāka, as alike.

Even here, those have conquered the material world, whose mind rests in equability; since Brahman is free from defects and equable, therefore they rest in Brahman.

He who knows Brahman, whose mind is steady, who is not deluded, and who rests in Brahman, does not exult on finding anything agreeable, nor does he grieve on finding anything disagreeable.

One whose self is not attached to external objects, obtains the happiness that is in (one's) self; and by means of concentration of mind, joining one's self (with the Brahman), one obtains indestructible happiness.

For the enjoyments born of contact (between senses and their objects) are, indeed, sources of misery; they have a beginning as well as an end. O son of Kuntī! a wise man feels no pleasure in them.

He who even in this world, before his release from the body, is able to bear the agitations produced from desire and wrath, is a devoted man, he is a happy man.

The devotee whose happiness is within (himself), whose recreation is within (himself), and whose light (of knowledge) also is within (himself), becoming (one with) the Brahman, obtain the Brahmic bliss.

The sages whose sins have perished, whose misgivings are destroyed, who are self-restrained, and who are intent on the welfare of all beings, obtain the Brahmic bliss.

To the ascetics, who are free from desire and wrath, and whose minds are restrained, and who have knowledge of the self, the Brahmic bliss is on both sides (of death).

The sage who excludes (from his mind) external objects, (concentrates) the visual power between the brows, and making the upward and downward life-breaths even, confines their movements within the nose, who restrains senses, mind, and understanding, whose highest goal is final emancipation, from whom desire, fear, and wrath have departed, is, indeed, for ever released (from birth and death).

He knowing me to be the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances, the great Lord of all worlds, and the friend of all beings, attains tranquillity.

Chapter VI

The Deity said:

He who, regardless of the fruit of actions, performs the actions which ought to be performed, is the devotee and renouncer; not he who discards the (sacred) fires, nor he who performs no acts.

Know, O son of Pându! that what is called renunciation is devotion; for nobody becomes a devotee who has not renounced (all) fancies.

To the sage who wishes to rise to devotion, action is said to be a means, and to him, when he has risen to devotion, tranquillity is said to be a means.

When one does not attach oneself to objects of sense, nor to action, renouncing all fancies, then is one said to have risen to devotion.

(A man) should elevate his self by his self; he should not debase his self, for even (a man's) own self is his friend, (a man's) own self is also his enemy.

To him who has subjugated his self by his self, his self is a friend; but to him who has not restrained his self, his own self behaves inimically, like an enemy.

The self of one who has subjugated his self and is tranquil, is absolutely concentrated (on itself), in the midst of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, as well as honour and dishonour.

The devotee whose self is contented with knowledge and experience, who is unmoved, who has restrained his senses, and to whom a sod, a stone, and gold are alike, is said to be devoted.

And he is esteemed highest, who thinks alike about well-wishers, friends, and enemies, and those who are indifferent, and those who take part with both sides, and those who are objects of hatred, and relatives, as well as about the good and the sinful.

A devotee should constantly devote his self to abstraction, remaining in a secret place, alone, with his mind and self restrained, without expectations, and without belongings.

Fixing his seat firmly in a clean place, not too high nor too low, and covered over with a sheet of cloth, a deerskin, and (blades of) Kusa (grass), — and there seated on (that) seat, fixing his mind exclusively on one point, with the workings of the mind and senses restrained, he should practice devotion for purity of self.

Holding his body, head, and neck even and unmoved, (remaining) steady, looking at the tip of his own nose, and not looking about in (all) directions, with a tranquil self, devoid of fear, and adhering to the rules of

Brahmakârins, he should restrain his mind, and (concentrate it) on me, and sit down engaged in devotion, regarding me as his final goal.

Thus constantly devoting his self to abstraction, a devotee whose mind is restrained, attains that tranquillity which culminates in final emancipation, and assimilation with me.

Devotion is not his, O Arjuna! who eats too much, nor his who eats not at all; not his who is addicted to too much sleep, nor his who is (ever) awake.

That devotion which destroys (all) misery is his, who takes due food and exercise, who toils duly in all works, and who sleeps and awakes (in) due (time).

When (a man's) mind well restrained becomes steady upon the self alone, then he being indifferent to all objects of desire, is said to be devoted.

As a light standing in a windless (place) flickers not, that is declared to be the parallel for a devotee, whose mind is restrained, and who devotes his self to abstraction.

That (mental condition), in which the mind restrained by practice of abstraction, ceases to work; in which too, one seeing the self by the self, is pleased in the self; in which one experiences that infinite happiness which transcends the senses, and which can be grasped by the understanding only; and adhering to which, one never swerves from the truth; acquiring which, one thinks no other acquisition higher than it; and adhering to which, one is not shaken off even by great misery;

That should be understood to be called devotion in which there is a severance of all connexion with pain. That devotion should be practised with steadiness and with an undesponding heart.

Abandoning, without exception, all desires, which are produced from fancies, and restraining the whole group of the senses on all sides by the mind only, one should by slow steps become quiescent, with a firm resolve coupled with courage; and fixing his mind upon the self, should think of nothing.

Wherever the active and unsteady mind breaks forth, there one should ever restrain it, and fix it steadily on the self alone.

The highest happiness comes to such a devotee, whose mind is fully tranquil, in whom the quality of passion has been suppressed, who is free from sin, and who is become (one with) the Brahman.

Thus constantly devoting his self to abstraction, a devotee, freed from sin, easily obtains that supreme happiness — contact with the Brahman.

He who has devoted his self to abstraction, by devotion, looking alike on everything, sees the self abiding in all beings, and all beings in the self.

To him who sees me in everything, and everything in me, I am never lost, and he is not lost to me.

The devotee who worships me abiding in all beings, holding that all is one, lives in me, however he may be living.

That devotee, O Arjuna! is deemed to be the best, who looks alike on pleasure or pain, whatever it may be, in all (creatures), comparing all with his own (pleasure or pain).

Arjuna said:

I cannot see, O destroyer of Madhu! (how) the sustained existence (is to be secured) of this devotion by means of equanimity which you have declared-in consequence of fickleness. For, O Krishna! the mind is fickle, boisterous, strong, and obstinate; and I think that to restrain it is as difficult as (to restrain) the wind.

The Deity said:

Doubtless, O you of mighty arms! the mind is difficult to restrain, and fickle. Still, O son of Kuntî! it may be restrained by constant practice and by indifference (to worldly objects).

It is my belief, that devotion is hard to obtain for one who does not restrain his self. But by one who is self-restrained and assiduous, it can be obtained through (proper) expedients.

Arjuna said:

What is the end of him, O Krishna! who does not attain the consummation of his devotion, being not assiduous, and having a mind shaken off from devotion, (though) full of faith?

Does he, fallen from both (paths), go to ruin like a broken cloud, being, O you of mighty arms! without support, and deluded on the path (leading) to the Brahman?

Be pleased, O Krishna! to entirely destroy this doubt of mine, for none else than you can destroy this doubt.

The Deity said:

O son of Prithâ! neither in this world nor the next, is ruin for him; for, O dear friend! none who performs good (deeds) comes to an evil end.

He who is fallen from devotion attains the worlds of those who perform meritorious acts, dwells (there) for many a year, and is afterwards born into a family of holy and illustrious men. Or he is even born into a family of talented devotees; for such a birth as that in this world is more difficult to obtain.

There he comes into contact with the knowledge which belonged to him in his former body, and then again, O descendant of Kuru! he works for perfection.

For even though reluctant, he is led away by the self-same former practice, and although he only wishes to learn devotion, he rises above the (fruits of action laid down in the) divine word.

But the devotee working with great efforts, and cleared of his sins, attains perfection after many births, and then reaches the supreme goal.

The devotee is esteemed higher than the performers of penances, higher even than the men of knowledge, and the devotee is higher than the men of action; therefore, O Arjuna! become a devotee.

And even among all devotees, he who, being full of faith, worships me, with his inmost self intent on me, is esteemed by me to be the most devoted.

Chapter VII

The Deity said:

O son of Prithâ! now hear how you can without doubt know me fully, fixing your mind on me, and resting in me, and practising devotion.

I will now tell you exhaustively about knowledge together with experience; that being known, there is nothing further left in this world to know.

Among thousands of men, only some work for perfection; and even of those who have reached perfection, and who are assiduous, only some know me truly.

Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, understanding, and egoism, thus is my nature divided eightfold.

But this is a lower (form of my) nature. Know (that there is) another (form of my) nature, and higher than this, which is animate, O you of mighty arms! and by which this universe is upheld.

Know that all things have these (for their) source. I am the producer and the destroyer of the whole universe.

There is nothing else, O Dhanañjaya! higher than myself; all this is woven upon me, like numbers of pearls upon a thread.

I am the taste in water, O son of Kuntî! I am the light of the sun and moon. I am 'Om' in all the Vedas, sound in space, and manliness in human beings; I am the fragrant smell in the earth, refulgence in the fire; I am life in all beings, and penance in those who perform penance.

Know me, O son of Prithâ! to be the eternal seed of all beings; I am the discernment of the discerning ones, and I the glory of the glorious. I am also the strength, unaccompanied by fondness or desire, of the strong. And, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! I am love unopposed to piety among all beings.

And all entities which are of the quality of goodness, and those which are of the quality of passion and of darkness, know that they are, indeed, all from me; I am not in them, but they are in me.

The whole universe deluded by these three states of mind, developed from the qualities, does not know me, who am beyond them and inexhaustible; for this delusion of mine, developed from the qualities, is divine and difficult to transcend. Those cross beyond this delusion who resort to me alone.

Wicked men, doers of evil (acts), who are deluded, who are deprived of their knowledge by (this) delusion, and who incline to the demoniac state of mind, do not resort to me.

But, O Arjuna! doers of good (acts) of four classes worship me: one who is distressed, one who is seeking after knowledge, one who wants wealth, and one, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! who is possessed of knowledge.

Of these, he who is possessed of knowledge, who is always devoted, and whose worship is (addressed) to one (Being) only, is esteemed highest. For to the man of knowledge I am dear above all things, and he is dear to me.

All these are noble. But the man possessed of knowledge is deemed by me to be my own self.

For he with (his) self devoted to abstraction, has taken to me as the goal than which there is nothing higher. At the end of many lives, the man possessed of knowledge approaches me, (believing) that Vāsudeva is everything. Such a high-souled man is very hard to find.

Those who are deprived of knowledge by various desires approach other divinities, observing various regulations, and controlled by their own natures.

Whichever form (of deity) any worshipper wishes to worship with faith, to that form I render his faith steady. Possessed Of that faith, he seeks to propitiate (the deity in) that (form), and obtains from it those beneficial things which he desires, (though they are) really given by me.

But the fruit thus (obtained) by them, who have little judgment, is perishable. Those who worship the divinities go to the divinities, and my worshippers, too, go to me.

The undiscerning ones, not knowing my transcendent and inexhaustible essence, than which there is nothing higher, think me, who am unperceived, to have become perceptible. Surrounded by the delusion of my mystic power, I am not manifest to all. This deluded world knows not me unborn and inexhaustible.

I know, O Arjuna! the things which have been, those which are, and those which are to be. But me nobody knows.

All beings, O terror of (your) foes! are deluded at the time of birth by the delusion, O descendant of Bharata! caused by the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion.

But the men of meritorious actions, whose sins have terminated, worship me, being released from the delusion (caused) by the pairs of opposites, and being firm in their beliefs.

Those who, resting on me, work for release from old age and death, know the Brahman, the whole Adhyātma, and all action.

And those who know me with the Adhibhūta, the Adhidaiva, and the Adhiyajña, having minds devoted to abstraction, know me at the time of departure (from this world).

Chapter VIII

Arjuna said:

What is that Brahman, what the Adhyâtma, and what, O best of beings! is action? And what is called the Adhibhûta? And who is the Adhiyajña, and how in this body, O destroyer of Madhu? And how, too, are you to be known at the time of departure (from this world) by those who restrain their selfs?

The Deity said:

The Brahman is the supreme, the indestructible. Its manifestation (as an individual self) is called the Adhyâtma. The offering (of an oblation to any divinity), which is the cause of the production and development of all things, is named action.

The Adhibhûta is all perishable things. The Adhidaivata is the (primal) being. And the Adhiyajña, O best of embodied (beings)! is I myself in this body.

And he who leaves this body and departs (from this world) remembering me in (his) last moments, comes into my essence. There is no doubt of that.

Also whichever form (of deity) he remembers when he finally leaves this body, to that he goes, O son of Kuntî! having been used to ponder on it.

Therefore, at all times remember me, and engage in battle. Fixing your mind and understanding on me, you will come to me, there is no doubt.

He who thinks of the supreme divine Being, O son of Prithâ! with a mind not (running) to other (objects), and possessed of abstraction in the shape of continuous meditation (about the supreme), goes to him.

He who, possessed of reverence (for the supreme Being) with a steady mind, and with the power of devotion, properly concentrates the life-breath between the brows, and meditates on the ancient Seer, the ruler, more minute than the minutest atom, the supporter of all, who is of an unthinkable form, whose brilliance is like that of the sun, and who is beyond all darkness, he attains to that transcendent and divine Being.

I will tell you briefly about the seat, which those who know the Vedas declare to be indestructible; which entered by ascetics from whom all desires have departed; and wishing for which, people pursue the mode of life of Brahmakârins.

He who leaves the body and departs (from this world), stopping up all passages, and confining the mind within the heart, placing the life-breath in the head, and adhering to uninterrupted meditation, repeating the single syllable 'Om,' (signifying) the eternal Brahman, and meditating on me, he reaches the highest goal.

To the devotee who constantly practises abstraction, O son of Prithâ! and who with a mind not (turned) to anything else, is ever and constantly meditating on me, I am easy of access.

The high-souled ones, who achieve the highest perfection, attaining to me, do not again come to life, which is transient, a home of woes.

All worlds, O Arjuna! up to the world of Brahman, are (destined) to return. But, O son of Kuntî! after attaining to me, there is no birth again.

Those who know a day of Brahman to end after one thousand ages, and the night to terminate after one thousand ages, are the persons who know day and night.

On the advent of day, all perceptible things are produced from the unperceived; and on the advent of night they dissolve in that same (principle) called the unperceived.

This same assemblage of entities, being produced again and again, dissolves on the advent of night, and, O son of Prithâ! issues forth on the advent of day, without a will of its own.

But there is another entity, unperceived and eternal, and distinct from this unperceived (principle), which is not destroyed when all entities are destroyed. It is called the unperceived, the indestructible; they call it the highest goal. Attaining to it, none returns. That is my supreme abode.

That supreme Being, O son of Prithâ! he in whom all these entities dwell, and by whom all this is permeated, is to be attained to by reverence not (directed) to another.

I will state the times, O descendant of Bharata! at which devotees departing (from this world) go, never to return, or to return.

The fire, the flame, the day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice, departing (from the world) in these, those who know the Brahman go to the Brahman.

Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, the six months of the southern solstice, (dying) in these, the devotee goes to the lunar light and returns.

These two paths, bright and dark, are deemed to be eternal in this world. By the one, (a man) goes never to return, by the other he comes back.

Knowing these two paths, O son of Prithâ! no devotee is deluded. Therefore at all times be possessed of devotion, O Arjuna!

A devotee knowing all this, obtains all the holy fruit which is prescribed for (study of) the Vedas, for sacrifices, and also for penances and gifts, and he attains to the highest and primeval seat.

Chapter IX

Now I will speak to you, who are not given to carping, of that most mysterious knowledge, accompanied by experience, by knowing which you will be released from evil.

It is the chief among the sciences, the chief among the mysteries. It is the best means of sanctification. It is imperishable, not opposed to the sacred law. It is to be apprehended directly, and is easy to practise.

O terror of your foes! those men who have no faith in this holy doctrine, return to the path of this mortal world, without attaining to me.

This whole universe is pervaded by me in an unperceived form. All entities live in me, but I do not live in them. Nor yet do all entities live in me.

See my divine power. Supporting all entities and producing all entities, my self lives not in (those) entities.

As the great and ubiquitous atmosphere always remains in space, know that similarly all entities live in me.

At the expiration of a Kalpa, O son of Kuntî! all entities enter my nature; and at the beginning of a Kalpa, I again bring them forth.

Taking the control of my own nature, I bring forth again and again this whole collection of entities, without a will of its own, by the power of nature.

But, O Arjuna! these actions do not fetter me, who remain like one unconcerned, and who am unattached to those actions.

Nature gives birth to movables and immovables through me, the supervisor, and by reason of that, O son of Kuntî! the universe revolves.

Deluded people of vain hopes, vain acts, vain knowledge, whose minds are disordered, and who are inclined to the delusive nature of Asuras and Râkshasas, not knowing my highest nature as great lord of all entities, disregard me as I have assumed a human body.

But the high-souled ones, O son of Prithâ! who are inclined to the godlike nature, knowing me as the inexhaustible source of (all) entities, worship me with minds not (turned) elsewhere.

Constantly glorifying me, and exerting themselves, firm in their vows, and saluting me with reverence, they worship me, being always devoted.

And others again, offering up the sacrifice of knowledge, worship me as one, as distinct, and as all-pervading in numerous forms.

I am the Kratu, I am the Yajña, I am the Svadhâ, I the product of the herbs. I am the sacred verse. I too am the sacrificial butter, and I the fire, I the offering.

I am the father of this universe, the mother, the creator, the grandsire, the thing to be known, the means of sanctification, the syllable Om, the Rik, Sâman, and Yajus also; the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the supervisor, the residence, the asylum, the friend, the source, and that in which it merges, the support, the receptacle, and the inexhaustible seed.

I cause heat and I send forth and stop showers. I am immortality and also death; and I, O Arjuna! am that which is and that which is not.

Those who know the three (branches of) knowledge, who drink the Soma juice, whose sins are washed away, offer sacrifices and pray to me for a passage into heaven; and reaching the holy world of the lord of gods, they enjoy in the celestial regions the celestial pleasures of the gods.

And having enjoyed that great heavenly world, they enter the mortal world when (their) merit is exhausted. Thus those who wish for objects of desire, and resort to the ordinances of the three (Vedas), obtain (as the fruit) going and coming.

To those men who worship me, meditating on me and on no one else, and who are constantly devoted, I give new gifts and preserve what is acquired by them.

Even those, O son of Kuntî! who being devotees of other divinities worship with faith, worship me only, (but) irregularly.

For I am the enjoyer as well as the lord of all sacrifices. But they know me not truly, therefore do they fall.

Those who make vows to the gods go to the gods; those who make vows to the manes go to the manes, those who worship the Bhûtas go to the Bhûtas; and those likewise who worship me go to me.

Whoever with devotion offers me leaf, flower, fruit, water, that, presented with devotion, I accept from him whose self is pure.

Whatever you do, O son of Kuntî! whatever you eat, whatever sacrifice you make, whatever you give, whatever penance you perform, do that as offered to me.

Thus will you be released from the bonds of action, the fruits of which are agreeable or disagreeable. And with your self possessed of (this) devotion, (this) renunciation, you will be released (from the bonds of action) and will come to me.

I am alike to all beings; to me none is hateful, none dear. But those who worship me with devotion (dwell) in me, and I too in them.

Even if a very ill-conducted man worships me, not worshipping any one else, he must certainly be deemed to be good, for he has well resolved.

He soon becomes devout of heart, and obtains lasting tranquillity. (You may affirm, O son of Kuntī! that my devotee is never ruined.

For, O son of Prithâ! even those who are of sinful birth, women, Vaisyas; and Sūdras likewise, resorting to me, attain the supreme goal.

What then (need be said of) holy Brâhmanas and royal saints who are (my) devotees? Coming to this transient unhappy world, worship me.

(Place your) mind on me, become my devotee, my worshipper; reverence me, and thus making me your highest goal, and devoting your self to abstraction, you will certainly come to me.

Chapter X

Yet again, O you of mighty arms! listen to my excellent words, which, out of a wish for your welfare, I speak to you who are delighted (with them).

Not the multitudes of gods, nor the great sages know my source; for I am in every way the origin of the gods and great sages.

Of (all) mortals, he who knows me to be unborn, without beginning, the great lord of the world, being free from delusion, is released from all sins.

Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forgiveness, truth, restraint of the senses, tranquillity, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, and also security, harmlessness, equability, contentment, penance, (making) gifts, glory, disgrace, all these different tempers of living beings are from me alone.

The seven great sages, and likewise the four ancient Manus, whose descendants are (all) these people in the world, were all born from my mind, (partaking) of my powers.

Whoever correctly knows these powers and emanations of mine, becomes possessed of devotion free from indecision; of this (there is) no doubt.

The wise, full of love, worship me, believing that I am the origin of all, and that all moves on through me.

(Placing their) minds on me, offering (their) lives to me, instructing each other, and speaking about me, they are always contented and happy.

To these, who are constantly devoted, and who worship with love, I give that knowledge by which they attain to me.

And remaining in their hearts, I destroy, with the brilliant lamp of knowledge, the darkness born of ignorance in such (men) only, out of compassion for them.

Arjuna said:

You are the supreme Brahman, the supreme goal, the holiest of the holy. All sages, as well as the divine sage Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyâsa, call you the eternal being, divine, the first god, the unborn, the all-pervading. And so, too, you tell me yourself, O Kesava!

I believe all this that you tell me (to be) true; for, O lord! neither the gods nor demons understand your manifestation.

You only know your self by your self. O best of beings! creator of all things! lord of all things! god of gods! lord of the universe!

Be pleased to declare without exception your divine emanations, by which emanations you stand pervading all these worlds.

How shall I know you, O you of mystic power! always meditating on you?
And in what various entities, O lord! should I meditate on you?

Again, O Ganârdana! do you yourself declare your powers and emanations;
because hearing this nectar, I (still) feel no satiety.

The Deity said:

Well then, O best of Kauravas! I will state to you my own divine emanations;
but (only) the chief (ones), for there is no end to the extent of my
(emanations).

I am the self, O Gudâkesa! seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the
beginning and the middle and the end also of all beings.

I am Vishnu among the Âdityas, the beaming sun among the shining
(bodies); I am Marîki among the Maruts, and the moon among the lunar
mansions.

Among the Vedas, I am the Sâma-veda. I am Indra among the gods. And I
am mind among the senses. I am consciousness in (living) beings.

And I am Sankara among the Rudras, the lord of wealth among Yakshas and
Rakshases. And I am fire among the Vasus, and Meru among the high-
topped (mountains).

And know me, O Arjuna! to be Brihaspati, the chief among domestic priests.
I am Skanda among generals. I am the ocean among reservoirs of water.

I am Bhrigu among the great sages. I am the single syllable (Om) among
words. Among sacrifices I am the Japa sacrifice; the Himâlaya among the
firmly-fixed (mountains);

the Asvattha among all trees, and Nârada among divine sages; Kitraratha
among the heavenly choristers, the sage Kapila among the Siddhas.

Among horses know me to be Ukkaisravas, brought forth by (the labours
for) the nectar; and Airâvata among the great elephants, and the ruler of
men among men.

I am the thunderbolt among weapons, the wish-giving (cow) among cows.
And I am love which generates.

Among serpents I am Vâsuki. Among Nâga snakes I am Ananta; I am Varuna
among aquatic beings. And I am Aryaman among the manes, and Yama
among rulers.

Among demons, too, I am Pralhâda. I am the king of death (Kâla, time)
among those that count. Among beasts I am the lord of beasts, and the son
of Vinatâ among birds.

I am the wind among those that blow. I am Râma among those that wield
weapons. Among fishes I am Makara, and among streams the Jâhnavî.

Of created things I am the beginning and the end and the middle also, O Arjuna! Among sciences, I am the science of the Adhyâtma, and I am the argument of controversialists.

Among letters I am the letter A, and among the group of compounds the copulative compound. I myself am time inexhaustible, and I the creator whose faces are in all directions.

I am death who seizes all, and the source of what is to be. And among females, fame, fortune, speech, memory, intellect, courage, forgiveness.

Likewise among Sâman hymns, I am the Brihat-sâman, and I the Jâyatrî among metres. I am Mârgasîrsha among the months, the spring among the seasons;

Of cheats, I am the game of dice; I am the glory of the glorious, I am victory, I am industry, I am the goodness of the good.

I am Vâsudeva among the descendants of Vrishni, and Arjuna among the Pândavas. Among sages also, I am Vyâsa; and among the discerning ones, I am the discerning Usanas.

I am the rod of those that restrain, and the policy of those that desire victory. I am silence respecting secrets. I am the knowledge of those that have knowledge

And, O Arjuna! I am also that which is the seed of all things. There is nothing movable or immovable which can exist without me.

O terror of your foes! there is no end to my divine emanations. Here I have declared the extent of (those) emanations only in part.

Whatever thing (there is) of power, or glorious, or splendid, know all that to be produced from portions of my energy.

Or rather, O Arjuna! what have you to do, knowing all this at large? I stand supporting all this by (but) a single portion (of myself).

Chapter XI

Arjuna said:

In consequence of the excellent and mysterious words concerning the relation of the supreme and individual soul, which you have spoken for my welfare, this delusion of mine is gone away.

O you whose eyes are like lotus leaves! I have heard from you at large about the production and dissolution of things, and also about your inexhaustible greatness.

O highest lord! what you have said about yourself is so. I wish, O best of beings! to see your divine form.

If, O lord! you think that it is possible for me to look upon it, then, O lord of the possessors of mystic power! show your inexhaustible form to me.

The Deity said:

In hundreds and in thousands see my forms, O son of Prithâ! various, divine, and of various colours and shapes. See the Âdityas, Vasus, Rudras, the two Asvins, and Maruts likewise. And O descendant of Bharata! see wonders, in numbers, unseen before.

Within my body, O Gudâkesa! see to-day the whole universe, including (everything) movable and immovable, (all) in one, and whatever else you wish to see.

But you will not be able to see me with merely, this eye of yours. I give you an eye divine. (Now) see my divine power.

Sañjaya said

Having spoken thus, O king! Hari, the great lord of the possessors of mystic power, then showed to the son of Prithâ his supreme divine form, having many mouths and eyes, having (within it) many wonderful sights, having many celestial ornaments, having many celestial weapons held erect, wearing celestial flowers and vestments, having an anointment of celestial perfumes, full of every wonder, the infinite deity with faces in all directions.

If in the heavens, the lustre of a thousand suns burst forth all at once, that would be like the lustre of that mighty one.

There the son of Pându then observed in the body of the god of gods the whole universe (all) in one, and divided into numerous (divisions).

Then Dhanañjaya filled with amazement, and with hair standing on end, bowed his head before the god, and spoke with joined hands.

Arjuna said:

O god! I see within your body the gods, as also all the groups of various beings; and the lord Brahman seated on (his) lotus seat, and all the sages and celestial snakes.

I see you, who are of countless forms, possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides.

And, O lord of the universe! O you of all forms! I do not see your end or middle or beginning.

I see you bearing a coronet and a mace and a discus — a mass of glory, brilliant on all sides, difficult to look at, having on all sides the effulgence of a blazing fire or sun, and indefinable.

You are indestructible, the supreme one to be known. You are the highest support of this universe. You are the inexhaustible protector of everlasting piety.

I believe you to be the eternal being. I see you void of beginning, middle, end — of infinite power, of unnumbered arms, having the sun and moon for eyes, having a mouth like a blazing fire, and heating the universe with your radiance.

For this space between heaven and earth and all the quarters are pervaded by you alone. Looking at this wonderful and terrible form of yours, O high-souled one! the three worlds are affrighted.

For here these groups of gods are entering into you. Some being afraid are praying with joined hands, and the groups of great sages and Siddhas are saying 'Welfare!' and praising you with abundant (hymns) of praise.

The Rudras, and Âdityas, the Vasus, the Sâdhya, the Visvas, the two Asvins, the Maruts, and the Ushmapas, and the groups of Gandharvas, Yakshas, demons, and Siddhas are all looking at you amazed. Seeing your mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs, and feet, with many stomachs, and fearful with many jaws, all people, and I likewise, are much alarmed, O you of mighty arms!

Seeing you, O Vishnu! touching the skies, radiant, possessed of many hues, with a gaping mouth, and with large blazing eyes, I am much alarmed in my inmost self, and feel no courage, no tranquillity.

And seeing your mouths terrible by the jaws, and resembling the fire of destruction, I cannot recognise the (various) directions, I feel no comfort. Be gracious, O lord of gods! who pervadest the universe.

And all these sons of Dhritarâshtra, together with all the bands of kings, and Bhîshma and Drona, and this charioteer's son likewise, together with our principal warriors also, are rapidly entering your mouths, fearful and horrific by (reason of your) jaws. And some with their heads smashed are seen (to be) stuck in the spaces between the teeth.

As the many rapid currents of a river's waters run towards the sea alone, so do these heroes of the human world enter your mouths blazing all round.

As butterflies, with increased velocity, enter a blazing fire to their destruction, so too do these people enter your mouths with increased velocity (only) to their destruction.

Swallowing all these people, you are licking them over and over again from all sides, with your blazing mouths. Your fierce splendours, O Vishnu! filling the whole universe with (their) effulgence, are heating it.

Tell me who you are in this fierce form. Salutations be to thee, O chief of the gods! Be gracious. I wish to know you, the primeval, one, for I do not understand your actions.

The Deity said:

I am death, the destroyer of the worlds, fully developed, and I am now active about the overthrow of the worlds. Even without you, the warriors standing in the adverse hosts, shall all cease to be.

Therefore, be up, obtain glory, and vanquishing (your) foes, enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these have been already killed by me. Be only the instrument, O Savyasâkin!

Drona, and Bhîshma, and Jayadratha, and Karna, and likewise other valiant warriors also, whom I have killed, do you kill. Be not alarmed. Do fight. And in the battle you will conquer your foes.

Sañjaya said:

Hearing these words of Kesava, the wearer of the coronet, trembling, and with joined hands, bowed down; and sorely afraid, and with throat choked up, he again spoke to Krishna after saluting him.

Arjuna said:

It is quite proper, O Hrishîkesa! that the universe is delighted and charmed by your renown, that the demons run away affrighted in all directions, and that all the assemblages of Siddhas bow down,(to you).

And why, O high-souled one! should they not bow down to you (who are) greater than Brahman, and first cause? O infinite lord of gods! O you pervading the universe! you are the indestructible, that which is, that which is not, and what is beyond them.

You are the primal god, the ancient being, you are the highest support of this universe. You are that which has knowledge, that which is the object of knowledge, you are the highest goal. By you is this universe pervaded., O you of infinite forms! You are the wind, Yama, fire, Varuna, the moon, you Prajâpati, and the great grandsire. Obeisance be to thee a thousand times, and again and again obeisance to thee!

In front and from behind obeisance to thee! Obeisance be to thee from all sides, O you who are all! You are of infinite power, of unmeasured glory; you pervade all, and therefore you are all!

Whatever I have said contemptuously, — for instance, 'O Krishna!' 'O Yādava!' 'O friend!' — thinking you to be (my) friend, and not knowing your greatness (as shown in) this (universal form), or through friendliness, or incautiously;

and whatever disrespect I have shown you for purposes of merriment, on (occasions of) play, sleep, dinner, or sitting (together), whether alone or in the presence (of friends), — for all that, O undegraded one! I ask pardon of you who are indefinable.

You are the father of the world — movable and immovable, — you its great and venerable master; there is none equal to you, whence can there be one greater, O you whose power is unparalleled in all the three worlds?

Therefore I bow and prostrate myself, and would propitiate you, the praiseworthy lord. Be pleased, O god! to pardon (my guilt) as a father (that of his) son, a friend (that of his) friend, or a husband (that of his) beloved.

I am delighted at seeing what I had never seen before, and my heart is also alarmed by fear. Show me that same form, O god! Be gracious, O lord of gods! O you pervading the universe!

I wish to see you bearing the coronet and the mace, with the discus in hand, just the same (as before). O you of thousand arms! O you of all forms! assume that same four-handed form.

The Deity said:

O Arjuna! being pleased (with you), I have by my own mystic power shown you this supreme form, full of glory, universal, infinite, primeval, and which has not been seen before by any one else but you, O you hero among the Kauravas!

I cannot be seen in this form by any one but you, (even) by (the help of) the study of the Vedas, or of sacrifices, nor by gifts, nor by actions, nor by fierce penances.

Be not alarmed, be not perplexed, at seeing this form of mine, fearful like this. Free from fear and with delighted heart, see now again that same form of mine.

Sañjaya said:

Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Vāsudeva again showed his own form, and the high-souled one becoming again of a mild form, comforted him who had been affrighted.

Arjuna said:

O Janardana! seeing this mild, human form of yours, I am new in my right mind, and have come to my normal state.

The Deity said:

Even the gods are always desiring to see this form of mine, which it is difficult to get a sight of, and which you have seen.

I cannot be seen, as you have seen me, by (means of) the Vedas, not by penance, not by gift, nor yet by sacrifice.

But, O Arjuna! by devotion to me exclusively, I can in this form be truly known, seen, and assimilated with, O terror of your foes!

He who performs acts for (propitiating) me, to whom I am the highest (object), who is my devotee, who is free from attachment, and who has no enmity towards any being, he, O son of Pându! comes to me.

Chapter XII

Arjuna said:

Of the worshippers, who thus, constantly devoted, meditate on you, and those who (meditate) on the unperceived and indestructible, which best know devotion?

The Deity said:

Those who being constantly devoted, and possessed of the highest faith, worship me with a mind fixed on me, are deemed by me to be the most devoted.

But those, who, restraining the (whole) group of the senses, and with a mind at all times equable, meditate on the indescribable, indestructible, unperceived (principle) which is all-pervading, unthinkable, indifferent, immovable, and constant, they, intent on the good of all beings, necessarily attain to me.

For those whose minds are attached to the unperceived, the trouble is much greater. Because the unperceived goal is obtained by embodied (beings) with difficulty.

As to those, however, O son of Prithâ! who, dedicating all their actions to me, and (holding) me as their highest (goal), worship me, meditating on me with a devotion towards none besides me, and whose minds are fixed on me, I, without delay, come forward as their deliverer from the ocean of this world of death.

Place your mind on me only; fix your understanding on me. In me you will dwell hereafter, (there is) no doubt.

But if you are unable to fix your mind steadily on me, then, O Dhanañjaya! endeavour to obtain me by the abstraction of mind (resulting) from continuous meditation.

If you are unequal even to continuous meditation, then let acts for (propitiating) me be your highest (aim). Even performing actions for (propitiating) me, you will attain perfection.

If you are unable to do even this, then resort to devotion to me, and, with self-restraint, abandon all fruit of action.

For knowledge is better than continuous meditation; concentration is esteemed higher than knowledge; and the abandonment of fruit of action than concentration; from (that) abandonment, tranquillity soon (results).

That devotee of mine, who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate, who is free from egoism, and from (the idea that this or that is) mine, to whom happiness and misery are alike, who is forgiving,

contented, constantly devoted, self-restrained, and firm in his determinations, and whose mind and understanding are devoted to me, he is dear to me.

He through whom the world is not agitated, and who is not agitated by the world, who is free from joy and anger and fear and agitation, he too is dear to me.

That devotee of mine, who is unconcerned, pure, assiduous, impartial, free from distress, who abandons all actions (for fruit), he is dear to me.

He who is full of devotion to me, who feels no joy and no aversion, who does not grieve and does not desire, who abandons (both what is) agreeable and (what is) disagreeable, he is dear to me.

He who is alike to friend and foe, as also in honour and dishonour, who is alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, who is free from attachments, to whom praise and blame are alike, who is taciturn, and contented with anything whatever (that comes), who is homeless, and of a steady mind, and full of devotion, that man is dear to me.

But those devotees who, imbued with faith, and (regarding) me as their highest (goal), resort to this holy (means for attaining) immortality, as stated, they are extremely dear to me.

Chapter XIII

The Deity said:

This body, O son of Kuntī! is called Kshetra, and the learned call him who knows it the Kshetrajña.

And know me also, O descendant of Bharata! to be the Kshetrajña in all Kshetras. The knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajña is deemed by me (to be real) knowledge.

Now hear from me in brief what that Kshetra (is), what (it is) like, what changes (it undergoes), and whence (it comes), and what is he, and what his powers,

(all which) is sung in various ways by sages in numerous hymns, distinctly, and in well-settled texts full of argument, giving indications or full instruction about the Brahman.

The great elements, egoism, the understanding, the unperceived also, the ten senses, and the one, and the five objects of sense, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, body, consciousness, courage, thus in brief has been declared the Kshetra with changes.

Absence of vanity, absence of ostentatiousness, absence of hurtfulness, forgiveness, straightforwardness, devotion to a preceptor, purity, steadiness, self-restraint, indifference towards objects of sense, and also absence of egoism; perception of the misery and evil of birth, death, old age, and disease;

absence of attachment, absence of self-identifying regard for son, wife, home, and so forth; and constant equability on the approach of (both what is) agreeable and (what is) disagreeable; unswerving devotion to me, without meditation on any one else; resorting to clean places, distaste for assemblages of men, constancy in knowledge of the relation of the individual self to the supreme, perception of the object of knowledge of the truth, this is called knowledge; that is ignorance which is opposed to this.

I will declare that which is the object of knowledge, knowing which, one reaches immortality; the highest Brahman, having no beginning nor end, which cannot be said to be existent or non-existent.

It has hands and feet on all sides, it has eyes, heads, and faces on all sides, it has ears on all sides, it stands pervading everything in the world.

Possessed of the qualities of all the senses, (but) devoid of all senses, unattached, it supports all, is devoid of qualities, and the enjoyer of qualities.

It is within all things and without them; it is movable and also immovable; it is unknowable through (its) subtlety; it stands afar and near.

Not different in (different) things, but standing as though different, it should be known to be the supporter of (all) things, and that which absorbs and creates (them).

It is the radiance even of the radiant (bodies); it is said (to be) beyond darkness. It is knowledge, the object of knowledge, that which is to be attained to by knowledge, and placed in the heart of all.

Thus in brief have Kshetra, knowledge, and the object of knowledge been declared. My devotee, knowing this, becomes fit for assimilation with me.

Know nature and spirit both (to be) without beginning, and know all developments and qualities (to be) produced from nature. Nature is said to be the origin of the capacity of working (residing) in the body and the senses; and spirit is said (to be) the origin of the capacity of enjoying pleasures and pains.

For spirit with nature joined, enjoys the qualities born of nature. And the cause of its birth in good or evil wombs is the connexion with the qualities.

The supreme spirit in this body is called supervisor, adviser, supporter, enjoyer, the great lord, and the supreme self also.

He who thus knows nature and spirit, together with the qualities, is not born again, however living.

Some by concentration see the self in the self by the self; others by the Sāṅkya-yoga; and others still by the Karma-yoga;

others yet, not knowing this, practise concentration, after hearing from others. They, too, being (thus) devoted to hearing (instruction) cross beyond death.

Whatever thing movable or immovable comes into existence, know that to be from the connexion of Kshetra and Kshetrajña, O chief of the descendants of Bharata!

He sees (truly) who sees the supreme lord abiding alike in all entities, and not destroyed though they are destroyed.

For he who sees the lord abiding everywhere alike, does not destroy himself by himself, and then reaches the highest goal.

He sees (truly), who sees (all) actions (to be) in every way done by nature alone, and likewise the self (to be) not the doer.

When a man sees all the variety of entities as existing in one, and (all as) emanating from that, then he becomes (one with) the Brahman.

This inexhaustible supreme self, being without beginning and without qualities, does not act, and is not tainted, O son of Kuntî! though stationed in the body.

As by (reason of its) subtlety the all-pervading space is not tainted, so the self stationed in every body is not tainted.

As the sun singly lights up all this world, so the Kshetrajña, O descendant of Bharata! lights up the whole Kshetra.

Those who, with the eye of knowledge, thus understand the difference between Kshetra and Kshetrajña, and the destruction of the nature of all entities, go to the supreme.

Chapter XIV

The Deity said:

Again I will declare (to you) the highest knowledge, the best of (all sorts of) knowledge, having learnt which, all sages have reached perfection beyond (the bonds of) this (body).

Those who, resorting to this knowledge, reach assimilation with my essence, are not born at the creation, and are not afflicted at the destruction (of the universe).

The great Brahman is a womb for me, in which I cast the seed. From that, O descendant of Bharata! is the birth of all things.

Of the bodies, O son of Kuntī! which are born from all wombs, the (main) womb is the great Brahman, and I (am) the father, the giver of the seed.

Goodness, passion, darkness, these qualities born from nature, O you of mighty arms! bind down the inexhaustible soul in the body.

Of these, goodness, which, in consequence of being untainted, is enlightening and free from (all) misery, binds the soul, O sinless one! with the bond of pleasure and the bond of knowledge.

Know that passion consists in being enamoured, and is produced from craving and attachment. That, O son of Kuntī! binds down the embodied (self) with the bond of action.

Darkness (you must) know to be born of ignorance, it deludes all embodied (selves). And that, O descendant of Bharata! binds down (the self) with heedlessness, indolence, and sleep.

Goodness unites (the self) with pleasure; passion, O descendant of Bharata! with action; and darkness with heedlessness, after shrouding up knowledge.

Passion and darkness being repressed, goodness stands, O descendant of Bharata! Passion and goodness (being repressed), darkness; and likewise darkness and goodness (being repressed), passion.

When in this body at all portals light (that is to say) knowledge prevails, then should one know goodness to be developed.

Avarice, activity, performance of actions, want of tranquillity, desire, these are produced, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! when passion is developed.

Want of light, want of activity, heedlessness, and delusion, these are produced, O descendant of Kuru! when darkness is developed.

When an embodied (self) encounters death, while goodness is developed, then he reaches the untainted worlds of those who know the highest.

Encountering death during (the prevalence of) passion, he is born among those attached to action. Likewise, dying during (the prevalence of) darkness, he is born in the wombs of the ignorant.

The fruit of meritorious action is said to be good, untainted; while the fruit of passion is misery; and the fruit of darkness ignorance.

From goodness is produced knowledge, from passion avarice, and from darkness heedlessness and delusion and ignorance also.

Those who adhere to (the ways of) goodness go up; the passionate remain in the middle; while those of the qualities of darkness, adhering to the ways of the lowest quality, go down.

When a right-seeing person sees none but the qualities (to be) the doers (of all action), and knows what is above the qualities, he enters into my essence.

The embodied (self), who transcends these three qualities, from which bodies are produced, attains immortality, being freed from birth and death and old age and misery.

Arjuna said:

What are the characteristics, O lord! of one who has transcended these three qualities? What is his conduct, and how does he transcend these three qualities?

The Deity said:

He is said to have transcended the qualities, O son of Pându! who is not averse to light and activity and delusion (when they) prevail, and who does not desire (them when they) cease; who sitting like one unconcerned is never perturbed by the qualities; who remains steady and moves not, (thinking) merely that the qualities exist; who is self-contained; to whom pain and pleasure are alike; to whom a sod and a stone and gold are alike; to whom what is agreeable and what is disagreeable are alike; who has discernment; to whom censure and praise of himself are alike; who is alike in honour and dishonour; who is alike towards the sides of friends and foes; and who abandons all action.

And he who worships me with an unswerving devotion, transcends these qualities, and becomes fit for (entrance into) the essence of the Brahman.

For I am the embodiment of the Brahman, of indefeasible immortality, of eternal piety, and of unbroken happiness.

Chapter XV

The Deity said:

They say the inexhaustible Asvattha has (its) roots above, (its) branches below; the Khandas are its leaves. He who knows it knows the Vedas.

Upwards and downwards extend its branches, which are enlarged by the qualities, and the sprouts of which are sensuous objects. And downwards to this human world are continued its roots which lead on to action.

Its form is not thus known here, nor (its) end, nor beginning, nor support. But having with the firm weapon of unconcern, cut this Asvattha, whose roots are firmly fixed, then should one seek for that seat from which those that go there never return, (thinking) that one rests on that same primal being from whom the ancient course (of worldly life) emanated.

Those who are free from pride and delusion, who have overcome the evils of attachment, who are constant in (contemplating) the relation of the supreme and individual self, from whom desire has departed, who are free from the pairs (of opposites) called pleasure and pain, go undeluded to that imperishable seat.

The sun does not light it, nor the moon, nor fire. That is my highest abode, going to which none returns.

An eternal portion of me it is, which, becoming an individual soul in the mortal world, draws (to itself) the senses with the mind as the sixth.

Whenever the ruler (of the bodily frame) obtains or quits a body, he goes taking these (with him) as the wind (takes) perfumes from (their) seats.

And presiding over the senses of hearing and seeing, and touch, and taste, and smell, and the mind, he enjoys sensuous objects.

Those who are deluded do not see (him) remaining in or quitting (a body), enjoying or joined to the qualities; they see, who have eyes of knowledge.

Devotees making efforts perceive him abiding within their selves. But those whose selves have not been refined, and who have no discernment, do not perceive him even (after) making efforts.

Know that glory (to be) mine which, dwelling in the sun, lights up the whole world, or in the moon or fire.

Entering the earth, I by my power support all things; and becoming the juicy moon, I nourish all herbs.

I becoming the fire, and dwelling in the bodies of (all) creatures, and united with the upward and downward life-breaths, cause digestion of the fourfold food.

And I am placed in the heart of all; from me (come) memory, knowledge, and their removal; I alone am to be learnt from all the Vedas; I am the author of the Vedântas; and I alone know the Vedas.

There are these two beings in the world, the destructible and the indestructible. The destructible (includes) all things. The unconcerned one is (what is) called the indestructible.

But the being supreme is yet another, called the highest self, who as the inexhaustible lord, pervading the three worlds, supports (them).

And since I transcend the destructible, and since I am higher also than the indestructible, therefore am I celebrated in the world and in the Vedas as the best of beings.

He who, undeluded, thus knows me the best of beings, worships me every way, O descendant of Bharata! knowing everything.

Thus, O sinless one! have I proclaimed this most mysterious science. He who knows this, has done all he need do, and he becomes possessed of discernment.

Chapter XVI

Freedom from fear, purity of heart, perseverance in (pursuit of) knowledge and abstraction of mind, gifts, self-restraint, and sacrifice, study of the Vedas, penance, straightforwardness, harmlessness, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from the habit of backbiting, compassion for (all) beings, freedom from avarice, gentleness, modesty, absence of vain activity, noble-mindedness, forgiveness, courage, purity, freedom from a desire to injure others, absence of vanity, (these), O descendant of Bharata! are his who is born to godlike endowments.

Ostentatiousness, pride, vanity, anger, and also harshness and ignorance (are) his, O son of Prithâ! who is born to demoniac endowments.

Godlike endowments are deemed to be (means) for final emancipation, demoniac for bondage. Grieve not, O descendant of Bharata! you are born to godlike endowments.

(There are) two classes of created beings in this world, the godlike and the demoniac; the godlike (class) has been described at length; now hear from me, O son of Prithâ! about the demoniac.

Demoniac persons know not action or inaction, neither purity nor yet (correct) conduct nor veracity are in them.

They say the universe is devoid of truth, devoid of fixed principle, and devoid of a ruler, produced by union (of male and female) caused by lust, and nothing else.

Holding this view, (these) enemies of the world, of ruined selfs, of little knowledge, and of ferocious actions, are born for the destruction (of the world).

Entertaining insatiable desire, full of vanity, ostentatiousness, and frenzy, they adopt false notions through delusion, and engage in unholy observances.

Indulging in boundless thoughts ending with death, given up to the enjoyment of objects of desire, being resolved that that is all, bound down by nets of hopes in hundreds, given up to anger and desire, they wish to obtain heaps of wealth unfairly for enjoying objects of desire.

'This have I obtained today; this wish I will obtain; this wealth is mine; and this also shall be mine;

This foe I have killed; others too I will destroy; I am lord, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, strong, happy;

I have wealth; I am of noble birth; who else is like me? I will sacrifice; I will make gifts; I will rejoice.' Thus deluded by ignorance,

Tossed about by numerous thoughts, surrounded by the net of delusion, and attached to the enjoyment of objects of desire, they fall down into impure hell.

Honoured (only) by themselves, void of humility, and full of the pride and frenzy of wealth, these calumniators (of the virtuous) perform sacrifices, which are sacrifices only in name, with ostentatiousness and against prescribed rules;

Indulging (their) vanity, brute force, arrogance, lust, and anger; and hating me in their own bodies and in those of others.

These enemies, ferocious, meanest of men, and unholy, I continually hurl down, to these worlds, only into demoniac wombs.

Coming into demoniac wombs, deluded in every birth, they go down to the vilest state, O son of Kuntī! without ever coming to me.

Threefold is this way, to hell, — ruinous to the self, — lust, anger, and likewise avarice; therefore one should abandon this triad.

Released from these three ways to darkness, O son of Kuntī! a man works out his own welfare, and then proceeds to the highest goal.

He who abandoning scripture ordinances, acts under the impulse of desire, does not attain perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal.

Therefore in discriminating between what should be done and what should not be done, your authority (must. be) scripture. And knowing what is declared by the ordinances of scripture, you should perform action in this world.

Chapter XVII

Arjuna said:

What is the state of those, O Krishna! who worship with faith, (but) abandoning scripture ordinances — goodness, passion, or darkness?

The Deity said:

Faith is of three kinds in embodied (beings), it is produced from dispositions. It is of the quality of goodness, of the quality of passion, and of the quality of darkness. Hear about it.

The faith of all, O descendant of Bharata! is conformable to the heart. A being here is full of faith, and whatever is a man's faith, that is a man himself.

Those of the quality of goodness worship the gods; those of the quality of passion the Yakshas and Rakshases; and the others, the people of the quality of darkness, worship departed (spirits) and the multitudes of Bhūtas.

Know those to be of demoniac convictions, who practise fierce penance not ordained by scripture; who are full of ostentatiousness and egoism, and of desire, attachment, and stubbornness; who are without discernment; and who torment the groups of organs in (their) bodies, and me also seated within (those) bodies.

The food also, which is liked by all, and likewise the sacrifice, the penance, and gifts, are of three kinds. Listen to the distinctions regarding them as follows.

The kinds of food which increase life, energy, strength, health, comfort, and relish, which are savoury, oleaginous, full of nutrition, and agreeable, are liked by the good.

The kinds of food which are bitter, acid, saltish, too hot, sharp, rough, and burning, and which cause pain, grief, and disease, are desired by the passionate.

And the food which is cold, tasteless, stinking, stale, impure, and even leavings, are liked by the dark.

That sacrifice is good which, being prescribed in (scripture) ordinances, is performed by persons not wishing for the fruit (of it), and after determining (in their) mind that the sacrifice must needs be performed.

But when a sacrifice is performed, O highest of the descendants of Bharata! with an expectation of fruit (from it), and for the purpose of ostentation, know that sacrifice (to be) passionate.

They call that sacrifice dark, which is against the ordinances (of scripture), in which no food is dealt out (to Brāhmanas, &c.), which is devoid of Mantras, devoid of Dakshinā presents, and which is without faith.

Paying reverence to gods, Brâhmanas, preceptors, and men of knowledge; purity, straightforwardness, life as Brahmakârin, and harmlessness, (this) is called the penance bodily.

The speech which causes no sorrow, which is true, agreeable, and beneficial, and the study of the Vedas, (this) is called the penance vocal.

Calmness of mind, mildness, taciturnity, self-restraint, and purity of heart, this is called the penance mental.

This threefold penance, practised with perfect faith, by men who do not wish for the fruit, and who are possessed of devotion is called good.

The penance which is done for respect, honour, and reverence, and with ostentatiousness, and which is uncertain and transient, is here called passionate.

And that penance is described as dark, which is performed under a misguided conviction, with pain to oneself, or for the destruction of another.

That gift is said (to be) good, which is given, because it ought to be given, to one who (can) do no service (in return), at a (proper) place and time, and to a (proper) person.

But that gift which is given with much difficulty, for a return of services, or even with an expectation of fruit, is said to be passionate.

And that gift, is described as dark, which is given to unfit persons, at an unfit place and time, without respect, and with contempt.

Om, Tad, and Sat, this is said (to be) the threefold designation of the Brahman. By that, the Brâhmanas and the Vedas and sacrifices were created in olden times.

Hence, the performance by those who study the Brahman, of sacrifices, gifts, and penances, prescribed by the ordinances (of scripture), always commence after saying 'Om.'

Those who desire final emancipation perform the various acts of sacrifice and penance, and the various acts of gift, without expectation of fruit, after (saying) 'Tad.'

'Sat' is employed to express existence and goodness; and likewise, O son of Prithâ! the word 'Sat' is used to express an auspicious act.

Constancy in (making) sacrifices, penances, and gifts, is called 'Sat;' and (all) action, too, of which that is the object, is also called 'Sat.'

Whatever oblation is offered, whatever is given, whatever penance is performed, and whatever is done, without faith, that, O son of Prithâ! is called 'Asat,' and that is nought, both after death and here.

Chapter XVIII

Arjuna said:

O you of mighty arms! O Hrishikesa! O destroyer of Keshin! I wish to know the truth about renunciation and abandonment distinctly.

The Deity said:

By renunciation the sages understand the rejection of actions done with desires. The wise call the abandonment of the fruit of all actions (by the name) abandonment.

Some wise men say, that action should be abandoned as being full of evil; and others, that the actions of sacrifice, gift, and penance should not be abandoned.

As to that abandonment, O best of the descendants of Bharata! listen to my decision; for abandonment, O bravest of men! is described (to be) threefold.

The actions of sacrifice, gift, and penance should not be abandoned; they must needs be performed; for sacrifices, gifts, and penances are means of sanctification to the wise.

But even these actions, O son of Prithâ! should be performed, abandoning attachment and fruit; such is my excellent and decided opinion.

The renunciation of prescribed action is not proper. Its abandonment through delusion is described as of the quality of darkness.

When a man abandons action, merely as being troublesome, through fear of bodily affliction, he does not obtain the fruit of abandonment by making (such) passionate abandonment.

When prescribed action is performed, O Arjuna! abandoning attachment and fruit also, merely because it ought to be performed, that is deemed (to be) a good abandonment.

He who is possessed of abandonment, being full of goodness, and talented, and having, his doubts destroyed, is not averse from unpleasant actions, is not attached to pleasant (ones).

Since no embodied (being) can abandon actions without exception, he is said to be possessed of abandonment, who abandons the fruit of action.

The threefold fruit of action, agreeable, disagreeable, and mixed, accrues after death to those who are not possessed of abandonment, but never to renouncers.

Learn from me, O you of mighty arms! these five causes of the completion of all actions, declared in the Sâmkhya system.

The substratum, the agent likewise, the various sorts of organs, and the various and distinct movements, and with these the deities, too, as the fifth.

Whatever action, just or otherwise, a man performs with his body, speech, and mind, these five are its causes.

That being so, the undiscerning man, who being of an unrefined understanding, sees the agent in the immaculate self, sees not (rightly).

He who has no feeling of egoism, and whose mind is not tainted, even though he kills (all) these people, kills not, is not fettered, (by the action).

Knowledge, the object of knowledge, the knower--threefold is the prompting to action. The instrument, the action, the agent, thus in brief is action threefold.

Knowledge and action and agent are declared in the enumeration of qualities (to be) of three classes only, according to the difference of qualities. Hear about these also as they really are.

Know that knowledge to be good, by which (a man) sees one entity, inexhaustible, and not different in all things (apparently) different (from one another).

Know that knowledge to be passionate, which is (based) on distinctions (between different entities), which sees in all things various entities of different kinds.

And that is described as dark, which clings to one created (thing) only as everything, which is devoid of reason, devoid of real principle, and insignificant.

That action is called good, which is prescribed, which is devoid of attachment, which is not done from (motives of) affection or aversion, (and which is done) by one not wishing for the fruit.

That is described as passionate, which (occasions) much trouble, is performed by one who wishes for objects of desire, or one who is full of egotism.

The action is called dark, which is commenced through delusion, without regard to consequences, loss, injury, or strength.

That agent is called good, who has cast off attachment, who is free from egotistic talk, who is possessed of courage and energy, and unaffected by success or ill-success.

That agent is called passionate, who is full of affections, who wishes for the fruit of actions, who is covetous, cruel, and impure, and feels joy and sorrow.

That agent is called dark, who is without application, void of discernment, headstrong, crafty, malicious, lazy, melancholy, and slow.

Now hear, O Dhanañgaya! the threefold division of intelligence and courage, according to qualities, which I am about to declare exhaustively and distinctly.

That intelligence, O son of Prithâ! is good which understands action and inaction, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, danger and the absence of danger, emancipation and bondage.

That intelligence, O son of Prithâ! is passionate, by which one imperfectly understands piety and impiety, what ought to be done and also what ought not to be done.

That intelligence, O son of Prithâ! is dark, which shrouded by darkness, understands impiety (to be) piety, and all things incorrectly.

That courage, O son of Prithâ! is good courage, which is unswerving, and by which one controls the operations of the mind, breath, and senses, through abstraction.

But, O Arjuna! that courage is passionate, by which one adheres to piety, lust, and wealth, and through attachment wishes, O son of Prithâ! for the fruit.

That courage is dark, O son of Prithâ! by which an undiscerning man does not give up sleep, fear, sorrow, despondency, and folly.

Now, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! bear from me about the three sorts of happiness.

That happiness is called good, in which one is pleased after repetition (of enjoyment), and reaches the close of all misery, which is like poison first and comparable to nectar in the long run, and which is produced from a clear knowledge of the self.

That happiness is called passionate, which (flows) from contact between the senses and their objects, and which is at first comparable to nectar and in the long run like poison.

That happiness is described as dark, which arises from sleep, laziness, heedlessness, which deludes the self, both at first and in its consequences.

There is no entity either on earth or in heaven among the gods, which is free from these three qualities born of nature.

The duties of Brâhmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, and of Sûdras, too, O terror of your foes! are distinguished according to the qualities born of nature.

Tranquillity, restraint of the senses, penance, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, also knowledge, experience, and belief (in a future world), this is the natural duty of Brâhmanas.

Valour, glory, courage, dexterity, not slinking away from battle, gifts, exercise of lordly power, this is the natural duty of Kshatriyas.

Agriculture, tending cattle, trade, (this) is the natural duty of Vaisyas. And the natural duty of Sûdras, too, consists in service.

(Every) man intent on his own respective duties obtains perfection. Listen, now, how one intent on one's own duty obtains perfection.

Worshipping, by (the performance of) his own duty, him from whom all things proceed, and by whom all this is permeated, a man obtains perfection.

One's duty, though defective, is better than another's duty well performed. Performing the duty prescribed by nature, one does not incur sin.

O son of Kuntî! one should not abandon a natural duty though tainted with evil; for all actions are enveloped by evil, as fire by smoke.

One who is self-restrained, whose understanding is unattached everywhere, from whom affections have departed, obtains the supreme perfection of freedom from action by renunciation.

Learn from me, only in brief, O son of Kuntî! how one who has obtained perfection attains the Brahman, which is the highest culmination of knowledge.

A man possessed of a pure understanding, controlling his self by courage, discarding sound and other objects of sense, casting off affection and aversion;

Who frequents clean places, who eats little, whose speech, body, and mind are restrained, who is always intent on meditation and mental abstraction, and has recourse to unconcern, who abandoning egoism, stubbornness, arrogance, desire, anger, and (all) belongings, has no (thought that this or that is) mine, and who is tranquil, becomes fit for assimilation with the Brahman.

Thus reaching the Brahman, and with a tranquil self, he grieves not, wishes not; but being alike to all beings, obtains the highest devotion to me.

By (that) devotion he truly understands who I am and how great. And then understanding me truly, he forthwith enters into my (essence).

Even performing all actions, always depending on me, he, through my favour, obtains the imperishable and eternal seat.

Dedicating in thought all actions to me, be constantly given up to me, (placing) your thoughts on me, through recourse to mental abstraction.

(Placing) your thoughts on me, you will cross over all difficulties by my favour. But if you will not listen through egotism, you will be ruined.

If entertaining egotism, you think that you may not fight, vain, indeed, is that resolution of yours. Nature will constrain you.

That, O son of Kuntî! which through delusion you do not wish to do, you will do involuntarily, tied down by your own duty, flowing from your nature.

The lord, O Arjuna! is seated in the region of the heart of all beings, turning round all beings (as though) mounted on a machine, by his delusion.

With him, O descendant of Bharata! seek shelter in every way; by his favour you will obtain the highest tranquillity, the eternal seat.

Thus have I declared to you the knowledge more mysterious than any mystery. Ponder over it thoroughly, and then act as you like.

Once more, listen to my excellent words-most mysterious of all. Strongly I like you, therefore I will declare what is for your welfare.

On me (place) your mind, become my devotee, sacrifice to me, reverence me, you will certainly come to me. I declare to you truly, you are dear to me.

Forsaking all duties, come to me as (your) sole refuge. I will release you from all sins. Be not grieved.

This you should never declare to one who performs no penance, who is not a devotee, nor to one who does not wait on (some preceptor), nor yet to one who calumniates me.

He who, with the highest devotion to me, will proclaim this supreme mystery among my devotees, will come to me, freed from (all) doubt.

No one amongst men is superior to him in doing what is dear to me. And there will never be another on earth dearer to me than he.

And he who will study this holy dialogue of ours, will, such is my opinion, have offered to me the sacrifice of knowledge.

And the man, also, who with faith and without carping will listen (to this), will be freed (from sin), and attain to the holy regions of those who perform pious acts.

Have you listened to this, O son of Prithâ! with a mind (fixed) on (this) one point only? Has your delusion (caused) by ignorance been destroyed, O Dhanañjaya?

Arjuna said:

Destroyed is my delusion; by your favour, O undegraded one! I (now) recollect myself. I stand freed from doubts. I will do your bidding.

Sañjaya said:

Thus did I hear this dialogue between Vâsudeva and the high-minded son of Prithâ, (a dialogue) wonderful and causing the hair to stand on end.

By the favour of Vyâsa, I heard this highest mystery, (this) devotion, from Krishna himself, the lord of the possessors of mystic power, who proclaimed it in person.

O king! remembering and (again) remembering this wonderful and holy dialogue of Kesava and Arjuna, I rejoice over and over again.

And remembering and (again) remembering that excessively wonderful form of Hari also, great is my amazement, O king! and I rejoice over and over again.

Wherever (is) Krishna, the lord of the possessors of mystic power, wherever is the (great) archer, the son of Prithâ, there in my opinion (are) fortune, victory, prosperity, and eternal justice.