

ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः हरिः ओम्

श्रीमद्-भगवद्गीता-तात्पर्यम्

Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā-Tātparyam

*A Chapterwise Summary of the Divine
Song*

स्वामी परमार्थानन्द सरस्वती

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Key to Transliteration

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ
<i>a</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ṛ</i>
ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	
<i>ṝ</i>	<i>ḷ</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ai</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>au</i>	
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ		
<i>ka</i>	<i>kha</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>gha</i>	<i>ṅa</i>		
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ		
<i>ca</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>jha</i>	<i>ña</i>		
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण		
<i>ṭa</i>	<i>ṭha</i>	<i>ḍa</i>	<i>ḍha</i>	<i>ṇa</i>		
त	थ	द	ध	न		
<i>ta</i>	<i>tha</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>dha</i>	<i>na</i>		
प	फ	ब	भ	म		
<i>pa</i>	<i>pha</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>bha</i>	<i>ma</i>		
य	र	ल	व	अं		
<i>ya</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>aṃ</i>		
श	ष	स	ह	अः		
<i>śa</i>	<i>ṣa</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>aḥ</i>		

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Note:

1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses. Chapter numbers are indicated by Roman (I, II, III *etc.*) numerals and verse numbers by Arabic (1, 2, 3 *etc.*) numerals.

Chapter 1

Arjunaviṣāda-yoga

(The setup in which the *Gītā*-teaching is imparted is the epic battle of *Mahābhārata*, fought between the *Pāṇḍavas* and *Kauravas*. *Arjuna*, the *Pāṇḍava*, discovers the problem of *saṃsāra* in the battlefield. He surrenders to Lord *Kṛṣṇa* seeking a solution. Then follows the great teaching.

If one should get the *Gītā*-wisdom, one should go through some important phases in one's life.

Firstly, one should discover the problem of *saṃsāra*, for which *Gītā* happens to be a solution. Unless one discovers the disease, one will not seek medicine.

Secondly, one should become possessed by a sincere longing (*tīvramumukṣā*) for freedom from *saṃsāra*. This alone can lead to committed and fruitful pursuit.

Thirdly, one should realize that one cannot solve this problem independently. The maximum that one can do, as a limited human being, is a rearrangement or a reshaping of the problem.

Finally, one should surrender to a guru seeking his guidance. When one discovers the *śiṣya* in one and surrenders to a *guru*, the ground is prepared for the *Gītā*-teaching to take place.

The entire first chapter and the first part of the second chapter are devoted to show these developments.)

The problem of *saṃsāra*, as shown in the first chapter, can be said to be the problem of attachment (*kṛpā* or *rāga*), grief (*śoka* or *viṣāda*) and delusion (*moha*). When one is not happy with oneself, one has to seek external aids. This leads to dependence and attachment. Since the conditions of the depended factors are unpredictable, the very peace of mind of that person is in trouble. A disturbed mind can make only faulty judgements complicating the matters further. Thus a vicious cycle is created. This, in short, is the problem of *saṃsāra*.

Coming to the text, we find, in the first twenty verses, a vivid description of the armies arrayed for battle. After a brief instruction of *Duryodhana* to his commanders, *Bhīṣma*, Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, *Arjuna*, and

others blow their conches, signaling the commencement of the battle (1 to 20).

At this fateful moment, *Arjuna* commands Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, his charioteer, to place the chariot in the middle of the army to scrutinize the enemy-forces. The mischievous Lord brings the chariot in front of *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa* and asks *Arjuna* to survey the army (21 to 25).

(Till now *Arjuna* was convinced that his cousins are unrighteous (23) and he, as a *kṣatriya*, has to fight the battle to establish righteousness.)

In a moment of weakness, *Arjuna* slips down from reason to relation. Instead of seeing the violators of *dharma*, he sees his beloved kith and kin. Naturally, *Arjuna* is overpowered by attachment. Then follow the twin offshoots of attachment *viz.* grief and delusion (26 to 30).

In the next five verses, we see *Arjuna* expressing his intense grief which shakes him completely. This indicates the extent of his attachment.

Veiled by attachment, his discriminative power becomes inoperative and he commits a series of false judgements. Interestingly enough, *Arjuna* even quotes the scriptures to support his unreasonable stand. Thus, *Arjuna* gets caught up in delusion which is depicted from the 36th verse upto the end of the chapter (36 to 47).

In this way, *Arjuna* finds himself in the deep sea of attachment, sorrow and delusion (*rāga, śoka, moha*). *Arjuna* sincerely wants to get out of this problem. He thinks that solution is to drop the battle. But, one corner of his mind is not convinced by this. At the same time, he has not realized that the problem is too deep for him to solve independently. Hence he doesn't surrender to *Kṛṣṇa* either. Thus caught up in a dilemma, *Arjuna* sits back on the chariot sorrowfully.

The main topics of this chapter are:

1. Description of the armies and the preparations 1 to 20
2. *Arjuna*'s chariot being placed in the middle of the armies on his request 21 to 25
3. *Arjuna*'s change of mind leading to attachment (*rāga*) 26 to 28
4. *Arjuna*'s grief (*śoka*) 25 to 34

5. <i>Arjuna's delusion (moha)</i>	35 to 47
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Since *Arjuna's* grief is the main topic, this chapter is aptly called *Arjunaviśāda-yoga*.

Chapter 2

Sāṅkhya-yoga

In the first chapter, *Arjuna* was shown to be completely immersed in grief (*śoka*) caused by attachment (*rāga*) and delusion (*moha*). Independently analyzing the problem, he comes to the conclusion that withdrawing from the war is the only solution.

In the beginning of the second chapter we see the turning point in *Arjuna*. Chastised by *Kṛṣṇa* (2, 3), *Arjuna* analyses the situation further. This leads to the two important discoveries:

1. His weakness of attachment is a fundamental problem which cannot be solved by superficial methods (9).
2. He has to surrender completely to a *guru* to get out of this fundamental problem (8).

Thus, *Arjuna* becomes a *śiṣya* by surrendering to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. Naturally, *Kṛṣṇa* also becomes a *guru*. Now that the *guru-śiṣya* relationship has been struck, the teaching can begin (10).

[Once a human being discovers a seeker in him, the *guru* will be right in front. The vedaantic teaching can take place only between a *guru* and *śiṣya*.]

Kṛṣṇa straightway attacks *Arjuna's* idea that war is going to harm *Bhīṣma* or himself. He points out that all the problems of *Arjuna* are because of delusion caused by ignorance, for wise men never have a problem (11). Thereafter, *Kṛṣṇa* gives different reasons to establish that *Arjuna* has to fight this war:

1. From the stand point of true nature of *Ātmā* (*ādhyātmika-dṛṣṭi*), *Bhīṣma* and others are immortal. *Ātmā* is never subject to changes

in spite of the changes of the body. It is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. Hence, neither is *Arjuna* a slayer nor is *Bhīṣma* slain. So, why should he resist to fight? (12 to 25). Even if the *Ātmā* is impermanent, *Arjuna* should not lament. Whatever appears will have to disappear and whatever disappears will appear. Hence, one should learn to accept the change. [In fact, change is the beauty of the creation. It looks ugly when our outlook is partial or selfish.] Hence, why should *Arjuna* grieve for the physical separation from *Bhīṣma* and others which is inevitable in life? (26 to 30).

2. From the stand point of *Kṣatriya*'s duty (*dhārmika-dṛṣṭi*), *Arjuna* can fight if it is necessary to establish order. A *kṣatriya* must look at the problem not from personal stand point, but from social stand point (31). Hence, why should *Arjuna* hesitate to fight for a righteous cause? A righteous war is a door to heaven for a *kṣatriya* (32). If *Arjuna* avoids war, not only he be shirking his duty and losing heaven, but he will positively incur sin (33). For avoiding sin, at least, *Arjuna* should fight.
3. Looking at the situation from worldly angle (*laukika-dṛṣṭi*), *Arjuna* should not withdraw from the war. He will be called a coward by everyone (including the future generation) (34, 36). Shouldn't *Arjuna* fight to protect his reputation?

With these arguments, Lord persuades *Arjuna* to fight (37, 38) and concludes the first part of his teaching. He calls this *sāṅkhya-yoga* (39). [In fact, the first argument which deals with the nature of the *Ātmā* and the body (*ātma-anātma-viveka*) alone is the *sāṅkhya-yoga*.]

Hereafter, the Lord enters into *buddhi-yoga* (*karma-yoga*). [Though *sāṅkhya-yoga* is the true solution for sorrow, many are not fit to gain it because of the false idea (*moha*) that worldly pursuits can solve the problem. So, initially, one has to be allowed to pursue worldly ends. By this, one should discover for oneself that actions and their results cannot give permanent satisfaction. This is dispassion. A dispassionate mind can pursue *sāṅkhya-yoga*. Thus *karma-yoga* is introduced as a means to come to *sāṅkhya-yoga*.]

First, the Lord describes the glory of *karma-yoga* (40 to 46). Then comes the principle of *karma-yoga*. One can choose one's action but never the result. The result is dependent on the laws of action. The other factors of the world, known and unknown, may bring a totally unexpected result. One cannot avoid that. Yet inaction will not be a solution (47). No one can completely know the laws of action. Hence, actions are often imperfect in spite of effort. So, one should ever be ready for any result. One can hope for the best, but should be prepared for the worst. When one acts with the above understanding, success and failure lose their capacity to shake him. One does not react, because he is not caught unawares. This equanimity in action is *yoga* (48). Thus, one can convert the binding *karma* into a valid teacher. This is skill in action (50). A tranquil mind will soon shed its false value attributed to the world and turns towards the *Ātmā* (52). When, through Self-knowledge, one gets established in the peaceful *Ātmā*, he attains liberation (53).

Now, *Arjuna* becomes curious to know the characteristics of a person who is firmly established in Self-knowledge (*sthitaprajñā*) (54). *Kṛṣṇa* answers *Arjuna*'s question and gives the means of stabilizing the knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be fruitful unless it is stabilized and assimilated. For this, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about two important *sādhanas* (58 to 68). They are the control of the mind and the sense organs and contemplation upon the teaching. By this, the knowledge sets (61). On the other hand, if these are not practiced, the mind and the sense organs will drag a person to the field of sense-objects and gradually pull him down spiritually (62, 63).

Talking about the characteristics of a wise man, the Lord points out that the man of Self-knowledge is always satisfied with himself and consequently, he is free from all desires (55). He is independent of the world to be happy. Naturally, he is free from attachment, hatred, desire, anger, fear, elation, depression *etc.* (56, 57). Though living in the same world, he enjoys a freedom and contentment which is unknown to others. Thus, if the ignorant man can be said to be in darkness with regards to the *Ātmā*, the wise man is in broad daylight of the *Ātmā*

(69). The best comparison for the wise man’s mind is the ocean. The ocean is independently full and is unaffected by the rivers, entering or not entering, dirty or clean. Similarly, the wise man’s mind is independently full. It is undisturbed by the favourable and unfavourable experiences, entering or not entering (70). *Kṛṣṇa* concludes this topic by glorifying this state as the *Brāhmī*-state, reaching which one does not get deluded again. He lives life as a *jīvan-mukta* (liberated while living) even at the far end of this journey. After death, he becomes one with *Brahman* (*nirvāṇam*) which is called *videha-mukti*.

Thus the second chapter discusses the following four topics mainly:

1. *Arjunaśaraṇāgati* 1 to 10
2. *Sāṅkhya-yoga* 11 to 38
3. *Karma-yoga* 39 to 53
4. *Sthitaprajñatva-upāya* and *sthitaprajña-lakṣaṇa* 54 to 72

Since *sāṅkhya-yoga* is the main topic, this chapter is aptly called *Sāṅkhya-yoga*.

Chapter 3

Karma-yoga

In the second chapter, the Lord praised Self-knowledge right from the beginning (11, 21, 46) and criticized the *karma-kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas* (42 to 45). Thereafter, He asked *Arjuna* to take to *karma* (48). This creates a serious doubt in *Arjuna* and the third chapter begins with this doubt.

Arjuna asks—“Oh Lord! You seem to confuse me by contradictory statements. Tell me one—knowledge or *karma*—which will lead me to *Mokṣa*” (1, 2).

Bhagavān answers that there are two lifestyles called *karma-yoga-niṣṭhā* (social life) and *jñāna-yoga-niṣṭhā* (secluded life). One can choose anyone of them as a householder or as a monk (3).

(But there is no choice between *karma* and knowledge. Whatever lifestyle one chooses, one has to follow relevant *karma* for purity and then pursue knowledge to discover the freedom that is one’s true nature.

Of these two lifestyles, *Kṛṣṇa* gives preference to social life throughout the *Gītā*. In the *Upaniṣads* we find the latter emphasized. Choice depends on the maturity of the seeker.)

From the 4th to the 7th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* condemns inaction and praises an alert and active life. Inaction should be avoided because:

1. Neither purity nor knowledge can be achieved by that (4);
2. Desires force one to act and inaction will be a suppression (5);
3. A mind without occupation will be idle. It will brood over sense-pleasures. Such a hypocritical mind will soon fall (6). (Also refer II-62, 63)

From the 8th to the 20th verse (1st line), *Bhagavān* deals with one of the most beautiful and important topics of the *Gītā viz. karma-yoga*.

Having created the world and the intelligent human beings, the Lord Himself advocated (in the *Vedas*) the way of life which is *karma-yoga*. By following this, material and spiritual progress can be attained (10 to 14).

Since it is the teaching of the Lord, the Master of the universe (*Svāmī*), human being has to take it as a command (*niyatam*) and obey it as a servant (*bhṛtya*) of the Lord (8).

When we follow the teachings of the Lord, it becomes a gesture of our appreciation for all the gifts and blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon us. Thus, our work becomes a worship or loving offering (*yajña*) to God. It purifies the mind also (9, 13).

Lastly, *karma-yoga* is necessary to maintain the harmony of the universe upon which we are dependent. The working of the universe being a cyclic process, with the human beings as its important link, one must be aware of one's responsibility (duty). Thus, *karma-yoga* is only the duty (*kāryam*) of a responsible citizen of the world. One who does not discharge it proves himself/herself to be an immature human being (14 to 16).

Thus, *karma-yoga* is to be pursued because:

1. It contributes to material and spiritual progress (*yoga*).
2. It is the commandment (*niyatam*) of the Master of the universe.

3. It is our grateful offering (*yajña*) to the Lord, acknowledging His gifts.
4. It is the only way of maintaining the harmony (*dharma*).

(In this chapter, *Bhagavān* does not talk about *kāmya-karma* — actions to fulfill the desires. This shows that true *karma-yoga* does not involve *kāmya-karma*. Hence a seeker must gradually reduce *kāmya-karma*, even to become a true *karma-yogī*.)

Karma-yoga ultimately leads one to liberation through the stages of purity (*śuddhī*), enquiry (*vicāra*) and knowledge (*jñānam*) (17, 18). *Kṛṣṇa* concludes the topic by citing the example of *Janaka* who successfully pursued knowledge while remaining in *karma-yoga-niṣṭhā* (social life) (20, 1st line).

From the 20th (2nd line) to the 29th verse, the Lord talks about the role of a wise man in the society, taking *Arjuna* as one. Any person with a higher status or knowledge (*śreṣṭha*), can influence others positively or negatively. Hence, even though *Arjuna* might not benefit from this war, he has to fight as *kṣatriya*'s duty and set an example to others. Else, he will be responsible for anarchy in his own time as well as in the future (22 to 25).

Thus, both the wise and the ignorant should act — the former for teaching others, and the latter, for purity. The only difference is that the former will be detached while the latter won't be (27 to 29).

The 30th verse summarizes *karma-yoga*, giving five conditions:

1. Keep the spiritual goal.
2. Offer all actions to the Lord.
3. Don't be concerned about the result.
4. Be free from possessiveness; and
5. Be calm.

One who follows *karma-yoga* reaches the goal of life and the other is lost (31, 32).

Likes and dislikes (*rāga-dveṣa*) born of habits (*vāsanās*) pull a person astray. Still, a person should not go by what he likes to do but what he has to do (duty), even if it involves difficulties (33 to 35).

As an answer to *Arjuna's* question (36), *Kṛṣṇa* elaborately discusses the problem of *kāma-krodha (rāga-dveṣa)*. They are the real enemies of a seeker (37). Clouding the knowledge, they force a person to run after endless insatiable desires and take away all the chances of peace and progress (38, 39). The senses, the mind, and the intellect are the base of desires. They have to be taken care of (40, 41).

(*Durovāsānās* should be replaced by *śubhavāsānās* by practice. False values should be replaced by right ones through discrimination.)

Once *kāma* becomes weak, one can discover the *Ātmā*, which is beyond the senses, the mind, and the intellect and thus destroy *kāma* for good (42, 43).

Thus the third chapter discusses the following topics mainly:

1. Introduction 1 to 7
2. *Karmayoga* 8 to 20 (1st line)
3. The role of a wise person 20 (2nd line) to 29
4. Summary 30 to 35
5. The problem of desire and its solution 36 to 43

Since *karma-yoga* is the main topic, this chapter is called *Karma-yoga*.

Chapter 4

Jñānakarmasannyāsa-yoga

(Lord *Kṛṣṇa* dealt with *karmayoga* and *sāṅkhyayoga* in the third and second chapters respectively. These two *yogas* are not newly introduced by *Kṛṣṇa*. It has been initiated by the Lord in the beginning of the creation itself through the *karma-kāṇḍa* and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas*. Thus, this is an ancient wisdom which has stood the test of time.)

Kṛṣṇa begins the fourth chapter by referring to the above aspect so that *Arjuna* will have reverence for *Gītā*. The Lord points out that He initiated the lineage of *Vivasvān* (Lord Sun), *Manu*, *Ikṣvāku*, and

others in the beginning of the creation (through the *Vedas*). It is the same ancient vedic wisdom which is being revived by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* through *Arjuna* in the form of the *Gītā* because it had declined by that time (2, 3).

Now, *Arjuna* wonders how *Kṛṣṇa*, who is his contemporary, can be the initiator of the ancient vedic wisdom (4). As an answer to this question, *Kṛṣṇa* introduces the topic of *avatāra* (5 to 8). [We are born because of our own *karma* (*vyasṭi-karma*) as well as the total *karma* of the world (*samaṣṭi-karma*). In the case of the Lord, His own *karma* is not there. Thus the *karma* of the world becomes the cause for the birth of the Lord.] The evil actions of the wicked and the noble worship of the saints necessitates the manifestation (*avatāra*) of the Lord to punish the former and bless the latter. Thus the Lord establishes *dharma* in the universe (7, 8). But, since this birth is only through *māyā*, it is apparent. Hence it does not affect the true birth-less nature of the Lord (6). Moreover, since *māyā* is under the control of the Lord, His omniscience, omnipotence, *etc.* are not veiled. He remembers all the past (5) as well as His true nature. It is from this standpoint that *Kṛṣṇa* says “I initiated the vedic tradition.”

From the 9th to the 15th verse, the Lord talks about His true nature and its knowledge. Though the Lord seems to be active, He is free from all activities and their results (13, 14). He is *akartā* and *abhoktā*. One who recognizes this nature of the Lord also becomes liberated *i.e.*, becomes free from actions and their results (9). (This shows that the true nature of the Lord and *jīva* is one and the same.) But, being interested in the pursuit of various types of means and ends, one does not turn to this liberating knowledge (12). Still, some people manage to become one with the Lord by freeing the mind from attachment, hatred and fear, by surrendering to the Lord, and by finally gaining Self-knowledge (10). Lord gives whatever the devotee seeks (11).

From the 16th to the 25th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives the knowledge of the nature of action and inaction and the characteristics of the person of such a knowledge. Having talked about the rareness of such a knowledge (16, 17), the Lord defines a wiseman as one who sees actionlessness (of the Self) amidst the activities (of the body) as well as (the

potential) action in the seemingly inactive body (18).

(The idea is that the wise man accepts activities at the level of body because no one can expect relaxation at the body level. The very process of life is the continuous function of the body. One should only discover inner relaxation even amidst the activities by recognizing the true 'I' as the actionless Self. Therefore, true and complete renunciation is possible only through knowledge.)

In fact, the wise man never sees anything other than *Brahman*, that being the truth of all (25). Whether his body is active (20) or not (21), he is not affected. He is self-sufficient, contented, independent, equanimous, and free from fancies, desires, expectations, attachments, and jealousy. His actions are meant for the worship of the Lord which uplifts the humanity (22, 23).

From the 25th to the 34th verse, the Lord talks about the superiority of knowledge over all the other *sādhanas* and the way of getting that knowledge. Various *sādhanas* are compared to *yajñas*. They are: *Brahmajñāna-yajña*, *deva-yajña*, *viṣayabhoga-yajña*, *dama-yajña*, *śama-yajña*, *prāṇāyāma-yajña* and *āhāranīyama-yajña*. All *sādhanas* lead one to liberation by preparing the mind. But, being the direct means to liberation, *Brahmajñāna-yajña* is superior to all (33). To get this knowledge one should approach a *guru* who is established in the Truth (*Tattva-darśī*) and who has the necessary language to communicate it (*jñānī*). Such a teacher must be approached with humility, faith, and reverence and asked for this knowledge. Instructed by them through the scriptures, one gains knowledge; not otherwise (34).

From the 35th to the 37th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about the benefit of this knowledge. Gaining the knowledge, one will not get into delusion once again. For, he sees everything in the Lord as well as in him (*i.e.*, he recognizes his identity with the Lord) (35). By this boat of knowledge one crosses over the ocean of sin however vast it may be (36). Like a blazing fire, this knowledge reduces to ashes (renders inoperative) all the *karmas* (37). Hence, knowledge is the greatest purifier. (All other *sādhanas* can produce *puṇya* which itself is a bondage. Moreover, no other *sādhana* can destroy ignorance which is the root cause of all sins.) That seeker who has purified the mind will soon attain knowledge by

the teaching of a *guru* (38).

In the concluding verses (38 to 42), *Bhagavān* talks about the qualifications and disqualifications with regard to Self-knowledge. One who has faith in the guru and the *śāstra*, sense-control, and a sincere desire for knowledge will gain the knowledge (39). On the other hand, one who is ignorant, faithless, and doubting is doomed. He cannot enjoy anything in the here or in the hereafter (40). Therefore, “*Arjuna!* Eliminate all doubts regarding the validity of these spiritual pursuits, and resort to *karmayoga*”, advises Lord *Kṛṣṇa* (42).

Karmas do not bind one who is ultimately established in the doubtless knowledge of the Self (41). This is freedom through knowledge in spite of action — *jñānakarmasannyāsa*.

The topics of this chapter are:

1. *Gītā-stuti* and *avatāra* 1 to 8
2. Knowledge of *avatāra* and its result 9 to 15
3. The wisdom of seeing inaction in action and vice versa
(The characteristics of the wise) 16 to 24
4. The glory and the means of knowledge 25 to 34
5. Benefit of knowledge 35 to 37
6. Qualifications and disqualifications 38 to 42

Since the renunciation of all activities through the knowledge of the actionless ‘I’ amidst the activities of the body is the main topic here, this chapter is called *Jñānakarmasannyāsa-yoga*.

Chapter 5

Sannyāsa-yoga

In the fourth chapter, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* talked about knowledge and renunciation. He referred to the wiseman as one whose *karmas* are burnt by the fire of knowledge (IV-19). He glorified the wiseman as one who is free from possessions, whose only activity is the maintenance of the body

(IV-21), and who is happy with anything that comes due to *prārabdhakarman* (IV-22). Evidently, these are the signs of a monk. At the same time, *Kṛṣṇa* concludes the chapter by advising *Arjuna* to take to action (IV-42). Naturally, *Arjuna* is not able to reconcile *Kṛṣṇa*'s various statements.

(In fact, secluded life and active life are only two lifestyles. The first is called *āśrama-sannyāsa* [*sāṅkhya*, in this chapter] and the latter is called *karma-yoga* [*yoga*, in this chapter]. In both the lifestyles, one is identified with the equipments. He is a *kartā*, and hence a *saṁsārī*. This shows that lifestyle itself cannot give liberation. When Self-knowledge is gained, one discovers that he is *akartā*, *abhoktā* and hence *asaṁsārī*. Thus, the renunciation of body-identification is true *sannyāsa* which is called *jñānakarma-sannyāsa*. This *sannyāsa* can coexist with active life because it is mental renunciation. But *āśrama-sannyāsa* cannot coexist with active life because it is physical renunciation. *Kṛṣṇa* is advising *Arjuna* to remain in the society and attain the goal of *jñānakarma-sannyāsa*. But *Arjuna* mistakes the *sannyāsa* as *āśrama-sannyāsa* and sees contradiction in *Kṛṣṇa*'s teaching.)

So the chapter begins with *Arjuna*'s doubt as to how a person can remain in duty and be free from actions at the same time (1). *Kṛṣṇa* introduces the two lifestyles once again (it was discussed in III-3) and says that either of the lifestyles can help a person in getting *mokṣa* (through knowledge). What is necessary in both lifestyles is a relative freedom from *rāga* and *dveṣa* which is an important condition for Self-knowledge. Of these two, *Kṛṣṇa* recommends active life as ideal for a common man. As the Lord Himself points out, a secluded life is difficult to pursue without maturity (2 to 6).

In the next six verses, the Lord talks about *karmayoga* and the stages of progress. A *karmayogī* dedicates all his physical and mental actions to the Lord without concern for the result. Because of this attitude, the results do not cause any reactions in his mind. Gradually, he develops self-control and ultimately discovers his true nature which is the same in all beings. (Of course, this is accomplished through the teaching of a *guru* alone.) This is called *jñānakarma-sannyāsa* (7 to 12).

In the following verses (13 to 21), *Kṛṣṇa* discussed the characteristics of a wiseman and his wisdom. Since he has discovered his identity with the pure Self, his nature is the same as that of the Self. In His presence all the organs function. Neither does He act nor does He instigate anyone. According to their nature, the organs act and reap results. He is beyond good and evil results.

Still, because of ignorance, one is deluded (15). When Self-ignorance is destroyed by Self-knowledge, *Brahman*, which is the true nature, becomes evident (16).

Being spontaneously established in *Brahman* through the pursuit of *śravaṇam*, *mananam*, and *nididhyāsanam*, these wisemen revel only in *Brahman*. Thus, freed from all impurities, they attain *videhamukti* from where there is no return (17). They recognize the one homogeneous awareness-existence which is behind all beings as their substratum (18). Thus, having discovered the identity with the defectless, ever-unaffected *Brahman*, they overcome mortality here itself (19). Though *prārabdha* brings favorable and unfavorable situations, these spontaneous, delusion-free wisemen are neither elated nor depressed (20). Detached from the world and established in *Brahman*, they enjoy infinite *ānanda* (21).

In the next two verses, the qualification of *vairāgyam* is stressed. Unless a seeker gets detached from sensual pleasures, he cannot attain infinite *ānanda*. A discriminative seeker who knows the impermanence of these contact-born pleasures will not indulge in them (22). And, one who can restrain the impulse of *kāma* (desire) and *krodha* (anger) alone is a man of self-control fit to enjoy life (23).

Now (24 to 26) the Lord talks about *videhamukti*. *Jīvanmuktās* who revel in themselves, who are pure-minded, who love all beings, and who have doubtless knowledge of the *Ātmā* attain oneness with *Brahman* (*videhamukti*) at the fall of the body.

Having clarified *Arjuna*'s doubt, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a brief reference to meditation in the last three verses which will be discussed elaborately in the next chapter.

(Though doubtless knowledge can be attained by *śravaṇam*, and *mananam*, the habitual notion that "I am the body" does not allow the

knowledge to manifest as joy. Hence one has to assimilate this teaching by dwelling upon it, which is called *nididhyāsanam*).

Having removed all (thoughts of) sense objects, having withdrawn the sense organs, having regulated the breathing, and freed from desire, fear, and anger, one should meditate with a desire for *mokṣa*. Such a *yogī* (meditator) becomes liberated forever (27, 28).

Knowing the Lord who is the receiver of all sacrifices, who is the supreme Lord of all worlds, and who is the friend of all beings the wiseman attains peace (29).

The topics of this chapter are:

1. The two lifestyles *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* 1 to 6
2. *Karmayoga* and its *phalam* 7 to 12
3. *Jñānakarmasannyāsa* 13 to 21
4. *Vairāgyam* (detachment) 22 to 23
5. *Videhamukti* 24 to 26
6. Instruction on meditation 27 to 29

Since the main topic is *sannyāsa* (renunciation), this chapter is called *Sannyāsa-yoga*.

Chapter 6

Dhyāna-yoga

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* introduced the topic of meditation towards the end of the last chapter. Being an important topic, *Kṛṣṇa* spends almost the whole of this chapter dealing with meditation. [Here, meditation is upon the Lord as the very Self (*Ātmā*) of the meditator. This is meant to assimilate the Self-knowledge gained from the *guru*'s teaching. The conditioning that "I am the body" will go only with the assimilation of the Self-knowledge. Assimilated Self-knowledge alone can express as *ānanda*.]

Kṛṣṇa talks about five important topics on meditation. They are:

1. *Bahiraṅga-sādhanā* — Those disciplines to be followed throughout daily life which influence one's meditation.
2. *Antaraṅga-sādhanā* — Those disciplines to be followed immediately before meditation.
3. *Dhyāna-svarūpam* — Nature of meditation.
4. *Dhyāna-phalam* — Result of meditation.
5. *Dhyāna-pratibandha-parihārau* — Obstacle and remedy.

Bahiraṅga-sādhanā

At the outset, the Lord indicates the role of *karmayoga* in meditation by praising the *karmayogī* (1, 2). *Karmayoga*, being a conscious way of life, helps one in getting self-control. It converts an extrovert mind into a contemplative mind. Once this is achieved, one should try to lead a quieter life, because active life becomes an obstacle to meditation (3). Total detachment is the characteristic of a contemplative mind (4).

Incidentally, *Kṛṣṇa* highlights two important values viz. self-confidence and self-control. One who lacks these two finds himself to be an obstacle for any pursuit. On the other hand, one who enjoys the above two virtues finds himself to be supporting force in every field (5, 6). Soon he is established in the vision of the *Ātmā*, the vision of equality (7 to 9).

Kṛṣṇa mentions a few other disciplines also, like moderation in eating, sleeping, working, and resting (16, 17).

Antaraṅga-sādhanā

The meditator has to choose a secluded, undisturbed place for meditation (10). In that spiritually and physically pure place, he has to fix the seat which is neither too high nor too low, neither too soft nor too hard (11). Holding the body, neck, and head erect, he has to fix the sight on the tip of his nose, as it were (*i.e.*, the eyes are half-closed) (13). Next, the meditator should withdraw the mind and sense organs from all other activities. The breathing also should be maintained even

(refer V-27). With a calm, withdrawn, undisturbed, tension-free, and one-pointed mind, the meditator should meditate upon the Lord, the *Ātmā* (12, 14).

Dhyāna-svarūpam and Phalam

Meditation is nothing but abidance of the withdrawn mind in the *Ātmā* (18). Having given up all desires and having restrained the senses through the mind, one should gradually bring back the mind with the help of the discriminative intellect, step by step. Once the mind is made to abide in the *Ātmā*, there should be no other thought (25). Though the mind may get distracted, one has to bring it back from the respective fields to one's own *Ātmā* (26).

(All this presupposes a clear understanding of *Vedānta*. Everything, including thoughts, is an object of the *Ātmā*, the Awareness. The *Ātmā* is not an object for me to be thought of, or to be experienced. It is the very "I". Thus, to knock off all expectations and struggles and to abide as the *Ātmā* with the knowledge that "I am the *Ātmā*" is true meditation.)

Thus, constantly abiding in the *Ātmā*, the meditator comes to enjoy permanent peace which culminates in the attainment of liberation (*videhamukti*) (15). He enjoys an ever-abiding mind which is completely satisfied with the discovery of the *Ātmā* (20). Since his *ānanda* is not sensual, it transcends all the limits. Having discovered this inner fullness, he never loses sight of his true nature (21, 27, 28). Neither does he consider any other gain to be superior, nor is he shaken by even the greatest loss (22). This infinite *ānanda* will never be lost because this was never gained. It was veiled by the false notion that "I am sorrowful". Once this is removed, the inner *ānanda* becomes evident. Thus, this is more a dissociation from sorrow rather than association (23). (This alone is known as *jīvanmukti*.) Seeing the *Ātmā* in all beings, and all beings in the *Ātmā*, he gets established in the vision of equality (29). This vision of the *Ātmā* alone is the vision of the Lord, because the *Ātmā* is not different from the Lord. Thus the meditator is ever established in the Lord inspite of his activities (30, 31). Being

established in the *Ātmā*, he looks at all bodies including his body with the same attitude of detachment. Hence he is free from selfishness and is spontaneously established in *dharma*. He is a saint (32).

Dhyāna-pratibandha-parihārau

Now, Arjuna puts a question regarding an obstacle to meditation. It is the problem of mental restlessness or extrovertedness. Because of this, one finds it difficult to meditate and assimilate the Self-knowledge. This frustrates *Arjuna*'s mind and he asks for a solution (33, 34).

Kṛṣṇa gives two methods to solve this problem. They are detachment and practice. When the mind is extrovert because of desires, one has to remove it by seeing the futility of desires and their fulfillment. This is detachment. Even a detached mind can be restless because of past habits. This has to be gradually removed by consistent practice alone. Thus, mental discipline requires determination and patience (35, 36).

Still, *Arjuna* feels diffident and he, somehow, thinks that liberation is not possible in one life. He desperately asks *Kṛṣṇa*—"What happens to that seeker who has fallen from meditation? Does he not perish like a scattered cloud?" (*Arjuna* feels that the meditator has no *puṇya*, because he has not done any *karma*. He has failed to achieve liberation also. Thus being deceived of *puṇya* and *mokṣa*, he must face an unfortunate future, according to *Arjuna*.) Not being able to accept this, *Arjuna* surrenders to *Kṛṣṇa* seeking clarification (37 to 39).

Kṛṣṇa consoles *Arjuna* by asserting that a spiritual seeker can never have a bad lot (40). The very meditation is a *puṇyakarma* capable of giving heaven and later an ideal birth for the continuation of the spiritual pursuit. The *yogabhraṣṭa* (one who has fallen from the path of spirituality) is reborn in a cultured, prosperous family, or may be, even in the family of a saint (41, 42).

Having got such a birth, he gets associated with the previous wisdom at a very early age (43). Irresistibly drawn by the past habits (*saṃskāras*), he find his spiritual urge suddenly growing from a small flame to a huge conflagration (44). Committing his entire life to the

spiritual pursuit and supported by the *saṃskāras* of all the previous lives, he effortlessly fulfils his mission in life (45).

Kṛṣṇa concludes this chapter by praising the meditator in general (46) and praising the meditator of *Kṛṣṇa-paramātmā* (*Brahmātman*) in particular.

Thus the sixth chapter discusses the following topics:

1. *Bahiraṅga-sādhanā* 1 to 9, 16, 17
2. *Antaraṅga-sādhanā* 10 to 15
3. *Dhyāna-svarūpam* and *dhyāna-phalam* 18 to 32
4. *Dhyāna-pratibandha* and *parihāra* 33 to 36
5. *Yogabhraṣṭa* 37 to 45
6. *Yogistuti* (Praise of the *yogī*) 46, 47

Since the main topic here is meditation, the chapter is called *Dhyāna-yoga* or *Ātmasaṃyama-yoga* (mastery of the mind).

Chapter 7

Jñānavijñāna-yoga

[In the first six chapters of *Gītā*, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* discussed the nature of the individual, *karmayoga*, etc. predominantly. In the following six chapters, the Lord will predominantly discuss the nature of God, worship of God with attributes (*upāsanā*), etc. The individual effort was emphasized in the previous section. It will be the grace of the god that will be emphasized hereafter. In short, all these are necessary to achieve the goal of liberation.]

In the first three verses, *Kṛṣṇa* introduces the topic and its glory. Surrendering to God, whoever worships Him along with His attributes will ultimately discover the attribute-less God (1). The knowledge of God with attributes, as different from oneself is called *jñānam*, and the knowledge of God as identical with oneself is called *vijñānam*. This is the highest knowledge because, the intellectual quest of a person finds its fulfillment in this knowledge (2). The very fact that the number

of people who attempt and succeed in gaining this knowledge is very small shows the subtlety and rarity of this knowledge (3).

From the 4th to the 11th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about the nature of God. God has two aspects known as the highest nature (*parā-prakṛti*) and the lower nature (*aparā-prakṛti*). The lower nature has eight divisions — five subtle elements, cosmic ego, cosmic intellect, and the unmanifest (4). [This is called lower because it is changing, inert, finite and dependently existent.] The higher nature is the consciousness behind every body and that alone sustains the entire creation (5). [This is called higher because it is changeless, conscious, infinite and independently existent.] From this God alone comes the entire creation which consists of conscious and inert aspects (*jīva* and *jagat*). He alone sustains the creation and resolves it (6). In fact there is no creation from Him and He alone is the very essence of everything (7 to 11). Being the material cause of everything, God is independent of everything and everything is dependent on Him (12).

In the 13th verse, the Lord traces the causes of all problems (*saṁsāra*). Being deluded by the creation which is the product of three *guṇas* (of *aparā-prakṛti*) one fails to know the higher nature (*parā-prakṛti*) of the Lord.

The divine *māyā* (power of delusion) consisting of three *guṇas* cannot be conquered by anyone by one's own effort. Hence the Lord gives the only solution possible — “only those who surrender to me cross over this *māyā*” (14).

In the next two verses, *Kṛṣṇa* divides the entire humanity into five groups. The lowliest of those are those non-believers who do not accept or pursue the Lord. Leading a life governed by their own desires and taking to devilish nature, such people are completely lost in *māyā*. The others, though they are devotees, worship Lord with different attitudes due to different levels of maturity. Thus *ārta* is one who worships the Lord when he is in distress. *Arthārthī* is one who worships the Lord for material prosperity. *Jijñāsu*, who is discriminative enough to discern the limitation of everything else, seeks the Lord through knowledge. *Jñānī* is one who has reached the destination of his life's journey by discovering his identity with the Lord (15, 16).

In the next three verses, the Lord talks about the superiority of the wise-devotee. His devotion is permanent and undivided. He loves the Lord has himself because he does not have the dualistic notion. Naturally, the Lord also loves the devotee as Himself (17). Then the Lord promises the highest goal for the wise man of non-dualistic vision [because fullness is possible only in non-duality] (18). Such a vision is achieved by preparing oneself through many births and rare those blessed ones (19).

In the following four verses, the Lord talks about other devotees who worship the Lord but seek various ephemeral ends. They look upon the Lord as the bestower of health, wealth, power, *etc.*, and they seek those ends through rituals and vows (20). Still the Lord, out of compassion, fulfills their prayers (21, 22). But the Lord warns that everything except God is finite (23).

Then the Lord reveals His true nature [which is identical with the seeker's nature and which is to be gained in terms of knowledge]. He is ever evident, imperishable, unsurpassed (24) and unborn. Still people, deluded by *māyā*, mistake the Lord as the person subject to birth, *etc.* (25). Being of the nature of one non-dual awareness, God alone knows everything belonging to the past, present and future. God never becomes the object of knowledge (26).

Concluding this topic, *Kṛṣṇa* mentions the stages of devotion. Because of the fundamental self-ignorance no one can avoid desires in the initial stages of life. Naturally he will be *ārta* and *arthārthī* (27). When he worships the Lord, his mind becomes purified and slowly desires become less. He becomes a *jijñāsu* (28). Now, his attention turns towards knowledge and he pursues it, surrendering to the Lord. Soon he becomes *jñānī* knowing all about *Brahman*, *karma*, *adhyātma*, *adhibūta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajña*. [He knows both the *parā-prakṛti* and *aparā-prakṛti* of the Lord.] Being established in his knowledge, he does not lose sight of the Lord even at the time of death (29, 30). [Thus *jñānī-bhakta* enjoys both *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*.]

The main topics of this chapter are:

1. Introduction to the knowledge of God and the glory of that knowledge 1 to 3

2. Nature of God	4 to 12
3. Cause of <i>saṃsāra</i>	13
4. <i>Bhakti</i> , the remedy for <i>saṃsāra</i>	14 to 19
5. <i>Sakāma-bhakti</i> (devotion for material ends)	20 to 26
6. <i>Niškāma-bhakti</i> (devotion for spiritual end)	27 to 30

Since the knowledge of *saguṇa-īśvara (jñānam)* and that of *nirguṇa-īśvara (vijñānam)* are highlighted in this chapter, it is called *jñānavijñāna-yoga*.

Chapter 8

Akṣaraparabrahma-yoga

[Lord *Kṛṣṇa* concluded the seventh chapter by glorifying *jñāni-bhakta* as one who knows *Brahman*, *adhyātma*, *karma*, *adhibūta* and *adhiyajña* (*i.e.*, the complete nature of God consisting of *parā* and *aparā-prakṛti*). He remembers the God at the time of death also.]

With the desire to understand the above new terms, *Arjuna* asks seven questions to *Kṛṣṇa*. The eighth chapter begins with these questions — the first six dealing with the six terms beginning with *Brahman* and the last one dealing with the thought of a person at the time of death (1, 2).

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* answers — *Brahman* is the imperishable Truth, *Adhyātma* (or *ātman*) is the same *Brahman* behind the individual equipments. *Karma* refers to all actions which are the cause for the birth of all beings (3).

Adhibhūta is the entire perishable, inert universe. *Adhidaiva* is the *Hiraṇyagarbha* who blesses all the organs of of all beings. *Adhiyajña* is the Lord as the presiding deity of all the actions of the individual (4).

From the 5th verse till the end of this chapter, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* elaborately answers the last question *i.e.*, how to remember the Lord even at the time of death.

Whatever be the predominant thought-pattern at the time of death, that determines the place of the rebirth as well as the type of rebirth (6). Hence, if a person yearns for the Lord at the time of death, his rebirth will be conducive for the pursuit of the Lord in which he will naturally be successful (5). [It is said that those who are *saguṇa-upāsakas* will go to *Brahmaloka*. They will attain liberation by gaining knowledge from *Brahmā*, the creator himself. This is called *krama-mukti*]. But the thought pattern at the time of the death is determined by the predominant thought pattern throughout one's life. Hence, *Kṛṣṇa* asks to remember God all the time so that we will remember Him at the time of death also (7). Though it may appear difficult, one can succeed in this by constant effort and sincere practice (8).

From the 9th to the 13th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* describes elaborately the practice of *upāsana* at the time of death. One should control the organs of perception as well as action. Then by the skill of *yoga*-practice, *prāṇa* has to be withdrawn (through the *susūmnā-nāḍī*) to the top of the head between the eyebrows. Then, he should withdraw the mind back to the heart, its source. With such a mind he should meditate on *oṅkāra* or any chosen deity with all devotion. He attains God who is omniscient, eternal, the ruler, subtler than the subtlest, the sustainer of all, incomprehensible, effulgent, and beyond ignorance. All scriptures talk about Him alone. All dispassionate seekers reach Him alone. All disciplines are for attaining Him alone. He is the ultimate goal of *upāsakas*.

For a person who is sincerely committed to the practice of mediation of God and whose devotion is undivided, God is easily attainable (14).

Then the Lord compares two types of goals, *i.e.*, God and the world. Nobody can put the end to the cycle of birth by reaching higher *lokas* (worlds) or by acquiring better bodies. Even *Brahmā*, the creator, who has the longest duration of life (his day being two thousand *catur-yugas*) cannot be free from finitude. Then what to talk of all other things and beings which appear during the day of *Brahmā* and disappear during his night? Hence all the *lokas* and achievements therein are finite. God is the only eternal and changeless principle who is beyond

the unmanifest and manifest creation. He is imperishable and is the supreme goal of life. All beings exist in Him and everything is pervaded by Him. Attaining Him, one does not take rebirth in the mortal world (*saṃsāra*) (15 to 22).

Thus the Lord established that attainment of God is the highest goal compared to all other achievements. Now *Kṛṣṇa* discusses the two paths that lead to the two goals which are subject to non-return and return. An *upāsaka* attains *krama-mukti* by departing through the bright-path (*śukla-gati*) which is presided over by the deities of fire, day, bright-fortnight and *uttarāyanam*. (He goes to *Brahmaloka*, gains Self-knowledge from *Brahmā* and becomes liberated.) Ritualists go by the dark-path (*kṛṣṇa-gati*) which is presided over by the deities of smoke, night, dark-fortnight and *dakṣiṇāyanam*. They come back after enjoying in the heavens (23 to 26).

Since the bright path takes one to God, one should choose that alone. To take to that path one should become an *upāsaka*. Hence *Kṛṣṇa* advises *Arjuna* to be committed to *upāsana* (27).

Concluding the topic, *Kṛṣṇa* glorifies the result of *upāsana* as superior to all other results gained through all other pursuits. Because, none of them can take one to that goal which the *Upasaka* attains — the supreme, primal God.

(*Upāsana* can take a seeker to *Guru* and *śāstra*. Naturally *upāsaka* becomes *jñāni-bhakta*. He is liberated in this very life. He has no travel. This aspect (*jīvanmukti*) was talked in the seventh chapter and will be continued from the ninth chapter.

If *upāsana* does not take one to *guru* and *śāstra*, he continues to be self-ignorant. He is not liberated in this life. But he travels by the bright-path to *Brahmaloka*. Instructed by *Brahmā*, the creator himself, he becomes *jñāni-bhakta* and is liberated. This is called *krama-mukti*, which is discussed in the eighth chapter.

Thus *upāsana* is useful for *jīvanmukti* as well as *krama-mukti*.)

The main topics discussed in this chapter are:

1. Definition of the terms *Brahman*, *adhyātma*, *karma*, *adhibūta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajña* 1 to 4

2. The significance and the method of remembering the Lord at the time of death 5 to 14
3. Comparison between two types of goals —
God and world 15 to 22
4. The bright and dark paths 23 to 27
5. Glory of *upāsanā* 28

Since *Kṛṣṇa* begins the teaching with *Akṣara-brahman* this chapter is called *Akṣara-brahma-yoga*.

Chapter 9

Rājavidyā-rājaguhya-yoga

[In the eighth chapter, *saguṇa-upāsanā* was pointed out as a means to attain *krama-mukti*. In fact, it was an incidental topic. The aim of the Lord is not to teach *saguṇa-upāsanā* as a means for *krama-mukti*. The main purpose of *upāsanā* is to qualify oneself to know the true nature of the Lord and attain liberation in this life itself (*jīvanmukti*). Thus, the Lord wants to teach *upāsanā* mainly as a preparatory step to knowledge. This was done in the seventh chapter. *Kṛṣṇa* brings out this idea in this chapter also.]

In the first three verses, *Kṛṣṇa* introduces the topic, its glory, and the qualifications needed for its pursuit. The topic is the knowledge of god in both the *saguṇa* and the *nirguṇa* forms (*jñāna* and *vijñāna*). It is the most secret and sacred knowledge which releases one from bondage. It is the easiest and immediate in giving the result. The seeker should have faith in the teacher and the teaching if the pursuit should be fruitful.

In the next three verses (4 to 6), the Lord reveals His true nature. He pervades the entire universe. Still, He is not related to anything. In fact, there is no universe other than God. Yet, it appears because of His *māyā*. He is ever non-dual and relationless like space (*kevala* and *asaṅga*).

Then *Kṛṣṇa* comes down and redefines Himself accepting the universe (7 to 10). He is the basis for the origin, existence, and dissolution of the entire universe (*jagat-kāraṇam*). Blessed by God, His *prakṛti* which is inseparable from Him, keeps the cycle of creation going. Though the Lord's presence is inevitable for all these phenomena, He is not involved in any one of them as doer or enjoyer. He is *akartā* and *abhoktā*.

In the 11th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about the cause of bondage. Because of the fundamental ignorance, no one knows the nature of God. Consequently, He is mistaken for human being with birth, form, *etc.* (Thus it is due to ignorance and consequent delusion regarding the nature of God — and oneself — that one gets bound).

Though ignorance is universal, many do not accept the fact. Hence, they never attempt to get rid of it. Believing neither in the scriptures nor in the established traditions, these atheists take to evil ways as directed by their instincts and waste their precious life (12).

On the other hand, there are some noble people who clearly recognize their bondage and worship the Lord, seeking Him alone to get out of the bondage (13, 14). *Kṛṣṇa* points out here that various devotees worship Him in manifold ways. Some worship God as identical with themselves, some as different from themselves, and some as everything (15). In this context, the Lord describes His cosmic form *i.e.*, *viśvatomukhatvam* (16 to 19).

In the next three verses, *Bhagavān* talks about two types of devotees — those who seek various finite ends through Him (*sakāma-bhaktas*) and those who seek the infinite God only (*niṣkāma-bhaktas*). The Lord points out that the worship for finite ends will be definitely fruitful. But, being finite they cannot last long. Even the attainment of heavens is finite only. A *niṣkāma-bhakta* worships God seeking nothing else. The Lord promises to take care of even the worldly well-being of such a *bhakta* because he has renounced all his worldly pursuits (22).

From verse 23rd to 29th, the Lord stresses the point that whether one should continue in *saṁsāra* (bondage) or attain *mokṣa* (liberation) is one's own choice (*puruṣārtha*). When people seek finite goals through the worship of other deities, they are invoking the finite aspects of that

one infinite God alone (23). All their prayers go to that one God only. (The amount of water that we can fetch from the ocean depends on what vessel we take.) Thus, they miss the infinite due to ignorance (24). Though the Lord is capable of giving everything, He can give only what the devotee is willing to receive. Hence, the Lord says that one gets what one seeks (25). What type of worship one must do to attain the infinite? *Bhagavān* says that the worship is the simplest for a *niṣkāma-bhakta*. He can offer anything. The attitude is important (26). Even if that is not possible, one should convert every action into worship by (mentally) offering it at the feet of the Lord (27). Such a *bhakta* is a *karma-yogī* (because he continues to act with equanimity) as well as a *sannyāsī* (because he renounces the concern for the results). He becomes purified and liberated soon by getting the teaching of scriptures through a *guru* (28). *Kṛṣṇa* concludes this topic by reemphasizing that He is available to all. It is for us to claim Him or not (29).

In the last five verses *Kṛṣṇa* glorifies *bhakti*. The greatness of *bhakti* is that even those who are not qualified for self-knowledge because of their past sins, weaknesses, extrovertedness, or dullness can take to *bhakti* and achieve the goal. Thus, *bhakti* is universal. The devotee will never perish. In conclusion, *Kṛṣṇa* sums up the pursuit of *Bhakti* thus — “Fix your mind on Me; be My devotee; keep Me as your goal; be My worshiper; surrender to Me. Thus fixing the mind, you will attain Me alone who am the Self.”

(Here, we should note that *bhakti* — whether it is taken as constant love of God or meditation on *saguṇa-īśvara*, cannot directly take one to the goal. It can take one to a *guru* only. One has to gain Self-knowledge by the study of scriptures under a *guru*. This alone can lead one directly to liberation.)

The main topics of this chapter are:

1. Introduction to the knowledge, its glory and necessary qualifications 1 to 3
2. Nature of God 4 to 10
3. Cause of bondage 11
4. Atheists, theists and types of *upāsana* 12 to 19

5. <i>Sakāma-bhaktas</i> and <i>niṣkāma-bhaktas</i>	20 to 29
6. Glory of <i>bhakti</i>	30 to 34

Since this chapter deals with the knowledge of God which is the greatest (*rājavidyā*) and the rarest (*rājaguhya*), it is called *Rājavidyārājaguhya-yoga*.

Chapter 10

Vibhūti-yoga

[In the previous three chapters, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* revealed God as the material cause of the universe. Since the effect cannot be different from the material cause, it clearly follows that the universe cannot be different from God. Thus the entire universe is the divine manifestation of God. Hence whatever glories we see in the creation belong to the Lord alone. *Kṛṣṇa* reveals this idea in this chapter as the culmination of his teaching of *Virāṭ* (*Viśvarūpam*).]

In the first three verses, *Kṛṣṇa* introduces the topic of *vibhūti* and *yoga* — *vibhūti* is the manifestation of Lord and *yoga* is the power of manifestation. Even great sages cannot talk about the glories of the Lord, because they are finite beings born later. Hence it is the rarest knowledge that is given. One who gains this knowledge will be free from *saṃsāra* (1 to 3).

In the next four verses, the Lord reveals His glory by pointing out that the entire subtle universe of thoughts as well as the gross universe are born of Him. The seven great sages, the four sages *Sanaka etc.*, and the *Manus* are all born of the mind of the Lord. One who knows this attains self-knowledge ultimately (4 to 7).

The following four verses deal with the *Virāṭ*-devotees and the benefits of such a devotion. The devotees accept everything as a gift of God, because God is the source of all. They think about God, speak about God, hear about God — in short they spend their lives revelling in God all the time (8, 9). (Still they are *saguṇa*-devotees only. They are ignorant of the highest nature of the Lord.) The Lord says that He

takes the responsibility of enlightening them. Out of compassion for them, the Lord lights up the lamp of knowledge, remaining in their heart. (The idea is that the Lord will provide them with a *guru* and the necessary conditions for the knowledge of the highest nature of God.) (10, 11)

In the next seven verses (12 to 18), *Arjuna* requests *Kṛṣṇa* to give the details of His glories (manifestations) which will help him in *upāsanā*. (Each expression of God in the universe can become a symbol for *upāsanā*. Later, when see every glory as the expression of God, it becomes the appreciation of *Virāṭ*. This helps in the expansion of the mind.]

From verse 19th to the end of the chapter, *Bhagavān* describes His glories. The Lord is careful to add both in the beginning and in the end that it is not an exhaustive list of His glories. They are the important ones. Nobody can exhaust the glories of the Lord (19, 40). *Kṛṣṇa* begins the enumeration with the very Self. The best, the closest and the most evident expression of the Lord is the very ‘I’, the consciousness (20). *Kṛṣṇa* concludes the list by pointing out that He is the very existence in all beings, because He is the material cause (*bījam*) of all (39). In short, whatever there is which is glorious, rich or powerful — all of them are the expressions of only a ray of God’s glory (41). In fact it is not that the Lord’s glory is in the world, but the entire world is in the Lord, occupying a part of Him, as it were (42). (The world cannot be a part of the Lord in the real sense of the term, because it is only apparent as the Lord Himself negates it in IX-5.)

The main topics of this chapter are:

1. Introduction and the glory of this knowledge 1 to 3
2. Lord’s glory in brief and the benefit of that knowledge . . 4 to 7
3. *Virāṭ*-devotees and the benefit of such a devotion 8 to 11
4. *Arjuna*’s request for elaboration 12 to 18
5. Lord’s glories elaborated 19 to 42

Since the main theme of this chapter is the Lord’s glories, this chapter is called *Vibhūti-yoga*.

Chapter 11

Viśvarūpadarśana-yoga

(In the previous four chapters, *Kṛṣṇa* established that the entire universe is a manifestation of God and, therefore, any glory in the creation belongs to God alone. Now, in this chapter, *Arjuna* appreciates this teaching and sees the universe as the very Lord.)

In the first two verses, *Arjuna* summarizes the entire teaching of *Kṛṣṇa* – the nature of *jīva* (predominantly discussed in the first six chapters) and the nature of God (predominantly discussed in the later four chapters). Though *Arjuna* has received the teaching, he is unable to appreciate the universal form due to some mental blocks. Hence, he prays to the Lord for the vision of the universal form of the Lord (3, 4).

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* agrees to bless *Arjuna* with the vision of the universal form (5 to 7). Since this is not possible to have such a vision with the ordinary eyes, *Kṛṣṇa* grants *Arjuna* the divine eye for this special purpose (8). (Universal form is not a special form of the Lord. It is the Lord as the universe. As such, it is available for all at all times. The Lord need not show it. Still we miss it because of our narrow outlook of the world. Once we refine our mind and look at the universe, we cannot miss the Lord. His stamp is there in all, from a blade of grass to the farthest star. Such a mind which is tuned to see the Lord is the divine eye behind the fleshy eyes. It is such an eye that *Kṛṣṇa* granted to *Arjuna*.)

From the 9th to the 14th verse, we get a description of the universal form from *Saṅjaya*. He picturises the Lord as a person with all divine ornaments shining with the brilliance of a thousand suns risen together. (We should remember that this is a description of the world only, divinised by the change of outlook. Every exalted object in the creation should be taken as an ornament of the Lord.)

From the 15th verse, we get *Arjuna*'s appreciation of the universal form. (*Arjuna* goes through the various phases as he sees the universal form. The first response is one of wonder only.) *Arjuna* sees all beings in the cosmic body of the Lord. The sun and the moon are like his eyes. He sees the hands, legs, *etc.*, of the people as those of

the Lord. Now, the Lord's body with thousands of hands, legs, *etc.*, appears without beginning, middle or end (15 to 22).

Now *Arjuna's* attention is turned towards the mouth of the Lord which represents Time (Death). With blazing fire and protruding teeth, the Lord's mouth evokes terror in all, including *Arjuna*. *Arjuna* sees the entire world being scorched by this fire (Time), while many are rushing towards the mouth of the Lord. Some are already inside the mouth and some are crushed between the teeth. All these cause great fear and confusion in *Arjuna* and he begins to doubt whether the Lord is a loving father or a terrible destroyer (23 to 31). (This shows that *Arjuna* is still not able to see the Lord as a whole. He is able to accept 'birth' as part of the universe, but not 'death'. This partial outlook is the cause of fear and confusion. This is the second phase.)

Then, the Lord clarifies that the fierce aspect also is Himself, manifesting as the Time-principle. When the time comes for people to die, the Lord finds the instruments to bring this about and *Arjuna* happens to be one of them in the hands of the Lord (32 to 34). Having understood the Lord to be 'the cosmic-stage-manager', *Arjuna* surrenders to His Will and sings His glory (34-45). (Now *Arjuna* appreciates the Lord as totality, the basis of creation-preservation-dissolution. In front of the Lord everything else is insignificant. This appreciation makes him a devotee, seeking forgiveness for all his past omissions and commissions. Thus, the third phase is true devotion to the Lord, born out of right understanding).

Arjuna is indeed happy to have this unique vision of the Lord. Still, one part of his mind is not able to accept the totality, especially the destructive aspect. So *Arjuna* requests the Lord to withdraw his form (46).

In the last nine verses (47 to 55), we see the Lord withdrawing His universal form (*i.e.*, the Lord takes away the divine eye that *Arjuna* enjoyed till now. *Arjuna* comes down to look at the world in his own private way.) The Lord praises devotion as a means to this cosmic vision. This universal form could be seen by *Arjuna* because of his devotion. Through devotion one can purify the mind, see the universal form, know the true nature of the Lord, and become one with the Lord.

Hence, *Kṛṣṇa* tells *Arjuna* - “Do actions for My sake; be My devotee; keep Me as the ultimate goal; be detached (from the world); be free from hatred towards all. Such a person reaches Me.”

The important topics discussed in this chapter are:

1. *Arjuna* desires to see the universal form 1 to 4
2. *Kṛṣṇa* grants the divine eye 5 to 8
3. *Saṅjaya*’s description of the universal form 9 to 14
4. *Arjuna*’s description of the universal form
(first phase expressing wonder) 15 to 22
5. *Arjuna*’s description of the universal form
(second phase expressing fear) 23 to 30
6. *Kṛṣṇa* answers *Arjuna*’s question 31 to 34
7. *Arjuna*’s description of the universal form
(third phase expressing devotion) 35 to 45
8. Withdrawal of the universal form and glorification of devotion
..... 46 to 55

Since this chapter deals with the universal form of the Lord, it is called *Viśvarūpadarśana-yoga*.

Chapter 12

Bhakti-yoga

(The eleventh chapter has paved the way for *virāḍ-bhakti*. So, in the twelfth chapter, the Lord deals with all aspects of *bhakti* leading to liberation.)

The chapter begins with *Arjuna*’s question seeking to know whether *virāḍ-bhakti* (*saguṇabhakti*) or *akṣara-bhakti* (*nirguṇa-bhakti*) is superior (1).

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* first answers that *saguṇabhakti* is superior. (In fact, we cannot compare them. Everyone has to go through both and one can reach the Lord through *nirguṇabhakti* alone, which the Lord himself

points out in the 4th verse. Still the Lord praises *saguṇabhakta* because of the context.) (2)

From the 3rd verse to the 12th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives out the entire range of *bhakti* which leads to liberation. In the first 3 verses (3 to 5) *Kṛṣṇa* talks about *nirguṇabhakti* which is *jñānayoga* and which is the direct means for liberation. But, the Lord points out that this would be difficult for unprepared people (5).

From the 6th verse to the 8th verse, the Lord speaks about the next lower stage in the form of *virāḍ-upāsana*. He promises that such *upāsaka* would be rescued from *saṃsāra* by the Lord. (This does not mean that a *virāḍ-upāsaka* can get liberation, skipping *jñānayoga*. The idea is that he becomes fit for *jñānayoga* and attains liberation through knowledge.)

In the 9th verse, the Lord comes one more step down. If one is incapable of doing *virāḍ-upāsana*, let him practice meditation on any form of the Lord (*iṣṭadevatā-upāsana*). Thus, *upāsana* (on *virāḍ* or *iṣṭadevatā*) becomes the preparatory step for *jñānayoga*.

In the next verse (10th), the Lord comes down further. If a person is too extrovert to take up *upāsana*, he is asked here to perform his duty (*nitya* and *naimittika*) as an offering to the Lord (*Īśvarārpanam*) without expecting any reward.

When a person is full of desires, he is impelled to do desire-born actions (*kāmya*) expecting results. For such a person *Kṛṣṇa* prescribes the last step. When he receives the result of *kāmya-karmas*, let him take it as a *prasāda* (graceful gift) of the Lord and avoid reaction. *Kṛṣṇa* indicates this through the word ‘*sarvakarmaphalatyāgam*’ (11).

The above two steps come under *karmayoga*. (A *karmayogī* becomes fit for *upāsana* after some time. *Upāsana* makes him qualified for *jñānayoga*. *Jñāna* helps him discover his own true ever-free nature.)

Kṛṣṇa concludes this topic by praising the last step of *karmayoga* (12).

From the 13th verse up to the 19th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a clear picture of the characteristics of one who has gone through all these steps and discovered fulfillment. [As a *karmayogī* and *upāsaka* he was a devotee of *saguṇa-īśvara*, seeing the Lord as distinct from him. This

is only lower *bhakti*, because he does not know the true nature of the Lord still (Refer VII-17). His *bhakti* is *saguṇabhakti* or *bhedabhakti* or *aparā-bhakti*. Once he pursues *jñānayoga* and discovers his identity with the Lord, his *bhakti* becomes *nirguṇabhakti* or *abhedabhakti* or *parā-bhakti*, which is an end in itself.] In these verses *Kṛṣṇa* describes the traits of a *parabhakta* who is a *sthitaprajña* (Refer II-55 to 72). (This serves twofold purpose. Firstly, it is an inspiration for a seeker to pursue his *sādhana*. Secondly, the natural traits of a *parabhakta* serve as values for a *sādhaka* to be deliberately practised.)

This portion can be broadly divided into two. One referring to those virtues which a *parabhakta* spontaneously enjoys, and the second, referring to those negative traits which he is totally free from.

We can enlist them as follows:

Sl.	<i>Parabhakta</i> is endowed with:	<i>Parabhakta</i> is free from:
1	<i>Maitrī</i> (Friendliness) [13]	<i>Dveṣa</i> (Hatred) [13]
2	<i>Karuṇā</i> (Compassion) [13]	<i>Mamakāra</i> ('Mine'-notion) [13]
3	<i>Samatvam</i> (Equanimity) [13]	<i>Ahaṅkāra</i> ('I' -notion) [13]
4	<i>Kṣamā</i> (Forbearance) [13]	<i>Udvega</i> (Anxiety) [15]
5	<i>Santuṣṭi</i> (Contentment) [14]	<i>Harṣa</i> (Elation) [15]
6	<i>Yatātmatvam</i> (Self-control) [14]	<i>Amarṣa</i> (Envy) [15]
7	<i>Dṛḍhaniścaya</i> (Firm Self-knowledge) [14]	<i>Bhayam</i> (Fear) [15]
8	<i>Bhakti</i> (Devotion) [14]	<i>Apekṣā</i> (Dependence) [16]
9	Gentleness [15]	<i>Ārambha</i> (Selfish action) [16]
10	<i>Śucitvam</i> (Purity) [16]	<i>Śoka</i> (Grief) [17]

11	<i>Dakṣatvam</i> (Resourcefulness) [16]	<i>Kāṅkṣā</i> (Desire) [17]
12	<i>Udāsīnatvam</i> (Impartiality) [16]	Pairs of opposites [17,18,19] (comfort and discomfort, honour and dishonour, etc.)

Kṛṣṇa concludes the teaching by saying — “Those who follow this teaching with faith, keeping Me as the goal, are very dear to Me.” (20)

Thus the main topics in this chapter are:

1. *Arjuna*’s question and *Kṛṣṇa*’s answer 1, 2
2. The five stages of *bhakti* (*prasādabuddhi*, *īśvarārpaṇabuddhi*, *iṣṭadevatā-upāsanā*, *virāḍ-upāsanā* and *akṣara-upāsanā* viz. *jñānāyoga*) 3 to 12
3. Traits of *parābhakta* (*parābaktalakṣaṇa*) 13 to 19
4. Glory of the teaching 20

Since this chapter talks about all stages of *bhakti*, this is called ‘*Bhaktiyoga*’.

Chapter 13

Kṣetrakṣetra-jñānavibhāga-yoga

[In the first six chapters, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* talked about the nature of *jīva* (*tvam-pada*) and *karmayoga* predominantly. In the second six chapters, *Bhagavān* discussed the nature of *Īśvara* (*tat-pada*) and *upāsanā* predominantly — especially *virāḍ-upāsanā*. When a seeker goes through these stages of understanding and *sādhana*, he becomes ready for *jñānāyoga* which is the recognition of the identity between the *jīva* and *Īśvara* (*asi-pada*). This is the topic which will be dealt with in the following six chapters.]

The thirteenth chapter is presented in the form of six topics — *kṣetram*, *kṣetra-jñāna*, *jñānam*, *jñeyam*, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

(Though these are discussed separately, we should note that *kṣetrajñā*, *jñeyam*, and *puruṣa* are the same essentially. Similarly, *kṣetram* and *prakṛti* are essentially the same.)

Kṣetram

The entire objective universe is *kṣetram*. From the beginningless *prakṛti* (*avyaktam*) everything experienced by us comes under this. It includes *mahat* (cosmic intellect), *ahaṅkāra* (cosmic ego), the subtle and gross elements, sense organs of action and perception, the mind and its modifications (6, 7). Still, *Kṛṣṇa* specially mentions the body as *kṣetram* (2) because we generally do not see the body as part of the universe.

Kṣetrajñā

That conscious principle which illumines the *kṣetram* is called *kṣetrajñā* (2). Having defined *kṣetrajñā*, *Kṛṣṇa* reveals that the *kṣetrajñā* is none other than the Lord (*i.e. Brahman*) Himself who is the consciousness in all bodies (3). Thus, *kṣetrajñā* is one all-pervading consciousness. (This *kṣetrajñā* alone is called *jīva*. So, the idea given here is the essential identity of *jīva* and *Īśvara*.)

Jñānam

From the 8th to the 12th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about some important values which prepare the mind for Self-knowledge. They are: humility, simplicity, non-violence, forbearance, honesty, service to the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, detachment from sense objects, absence of egoism, constant awareness of the misery in birth, death, *etc.*, dispassion, non-identification with son, wife, house, *etc.*, being always equanimous in desirable and undesirable situations, unswerving devotion to the Lord, seclusion, non-indulgence in people's company, constant self-enquiry, and not losing sight of the fruit of Self-knowledge.

Jñeyam

In the next six verses (13th to 18th), *Kṛṣṇa* talks about the Truth which is to be known. It is beginningless, beyond *sat* and *asat* (13), all-pervading, subtle, far (for the ignorant), and near (for the wise) (16). Though undivided, it appears divided and it is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of all (17). It is the light of consciousness which resides in the heart of all (18). Being subtle, it cannot be known in its pure form. Yet, it shines in the body (as Awareness-Existence) and in the world (as Existence). One has to recognize it as pure Awareness-Existence by distinguishing it from the body and the world (14, 15). (This method of teaching is called *adhyāropa-apavāda-prakriyā* i.e. the method of superimposition and negation.)

Having talked about these four topics, *Kṛṣṇa* glorifies this knowledge as the one which leads the seeker to Him (19).

Puruṣa and Prakṛti

Now comes the last pair, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (20 to 24). Both are beginning-less. Blessed by *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* creates everything (20 and 27). (Though beginningless, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are of opposite nature. While *puruṣa* is conscious, changeless and real, *prakṛti* is inert, changing, and unreal.) The body, the mind, and their activities belong to *prakṛti*, whereas *puruṣa* is a mere illuminator of all these (21). When *puruṣa* obtains in the body as *kṣetrajña*, it seems to be a *kartā*, *bhoktā*, etc. But as *paramātmā*, the absolute, it is ever unaffected and is ever the same (23). Not knowing this, when *puruṣa* (i.e. *kṣetrajña*) identifies with the body and its *guṇas*, then, all limitations and the consequent problems arise (22). One who has the discriminative knowledge of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* attains immortality (24).

In the following verses (25th and 35th) *Kṛṣṇa* sums up the teaching and presents its *sādhanam* and *phalam*. The wise man is one who always abides in the Self, which is the same everywhere (28 and 29), which is actionless (30), and which is unaffected (32) like the space (33) or like the light (34). The Self is not only the illuminator of everything (34) but also the substratum of the whole universe (31). In

fact, there is no universe other than the Self (35). One who has assimilated this wisdom is *Brahman* itself (31) and attains the supreme goal of liberation (35).

To gain this knowledge, one has to purify the mind through *kar-mayoga*, gain knowledge through enquiry (*sāṅkhyā-yoga*), and ultimately get established in the knowledge through *dhyānayoga* (25 and 26).

The main topics in this chapter are:

1. Introduction 1
2. *Kṣetram* and *kṣetrājñā* 2 to 7
3. *Jñānam* 8 to 12
4. *Jñeyam* 13 to 19
5. *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* 20 to 24
6. *Sāadhanam* and *phalam* 25 to 35

Since the main topic is the discrimination between the *kṣetram* and *kṣetrājñā*, this chapter is called *Kṣetrakṣetrājñāvibhāga-yoga*.

Chapter 14

Guṇatrāya-vibhāga-yoga

[In the 13th chapter, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* said that it is the association with the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* that is responsible for rebirth *i.e.* *saṃsāra* (XIII-22). In this chapter, the Lord deals with this topic elaborately and shows how one can be free from these binding *guṇas*.]

In the first two verses *Kṛṣṇa* praises Self-knowledge to draw *Arjuna*'s attention. It is the greatest knowledge which takes one to the greatest goal of liberation. By this knowledge, one attains the nature of God Himself and thus becomes free from birth and death.

In the next two verses, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a brief account of creation. Blessed by the Lord (*puruṣa*), *prakṛti* gives birth to this universe. Thus, they are the universal parents from whom all things and beings originate.

From the 5th to the 18th verse, *Bhagavān* makes an elaborate analysis of the three *guṇas* — *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. They are born of *prakṛti* and are responsible for the human bondage. The Lord analyses them from various angles which can be depicted in the form of a chart.

Even though all the beings have the three *guṇas*, they differ because of the predominance of one *guṇa* over the other two. (It is also possible to change the proportions for which alone all the preparatory *sādhanās* are prescribed) (10).

In the 19th and 20th verses, *Kṛṣṇa* teaches the means of transcending the *guṇas*. The Lord points out that the transcendence is in the form of knowledge alone. The Self (*puruṣa*) happens to be already beyond the *guṇas* (*guṇātīta*). It is the body (*prakṛti*) which has *guṇas*, doership, *etc.* Because of identification with the body alone, the Self (*puruṣa*) seems to have *guṇas*. Hence the only solution is to discriminate and own up the *guṇātīta puruṣa* as oneself (19). Through this knowledge, one discovers oneself to be free from birth, death, *etc.* This is liberation (20).

Arjuna asks *Kṛṣṇa* about the characteristics of a *guṇātīta* and the *sādhanā* to achieve this (21).

From the 22nd to the 25th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* answers the first question. *Guṇātīta* is one who is detached from *prakṛti*. He does not have I-notion in his body or my-notion in the world. Hence, he looks at the variations of *guṇas* objectively without reacting to them (22). He remains unaffected by the opposite experiences of life like pleasure-pain, praise-censure, honour-dishonour, *etc.* They are the play of *prakṛti* (23, 24). Being full, he does not seek anything and therefore is free from selfish activities (25). (Since a *guṇātīta* is invariably a wise man, this description tallies with the *sthitaprajña* portion of the 2nd chapter as well as the *parābhakta* portion of the 12th chapter).

Kṛṣṇa concludes by prescribing *bhakti* as the *sādhanā* to achieve this goal. (Thus, the Lord answers *Arjuna*'s second question. By the grace of the Lord one gets a *guru*. Through the *guru*, one gets the knowledge which makes one *guṇātīta*). A *bhakta* becomes fit to attain *Brahman*'s nature (*guṇātītatvam*) which is immortality and absolute *ānanda* (26, 27).

No.	Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
1	<i>Lakṣaṇam</i> (Definition)	<i>Prakāśātmakam</i> (Of the nature of brightness) (6)	<i>Rāgātmakam</i> (Of the nature of delusion) (7)	<i>Mohanātamakam</i> (Of the nature of attachment) (8)
2	<i>Bandhanapṛakāra</i> (Mode of binding)	<i>Jñānasāṅga</i> (By causing attachment to knowledge) (6, 9)	<i>Karmasāṅga</i> (By causing attachment to activity) (7, 9)	<i>Pramādasāṅga</i> (By causing attachment to indifference) (8, 9)
3	<i>Līṅgam</i> (Sign of predominance)	<i>Jñānavṛddhi</i> (Increase of knowledge) (11)	<i>Karmavṛddhi</i> (Increase of activity) (12)	<i>Pramādavṛddhi</i> (Increase of indifference) (13)
4	<i>Gati</i> (Travel after death)	<i>Ūrdhvagati</i> (To higher lokas) (14, 18)	<i>Madhyamagati</i> (To middle lokas) (15, 18)	<i>Adhogati</i> (To lower lokas) (16, 18)
5	<i>Phalam</i> (Consequence in this life)	<i>Punya & Jñānam</i> (<i>Punya</i> and knowledge) (16, 17)	<i>Duḥkham & Lobha</i> (Sorrow and greed) (16, 17)	<i>Ajñānam & Moha</i> (Ignorance and delusion) (16, 17)

The topics discussed in this chapter are:

1. Introduction 1 to 4
2. Analysis of *guṇas* 5 to 18
3. Knowledge as the means to transcend the *guṇas* 19 to 20
4. *Guṇatīta-lakṣaṇam* and *sādhanam* 21 to 27

Since the main topic here is the discrimination of the three *guṇas* and the Self (*puruṣa*), this chapter is called *Guṇatrāya-vibhāga-yoga*.

Chapter 15

Puruṣottama-yoga

[In the 13th and 14th chapters, the Lord dealt with the main theme of the *Gītā* — the essential oneness of *jīva* and *Īśvara*. Being a subtle topic, *Kṛṣṇa* discusses the same in this chapter also, in a different way.]

In the first two and a half verses, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a description of the vast and endless *saṃsāra* by comparing it with the mighty *aśvattha*-tree. Like this tree, this *saṃsāra* is vast, many-branched, well-rooted and not easily destructible. To add to this is its mysterious nature. (The *jīva* is caught in this *saṃsāra*, helplessly struggling to free itself.)

In the next two and half verses (upto the 5th), *Bhagavān* talks about the means to get out of this *saṃsāra*. The first step is to develop detachment from this *saṃsāra* by recognizing its binding nature. (As long as one has value for worldly pursuits, one's mind will not be available for seeking freedom.) Having withdrawn the mind from worldly desires, one should seek *Brahman*, the cause of everything (4). (Seeking *Brahman* is nothing but *jñānayoga* — vedantic enquiry under a *guru*.) Then, *Kṛṣṇa* highlights the qualifications necessary for this knowledge. Freedom from (reaction towards) the pairs of opposites, pride, delusion, and attachment as well as a commitment to vedantic enquiry are emphasized here (5).

In the 6th verse, the Lord talks about the nature of *Brahman*. It is not illumined by anything (because it is the self-effulgent con-

sciousness which illumines everything). Attaining this *Brahman*, the supreme abode of the Lord, one does not return to *saṁsāra* again.

[In the following sections, *Kṛṣṇa* reveals that *Brahman* alone expresses in the form of *jīva* and *jagat* (universe). From this it becomes clear that reaching *Brahman* does not involve travel.]

From the 7th to the 11th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* shows that the *jīva*, the consciousness in every being, is the Lord's (*Brahman*'s) expression only (7). At the time of death, this *jīva* alone takes the mind and sense-organs from one body to another body. (8). It is this *jīva* who experiences everything through the sense organs (9). Thus, the Lord alone is expressing in the form of the very life and its functions in every being (10). The pure-minded ones recognize this whereas the deluded ones do not (11).

From the 12th to the 15th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* shows how the *jagat* (the universe) also is an expression of the Lord (*Brahman*). The light in the sun, the moon, and the fire is the Lord only (12). In the form of the sunlight and moonlight, the Lord alone sustains all living beings (13). As the digestive fire, it is the Lord who digests the food (14). The Lord alone is behind all the mental faculties of knowledge, memory, *etc.* He is the author and the content of the *Vedas* as well as the knower of the *Vedas* (15).

(Thus, *Kṛṣṇa* reveals that *Brahman* alone is in the form of *jīva* and *jagat*. Hence reaching *Brahman* is in the form of understanding only — understanding that *Brahman* is never away from either oneself or the universe.)

In the next three verses, *Bhagavān* reveals *Brahman* in its true nature. *Brahman*, in the form of the manifest universe, is called *kṣarapuruṣa*. As the unmanifest universe (*māyā*), the same *Brahman* is called *akṣarapuruṣa* (16). Both these *puruṣas* are relative. Beyond these two *puruṣas* is the *uttamapuruṣa*, the absolute. Because of its superiority, it is called *paramātmā* or *puruṣottama*. It is the imperishable (attributeless) *Brahman* because of which everything exists (17, 18).

Concluding the teaching, *Kṛṣṇa* glorifies this knowledge as the means of fulfillment. With an undeluded mind, the one who knows this most secret knowledge of *puruṣottama*, becomes the knower of all and

a person of fulfillment (19, 20).

The main topics discussed in this chapter are:

1. Description of *saṃsāra* 1 to 3
2. Means of liberation 3 to 6
3. *Brahman* as *jīva* 7 to 11
4. *Brahman* as *jagat* 12 to 15
5. *Brahman* as *puruṣottama* 16 to 18
6. Glory of *puruṣottama-jñānam* 19, 20

Since the main topic of this chapter is *puruṣottama*, this chapter is called *Puruṣottama-yoga*.

Chapter 16

Daivāsurasampadvibhāga-yoga

In the previous three chapters (XIII, XIV and XV) *Bhagavān* talked about Self-knowledge (*jñānayoga*) which is the direct means for liberation. In the following two chapters, *Kṛṣṇa* discusses the values to be followed by a seeker. Though values themselves do not give liberation, they are necessary to gain knowledge. They alone prepare the mind and make it fit for receiving the knowledge. In fact, *Vedānta* is a *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) only for a prepared mind.

In this chapter, *Kṛṣṇa* divides all mental traits into two groups — *daivī-sampat* and *āsurī-sampat*. All sattvic traits come under the former, while rajasic and tamasic traits come under the latter. *Daivī-sampat* is conducive to Self-knowledge; *āsurī-sampat* is an obstacle to spiritual pursuit (5). [Without exception, every one in this universe falls under one of these two groups. From this it is evident that all seekers of knowledge must necessarily lead a spiritual (sattvic) life avoiding materialistic (rajasic and tamasic) tendencies.]

Kṛṣṇa enumerates *daivī-sampat* (1 to 3) and *āsurī-sampat* (4 to 21) which is listed below:

Daivī-sampat

1. Fearlessness (1)
2. Purity (1, 3)
3. Scriptural Study (1)
4. Charity (1)
5. Sense-control (1)
6. Worship of God (1)
7. Austerity (1)
8. Straightforwardness (1)
9. Non-violence, kindness to all and absence of ill-will (2, 3)
10. Truthfulness (2)
11. Renunciation (2)
12. Calmness and patience (2, 3)
13. Absence of slander (2)
14. Absence of greed (2)
15. Gentleness (2)
16. Modesty (2, 3)
17. Steadfastness and absence of restlessness (2, 3)
18. Strength (3)

Āsurī-sampat

1. Vanity (4, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18)
2. Arrogance (4, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18)
3. Pretension (4, 10, 17)
4. Anger (4, 12, 18)
5. Cruelty (4, 9)
6. Ignorance (4, 15)
7. Impurity (7)
8. Absence of religious discipline (7)
9. Absence of truthfulness (7)
10. Absence of faith in God (8, 18)
11. Endless desire for sense-pleasure (10, 11, 12, 16, 18)
12. Delusion (10, 15, 16)
13. False values (10, 16)
14. Worry (11)
15. Attachment (12)
16. Greed (12, 13, 14)
17. Egoism (18)
18. Slander (18)

Āsurī-sampat leads a person astray causing (spiritual) destruction ultimately (19, 20). *Kṛṣṇa* sums up the entire *āsurī-sampat* as the

three basic materialistic traits of desire, anger and greed. They are the three-fold gateway to hell (21). When one avoids these three traits and adopts the divine virtues, *daivī-sampat*, one becomes qualified for Self-knowledge and attains liberation soon (22).

The Lord concludes the chapter by pointing out that *śāstra* is the *pramāṇa* in determining what is right and wrong. One should know what the scriptures say and act accordingly (23, 24).

The topics in this chapter are:

1. *Daivī-sampat* 1 to 3
2. *Āsurī-sampat* 4 to 21
3. Importance of *śāstra* and conclusion 22 to 24

Since this chapter deals with *daiva* (spiritual) and *āsura* (materialistic) traits, it is called *Daivāsurasampadvibhāga-yoga*.

Chapter 17

Śraddhātrayavibhāga-yoga

In the previous chapter, *Bhagavān* said that *śāstra* is the *pramāṇa* in determining what is right and wrong and that one should act according to what *śāstra* says. Based on this, *Arjuna* raises a question here — “To what category does a person belong if he worships with faith without scriptural knowledge - sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic?” (1)

Kṛṣṇa answers that he may belong to any category according to his temperament. An ignorant person’s faith will depend on his nature since he has no scriptural knowledge to guide. (By observing various types of worship done by others, he develops his faith according to his character. On the other hand, a person who goes by the scriptural teaching will invariably have sattvic faith) (2, 3).

Kṛṣṇa differentiates three types of faith based upon the object of worship (4). Even the nature of worship varies according to faith. People of tamasic faith take to severe practices involving torture of the body *etc.* (5, 6).

Having answered *Arjuna*'s question, *Kṛṣṇa* discusses a few more topics namely food, *yajña*, *tapas* and charity, differentiating them into three types based on the *guṇas* (7 to 22). (Refer the chart.) [A seeker has to choose the sattvic type *i.e.* *daivī-sampat* and avoid rajasic and tamasic types *i.e.* *āsurī-sampat*.]

Bhagavān concludes the teaching mentioning the significance of the mantra “*Om tat sat*”. This originated from *Brahmā*'s mouth in the beginning of creation, and has been traditionally chanted during scriptural activities like *yajña*, *tapas* and *dāna*. The word ‘*sat*’ has many meanings like existence, goodness, good action, steadfastness and an action as an offering to the Lord (23 to 27). [In essence the utterance of this *mantra* will sanctify scriptural actions and make them sattvic.]

In the last verse, *Kṛṣṇa* emphasizes the importance of *śraddhā* (faith). Without faith all scriptural activities become *asat*, *i.e.* fruitless (28).

The topics of this chapter are:

1. *Arjuna*'s question and three types of *śraddhā* 1 to 6
2. *Kṛṣṇa* introduces new topics 7
3. Three types of food 8 to 10
4. Three types of *yajña* 11 to 13
5. Three types of *tapas* (based on instrument) 14 to 16
6. Three types of *tapas* (based on *guṇa*) 17 to 19
7. Three types of charity 20 to 22
8. Significance of “*om tat sat*” and conclusion 23 to 28

Since *Śraddhā* is highlighted both in the beginning and in the end, this chapter is called *Śraddhātrayavibhāga-yoga*.

Topic	Sattvic	Rajasic	Tamasic
<i>Śrādhā</i> (Faith)	Worship of the gods. (4)	Worship of the <i>yaḷśas</i> and <i>rākśasas</i> . (4)	Worship of spirits and ghosts. (4)
<i>Āhāra</i> (Food)	That which is delicious, which gives longevity, health, strength, and happiness. (8)	That which is excessively bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent and which causes pain. (9)	That which is improperly cooked, without nutrition, putrid, stale, left over, and impure. (10)
<i>Yajña</i> (Sacrifice)	That which is sincerely done according to the scriptural injunctions, without expecting any result. (11)	That which is done for the sake of show and for the sake of result. (12)	That which is done without rules, faith, <i>mantra</i> , <i>dakṣiṇā</i> , or food-distribution. (13)
<i>Dānam</i> (Charity)	That which is sincerely given to a deserving person at the proper time and place without expecting any return. (20)	That which is reluctantly given for the sake of return and result. (21)	That which is given without respect to an undeserving person at an improper time and place. (22)

Kṛṣṇa divides *tapas* on the basis of the *guṇās* and also on the basis of the instrument as given below:

Sattvic	Rajasic	Tamasic
That which is practiced with faith and without expecting any result. (17)	That which is practiced for the sake of show, name and fame. (18)	That which is practiced with false notions and bodily torture for harming others. (19)

<i>Kāyikam</i>	<i>Vācīkam</i>	<i>Mānasam</i>
Worship of gods, <i>brāhmaṇas</i> , elders and wisemen as well as purity, self-control and nonviolence. (14)	Words which are harmless, truthful, pleasing and beneficial as well as scriptural study. (15)	Tranquility, gentleness, mind-control and purity of heart. (16)

Chapter 18

Mokṣasannyāsa-yoga

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* dealt with Self-knowledge in the XIII, XIV and XV chapters. In the XVI and XVII chapters were discussed the values without which the mind will not be fit to receive the knowledge of the Self. With this, the Lord has exhaustively dealt with all the aspects of vedantic teaching.

In such a situation, *Arjuna* puts his last question to *Kṛṣṇa* seeking to clarify the difference between *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*. Now begins the XVIII chapter answering *Arjuna*'s question. *Bhagavān* takes this opportunity to sum up His entire teaching which has been spread over the last sixteen chapters.

The chapter begins with *Arjuna*'s question — “Oh Lord! I desire to know the true nature of *sannyāsa* and *tyāga* distinctly” (1). *Kṛṣṇa* replies by citing the views of some people (2, 3). The Lord gives his verdict from the 4th verse onwards. *Bhagavān* does not differentiate

sannyāsa and *tyāga*. (This indicates that they are not different according to the Lord.) *Kṛṣṇa* emphasizes the importance of obligatory rites (*nityakarma*) like *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapas*, and asserts that they should never be given up (5, 6) (We should note that this advice is given to people with impurity. *Śāstras* allow a person with purity to renounce *nityakarma* also). In the next three verses, the Lord divides renunciation into three types — tamasic, rajasic and sattvic. (For details see the chart)

In the following verses, *Bhagavān* glorifies sattvic renunciation. (In fact, sattvic renunciation is nothing but *karmayoga*.) A *karmayogī* renounces all the results of action. In due course he gets Self-knowledge. He is not affected by the consequences whether they are good, evil or a mixture of both (10 to 12).

From the 13th to the 17th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a gist of *jñānayoga*. Five factors are involved in every action — the body, *prāṇa*, the mind with sense organs, the ego and the presiding divinity of all these. (In short, they are the four *kośās* and the presiding divinity) (13, 14). All actions, good or evil, are accomplished through these five factors only (15). The Self is not involved in any action. But, due to identification with the above factors, one mistakes oneself to be a doer (16). On the other hand, the wiseman, who does not have the false ‘I’ (*ahaṅkāra*) born of identification, is free from all *karmanas* in spite of the activities of his equipments. He is neither a doer, nor an enjoyer (17).

Taking a diversion, *Bhagavān* introduces six factors necessary for any *vyavahāra* (transaction). They are — knower, knowledge, known, doer, action and the instrument of action (18). Of these six factors, *Kṛṣṇa* takes up three (knowledge, action and doer) for further division based on the three *guṇas* (19). Later, the Lord divides the intellect and will also on the same basis (29). Finally, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about three types of happiness (36). (For details see the chart)

Kṛṣṇa concludes this topic by pointing out that there is nothing in the creation which is free from these three *guṇas* (40).

With an intention to sum up the entire *Gītā*-teaching, *Bhagavān* gives the essence of *karmayoga* (41 to 49) and *jñānayoga* (50 to 55) in the following section.

Topic	Sattvic	Rajasic	Tamasic
1. <i>Sannyāsa</i> (Renunciation)	Renunciation of the results of <i>nityakarmas</i> . (9)	Renunciation of <i>nityakarmas</i> due to fear of bodily strain. (8)	Renunciation of <i>nityakarmas</i> due to the ignorance of their value. (7)
2. <i>Jñānam</i> (Knowledge)	That by which one sees the undivided Self in and through all the beings. (20)	That because of which one takes the Self to be distinct in every being. (21)	That because of which one takes the body as the Self. (22)
3. <i>Karma</i> (Action)	Duty performed without attachment and expectations. (23)	Action done with egoism for the sake of results. (24)	Indiscriminate action done without considering the consequences. (25)
4. <i>Kartā</i> (Doer)	One who is detached, perseverant, enthusiastic, unassuming, and calm in success and failure. (26)	One who is attached, greedy, harmful, and subject to elation and depression. (27)	One who is undisciplined, uncultured, arrogant, harmful, dull and procrastinating. (28)

<p>5. <i>Buddhi</i> (Intellect)</p>	<p>That which knows <i>dharma</i> and <i>adharma</i>, right and wrong as well as the bondage and liberation. (30)</p>	<p>That which improperly knows <i>dharma</i> and <i>adharma</i>, as well as right and wrong. (31)</p>	<p>That which knows <i>dharma</i>, <i>adharma</i>, <i>etc.</i>, perversely. (32)</p>
<p>6. <i>Dhṛti</i> (Will)</p>	<p>That by which one sustains the functions of all organs in the spiritual path and which is made unswerving through <i>yoga</i>. (33)</p>	<p>That by which one pursues <i>dharma</i>, <i>artha</i> and <i>kāma</i>, craving for their benefits. (34)</p>	<p>That by which one does not give up sleep, fear, grief and indulgence. (35)</p>
<p>7. <i>Sukham</i> (Happiness)</p>	<p>That which is like poison in the beginning, like nectar in the end, and which is born of Self-knowledge. (37)</p>	<p>That which is like nectar in the beginning, like poison in the end, and which is born of contact between sense organs and objects. (38)</p>	<p>That which deludes the mind in the beginning and in the end, and which is born of indolence and negligence. (39)</p>

The duties of the four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*) are prescribed in the scriptures based on their nature (41 to 44). *Karmayoga* is the performance of one's own duty as an offering to the Lord. This renders the mind fit for knowledge (45, 46). Here, *Kṛṣṇa* makes it a point to emphasize the importance of *svadharma* (duty). It is necessary not only for the sake of purity but for the sake of social harmony also. Shriking one's duty can only lead to total confusion (47, 48). The purified seeker, who is detached and self-controlled, will soon attain liberation through *jñānayoga* (40).

Now the Lord introduces *jñānayoga* and gives a brief outline of meditation *i.e.* *nididhyāsanam* (which is necessary to assimilate the knowledge gained through *śravaṇam* and *mananam*). Having restrained all organs and having given up all disturbing thoughts like desire, anger *etc.*, one should remain in a secluded place (51 to 53). Being firmly established in his *Brahman*-nature, he becomes free from grief and desire. Being the same to all beings, he enjoys the highest devotion to the Lord (54). Having known the Lord in His true nature, he becomes one with Him (55). (Becoming one is nothing but dropping the notion of division.)

In the following verses (56 to 63), *Kṛṣṇa* comes back to *karmayoga*, emphasizing the aspect of devotion *i.e.* the attitude of surrender. Constantly remembering the Lord, if one dedicates all his actions to Him, that devotee attains the Lord ultimately by effortlessly crossing over all obstacles (56 to 58). On the other hand, if one tries to evade his duty, which is based on his nature, it will be in vain and harmful (58 to 60). Hence, surrendering to the Lord of the heart, the controller of all, a devotee should strive to attain supreme peace by His grace (61 to 62). With this, *Bhagavān* concludes the teaching and directs *Arjuna* to do whatever he likes (63). But, the affection towards *Arjuna* overpowers *Kṛṣṇa* once again (64). Hence, the Lord repeats His teaching emphatically once again — “Fix the mind on Me. (Be) My devotee. (Be) My worshiper. Surrender to Me. You shall reach Me alone. Truly do I promise to you. You are dear to Me. Having renounced all actions, seek Me, the nondual, (as your) shelter. I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve” (65, 66). (These two verses

are presenting *karmayoga* and *jñānayoga* in capsule-form.)

Having thus concluded the teaching, the Lord states the qualifications necessary to receive this. One who has no faith, discipline, devotion and desire to know should not be given this knowledge (67).

Now comes the *phalam*. One who imparts and the one who receives this wisdom attain the Lord Himself (68 to 70). Even the one who merely hears this with faith attains higher worlds (71).

Being satisfied with the teaching, *Kṛṣṇa* asks *Arjuna* whether his delusion is gone. *Arjuna* gratefully acknowledges, promising to abide by the Lord's teaching (72, 73).

Now *Saṅjaya* addresses *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, exclaiming how blessed he was to listen to this glorious dialogue between the Lord and *Arjuna* (74, 75). *Saṅjaya* remembers the whole dialogue and the cosmic vision with thrill (76, 77). He concludes his remarks with the declaration — “Where there is *Kṛṣṇa*, the Lord of *yoga*, and where there is *Arjuna*, the wielder of the bow, there will be permanent wealth, victory, prosperity and justice” (78).

The topics of this chapter are:

1. *Sannyāsa* and *tyāga* 1 to 12
2. *Jñānayoga* 13 to 17
3. Three types of knowledge, action, doer, intellect, will and happiness 18 to 40
4. *Karmayoga* (emphasizing *svadharma*) 41 to 49
5. *Jñānayoga* (emphasizing meditation) 50 to 55
6. *Karmayoga* (emphasizing devotion) 56 to 62
7. Final summary 63 to 66
8. Lord's concluding remarks 67 to 73
9. *Saṅjaya*'s concluding remarks 74 to 78

Since the chapter begins with *Sannyāsa* which is the means of liberation, it is called *Mokṣasannyāsa-yoga*.