

GITA VIMARSH

DISCOURSE ON FIRST SEVEN CHAPTERS OF
Shrimad Bhagwat Gita

Original in Hindi
By
SWAMI RAMANANDA

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION
BY
KRISHAN GOEL**

BFC PUBLICATIONS


BFC PUBLICATIONS



Published in India by BFC Publications Private Limited
CP-61, Viraj Khand, Gomti Nagar,
Lucknow-226010, Uttar Pradesh, India

www.bfcpublications.com

ISBN – XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Copyright (©) – **SWAMI RAMANANDA** (2024)

All rights reserved worldwide.

No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means (electronic, digital, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the publisher.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this book are solely those of the author, and presented by the publisher in good faith.

Dedication

I, krishan goel,

Place this work in the Lotus feet of my Ishta Dev

Shri Krishna

Without his blessings and grace I could never do this work

I also dedicate this work to

Swami Ramanand

Without his inspiration I could never undertake this work

FROM THE TRANSLATOR'S PEN

GITA VIMARSHA is a commentary on the first seven chapters of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita, the Divine Song. Soon after he completed writing commentary of the seventh chapter Swami Ramananda was released from the mortal body and merged in the Supreme, *Parmatman*. Perhaps, he had accomplished the work for which he had taken birth in this mortal world. In Gita Vimarsha, Swamijee has explained in detail the message of the Gita and a reader is not deprived of any essential aspects of it. Wherever necessary, verses from other chapters have been referred and explained.

Shrimad Bhagwat Gita is a religious scripture of Hindus. It may be so because Shri Krishna, the singer of this Divine Song, is widely worshiped by Hindus as an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. However, the Gita is not really a sectarian scripture, as it does not ordain to worship any particular deity or to follow any specific path of worship. In fact, the Gita accepts all religious paths and Shri Bhagwan himself says that He alone has created all paths and all paths lead unto Him. All that He preaches is that, one should follow his chosen path with full devotion, dedication and sincerity. All paths lead to the realization of the Supreme Reality. The Gita is thus a secular scripture for the entire humanity.

Shri Krishna had given the sermon of the Gita to Arjuna in the battlefield. Arjuna after seeing those, whom he always respected, and his other relations and friends, standing in the battlefield, ready to fight, realized the prospect that he might become an instrument for their killing in the war. He, therefore, expressed a wish to retire from the battlefield saying that the kingdom achieved as a result of that war would not be worthy of enjoyment. However, towards the end of the Gita, after listening to Shri Bhagwan, Arjuna accepted His advice and became ready to fight as a means for discharging his duty as a warrior. The Gita, therefore, teaches us that one should discharge his duties with full devotion and dedication without bothering about consequences for himself. One should always work, without any fear or favour in one's best judgment, for upholding the ethical and moral values of the society. If in the process one needs to sacrifice his own interests or the interests of his near or dear ones for the good of the society, then he should not hesitate to do so. That alone is the path of one's salvation.

It is in recognition of the eternal value of this message that the Gita has been translated in almost all languages of the world. There are any number of commentaries of this book, written by saints and scholars. Yet no one can claim that whatever he has written is the perfect explanation of the Divine message. The message, being so intimately related to day-to-day life, everyone understands it from his own perspective. "*jaki rahi bhavana jaisi Prabhu murati tinh dekhi taisi*". Therefore, people should have the opportunity to know the different viewpoints, which may be identical in substance but are different in presentation, to have a better and clearer understanding of the Divine message.

I got a copy of Gita Vimarsha about two decades ago. It was for the first time in my life that I could have a little understanding of the Gita after reading this book. When I was going through the book, I felt that the readership of the book should not remain confined to Hindi

knowing people and the views of Swamijee on the Gita should also be made available to English knowing community in the world, so that they also have a better understanding of the Gita. It was with this feeling and with some inner inspiration that I undertook the work of translating this book. However, this translation could not have seen the light of the day but for the encouragement given to me by Dr. Lakshmi Saxena, who retired as a Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Gorakhpur University.

I mailed a copy to Sadhna Dham for their approval. Shri R. C. Gupta, Secretary, Sadhna Dham, has very graciously gone through the draft. I have corrected the draft per his observations and suggestions. Still there may be some mistakes, errors or misrepresentations, for which I take full responsibility.

I am grateful to the President, Swami Ramanand Sadhna Parivar, for giving me permission for publishing this English translation of Gita Vimarsh

I am also grateful to Sushri Anamika Singh, Publishing Consultant and Shri Gaurav Saxena, Project coordinator, BFC Publications, for publishing this work.

I feel this English version of Gita Vimarsh has been possible only by the grace and invisible blessings of Swamijee, without which an ignorant person like me could never have thought of undertaking this work. I pray to him to continue to bless me and guide me in my spiritual voyage.

Krishan goel

NEW DELHI
October 22, 2023

PREFACE

Shrimad Bhagavad-Gita is a precious treasure of the spiritual world. Many saints and scholars have discussed and have written commentaries on this scripture. Despite that it cannot be said that nothing more is left to say. In this Creation of the Lord – multifarious and multi-dimensional creation, no two bodies are identical. How can then two minds be identical? People have different experiences, different viewpoints and different ways of thinking. Rather, everything is different. Therefore, everyone understands the esoteric worth of the Gita as per his own perception and understanding.

Though the understanding of each individual is unique, yet it is not entirely his own. For whatever one hears and whatever he reads becomes a part of his understanding. Moreover, our physical body has definite limitations. Physically we are aware of only of those things, which come from outside, but our mind does not have any such physical limitation. Subtle thoughts and emotional vibrations are present in the space and these vibrations invisibly and unknowingly enter into our mind and heart. We foolishly think that a thought or an emotion is our own and unique.

Therefore, the claim for any originality appears to be mean and foolish. In this world, who is separate and independent from others? Who can be independent of others, either in the gross world, or in the esoteric world? We are part of each other. We are inseparably and mutually related and dependent on each other. My thoughts are not my own. The cumulative influence of the entire world finds its expression in me. I am only a link in the great un-ending chain. My past, my present and my future are connected and related with the entire world. I cannot escape, nor can I break, from this thread of life.

What is originality? I know only this much that, this book is my reaction to the Gita and this is the result of various influences on a person like me. I further believe that even this little understanding may give something to many people by generating new thoughts and emotions. Mutual exchange of thoughts and views is the only way of growth in every field. This is *yagya*. This is service to that Supreme Lord. This is also an offering in the great *yagya* of the world.

Everybody has his own understanding. Blind faith, is borrowed and does not involve original thinking, and so whether right or wrong, it does not benefit anyone. It is no understanding. It is also dangerous because it hampers progress. It does not in any way nurse humanity or the thinking of a person. To think that everyone should think like me is also foolishness. Everyone should think independently and act accordingly. Yet, it is necessary that the thinking of a person should gradually become refined and liberal in influencing his actions so that he becomes benevolent and kind.

If my thoughts and emotions generate vibrations in the mind and heart of someone else and his understanding starts flowering and gives his emotions a depth and magnificence, I would consider my effort worthwhile. If this work inspires someone to think, I would consider that this effort has not been wasted.

I do not lay any claim on ‘Gita Vimarsh’. I can only say that I have endeavored to be true to myself and through this work (Gita Vimarsh) I have made an effort to worship “*satya swarup param prabhu*” (the Supreme Lord, the truth incarnate). I know my understanding has its limitations and that there are immense potentialities of growth in this mind. I also know my awareness is that of a child. I, therefore, do not make any claim. I have only tried to be near to the speaker of the Gita through ‘Gita Vimarsh’. I am trying to generate ‘*tatvik bhav*’- a sublime emotion - for the Gita in your heart and consider myself blessed by drinking and making you drink the nectar of the Gita.

Great scholars have discussed the Gita in detail. Their works have certainly influenced my understanding. They have evidently influenced whatever I am and whatever my experiences have been. I am indebted to all of them - noble souls - who have so far discussed and commented on the Gita. However, the understanding as has been expressed in this book is my own and nothing can disassociate it from me. This understanding is not borrowed.

Friends, I would also urge you to ponder and develop your own understanding. I will be happy if you could make an effort to go beyond my understanding. There can be no last word on a scripture like the Gita. In coming ages, people will understand the Gita in the light of their own problems and experiences. They have a right to do so. It is the greatness of the Gita that everyone can find in it solutions to his own problems and confusions. .

I will now say a few words about my present work - ‘Gita Vimarsh’. Many people want to become very academic about the Gita. They think that they have become scholars of the Gita by memorizing entire scripture and by reading commentaries and discourses of various scholars and commentators. Let them be pleased with their scholarship. I do not want to be one of them. Some people evaluate the Gita with their own scale and argue to prove that ‘this is right and that is wrong’. I cannot do that also. They may do so.

I wish to absorb the Gita in my whole being. I want to capture the message of the Gita, which is for me, and wish to absorb that message in such a way that my whole life starts vibrating with it. The ideals of the Gita should get reflected in my life. The Gita has been the scripture of devotion in my life and I have found its ideals so powerful and forceful that I have not found in any other work or anywhere else. The path preached in the Gita is so comprehensive that I have not seen such elsewhere. For me, the Gita is a work of worship and also of reverence. It has given me solutions for the problems my life. I read the Gita with this wonderful feeling. This is the limitation of my understanding. I have discussed the Gita with this perspective.

This viewpoint is dear to me. This is also beneficent (*mangalmaya*) indeed. Before starting a discussion on the contents of the Gita, it would not be improper to take note of the problem, which has been considered in it, because this has a close relationship with our life. Injustice was being done to Arjuna. Duryodhan was not prepared to give anything to Pandavas. Pandavas had prepared for war to counter that injustice. Before the commencement of the war when Arjuna glanced over the two armies, his heart trembled ‘for this empire so much of destruction’. His was entirely a humane emotion. He refused to fight. All of a sudden, many

problems surfaced at that point. Perhaps he was right. Why should he kill so many of his brethren for the sake of kingdom? Arjuna and his brothers could have lived anywhere else.

However, if the injustice was not countered it had continued to grow and people would have immensely suffered the consequences of that injustice. People would have been miserable after the war but Arjuna had become miserable even before the war.

Moreover, who can decide about justice? In the present complex world no one considers himself to have committed injustice. Germans used to call British as perpetrators of injustice and so called the British to Germans. The party, which wins is always considered right and the losing side is always wrong.

The Lord convinced Arjuna to fight. Then, should we fight with our brothers if such an occasion arises?

Muslims considered that Hindus were persecuting them and were depriving them of their rights. And Hindus considered that for what sins they had committed for which they have to suffer the atrocious behavior perpetrated on them by those who are terror personified.

Today, Arabs and Jews are fighting and both consider themselves right. There is a (armed) race between Russia, America and England. In China, communists are in revolt and think that their point of view (ideology) is justified. Dutch and Indonesians are also fighting. How do we know, who is on the right side of justice?

What considerations are the basis for deciding duty or non- duty of a person? Moreover, what are the considerations, which decide duties and non-duties of a community? This is the dilemma of life. This dilemma comes on surface in various forms at every stage of life. To begin with, it will be necessary to know certain fundamental principles.

An individual is for the society and the society is for the individual, and both of them are for the growth and progress of each other. Everyone should have opportunity to grow and progress. Development does not mean growth of pleasures or raising the standard of life. It means attainment of that state of consciousness in which the best of a man (*Purushottama*), and a truly blissful inner state (*sat-chit-ananad*) manifest in its full glory. A person is able to attain his divine consciousness (*bhagvat chaitanya*), which has equality, wisdom and bliss. There is nothing beyond this. A society made of such people is an ideal society.

Duty consciousness is the path of one's gradual evolution and growth. To consider physical pleasures and enjoyments as an ideal is in reality an invitation for misery: ***“ye hi samsparsja bhoga duhkhayonaya ev te” (5.22)*** (The pleasures, which are born of contacts of sense organs, are verily a source of suffering only). The modern world is a proof of this statement.

Death, destruction and devastation are normal events of this world. They are associated with creation itself. They are not important for determining duties. The state of evolution of an individual, of the community and the situations alone can determine duty. Without knowing them,

it is impossible to determine duty. That action alone, which takes an individual and the community towards the ideal state of evolution, is duty.

The most important consideration is the motive with which a person does his work. That motive alone can make or mar him. And that alone is the one, which makes or mars the society as well. Actions that are done out of greed, attachment, hatred, passion or anger can never be duty. They are always causes of agony. Such actions debase both individuals and the community. Greater the incidence of such actions, greater will be the degree of misery of people.

Only a judicious mind (*sambuddhi*) free from attachments and hatred can take a right decision about justice or injustice. Mere arguments cannot do that.

If we can imbibe basic teachings of the Gita in our life or make them the basis of nation's consciousness, then it will not at all be difficult to decide our duties making the path of progress easy and trouble free. Ideals are important. **Ideals are** for everyone and not for any specific person or for a specific community.

According to the Gita, there can be scope for conflict and disputes; but there is no scope for likes or hatred. There is no scope for excessive indulgence in sensual-pleasures. There is also no place for intense penance (*tapsya*). This is a path of fearlessness and not of cowardice. This is a game of life and death. On this path of duty, personal gain or loss has no importance. Even life and death has no meaning. Emphasis is on internal purity. Ego-less-ness is the ideal. The phrase '*sarvabhutahite ratah*' (committed to the welfare of all being) has a very deep and comprehensive meaning. (Gita 12.4)

This principle does not teach hatred for the oppressor and also does not teach meek acceptance of oppression. Instead this teaches that the oppressor be punished without any hatred. This teaches one to act for his benefit by becoming an instrument in the hands of God. Injustice must be punished. The Divine forces themselves punish an oppressor for his sinful deeds. That is why, Jesus Christ taught tolerance of injustice and love for the oppressor. This is also a great teaching. The Gita teaches us to punish an oppressor by becoming an instrument in the hands of God without vanity and with love for the oppressor. This is possible. The Gita gives proof of this possibility. The equanimity one develops with *Sadhana* gives its proof.

This is a very lofty ideal. This brings harmony and is beneficial for all. Of course, it is a difficult ideal to practice. One can learn his lessons only by facing conflicts and not by running away from them and the world. It is impossible to implement this ideal without complete purification. Hatred breeds hatred, jealousy breeds jealousy. We must learn and practice to break this process by striking at the very root of it. We should also learn to be firm about our duty. It is a wonderful ideal. Shri Krishna and His Gita are also wonderful.

The duty demands that one fight with his opponent with full force but with compassion and love for him and also wishing for his welfare in true sense. One must accept his opponent as God accepts everyone.

After having given this brief introduction about the Gita, I will now discuss this scripture systemically. In the first chapter, we just find a description of the situation – the difficulty of Arjuna and his inner confusion. We get full introduction of that in first chapter. Without properly understanding the situation and without knowing the circumstances in which God had given the sermon, we cannot properly understand the main message of the Gita. If we were to separate the various portions of a book, we are likely to make interpretations, which may be contrary to the basic theme of the book itself. Therefore, we should never forget the basic purpose and approach.

Meanings of verses are given along with the *verse* and wherever considered necessary commentary on them has been given.

Ramanand

Explanation for using following Sanskrit and Hindi words in this translation

Atman: the soul, the self; uniqueness of an existence or of a being – this uniqueness comes from physical and chemical properties in material existences; in living beings it comes from their character, behavior, pattern of growth, physical attributes, etc. It is not a single attribute, which gives uniqueness, it is combination of all these factors which make an existence or a being unique.

Brahman : For Him, there is no equivalent word in any language. Brahman, the absolute and ultimate phenomenon, if I can use the word phenomenon, cannot be understood or experienced in its totality. Every religion, every civilization and every language has a word to refer this phenomenon. Different languages have different names like Brahman, God, Allah, Tao, etc. By whatever name humanity may call him, no name can describe Him fully. No one can bind him in any definition. All definitions have limitations and He is limitless. His total existence cannot be perceived by human mind. He is not measureable.

He has no beginning and no one can conceive His end. He is material and immaterial at the same time. He is potent as well as impotent. He is animate and also inanimate. He is within as well as without every existence and being in the universe.

Every existence in the cosmos comes from him and after living its life, disappears in Him. He alone sustains every existence during its manifestation. In Vedic literature, these three attributes are Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh: creator, sustainer and dissolver, respectively.

Dharma: This word is normally used for ‘religion’ and ‘righteousness’. In Sanskrit, it has different meanings in different contexts. In the context of inanimate existences, it refers to their physical and chemical properties. In the context of animate beings it means their intrinsic nature manifesting in their behavior. When we use this word in the context of human beings it means their duties and responsibilities towards themselves, towards their families, towards their community and society, towards their country, towards humanity and finally towards nature. I could not find any equivalent English word, which I could use for this comprehensive word.

Karma: This word is the soul of the Gita. It can mean duty, action, work, deed, activity depending upon the context in which used. It may also mean inherited consequences of actions done in the past or in past lives.

Parameshwara: this word is composed of: param + ish + wara. ‘Param’ means ‘ultimate’ or ‘supreme’; ‘ish’ means ‘wish’ or ‘desire’; and ‘wara’ means ‘the one who desires or wished’. Thus, “parameshwara” should mean the ultimate or supreme desire of a person. I have used this word for ‘God’ the ultimate or Supreme Entity in and of the Universe.

Parmatmana: the Supreme Soul of the Universe. The word also means soul or self of every one other than ‘me’ or own self.

Moksha: means liberation from the cycle of birth and death. A state of peace and tranquility where one has no regrets and no worries; no aspirations and no expectations

Prakriti: this word is used both for nature in general and for nature of an individual existence or being.

Sadhana: devotion, dedication, constant practice to achieve an objective

Samadhi: the state of perfection in meditation. In this state, the person has consciousness but there are no volitions or thoughts in his mind. This is the state of thoughtlessness, full of bliss and peace.

Sanskar: the word can mean tendencies, values and character of a person; can also mean inherited tendencies.

Sanyas: Usually external renunciation is considered as *Sanyas*. However, external renunciation does not really lead to *sanyas*. *Sanyas* is possible only by having an inner detachment with *karma* i.e. '*naishyakarmaya*'. This state can be attained by engaging in *karma*.

Svabhav: individual nature; innate or spontaneous disposition of a person

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
From The Translator's Pen	i
Preface by Swami Ramanand	iii
Explanation for using Sanskrit and Hindi word In this translation	viii
Chapter 1	1
Chapter 2	10
Chapter 3	104
Chapter 4	179
Chapter 5	243
Chapter 6	283
Chapter 7	337
Glossary	371

|| SHRI RAM ||

CHAPTER 1

*dhrtarastra uvaca
dharmaksetre kuruksetresamaveta yuyutsavah/
mamakah pandavas cai 'va kim akurvata samjaya //1||*

Dhritrashtra said –

"O Samjaya! Tell me what my sons and sons of Pandu, assembled in the sacred land (*dharmakshetra*) of Kurukshetra with the intention to fight, did?" (1)

Before the commencement of the Mahabharata war, Vyasji had offered to Dhritrashtra divine vision if he wanted to see the war. Dhritrashtra declined the offer saying that he did not want to see with his own eyes the annihilation of his family. Thereupon, Vyasji gave divine vision to Samjaya, the charioteer of Dhritrashtra, so that he could vividly see from any place events of the battlefield. After the death of Bhishma Pitamaha Samjaya went to Dhritrashtra to give him the news. At that stage, Dhritrashtra asked Samjaya to give him full description of the war. Thereupon, Samjaya described to Dhritrashtra the formation of the two armies, events taking place in the war and narrated to him the gospel of the Gita,

*samjaya uvaca
drstva tu pandavanikam vyudham duryodhanas tada/
acaryam upasamgamyam raja vacanam abravat//2||*

Samjaya said -

"On seeing the battle ready army of Pandavas, *Duryodhana*, the prince, went to *Dronacharya* and spoke these words ". (2)

*pasyai 'tam panduputranam acarya mahatim camum/
vyudham drupadaputrena tava sisyaena dhimata//3||*

"O' Acharya! Look at the mighty army of Pandavas organised by your wise student, son of Drupada (*Dhrstadyumna*)". (3)

*atra sura mahesvasa bhimarjunasama yudhi/
yuyudhano viratas ca drupadas ca maharathah//4||
dhrstaketus cekitanah kasirajas ca viryavan/
purujit kuntibhojas ca saibyas ca nara pumgavah//5||
yudhamanyus ca vikranta uttamaujas ca viryavan/
saubhadro draupadeyas ca sarva eva maharathah//6||*

"That army has great warriors like Arjuna and Bhim, great archers *Yuyudhan*(Satyaki), *Virat*, great charioteers *Drupad*, *Dhrstketu*, *Chekitan*, valiant king *Kashiraj*, *Purujit*, *Kunti Bhoj*, foremost of men *Shaivya*, mighty *Yudhamanyu*, brave *Uttamouja*, son of

Subhadra (Abhimanyu) and (five) sons of Draupadi. All of them are great warriors. Duryodhana mentioned to Dronacharya names of great warriors of Pandavas's army. After that he started mentioning names of his own army'. (4-6)

*asmakam tu visista ye tan nibodha dvijottama/
nayaka mama sainyasya samjnartham tan bravimi te//7||
bhavan bhismas ca karnas ca krpas ca samitimjayah/
asvattamavikarnas ca saumadattis tathai 'va ca//8||
anye ca bahavah sura madarthe tyaktajivitah/
nanastrapraharanah sarve yuddhavisaradah//9||*

"Now know the names of distinguished warriors of our army. O' Brahmin *Shreshtha* (best of brahmin)! These are the commanders of my army. For your information, I am mentioning their names; you, *Bhishma*, *Karna* and ever victorious *Kripacharya* and like him are *Asvatthama*, *Vikarna* and son of *Somadutta* (*Bhurishrava*).

In addition, there are many other heroes, who have staked their lives for my sake. They are well skilled in warfare and are capable of using different arms and weapons". (7-9)

*aparyaptam tad asmakam balam bhismabhiraksitam/
paryaptam tv idam etesam balam bhimabhiraksitam//10||
ayanesu ca sarvesu yathabhagam avasthitah/
bhismam eva 'bhiraksantu bhavantah sarva eva hi//11||*

"Our Army, guarded by *Bhishma*, seems not adequate and their army commanded by *Bhima* is adequate. All of you must, therefore, protect *Bhishma* from your designated positions." (11).

From verse 4 to verse 11, we are getting a good idea of the mental state of *Duryodhana*. When he counted names of commanders of *Pandava's* army, he mentioned a number of warriors. But, he could count only a few **commanders in** his army. Moreover, he unambiguously said: 'our army is not adequate, **and Pandavas'** army is adequate'.

It is clear that *Duryodhana* was having **the realization of the** weakness of his side. It was only his obstinacy that was forcing him to wage the war.

Why *Duryodhana* gave the direction: 'you people protect *Bhishma*'? Was *Bhishma* not capable of protecting himself? It appears that *Duryodhana* did not **trust Bhishma** for his victory. He was worried that if there was any danger to *Bhishma*, his game plan would be frustrated? In his worry, he had forgotten that *Bhishma* himself was an extremely capable and competent warrior. He could protect himself.

Duryodhana goes to *Acharya Drona* and after looking at his commanders **he mentions names** of the warriors. We will see a little later that a similar **desire arose** in *Arjuna* and he had asked *Shri Krishna* to station his chariot between the two armies.

It appears that *Bhishma* **Pitamahah understood** the mental state of *Duryodhana*. Therefore, to boost his morale *Pitamahah* blew his conch.

*tasya samjanayan harsam kuruvrddhah pitamahah/
simhanadam vinadyo 'ccaih sankham dadhmau pratapavan//12||
tatah sankhas ca bheryas ca panavanakagomukah/
sahasai 'va 'bhyahanyanta sa sabdas tumulo 'bhavat//13||*

The grandsire of Kuru family, the glorious Bhishma Pitamaha, roared aloud like a lion and blew his conch to cheer up Duryodhana. (12)

Thereafter, conches, battle drums, tabors, cow horns, etc. suddenly started blowing and created tumultus noise reverberating all around. (13)

Conch, etc. are **different instruments** used for making martial uproar. Blowing of conch by Bhishma was a signal to others. They also started blowing their conches and beating battle-drums.

*tatah svetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau/
madhavah pandavas cai 'va divyau sankhau pradadhmauh//14||
pancajanya hrsikeso devadattam dhanamjayah/
paundram dadhmau mahasankham bhimakarma vrkodarah//15||
anantvijayam raja kuntiputro yudhisthirah/
nakulah sahadevas ca sughosamanipuspakau//16||
kasyas ca paramesvasahsikhandi ca maharathah/
dhrstadyumno viratas ca satyakis ca parajitah//17||
drupdo draupadeyas ca sarvasah prithvipate/
saubhadras ca mahabahuh sankhan dadhmuh prthak prthak//18||*

"Then Shri Krishna and Arjuna, sitting in a big chariot drawn by white horses, blew their divine conches – Shri Krishna blew his conch *Panchajanya* and Arjuna blew his *Devadatta*. *Bhimsen*, the doer of terrible deeds, blew his mighty conch named *Paundru*. King Yudhishtar, son of Kunti, blew *Anantavijaya*, *Nakul* and *Sahadeva* blew their *Sughosh* and *Manipushpak*. O' King! Great archer *Kashiraj*, great charioteer *Shikhandi*, *Dhristadyumn*, *Virat* and invincible *Satyaki*, *Drupad* and sons of *Draupadi* and valiant Abhimanyu blew their own conches." (14-18)

*sa ghoso dhartarastranam hrdayam vyadarayat/
nabhas ca prithvim cai 'va tumulo vyanunadayam //19||*

"The tumultous uproar, resounded through earth and sky, rented the hearts of *Kauravas*".(19)

The noise created by the blowing of conches by Pandavas rented the hearts of *Kauravas* because they were already considering themselves weak. The effect on everyone was **similar to that** on Duryodhana.

*atha vyavasthitan drstva dhartarastran kapidhvajah/
pravrtte sastrasampate dhanur udyamya pandavah//20||
hrsikesam tada vakyam idam aha mahipate /*

"When weapons were about to strike, seeing sons of *Dhritrashtra* ready for war, O' King, Arjuna spoke these words to Shri Krishna" – (20 and first half of 21)

Arjuna uvach
senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthupaya me' cyuta||21||

"O' Achyut (the infalliable one) station my chariot between the two armies". (21).

War was about to start. Arjuna had picked up his bow and at that stagea desireto see warriors arrayed at the **battle front arose** in his mind and he asked Shri Krishna to take his chariot between the two armies.

**yavad etan nirikse 'ham yoddhukaman avasthitan/
kair maya saha yoddhavyam asmin ranasamudyame||22||
yotsyamanan avekse 'ham ya ete 'tra samagatah|
dhartarastrasya durbuddher yuddhe priyacikirsavah||23||**

"I want to see these men eager to fight and with whom I am to engage in this business of war; and will also like to see the kings who wish well **for evil-minded** Duryodhana and have joined his army to fight for him". (22-23)

The battle drums were reverberating in the battlefield. The battlefield was full of battle cry and the weapons were ready to strike. At that stage, Arjuna had asked Shri Krishna to take his chariot between the two armies from where he could see warriors of enemy army with whom he was to fight. He was anxious to know the warriors who had come to fight from the side of Duryodhana.

samjaya uvaca
evamukta hrsikeso guddakesena bharata |
senayor ubhayor madhye sthapayitva rathottamam ||24||
bhismadronapramukhatah sarvesam ca mahiksitam |
uvaca partha pasyai 'tan samavetan kurun iti ||25||
tatra 'pasyat sthitan parthah pitrn atha pitamahan|
acaryan matulan bhratrñ putran putran sakhims tatha ||26||
svasuran suhrdas cai 'va senayor ubhayor api|
tan samiksya sa kaunteyah sarvan bandhun avasthitan||27||
krpaya paraya 'visto visidann idam abravit||28||
(first half)

Samjaya said!

"O' *Dhritrashtra*, on being asked by Arjuna, Shri Krishna drove and stationed the the magnificent chariot in between the two armies facing each other and said: O' Partha, "look at these assembled *Kauravas*". (24-25)

"Thereafter, Arjuna, son of Pritha¹, saw uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, fathers-in-law, friends and his other well wishers standing in the two armies. Seeing his relations present in the two armies, son of Kunti, Arjuna was filled with compassion and said with sadness". (26-28)

Shri Krishna immediately fulfilled the desire of Arjuna and drove and stationed the chariot in between the two armies. Bhishma, Drona and other **important warriors** were present in the battlefield. What did Arjuna see when he looked around? He saw that in both the armies, grandfathers, uncles, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, cousins, sons, grandsons, fathers-in-

¹ Pritha: another name for Kunti, the mother of Pandavas

law, friends and other relations were standing. Watching that scene, Arjuna started trembling as if the earth had slipped from under his feet. He was swayed by his emotions and with much sadness said to Shri Krishna –

Arjuna uvach

*drstve 'mam svajanam krsnayuyutsum samupasthitam//28||
sidanti mama gastrani mukham ca parisusyati/
vopathus casarire me romaharsas ca jayate//29||
gandivam sramsate hastat tvak cai 'va paridahyate/
na ca saknomy avasthatum bhramati 'va ca memanah//30||
nimittani ca pasyami viparitani kesava/
na ca sreya 'nupasyami hatva svajanam ahave||31||*

"O' Krishna! On seeing these relations assembled to fight, my limbs are becoming weak, my mouth is parched, my body is shivering and my hair are standing on end. Gandiva² is slipping from my hands and my skin is burning. I am not able to stand steady, my mind is reeling and I am seeing evil-omens. I do not see any good by killing my own relations in this war". (28-31)

*na kankse vijayam krsna na ca rajyam sukhani ca/
kim no rajyena govinda kim bhogair jvitenam va//32||*

"O' Krishna, I do not long for victory, nor empire nor pleasures and enjoyments. What do we have to do with this empire? O' Govind, why do we need enjoyments or even life itself?" (32)

*yesyam arthe kanksitam no rajyam bhogah sukhani ca/
ta ime 'vasthita yuddhe pranams tyaktva dhanani ca||33||
acaryah pitarah putras tathai 'va ca pitamahah/
matulahsvasurah pautrah syalah sambandhinas tatha||34||*

Those for whom we **desire kingdom**, for whom there is craving for pleasures and enjoyments, leaving any hope for life and riches are present in the battlefield. They are all our relations: elders, uncles, sons, and like them grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons and other relations.(33-34)

When Arjuna saw the scene of battlefield, he noticed that his loved ones were present in the battlefield. Some of them would fight from his side and others from the side of Duryodhana. Arjuna was a warrior. He knew that coming to the battlefield was an open invitation to death. Some might survive, but there was a distinct possibility that some others would not survive. He visualized **that those** killed would leave behind a void which **would neither** have friends nor other relations. Then, what would be the worth of such a kingdom? The pleasures of life are enjoyable only with relations and friends. What is the value of pleasures in isolation? In cremation ground, all pleasures **appear meaningless**. Their memories **would also** haunt him throughout the life.

Arjuna visualized the ghastly scene that would come about after the war and he could not bear that. His inner self was deeply shaken. He felt that he was under an illusion. The price he was about to pay for gaining the **kingdom would** make the pleasures of royal **life worthless**. He,

² Gandiva: the name of Arjuna's bow

therefore, did not like the bargain. All those with whom he could be happy and for whom he wanted the kingdom were about to be killed in the war. Consequently, he lost the will to fight and also the desire for kingdom. In explicit words, he said to Shri Krishna,

*etan na hantum icchami ghnato 'pimadhusudana/
api trailokyarajasya hetoh kim nu mahikrte //35||*

"What to say of the kingdom of this earth, I will not kill these relations even for the kingdom of the three worlds (*triloki*), even though I may be killed". (35)

After saying these words, Arjuna's mind became charged. So far, Arjuna's reaction was normal. So far, only physical signs had appeared. Then, Arjuna expressed his determination that 'he will not fight and will not kill'. In support of his resolve, he started giving arguments –

*nihatya dhartarastran nah ka pritih syaj janardana/
papam eva 'srayed asman hatvai 'tan atatayinah//36||
tasman na 'rha vayam hantum dhartarastran svabandhavan/
svajanam hi katham hatva sukhinah syama madhava//37||*

"What benefit will beours after killing Duryodhana and others? By killing these malignants only sin will accrue to us. Duryodhana and others are our relations and we should not kill them. O' Madhava! How can we be happy after killing our own people"? (36-37)

Arjuna wanted to impress Shri Kirshna with his arguments. It was natural. Arjuna knew that without the consent of Shri Krishna he could not even leave the battlefield. Shri Krishna was the advisor of **Pandavas**. Arjuna had to follow his advice.

*yady apy ete na pasyanti lobhopahatacetasah/
kulaksayakrtam dosammitradrohe capatakam//38||
katham na jneyam asmabhih papad asman nivartitum/
kulaksayakrtamdosam prapasyadbhir janardana//39||*

"If they do not understand, let them not. Their minds are overpowered by greed. Destruction of the family is a great evil. Treachery to friends is a great sin. We know this. We understand the harm that will be caused by the destruction of the family. We should refrain from this sinful act."(39)

Arjuna was speaking in a very logical and impressive manner. Then he tried to justify his resolve with more arguments.

*kulaksaye pranasyantikuladharmah sanatanah/
dharme naste kulamkrtanam adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta//40||
adharmabhihavad krsna pradusyanti kulastriyah/
strisu dustasu varsneyajayate varnasamkarah//41||*

*samkaronarakayai 'va kulaghnanam kulasya ca/
patanti pitaro hy esam luptapindodakakriyah//42//*

“The ruin of a family destroys its old traditions and religious practices. Destruction of traditions and religious practices leads the whole family to immorality. As a result of loss of morals, ladies of the family become corrupted and mixed breed children are born. Mixed breed children take the family to hell and destroy family traditions. The custom of offering oblations of food and water to the departed ancestors also disappear. Consequently, the departed ancestors also go to hell.” (40-42)

Mixed breed is an indicator of progeny born out of illegitimate alliances. There is a mention in *Manusmiriti*³ about different kinds of reverse-inverse alliances amongst different castes. Mixed **breed Children** have no right of offering oblations to departed ancestors. Oblations offered by them do not reach ancestors. In fact, caste indicates the nature and duties of a person. In a family birth of children having predominantly different **work-cultures create confusion** about duties. For example, if a soul having primarily *Brahmin*³ or *Vaisya*⁴ propensities is born in a warrior (*Kshatriya*) family, then warrior traditions of the family get diluted and the related values get distorted. This is the result of alliances between different castes. The present state of the Hindu society is that of cross breed. It is **an indication** of disappearance of ancient values and traditions.

*dosair etaih kulaghnanam varnasamkarakarakaih/
utsadyante jatidharmah kuladharmas ca sasvatah//43//*

“It is as a result of the misdeeds of those who destroy their family and create confusion of *varnas*, eternal family traditions and community traditions are destroyed.” (43)

*utsannakuladharmanam manusyanam janardana/
narake nityam vaso bhavati 'ty anususruma//44//*

‘O’ Janardana, we have heard that those whose family traditions and customs have been destroyed live in hell forever”. (44)

Family ethics, traditional customs due to which people become noble are high practical **ideals for** a person. Community norms and traditions relate to humanity. Man for being a man has to follow norms of social behavior and conduct. By deviating from these norms man becomes like a beast.

These days neither family values nor community values are given any importance. In fact, people do not believe in observing duties and responsibilities towards the society. As a result, life is becoming highly hellish in this world.

As a result of his thought process and his perception of horrific outcome of war, Arjuna got terrified and cried saying,

³ Brahmin: Priestly community or the community live on learning

⁴ Vaisya: trading or business community

*aho bata mahat papam kartum vyavasita vayam/
yad rajyasukhalobhena hantum svajanam udyatah||(45)*

'Oh! We have resolved to commit such terrible sinful actin striving to kill our own relatives for the sake of kingdom and its pleasures'. (45)

*yadi mam apratikaram asastram sastrapanayah/
dhartarastra rane hanyus tan me ksemataram bhavet||46||*

Thereafter, Arjuna resolved to leave the battlefield.-- even if the sons of Dhritrashtra kill my brothers, it will be better for me to leave the battlefield. I will neither take up weapons against them nor will I resist them". (46)

*samjaya uvacha
evam uktva 'rjunah samkhye rathopastha upavisat/
visrjya sasaram capam sokasamvignamanasah||47||*

"Samjaya told Dhritrashtra that after saying so, Arjuna, casting away his bow and arrow, sank down on the seat of his chariot in the battlefield. He was overwhelmed with grief". (47)

Arjuna had become personification of grief. He was distressed to perceive the ravages of war and the picture of its terrible outcome. Bow and arrows slipped from his hands. He could not remain standing. He sat down in the chariot.

Title of this chapter is "Arjun-Vishad-Yoga". In this chapter, causes of Arjuna's distress have been mentioned. But why has this been called Yoga?

Distress is the foundation of *vishad* Yoga, the path for spiritual elevation, which is preached in the Gita. Without his distress Arjuna could not have become worthy of listening the gospel of the Gita. As roots of a tree, its **foundation cannot** be separated from the tree, so the distress of Arjuna was the foundation of the Yoga described in the Gita and, therefore, is Yoga.

Each chapter of the Gita is concluded by using the following sentence:

*"Om tatsiditi srimad bhagavadgitasupanisatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
sriksnarjunasamvade arjunavisadyoga nama prathmo 'dhyayah"*

And the chapter comes to an end.

The meaning of the Gita is 'the sung'. There are many scriptures by the name 'Gita'. The name of this book is '*Shrimad Bhagvadgita*'. It means: 'sung by the Divine Lord'. It is also known as an *Upanishad*. The Gita is the essence of various *Upanishads* and, therefore, it is proper to call it *Upanishad*.

*sarvopnishad gavo dogdha gopalanandanah I
partho vatsah sudhirbhokta dugdham gitamritam mahat II*

All *Upanishads* are cows and Shri Krishna – Gopalanandan – has drawn their milk. Arjuna is the calf, who drank the milk. Milk is the nectar of the Gita. This verse is included in '*Gita Dhyan*' and is indicative of great truth. If the Gita is compared with other *Upanishads*, it will be seen that not

only many verses of the Gita are based on the verses in other *Upanishads* but it will also be seen that what has been said in the *Upanishads*, indirectly and indistinctly, has been beautifully clarified in the Gita. The term *Upanishad* is used for the knowledge given by a teacher to his disciple. In that system of teaching, physical nearness of the disciple with his preceptor was important. Arjuna received this knowledge from the blessed mouth (Srimukh) of the Lord himself.

The Gita is a book of '*brahmavidya*' i.e. the Divine knowledge. Metaphysical knowledge is its main subject. Therefore, the term '*brahmavidyam*' has been used.

The third adjective used is '*yoga shastra*'. '*Yoga shastra*' means a manual for *sadhana*⁵ -- a discipline for attaining union with the Divine. '*Brahmavidya*' is philosophy. *Yoga* gives it a practical shape so this knowledge can be practiced in life. The Gita teaches its practical application in life. This clearly describes as to how a practitioner of '*brahmavidya*' should conduct himself in life.

The Gita is in a form of dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna. That is why it is called "*srikrshnarjunasamvade*". Thereafter, each chapter is given a name according to the subject matter discussed in that chapter. All chapters being the limbs of *yoga* expounded in the Gita are called *yoga*. For these reasons, the significance of concluding sentence of each chapter can be understood.

⁵ Sadhana: spiritual pursuit, spiritual endeavor, spiritual practice

|| SHRI RAM ||

CHAPTER 2

Title of the second chapter is 'Samkhya yoga'. It will be proper to discuss the significance of this title at the end of the chapter.

Casting aside his bow and arrow, Arjuna sat down in the chariot. This has been mentioned in the first chapter. The present chapter deals with subsequent developments.

samjaya uvaca
tam tatha krpaya 'vistam asrupurnakuleksanam
visidantam idam vakyam uvaca madhusudanah||1||

Samjaya said –

“Seeing Arjuna extremely distressed, depressed and in tears, Shri Krishna said.” (1)

sri bhagavan uvaca
kutas tva kasmalamidam visame samupasthitam/
anaryajustam asvargyam akirtikaramarjuna||2||
klaibyam ma sma gamah partha nai 'tat tvayy upapadyate
ksudram hridayadaurbalyam tyaktvo 'ttistha paramtapa||3||

Shri Bhagwan said –

"O' Arjuna, from where have these **unwarranted emotions** arisen in you? Noble persons never behave like this. They do not give glory or heaven. O' Prithaputra, overcome this impotence; this is unbecoming of you. O' oppressor of foes, cast off this unwarranted weakness of your heart and rise." (2-3)

Shri Krishna used these words to exhort Arjuna **to fight; as if Shri** Bhagwan was challenging him. These words were spoken in a highly psychological manner. Shri Bhagwan called this despair as sinful *samsakar* – 'kashmal'. One way of suppressing a tendency (**samskar**) is to consider it petty and mean. The more we praise anything, stronger it becomes and more we condemn weaker it becomes. Shri Bhagwan **considered that** despair as a sinful *samsakar*.

Ancestors always considered fighting in a war as **praise worthy**. *Vedas* give description of wars fought by gods. There are many famous tales where human beings helped gods and gods helped human beings. Compassion, fear of death and such emotions in war were totally against *Vedic* culture. Shri *Bhagwan* therefore, called this attitude as '*anaryujusht*' i.e. 'not worthy **of noble** persons'. The word '*arya*' is used for noble and reputed persons.

It is an age-old belief that those killed in battlefield go to heaven. This belief is not confined to India; even in Japan there is a belief that after death in battlefield a man attains heaven. For this reason, people in that country used to end their life instantly by stabbing themselves without any hesitation. Even now there are self-sacrificing servants in that country. The sacrifice made by a warrior is indeed a great sacrifice. A warrior goes to the battlefield leaving behind all attachments putting his life at stake. A person, who sacrifices his life for discharging his duty as a warrior (**kshatriya**) and for his country, is certainly praise-worthy. Is it a

matter of surprise if one attains heaven because of his great sacrifice? Shri *Bhagwan*, therefore, called the emotions of pity as un-heavenly. In other words, one cannot attain heaven by having such emotions. For those who run away from battlefield, doors of heaven are closed.

In addition, it is said: 'it does not bring glory'. Because of such conduct, people will start calling names saying that Arjuna was a coward. He ran away from the battlefield for fear of death. Shri *Bhagwan* himself explains this in detail later.

The present situation has been called a difficult one. Indeed, it was difficult. If ever such thoughts as expressed by Arjuna were to be nursed, they should have been considered before calling people for the war. It was sheer stupidity to run away from the battlefield after making such an elaborate preparation (for war).

In the third verse, an effort is made to provoke heroic emotions in Arjuna. Arjuna has been called '*Partha*'. *Partha* means son of *Pritha* - a 'brave son protecting the honour of his mother'. Another term used for addressing Arjuna is - '*parantapa*'. *Parantapa* means tormentor of foes. 'You have defeated enemies many times. The same *Kauravas* were defeated in Virat Nagar. Why are you worried now?'

The present state of delusion of Arjuna (or we may call compassion) has been called '*klaivayam*'⁶. The word '*Kleev*' is used for 'impotency'. The meaning of *klaivayam* is unmanly. Brave people do not think as Arjuna was thinking. For them, killing or being killed is verily a game. Shri *Bhagwan* is saying, 'why are you becoming impotent? This feeling is not befitting you. Your entire past life is full of heroic deeds. Your present emotions do not get along with them. It is nothing but the weakness of your heart and that alone makes you think like this; the web of your arguments is nothing but product of your emotions. This weakness is not befitting valiant ones. Get over this feeling and get up to fight.'

In normal circumstances, such heroic words would have infused new blood in Arjuna and would have made him ready to fight. Shri *Bhagwan* understood by visualising the terrible scene of death of near and dear ones. Arjuna was terrified visualizing that possibility and his feelings of compassion had overcome his warrior instincts. Shri *Bhagwan* did not attach much importance to his arguments. He made no attempt to rebut them. The effort was only to awaken his emotions as a warrior.

The distress of Arjuna was deep. He was only trying to find an intellectual and emotional support for his conduct so that he could leave the battlefield. It was not enough for him to understand that war was the call of his duty as a warrior (*kshstra dharma*). Today why should he perform his duty of a warrior? He was unable to prepare himself to perform his duty without understanding the secret and value of duty.

His arguments are infallible. Mahabharata war had changed the course of Indian history. The understanding of higher values and ideals of life was forgotten. Religious and moral values

⁶ Klaivayam: the impotence

had also disappeared. The whole era had changed. This is all true. But, was Arjuna responsible for all that? Behind all that, it was the working of the time, 'kalpurusa'⁷ and that was the determining factor. Everyone was playing in the hands of 'kalpurusa' as his instruments. Everyone was perhaps responsible for his emotions and conduct. Man is responsible for his deeds but the motive behind his deeds determine the consequences thereof.

Arjuna did not have such a wide perspective but Shri **Bhagwan had such perspective**. His arguments were, therefore, meaningless. For Shri **Bhagwan they** were like tantrums of a child. For that reason, Shri *Bhagwan* ignored them.

After hearing rebuke and words of encouragement from Shri *Bhagwan*, Arjuna becoming helpless started expressing his inner thoughts.

arjuna uvaca
katham bhismamaham samkhye dronam ca madhusudana/
isubhih pratiyotsyami pujarharv arisudana//4||

Arjuna said -

“In this war, I will have to pierce Bhishma and Drona with my arrows and both of them are worthy of my worship. How will it be possible for me to commit such a heinous act? Till today, I have been respecting both of them. How will I be able to shoot my arrows to kill them?” (4)

Arjuna perceived the act of killing his kins as very mean. At the end of the first chapter, he had imagined the misfortune of departed warriors. Now he becomes aware of the vehemence of the act of killing elderly and respectable persons.

guru nahatva hi mahanubhavan
sreyo bhoktum bhaiksyam api 'ha loke|
hatva 'rthakamams tu gurun ihai 'va
bhunjiya bhoganrudhirapradigdhan//5||

“Instead of killing these venerable persons, I would consider it better to live by begging. The pleasures of life, which I shall enjoy after killing these venerable persons, who are worthy of my worship and who are presently in the grip of desires for worldly gains, will be tainted with their blood. It would be better to live on alms than to kill them.” (5)

In verse 5, the words, 'artha' and 'kama,' have been used for worldly gains. Both Drona and Bhishma were in the battlefield giving no importance to worldly gains. They were not considering subtle values of life as important as Arjuna was considering. Like Arjuna, they were not even keen to erase their existence.

For a warrior living by begging is highly insulting but that day Arjuna was ready even for that. He was not ready to kill people worthy of his worship. If he had to choose between the two **alternatives, he preferred to live by begging**. In his view the pleasures which he would have gained by killing **them would have been tainted with their blood. Abhorrent memories would** also be associated, which would cause him sorrow instead of happiness.

⁷ Kalpurusa: lord of time. Kal means time. It also means destiny

In fact, if it is considered from the point of view of securing true happiness, the empire achieved through such a war can never be a source of real peace and happiness. Even today, wealth gained after litigation in family disputes does not give peace. After all, the life of a person and his happiness is not dependent upon his worldly possessions. It is more dependent on mutual exchange of feelings of love and respect. It is more dependent on emotions of love and compassion. Arjuna considered it a bad bargain to kill those persons whom he had always loved and respected. The situation was abnormal. Any sensitive person would hesitate in such a situation. Arjuna considered such a bargain as unprofitable, rather of loss.

Arjuna reached this conclusion.

*na cai 'tad vidmah kataran no gariyo
yad va jayema yadi va no jayeyuh /
yan eva hatva na jijivisamas
te 'vasthitahpramukhedhartarastrah//6||*

"And, we also do not know what will be more beneficial for us, our victory or their victory. The sons of Dhritrashtra, after killing whom we want to live, are standing before us as(ready to fight)". (6)

'Not only *Dronacharya and Bhishmapitamah*, sons of *Dhritrashtra* are our cousins. We do not want to kill them. We do not want to live after killing them. But they are standing in the army before us ready to fight. If we win, that will be possible only after they are killed. Their victory will be possible only after our death that also we do not want. Both appear to be equally undesirable. Therefore, it is not clear to me what should we desire – victory or defeat'.

In life, such situations do come when all available alternatives appear to be undesirable. No alternative appear to result in happiness or in virtue. One has to select one out of available alternatives and that is the helplessness in life. It appears as if situations compel to commit sins. An ordinary person stops thinking and surrenders. Normally, desire for gaining normal worldly pleasures become decisive. From the gross point of view one follows the path of selfishness. He ignores tender feelings of love and higher human values of compassion and affection. But Arjuna could not ignore them. His soul was highly evolved. He could not resolve the conflict in that manner by ignoring higher human values. He could forego worldly gains for human values and *ShriBhagwan* was preventing him from doing so.

Arjuna was helpless in that situation. His entire existence was reacting against the war. It was abhorrent for him to fight with his elders, teachers and own brethren for attaining pleasures of the world. His emotions were not supporting him for fighting in the war. In his view it was a costly or rather a bad bargain. Without them, the pleasures of life would not be enjoyable. Such pleasures would instead be the pleasures of a cremation ground - so he thought. In spite of that, the insistence of *Shri Krishna*, his chiding and impact of his personality was pushing Arjuna towards the other alternative. Arjuna had become helpless and pitiable. He started saying –

*karpanyadosopahatasvabhavah prcchami
tvam dharmasammudhacetah /
yac chreyah syan niscitam bruhi tan mesisyas
te 'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam//7||*

'My warrior instincts are stricken with sentiments of pity. I am unable to decide about my duty - what is right or what is wrong. What is best for me in this situation(to fight or not to fight or something else)? Please tell me,for certain, which is better. I am worthy of your command. Please instruct me. I surrender to you.' (7)

Arjuna had tried to decide himself about his duty-nonduty, but he could not find a solution. He did not know as to what he should do - on one side was the devil and on the other was deep sea. If he left the battlefield he would ignore his duty (*dharma*) and if he fought he would be committing sin. This predicament confused him. Till that day he had considered Shri Krishna as his friend. He also respected him and consulted him. At that hour also, only Shri Krishna was available for consultation. Considering his own thoughts as irrelevant, Arjuna started praying to him. He expressed his anxiety, his helplessness, the limitation of his wisdom and took refuge in Shri Krishna: 'command me, I am unable to think for myself, I need your command, but tell me only after due consideration, whatever is beneficial for me. I will do that. Consider me as your disciple'.

'*shishya*' means deciple or the one who deserves to be guided. He who could be taught to do a specific act is a *shishya*. Obedience is the main requirement for a *shishya*.

Surrender is the secret of ensuing discourse. Shri Bhagwan had not spoken to Arjuna about wisdom as yet. He had only tried to motivate Arjuna to fight in a normal manner. Arjuna was not receptive. Now that Arjuna had failed in his efforts to decide,and was ready to act on the advice, it became possible for Shri Bhagwan to show him the way.

"jab lagi gajbal apno bartyo, tanik saryo nahin kam"
(so long as ownabilities were used no purpose was served)

It was necessary that the state of Arjuna should have become suitable for the path of surrender, which has been preached in the Gita. Only then could he have received that specific lesson. It was the only way available for Arjuna. Arjuna deserved that. This is the unique gift of the Gita. Though the Gita does not discard other paths, rather coordinates them, yet it advocates the path of surrender. Arjuna gets strength only after surrendering. After hearing everything, Arjuna at the end of chapter 18 said:

arjuna uvaca
nasto mohah smrtir labdha tvat prasadan maya 'cyuta|
sthito 'smi gatasamdehah karisye vacanam tava||18/73||

"Delusion is destroyed, O' Achyut (Sri Krishna)! I have regained my memory by your grace; I am free from doubts and am now composed. I shall obey thy words."

How the promise made in verse 7, complements with this verse? The two verses have connected the two ends of the Gita. We cannot forget them while trying to understand the Gita.

This also gives us a glimpse of the real nature (true import) of the word 'surrender'. Distress is the basis for surrender. It should be genuine. Only after losing confidence in one-self, surrender becomes genuine and then what is it that Shri Bhagwan does not do for the one, who

surrenders - Shri *Bhagwan* does every thing for him. He immediately makes him free from anxiety.

*na hi prapasyami mama 'panudyad yac chokam ucchosanam indriyanam|
avapya bhumav asapatnamrddham rajyam suranam api ca 'dhipatyam||8||*

"I am unable to understand whether this grief which is drying up my senses would ever be removed by gaining a prosperous kingdom free of enemies or even by achieving sovereignty over gods." (8)

Arjuna was only trying to express the depth of his sorrow. Even the pleasures and enjoyments of the world would not be enough for him to forget his grief. Mere possibility of war had made him deeply distressed, which by no means he could forget. In the pleasures of life, one easily forgets his grief, but when the grief is deep, it is not possible to forget it by any means.

In fact, the distress of Arjuna was very deep. His limbs had become weak and his heart was sinking. He had lost his composure and even his enthusiasm had left him. Arjuna was unable to perceive how it would be possible for him to forget all about the events of war even after gaining a prosperous kingdom in which there would be nobody to oppose him? He also thought that he would not be able to forget the pain even if he was bestowed the throne of Indra, the lord of all gods.

There is *Yama*⁸-- Nachiketa episode in *Kathopanishad*. Nachiketa had received three boons from *Yama*. As a third boon, he had asked for the knowledge of self. *Yama* tempted Nachiketa by offering him many alternative boons. He offered him infinite affluence, pleasures and enjoyments, a long life, sons and grandsons, in order to discourage him from asking for that specific knowledge. However, Nachiketa did not succumb to any of those temptations. Ultimately, respecting his firmness, *Yama* gladly preached him *brahmavidya* (divine knowledge). We do not become worthy of the path of *Prabhu* (of divine knowledge) till such time as our inner craving is not so deep as it can not be satisfied by any worldly attainments. It is immaterial whether the craving is due to deep distress, or due to an intellectual anxiety. We become worthy of this knowledge only when we have such craving, which cannot be satisfied by any worldly attainment or by any like situation; only when we become able to enter the state of enlightenment.

Those people are fortunate who get such a deep wound. A person forgets ordinary wounds. One does not learn any lesson from his wounds; as if he was sleeping and goes back to sleep again after waking up for a short while. He is not conscious. In the conscious state such a deep enlightenment is possible after reaching appropriate stage of evolution. Evidently after such a state of enlightenment, a person never returns to the enjoyments of life despite making efforts for them as before. In such a state he has only one alternative i.e. to keep moving forward on the path of his evolution. He loses interest in worldly pleasures and if on attaining such a stage one does not have the courage to move forward then there is surely harshness, disinterestedness, and a vacuum in life. The life appears to become purposeless because the objective of life becomes meaningless or there is no new direction, objective or goal.

⁸ Yama: God of death

Shri Bhagwan tried to tempt Arjuna. He also provoked him, criticised him. But all this was in vain. It only meant that Arjuna was a right person for spiritual enlightenment (*adhyatma Yoga*). He had lost interest in worldly life. He had passed the preliminary test. Moreover, he was fully receptive. He was fully devoted to Shri Krishna; he trusted him and was prepared to tread the path of enlightenment preached by Shri Krishna. It is to be noted that till such time it was not clear that Arjuna possessed those **qualities Shri Bhagwan** did not talk to him about *atman*⁹. He talked only in normal worldly manner. Earlier it was not possible for him to talk about *atman* because an enlightened person does not open his mouth before a person who is not ready. The eligibility of a person is a silent signal to speak on this subject.

When we understand the requirements of eligibility as mentioned above, it becomes quite clear why the first chapter is named *Arjuna-vishada (distress) yoga*. Distress is the basis of this *yoga* and, therefore, is *yoga*. This is the infallible sign of eligibility. It is *vairagya* i.e. detachment from worldly affairs.

Normal **reaction against attachment is *vairagya (detachment)***. This is born out of hurt of the inner self- the distress. Transient detachment is like detachment in a cremation ground. When detachment is firm, then alone there are constructive possibilities. When detachment is negative, in other words is primarily non-attachment, then it does not generate devotion in the feet of the ***Parameshwara and*** is useless. Only that distress and detachment is blessed which generates a deep devotion in the feet of the ***Parameshwara and*** frees a person from any possibility of distress in future. To an extent, it depends **upon immediate** influences. It was due to the presence of Shri Krishna and his influence, seeds of devotion, wisdom and duty could sprout in the fertile soil of distressed Arjuna. Otherwise, only a vacuum would have remained in the heart of Arjuna, and his life would have become meaningless and if that had not happened, he would have had internal conflicts for his entire life.

Those who are on the right path, in whose heart buds of devotion in the feet of the *Parameshwara* have sprouted; do not need such a deep wound. The grace of the Lord gradually purifies their minds.

sanjaya uvaca
evamuktva hrsikesam gudakesah paramtapah/
na yotsya iti govindamuktva tusnim babhuva ha//9||

Gudakesh –(Arjuna)after saying so ‘will not fight’ to Shri Krishan became silent (9)

tam uvaca hrsikesah prahasann iva bharata/
senayor ubhayor madhye visidantam idam vacah//10||

O’ Bharata! Stationed between the two armies, Shri Krishna smilingly spoke these words to distressed Arjuna, (10)

In the Gita, Arjuna has been called by many names. These are adjectives. The meaning of the word ‘*Gudakesh*’ is ‘the lord of sleep’, ‘*nidrajit*’ (who has control over sleep). Similarly, Shri

⁹ Atman: the self; the soul; the spirit

Krishna has been called by many names, *Hrishikesh* – the Lord of the senses i.e. *indriyajit*, *Govinda* – a cowherd or a person who has control over the senses. This is a tradition of the Sanskrit literature that a person is first addressed by an adjective and in due course that adjective becomes his name.

Arjuna had stated his resolve, 'I will not be able to fight – I will not fight'.

Shri Krishna was not alarmed. He was the Lord. Appreciating the situation Shri Krishna smiled and started preaching. The *yoga* of the Gita starts from this place.

*sri bhagavan uvaca
asocyan anvasocas tvam prajnavadams ca bhasase/
gatasun agatasums ca na 'nusocanti panditah//11||*

"You are grieving for those, who do not deserve to be grieved and are talking like a wise man. Wisemen do not grieve either for the dead or for the living." (11)

The real sermon of *Bhagwan*, Shri Krishna, starts from this verse. The Lord describes the present condition of Arjuna in the first half of the verse. '*Ashochya*' has been used for the 'undeserving for grief'. Arjuna was grieving for his relations who might be killed in the war. In fact, what is the need to grieve for a warrior (*kshatriya*) who dies in a battlefield while performing his duties as a warrior (*kshatra dharma*)? He sacrifices his life while performing his duty (*dharma*) and after death he goes to heaven. His death should not be a cause of grief. It should be a matter of joy instead. The body does not live forever. So if a person can discharge his duty with its help then his body is honorable – both in life and also in death. It is only the delusion of a person that makes him tremble at the prospect of death and he starts looking at it as a frightening accident.

In *Shri Ram Charit Manas* also there is an incident. On the death of King Dasharatha guru Vashisht preached thus:

*sochiye vipra jo ved vihina, taji nij dharma vishyai leyleena /
sochianripati jo niti na jana, jehi na praja priy prana samana //*

(The Brahmin, who leaving his own dharma is engrossed in pleasures consider him ignorant of Vedas. Consider that king ignorant of the statecraft for whom **his subjects are** not as dear to him as his own life.)

Death is not worthy of grief. This is certain and is necessary for evolution of a person. The main consideration should be, as to what for the life is given? What was the purpose? To die while discharging duty should be a matter of joy because by doing so one moves rapidly on the path of his evolution.

In the entire Gita, devotion to duty (*svadharma*) is the underlying theme. **Svadharma** was the basis for the arrangement of castes. On that basis only, social order was maintained. Considering from a wider perspective, **this was the system for growth** and development. When petty considerations start reducing the importance of ethical values in life, then a person is deluded

and strays from the right path; and due to imbalance created in the social order morality (*dharma*) devalues. Devotion to one's duty alone makes death unworthy of grief. One has to be firm in the discharge of his duty (*dharma*). Even the considerations of happiness or unhappiness are not important in the cause of *dharma*. Considered from this **view point, devotion** to duty is a great penance and a great sacrifice. To emphasise the importance of *svadharma* is indeed a great contribution of the Gita.

Another thing, which Shri **Bhagwan told** to Arjuna: 'you are talking like a wise man-*'prajnavadams ca'*. Not as a wise man but like a wise man. In other words, his arguments **were logical** and appealed to mind but in fact were baseless. 'Immorality amongst women, disappearance of traditions and customs, birth of mixed-beed children and absence of oblations to the departed **ancestors were prima facie beautiful** and well argued considerations. However, those considerations were not for Arjuna to bother. Arjuna should discharge his duty (*dharma*) as a warrior. He had come to the battlefield to **fight and fighting was** the demand of his **duty; and let** anything happen. All his concerns were of no importance before the call of duty. By deviating from his duty, he would not only **harm himself** but would also harm the social order. Whatever he said **was right** in a way, but it was wrong to give it undue importance.'

In the second part of the verse, Shri Krishna gives his reason. *Pundit* is the one who is wise, is the one who can properly evaluate situations by having a wider perspective. A person, who understands complexities of a situation and related issues but does not understand their real value and cannot compare them with similar situations, may be a scholar but is a fool. One does not become a *pundit* simply by having knowledge of many matters. In fact, wisdom is the capability of properly understanding all relevant issues. One does not achieve this understanding by simply reading books.

The refinement of intellect achieved by internal and external experiences is very important. In the Gita, **pundit is** given a very exalted position. He is a person having balanced vision and outlook (verse 18 of chapter 5). This is height of cognition. This is also the horizon of vast vision. This is the real vision. In fact, this is wisdom.

Wise people do not grieve for those who are dead and also for those who are alive. Life and death are inevitable events of life. What can be achieved by grieving over death? Death is inevitable. The body has to die. It is immaterial howsoever much and in whatever way one may worry or grieve. Both birth and death are necessary and interrelated to keep the cycle of the world going. Birth is dependent on death and death on birth. When there is birth, there has to be death.

Moreover, death is only a release from physical body. Death is not losing spiritual existence. Birth is only an acquisition of a body in the physical world. He who understands this secret, there is no grief for him. For him birth and death is a game like the game of hide-and-seek.

*na tv eva 'ham jatu na 'sam na tvam ne me janadhipah|
na cai 'va na bhavisyamah sarve vayam atah param //12||*

"It is not that I was not there in the past, or you were not, or these kings were not. And, it is also not that we will not be in future again. We are all beyond this." (12)

The analysis of the concept of life and death starts from this *verse*. An attempt is being made to explain the meaning of **immortality** of *atman*. Arjuna had only a gross vision of things (understanding). It was limited to the present. He knew a bit of the past and a bit of the future. Considering the body as existence (*satta*) he was becoming sad by **taking upon** himself the **blame** for its death and thinking that every one of the warrior would die in the war and he would be responsible for their death. He **knew nothing** about the existence of the *atman* before its manifestation in a body and he also did not know any thing about the existence of *atman* after death of a body. Shri *Bhagwan* tells him explicitly, 'it is not that, I was born on the birth of this body. There was never a time, when I did not exist. I have always been there. I am unborn - am *ajanma* i.e. unborn, and this is not special to me because you are also *ajanma*. The body is born and not you. You existed before the birth of your body. You always existed. Similarly these kings for whom you grieve were not born with their bodies, they always existed.'

'Even when we look in future, there will never be a time when we will not be. Only body destroys, but the power which speaks and works does not destroy. That is never lost. Similarly you are never destroyed **nor any of** these kings can ever be non-existent. They will always exist. It is only the body, which dies. This is your delusion to think that they will die'.

The existence in the form of consciousness in a body is *atman*. That does not die on the death of a body. That is unborn and perennial. **Atman is** an eternal existence. That is immortal. Body is mortal. Now Shri *Bhagwan* explains by giving an example.

*dehino 'smin yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara|
tatha dehantarapaptir dhiras tatra na muhyati //13||*

"As this gross body of the embodied (which has acquired a body) has childhood, youth and old age. Likewise, it gets another body after rebirth. Therefore, a stable person is not deluded in this matter." (13)

Three stages: childhood, youth and old age pass in a body of embodied. Embodied remains the same while passing from childhood to youth **and his** chain of memory does not break. The one who was a child becomes a youth and similarly who was young becomes old. The transition from one stage to another is not an end of the previous state. In the same manner, along with the three stages, the fourth stage is that of death. After death, embodied attains a new subtle body. The embodied leaving the gross body starts dwelling in a subtle body.

It is desirable to know the opinion of **Upanishads** about transmigration of souls. There is an illustration of leech (Jaluka) about death in *Chhandogya Upanishad*. A leech lifts its rear feet only after firming its front feet. In the same manner, *atman* leaves an old body on attaining a new body. This does not mean that it immediately takes another birth in the gross world. In fact, on death our relationship with the gross body terminates and shortly thereafter the animate breathing body also gets annihilated. The embodied self dwells in a subtle state in a subtle world. It appears

that after death, some changes in conformity with propensities of the person usually take place in the subtle body and, therefore, it is a new one. That is why in the Gita death has been called transmigration of body to a different level. As in life, the body passes through the three stages and the embodied continues in those stages unchanged, so also continues in yet another stage, which it attains after death. This is also another stage, though it appears entirely different from other stages. For example, one has constructed a house and starts living therein. With the passage of time the house becomes old and damaged. The person leaves that house and starts living in another house. He remains the same person in the new house, as he was earlier in the old house. He only changes his house. He continues to be like before. He is not destroyed with the destruction of the old house.

It is necessary to differentiate between the stages and the one whose stages they are. **Change is** in stages and not in the one whose stages they are. Because of lack of this understanding, we think that a person dies and we grieve and make others grieve.

This ignorance about death – concept of death -- is deeply rooted in the psyche of human society. Death is considered as ‘destruction’. That is why so much importance is given to it and its fear keeps **us mortified**. It is essential that we understand the science of death so that we correct our attitude towards it and free ourselves from the fear of death.

*matrasparsas tu kaunteya sitosnasukhaduhkkhadah/
agamapayino ‘nityas tams titiksasvab bharata//14||*

Contacts of senses with their objects **give rise to experiences** of cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They come and go, and are transient. O Bharat¹⁰! Endure them. (14)

What can be measured, is called measurable. Unmanifested *prakriti* is beyond measurement. However, the entire manifested *prakriti* is composed of measurables. They have limitations. All our perceptions are dependent on limits, which are possible by measurement through senses. All that, which the senses, the mind or the **intelligence can perceive are** measurables and are **measures of** *prakriti*. Therefore, ‘*matrasparsha*’ (contact with measurables) means contacts with *prakriti*, union with *prakriti* and effects of *prakriti*.

The embodied acquires a body. Through sense organs that body comes in contact with external world. The body influences the phenomenal world and in turn it influence the body. That gives perception of heat and cold, and of pleasure and pain. Perceptions of pleasure and pain are not dependent only upon contacts with sense organs.

The mind and the intellect also experiences perceptions of pleasure and pain. Influences of gross *prakriti* alone do not give rise to pleasure and pain. The thoughts and emotions also give rise to them. The subtle *prakriti* in the mind and the intellect, which is not manifest, is stronger than the gross.

¹⁰ Bharat: Arjuna

The context was --- *atman* is immortal, **the relations** (referred by Arjuna) will **leave only** their bodies – only their state will transform and they (who survive) **will experience physical** suffering and pain. Can we not save them and ourselves from that (suffering)?

Perhaps in this verse, Shri *Bhagwan* is answering this question: When the embodied is in a physical body, there **is relationship** with nature and because of that relationship there **is perception** of hot cold, pleasure and pain. Of course this relationship (contact) keeps changing. *Prakriti* is not stable. Consequently, contacts with measurables keep changing, and also external conditions keep changing. And our sense organs, means of our experiences, also keep changing. As a result, the experiences of hot and cold also keep changing. A happy person is not always happy so also an unhappy person is not always unhappy. Like the edges of a rotating wheel (*chakranemikramain*), every thing keeps rotating. Seasons change and like them everything changes.

Secondly, these contacts are transitory (*anitya*). It is not that they will always be there and the person will **always be** compelled to experience hot and cold, pleasure and pain. By progressing in the process of evolution, one acquires freedom from these experiences. For ‘*sthithpragya*’¹¹, Shri *Bhagwan* says, he is neither happy in **happiness nor** unhappy in unhappiness. He develops an inner evenness. This is also true about hot and cold. This means that these experiences are not permanent i.e. do not last. Not only that, contact or union with *prakriti* is also not constant. Death makes us rid of physical contacts of the nature. Similarly, as our consciousness develops, we gradually acquire capability of remaining immune from experiences of physical world. The stage of ‘*kaivalya*’ (state of isolation) is a state of irreversible separation from the *prakriti*. A person, whose consciousness is beyond mind, intellect and ego, is beyond the experiences of *prakriti*. The *prakriti* has no binding on him. He can enjoy or leave *prakriti* at will. This was the state of Shri *Bhagwan*.

‘*taanstitikhasva*’ i.e. endure them. Until such time, one does not attain tolerance he has to endure them. There is no escape. If this is accepted then there is no problem.

***deh dhare ka dand he sab kahu ko hoai /
gyani bhoge gyan son murakah bhoge roai //***

(This is the punishment of acquiring a body and everyone has to bear it.
A wise man endures it with wisdom and a fool suffers crying.)

Along with this, if **one understands** that this bond of *prakriti* is the requirement of evolution then **he overcomes** the feeling of helplessness. A person can knowingly use this bond for giving an impetus to his evolution. He tries to learn essential lessons **from *prakriti* quickly** and properly so that he can quickly pass through these stages. Life itself is seen as a school. Pleasure and pain look like messages of the merciful God (*kripnidhan*). Life is no longer remains a prison. It does not remain a burden and the whole perspective of the person toward life changes.

***yam hi na vyathayanty ete purusam purusarsabha/
samaduhkhasukham dhiram so ‘mrtatvaya kalpate//15//***

¹¹ *Sthithpragya*: stable in intelligence (mind)

'O, Chief of men! A person, who is not bothered by contacts of measurables, who has patience and remains even in pleasure and pain, is worthy of immortality.'" (15)

Shri *Bhagwan* discusses in this verse a higher level of tolerance which he had referred in the previous verse. Influences of *prakriti* cause disturbances in a person. When these influences are strong, the person becomes uneasy. This uneasiness and awareness of external influences are not the same. To be uneasy due to cold and knowing cold are two different things. When temperature goes down mercury in thermometer drops but it is not said that thermometer is uneasy. Perceptions of external situations by intelligence and experiences of pleasure and pain, uneasiness or comfort are properties of consciousness. These are two different forms of sensitivity. Ability to perceive is 'cognition'. Ability to experience pleasure and pain is feeling of expression. Both are different. For this reason, despite the cognition being same, the feeling of pleasure or pain is not similar in different persons. Death of any near and dear relation does not make everyone equally unhappy.

As a person advances in his spiritual journey, his ability to perceive improves. For him space and time start contracting. He becomes more sensitive towards internal and external changes than he was before. He starts perceiving changes, both external and internal, more clearly than before. He is also able to know motives and intentions of others with greater clarity. Along with these two abilities, there is another infallible indicator of his progress: in him possibility of becoming restless decreases. The events, which used to bother him before, do not bother him any longer and in due course of time, he reaches a stage when it becomes impossible for him to get worried as earlier when it was impossible for him not to get worried. This change is possible by a transformation and purification of astral body. It is also natural that this change affects his central nervous system. They strengthen. He knows everything but does not get perturbed. .

The understanding, which at this stage an aspirant achieves, if an ordinary person achieves that understanding he will not be able to live normal life and pangs of grief will break his heart. This evolution should take place simultaneously in the fields of knowledge and emotions. It certainly does not mean that one becomes a stone (devoid of feelings).

This, however, does not indicate the evenness an aspirant of knowledge achieves by controlling his sense organs. One can reach this stage by continually enduring cold, which makes the skin thick and sensory cells insensitive. When there is no feeling of cold, in this manner, then there is no possibility of any discomfort and the question of evenness does not arise. This is not development of evenness but is a step towards animality.

The evenness towards pleasure and pain does not mean this. Steadfast (*dhir*) is the one, who has patience (*dhairya*), who is balanced, who can endure outside influences and is not disturbed in any manner by external or internal changes. He alone is stable. Evenness towards pleasure and pain and steadfastness develop together. In the last part of this verse it is said that he is worthy of immortality. Immortality is a state free from death. In fact, even gods are not immortal. From human point of view, people remember such persons for so long that we start calling them immortal. Secondly, their body does not disintegrate on death like ours. It does not

change significantly. For these reasons, we call them immortal. Real immortality is that state when the *atman* does not need to acquire a new body after **the existing** body is discarded i.e. death.

We are in a gross body. The intensity of heat and cold and of pleasure and pain, experienced in a gross body and in physical **world, is** not experienced in astral bodies. It is impossible to **experience them** in subtle bodies in the astral worlds. Therefore, this lesson of evenness can be learnt only in this phenomenal world and is learnt through these external influences. This means that the utility of these external influences is necessary for learning lessons of life. As we learn the said lesson of evenness, the utility of external influences declines for us. Once a person properly understands the nature of these influences and can remain unaffected, these external influences do not remain useful for him. It means that he will not have to return to this physical world i.e. the world of transient pleasures and pains. For him, physical world does not remain useful. Such a person becomes worthy of immortality. He will not have to acquire a physical body nor leave it. Of course in the present context it should also be understood that acquisition of a body is not necessary for evolution yet one can acquire a body many times to discharge some specific tasks for a higher purpose and inspiration. Like a boy who has already passed high school need not go to school to study in high school but he can certainly go to school to teach or for any other purpose.

The basis **of what** was said by Shri *Bhagwan* to Arjuna in verses 11 to **15 is tattva gyan** (elemental knowledge). Without understanding the secret of the self and non-self (*atman-anatman*)¹² all that knowledge appears baseless. In verses 16 to 25 this has been elaborated. *Atman* is eternal and death is the property of a physical body. Self of a person is *atman* and not body. The Self is **immortal**. In reality, death means decay of a body. These are fundamental concepts for an **understanding of atman** and *anatman*. In our life, this understanding has great importance. It depends on us how we want to spend our life, where we want to proceed and whether we want to be happy or unhappy.

Nothing happens by merely cramming that *atman* is immortal and the body is mortal. Even a parrot can learn many things, but parrot does not have any use of that knowledge in his life. We will have to use this knowledge in our life. Equipped with this knowledge, we will ourselves have to examine life from every angle and also have to observe events happening around us.

Do we really know and believe that *atman* is immortal, we are immortal and this body is mortal? If we truly believe this, then why do we give so much importance to the enjoyments and pleasures, happiness and unhappiness, which are related to this body? Why do we live for acquiring them? Why do we sacrifice our duty and ethical values of life for the sake of the body and for its pleasures? Why do we sacrifice our own welfare (*atmankalyan*) for enjoyments, and for worldly and physical comforts? This is because our knowledge is that of a parrot, devoid of any understanding of what we are saying. We accept for the sake of acceptance but behave in a different manner or do not give any importance to our behaviour.

¹² anatman: non-self

In fact, that alone is knowledge, which can influence the life. Hindu society gives lot of respect to the Gita. It believes in the immortality of *atman*, but when somebody dies, we grieve so much that the entire wisdom of the Gita flows out of us - like a river. At that time one should think how can the concept of immortality be practiced in life keeping all aspects in view and change his life accordingly.

*na 'sato vidyate bhavo na 'bhavo vidyate satah|
ubhayor api drsto 'ntas tv anayos tattvadarsibhih//16|*

"What is non-existent that does not come to exist, (and) what exists that never ceases to be. The knower of the two, existents and non-existents, knows them in their true form, knows them conceptually. (16).

This means, whatever exists is always there and whatever does not exist, is never there. That which does not have its own existence can never exist and that which has existence will never cease to exist.

The normal meaning of 'sat' is that exists. But, what is it? We will have to examine this deeply. Does a tree exist? Yes, it exists, as it is visible. However, a tree is made of five elements. First, the elements exist and then only a tree exists. The existence of a tree really depends upon the existence of five basic elements. Do the five basic elements exist? If we go a little deeper, we will understand that the five basic elements exist because *prakriti* exists. They do not have any existence independent of *prakriti*. Does *prakriti* exist? Going further deep into the issue, it will be realised that there is only one indivisible existence, which manifests itself in the form of *prakriti*. Moreover, even *prakriti* does not have its own independent existence. What has its own independent existence is 'sat' - real. This then is the definition of 'sat'. By saying 'sat' it means that it exists on its own and that its existence is not dependent on any other existence. Moreover, it never ceases to exist. To say that 'sat' never ceases to exist is to define the word 'sat'. If 'atman' is considered as 'sat' then just by saying so, the immortality of *atman* is mentioned.

If we are really *sat-swarup* then we never destroy. This means, 'sat' can never become non-existent, and nobody can ever kill it. If, however, it can be killed then it is not 'sat'.

'*asat*' never exists. The '*asat*' can never be. Physical body is '*asat*'. It is perceptible. It does not have real existence. '*asat*' means transient. Essentially, its existence is as good as non-existence - as water has existence but a bubble does not have its own existence. All things in the world both moveable and immovable are like a bubble. Real existence is only of the one Supreme-Brahman (*Parabrahman*) and of our *atman*, because, our existence is not different from Him. We are part of that Supreme existence.

Atman is eternal as it is not transient. Body is transient and it is not eternal. *Paramatman*¹³ is eternal and He is 'sat' real, and the entire creation is transient and is '*asat*' unreal.

¹³*Paramatman*: the Supreme self or the Supreme soul

This understanding is the **understanding of** permanent and temporary matters of *sadhanachatushtya*. The existence of many things used in every day life is only a reflection of that One Supreme existence. They are dependent on that One alone; as they are born from that One and will finally disappear in that One. Only that One is final destination. He alone is the life of our life and is perfect. The world is His projection. We should move towards him. The thirst for transient things is the cause of unhappiness because of their transient nature and they cannot give real happiness.

Those who know the *tatva* (essence) of '*sat*' and '*asat*', they certainly know this much about '*sat*' and '*asat*'. The one who is able to explore and discover roots is a knower and philosopher.

In verse 11, Shri *Bhagwan* had told Arjuna that he was talking like a **wise man**. In other words, Arjuna had not actually understood reality.

Correct understanding is the ability to differentiate between *atman-anatman*. If Arjuna really had that understanding, he would not have given so much importance to dying and killing. For transient bodies, why should he ignore his own duty, which was so important for his **own good**? He considered body as important and considered body **itself as** real life.

An edge or a root is a terminal point. The terminal of a subject is its conceptual knowledge – fundamental principles of that subject. By giving examples of wise people, Shri *Bhagwan* tried to explain this subject in many ways so that Arjuna could fully understand.

*avinasi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam/
vinasam avyayasya 'sya na kascit kartum arhati//17||*

"Know the one by which all this is pervaded as indestructible (not subject to decay), for no one can destroy this immutable." (17)

Now we apply the principle, discussed in verse 16. What **is that** which pervades this **universe** (even beyond this universe), present in every atom as threads in cloth, as fibers in thread, is the indestructible? Indestructible is one, which cannot be destroyed. In other words, that is *sat* (real).

What is that thing which is present in everything? This is '*sat*' (real). It is present in everything and is subtler than the subtle. This cannot be the subject of mind, intellect and senses. It is **atman and** is unmeasurable, unlimited and infinite. It is beyond boundaries of space and time. It exists in everything yet it is beyond everything.

Can It be destroyed? Everything exists because It exists, has strength because of Its strength and has character from Its character. How can it destroy? How can threads destroy fiber? How can cloth destroy threads? How can subtle be mutable gross? How can a body kill its *atman*? How can creation destroy the Absolute (*Paramaeshwara*¹⁴)?

¹⁴*Paramaishwara* : The Supreme Lord

Who can kill Him? All senses and mind pulsate due to Him. *Prana*¹⁵ moves due to Him. Intelligence sparkles due to Him. Nothing has any authority over Him. He is indestructible and because **He is immutable He cannot decay.** In fact, even time (*kaal*) is due to Him. Destruction also is due to Him. He is transcendent. He is omnipotent. Hands cannot reach Him and eyes cannot see Him.

Our *atman* is that Indestructible Existence which pervades everything and is the cause of everything, and is omnipresent.

We are part of that Infinite, if the word 'part' could be used. We are just a glimpse of that Infinite. In our ego-mind-intelligence, that infinite (*anant*) perceives and appears serene in this body for His divine play (*lila*).

To be **aware of** that feeling (*bhava*) of immortality is to attain the infinite consciousness and is to realize one's immortality. After having that feeling, man starts saying like swami Ramatirtha 'He is everything in everything'. Moreover, then only a man can properly understand the *vibhuti-yoga* or the *yoga* of Divine Glories.

*antavanta im deh nityasyo 'ktah saririnah/
anasino 'prameyasya tasmad yudhyasva bharata*||18||

It is said that these manifested bodies of the eternal embodied (soul), which is indestructible and incomprehensible (*aprameya*), come to an end? O'Bharata (Arjuna!)! you should, therefore, fight. (18)

In this verse, differentiating between *atman* and body, it is said that *atman* is eternal and body is destructible.

The one, which has a body, is embodied. That one which has taken a body, who is the master of the body, is embodied. Only *atman* acquires a body. Without *atman*, body is inert, it is dead and is worthy of cremation. The body is a means for experiencing. Through this body *atman* establishes its contact (through mind, etc.) with physical and subtle world. It influences and get influenced too. Body is a machine and *atman* is its operator. **The *atman*** uses it. This *atman* is also the source of its energy and knowledge.

By considering thus, one has to understand that the body and the embodied – the *atman*, the existence, which acquires a body – are different. Once this is understood, further understanding becomes easy. For example, a person who does not know that wheat and gram are **different** will not be able to know their mixture after they are mixed. Similarly, the one who does not know the two - *prakriti*¹⁶ and *purusha*¹⁷, cannot understand this distinction. He thinks that the body alone has all qualities. Body is conscious with the presence of *purusha*. Not every person

¹⁵ Prana : vital, life breath

¹⁶ *Prakriti*: Samkhya speaks of two ultimate realities -- *Purusa* and *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* is composed of three *gunas* (constituents) i.e. *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. And when they are in a state of equilibrium, it is known as *avyakta* or the unmanifest. When the equilibrium is disturbed then arises the universe. *Purusa* does not change or mutate.

¹⁷ *Purusha*: In the Vedanta philosophy '*Purusha*' is known as *atman* or the self. In both systems '*Purusha*' exists as a witness or *sakshi* of all changes. The only difference between *Samkhya* and *Vedanata* is that the *Samkhya* believes in the multiplicity of *Purusas* whereas Vedanta does not believe so - it believes in one ultimate reality or principle.

can understand this subject in this manner, as one is not able to recognise that the cloth is different from colour in which it is dyed. Until one does not recognise the cloth as different from colour, he does not have proper cognition. Similarly, the two have to be understood as different. Only by knowing *atman*, the embodied, and the body, in which it dwells, are different, this understanding is possible.

The *atman* is eternal, immortal and immeasurable. The **body has** totally different properties. Eternal i.e. the one, which has always existed and will always exist, is beyond the limitations of the past or of the future. The *atman* is never born i.e. neither its beginning nor its end can **be known**. And, *atman* never dies i.e. when its end can be called and after which its existence cannot be imagined. It was always there and will always be there. In this chapter only, Shri **Bhagwan has** thus said about *atman* “*bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah*” (verse 20).

It is indestructible i.e. it cannot be destroyed: How can something eternal be destroyed? Destruction is possible only by bringing a change. The *atman* is free from any change. It is always the same.

Immeasurable (*aprameya*) is that, which cannot be measured. Measurement is by eyes, by senses and by the mind and intelligence. Sensory organs measure physical objects and mind and intelligence measure subtle objects. *Atman*, cannot be measured by any of these means. It is beyond the limits as it is subtle. It is smaller than the smallest and is bigger than the biggest. It is stable as well as moving. There is no end to its energy, of its wisdom or of its bliss. It is entirely without limits or boundaries. That is why it is *aprameya* – immeasurable. Body is its opposite, i.e. transient, destructible and measurable.

Body decays and is rebuilt every moment. After a certain period, the play of the body comes to an end, and it becomes lifeless like wood or iron. Having become useless, it is consigned to flames (or is buried). Body is also measurable. We can measure it. Its growth and decline can also be measured.

In this way, the body of the embodying *atman*, acquiring a form, is perishable. Bodies are certainly perishable. They do not last forever. Like a watch that stops after its winding is over. After it lives its destiny, the body perishes.

The word ‘body’ has been used in plural and the embodied (*atman*) is used in singular. This needs to be noted: The *atman* is one and does not change. That singular entity uniting with a form of life becomes individual soul (*jivatman*), and when united with universal soul it is the Supreme Soul (*Paramatman*).

Basically it is only one Reality. **The duality** (*dwaita*) is confined to intelligence. In the existence beyond *prakriti*, where is a possibility of any duality? In the Gita, Shri *Bhagwan* says, ‘*kshetrasyam ch api mam vidhi sarvakshetreshu bharat*’ – O Arjuna! Understand that I am the knower of the field (*Kshetrasya -atman*) in every field (*kshetra* -body). Broadly speaking this means that you consider Me the **embodied in** every body (*dehdhari*). (Second verse of chapter 13).

Shri **Bhagwan tells** Arjuna thus, ‘therefore, you fight as *atman* is eternal and immortal (*ajar –amar*). Not even an iota of *atman* **can mutate**. Body alone is mortal. It will certainly perish. Therefore, you fight without any worry.’

‘You cannot kill any body. At best you can **destroy a** body, which even otherwise is going to perish. Why should you worry then? Stand up and fight.’

*ya enam veti hantaram yas cai ‘nam manyate hatam|
ubhau tau na vijanito na ‘yam hanti na hanyate//19||*

"One who thinks that he slays and the one who thinks this (*atman*) can be slain – both of them do not know the truth. Neither it slays nor *can it* be slain." (19)

The atman neither kills nor killed. Shri *Bhagwan* said this in the context about which Arjuna was worried. The *atman* does not die and is immortal. Only the body dies. When a body is slain, the **atman in** it is not slain and does not die. Why does it not die? A sword can cut wood but cannot **cut** air. Space does not disintegrate when a lump of mud is thrown in air. It is because **it is** subtle. The *atman* is so subtle that there is nothing subtler than it. In fact, it cannot die because dying is not its nature. It has always been there and will always be there. It is unique. Therefore, what simile can be given for it?

It is easy to understand that *atman* is immortal but it is difficult to understand that it does not even kill. It is also easy to understand that *atman* does not kill *atman*.

But, **can atman not kill even a body**? Only body dies and can only be killed by another body. Only a living being can kill another living being. Then, what does it mean that *atman* does not kill? *Atman* is an existence beyond the three constituents (*gunas*) of *prakriti*. It is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. It is also not subject to change. Therefore, the changes in the forms of enjoyments of *karmas* take place only in a body, a constituent of *prakriti*. Changes do not take place in *atman*, which is beyond the constituents of *prakriti*. Therefore, the *atman* is not involved in the doer-ship of killing. Subsequently, in verse 28 of chapter 3, Shri *Bhagwan* himself says:

*tattvavit tu mahabaho gunakarmavibhagayoh |
guna gunesu vartanta iti matva na sajjate || (3/28)*

"He, who knows the truth about the respective modes of *gunas* (*prakriti*) and of *karmas* holding that it is the *gunas* (in the shape of mind, organs, etc.) that move among the *gunas* (existent or perception), does not get attached to them O' Arjuna."

By considering himself as a killer, a person imposes upon himself the doer-ship of his **karma** of killing. Consequently he has to become an enjoyer of consequences and place himself in the cycle of birth and death, and of happiness and unhappiness. In fact, we are the *atman*. We, as *atman*, neither do anything nor enjoy anything. It is all the play of **gunas with** the *gunas*. The three *gunas* keep reacting with each other in different forms. To know this is to know the essence of the Samkhya¹⁸. By this alone a man attains *kaivalya*¹⁹ and **liberates himself** from the bonds of

¹⁸ Samkhya : This is a school of Vedic philosophy.

¹⁹ Kaivalya: this is the ultimate state attained according to the school of Samkhya.

prakriti for ever. People usually do not understand this secret. They think that somebody has killed and somebody has been killed. This happens because they consider body as a real existence. This is false or illusory knowledge (*avidya*) and is the cause of misery. To know this distinction between the *atman* and *anatman* is to become fearless and to become free from all conflicts. To consider body as *atman* is to play in the hands of *prakriti*.

*na jayate mriyate va kadacin na 'yam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah |
ajo nityah sasvato 'yam purano na hanyate hanyamane sarire //20||*

"The *atman* is never born, nor does it ever die. In other words, the *atman* not having come to be, it does not cease to be. It is unborn, eternal, permanent and primaeval. Even on destruction of a body it is not destroyed." (20)

Shri *Bhagwan* **is not tired by** harping on the theme of immortality of *atman*. To make it absolutely clear and intelligible, Shri *Bhagwan* repeats the same song by using different expressions and using new words.

*paida na hota atman, marta bhi he na yah kabhi /
ho karke phir hoga nahin, is tarah ka bhi nahin //
ajanna nitya aur shaswat, he puratan tattva yah /
nashta hone par tanu ke, nashta hota yah nahin //*

Atman is never born, nor does it ever die, It is not like the one,
which becomes non-being after becoming a being
It is primaeval, unborn, eternal and immortal,
It is not destroyed, when a body is destroyed.

Man considers himself to be a body and says, 'today I am so many years old; this is my birthday.' Does the *atman* have any birthday? The *atman* has no birthday. Only body has birthday. Body is distinct from *atman* and its nature is also different. To weep on some one's death indicates identification with the body. The joy on some one's birth also indicates identification. At best it can be said that our body and we are transient. **Manifestation of atman in a** body is 'birth' and departure from body is death.

By bringing a lamp in a room, the room is lighted. By taking the lamp outside, the room becomes dark. We are like a lamp. The **place where** we are is full of life and there is darkness or death in the place from where we disappear. As Sun never sees night, similarly *atman* never sees death. *Atman* is always beyond death. Death cannot even touch it. The moment **Anything has** *atman*, it becomes life. This is the wonderful magic of our existence.

Atmanis is never born. It is clear that birth is only of a body. In reality, **it is the body**, that comes out of the womb of a mother, it is the tender sapling that sprouts by breaking earth. Rising of Sun on the horizon is known as its birth. Birth is only a transformation of a state. Was there no Sun before today? Was there no sapling? Was there no body at any time before? All of them were there but in a different states and in different regions. In *atman* even such transformation is not possible. **Atman does** not age i.e. does not become old from young as it is endowed with all possibilities. **Atman is** not a toy for the play of Time. Time is a toy for it. We have been together **since** ages. When there was no time, there was no change but *atman* was there. *Atman* will exist even when time will cease to exist.

It is not correct to say that *atman* will become non-existent after becoming. It can be said that *atman* is unborn, eternal, but it is not true to say that it ends its play and becomes non-existent. Its playful existence always remains. 'The people who will die in battlefield will be back in the world after acquiring new bodies'. This seems to be the meaning indicated by this sentence.

Atman is unborn (*aja*), has no birth. It is not born from the womb of a mother and does not disappear in flames of a pyre. Before its birth in this body, it was in a subtle world and before that it was in gross (world).

The cycle from subtle to gross and from gross to subtle continues from eternity. That *adi-purusa-purushottama* in the form of embodied soul (*jeevatman*) has been playing this game of hide-and-peek since eternity. How can we find the cause of that eternal being for whom time is a toy, death is fodder and who Himself is the cause of every thing. Who will give birth to that eternal existence which gives birth to everything and from whom every body comes in existence?

He is eternal. His eternity is in His being beyond time. This concept has been considered earlier.

Eternal is what always exists. It indicates towards future. The word 'eternal' is indicative of the past and the future. It includes both. It is immortal. To explain this and to plant it firmly in the mind, different words are used. In fact, the intellect cannot comprehend the concept of immortality. Space and time are the limitations of the intellect and *atman* is beyond them. For this reason, use of different words becomes necessary to make good the limitation of words, or to provide for the limitation of mind.

In the last portion of this **verse, Shri Bhagwan** says that on the death of a body, the *atman* does not die. We consider ourselves a body. That is why the death of the body appears to be the death of the person in that body. There is no sound once a radio goes out-of-order because the instrument, which transmits sound, is no longer working. Sound, however, does not destroy. There is no light when the bulb fuses. In fact, electric current is not non-existent but the instrument that causes its appearance is not working. If the electric current is not flowing, the sound cannot be heard even if speaker is working. Similarly, when the body becomes useless in every respect i.e. when it dies, it cannot speak, it cannot see and it cannot hear. A body is capable of speaking, seeing and hearing only with the presence of *atman*.

Proper understanding of the nature of *atman* is the foundation of *Samkhyayoga*. The discrimination between *atman* and *anatman* is in fact the essence of this *yoga*. The philosophy of *Samkhya* teaches us difference **between prakriti** and *purusha*.

Samkhya of the Gita also **gives full** understanding of this reality. *Atman* is eternal, immortal and indestructible existence within us. Body is mortal and is distinct from *atman*. By this understanding, a person stabilises in self-awareness (*atmanbhav*) and rises above *karmas* of the body. He is also liberated from the bonds of *prakriti*.

This knowledge can liberate a person from the fear of death. This forbids him from committing evil deeds, which he commits under the influence of petty emotions, which arise in him due to deceptive understanding of the body being the Self.

A saint absorbed in the *atman* sings thus: “*kimichchan kasya kamaaya sharirmanus 'anusajjvaret'*”, (Upanishad) i.e. for what desire and for what expectation should a person suffer in the body.

*veda 'vinasinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam/
katham sa purusah partha kam ghatayati hanti kam//21||*

“O Arjuna! The one who knows this (*atman*) as indestructible, unborn and immutable, how can he slay anyone or cause any one to be slain?” (21)

The basis of Arjuna’s delusion was his understanding that he would kill his relations and they would be killed. He did not have self-awareness (*atman-buddhi*). He considered bodies as *atman*. A person who has self-awareness (*atman-buddhi*) is not affected by death or by birth. He does not abandon his *svadharma*²⁰ on account of birth or death. By making Arjuna aware of this awareness (*atman-buddhi*) Shri *Bhagwan* wanted to take him to the path of his *svadharma*.

The knowledge of acquisition of bodies and discarding of bodies was the path for Arjuna’s evolution. This subject will again be discussed later.

*vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya navani grhnati naro 'parani|
tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany anyani samyati navani dehi//22||*

Shri *Bhagwan* tries to explain by giving an illustration: “as a man after discarding old clothes wears new ones, similarly the embodied (*dehadhari – atman*) discards a worn out body and acquires a new body.” (22)

When clothes become old or worn out, they are discarded and new clothes are put on. Similarly, when a body is worn out and becomes old, decays due to illness or becomes useless due to an accident then that body is discarded and a new body is acquired. In fact, this body is a means for our use. Through our body we establish a relationship with the mortal world and through body we act or perform in mortal world and experience influences of the world. Only through a body, action-reaction is possible in mortal world. For spiritual evolution, creation and assimilation of these experiences is necessary. They gradually activate our latent consciousness. They also enhance our capability to act and to perceive influences at different levels. Feelings of happiness-unhappiness as well as sin-virtue also generate in a body.

A carpenter uses a jack plane (a tool used to smoothen a surface) to smooth a table and if the jack plane is defective, he tries to repair it. If his jack plane cannot be repaired, he discards that jack plane and gets a new one to finish his work. Similarly, *atman* uses a body. When a body is not able to serve the purpose for which it was acquired, then that body is discarded and another body is acquired to accomplish the objective of evolution. Even new clothes are discarded if they

²⁰ *svadharma*: own duties and responsibilities

are not useful. Similarly, a body can be discarded even before old age. If the kind of experiences required for one's evolution are not possible in the existing then that body has to be discarded. For deaths in young age or in infancy there is no doubt that *karmas* of past lives are responsible. Even behind the law of *karma*, some principles work and some purpose is hidden. This is the law of evolution and is responsible for determining the destiny of an individual.

After the over-coat is taken off, jacket remains on the body and after jacket **is taken** off the waist coat remains on the body, similarly after physical body is discarded the subtle body i.e. the vital or the **pranamaya body** subsists. In that state, the subtle body takes the place of the gross. Even after leaving the subtle *pranamaya* body, the mental body i.e. *manomaya* subsists. When in due course of time it becomes necessary a subtle or physical body is attained again.

A person considers himself a body. On the decay of a body we think the person has decayed and on the death of his body we think that he has died. We are distinct from the body. We are *atman* living in a body. We are not born with the birth of the body and are not destroyed with death. We have independent existence. Body is a means for expression. When the axe is broken, the **wood cutter** is not broken. Similarly, when the body **dies atman**, the Self, does not die.

*nai 'nam chindanti sastrani nai 'nam dahati pavakah|
na cai 'nam kdledayanty apo nasosayati marutah||23||
acchedyo 'yam adahyo 'yam akledyo 'sosya eva ca/
nityah sarvagatah sthanur acalo 'yam sanatanah||24||
avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam, avikaryo 'yam ucyate /
tasmad evam viditvai 'nam na 'nusocitum arhasi||25||*

"Weapons cannot cut **the self**; fire cannot burn it, water cannot make it wet nor can the air dry it." (23)

"It cannot be cut, cannot be burnt, cannot be made wet and can also not be dried. It is eternal, all pervading, immovable, constant and unchanging." (24)

"It is called unmanifest (*avyakta*), inconceivable (*achintya*) and immutable (*avikarya*). Therefore, by **knowing thus** it is not proper for you to grieve." (25)

Shri **Bhagwan does** not satiate by describing the nature of *atman*. Weapons do not cut *atman*. Weapon is called a weapon because it can kill or injure. However, for *atman* no weapon is a weapon. Weapon can kill only a gross physical body. The *atman* goes out of a body in full without having been cut or injured.

Why a weapon does not kill *atman*? Answer is given in the next verse.

Fire burns a body and not the *atman*. When a body is burnt, the *atman* leaves the body. Even water does not make *atman* wet as it can only affect a body. Even air does not dry the *atman* as it can only dry a physical body.

Earth, fire, water and air are four gross elements against the *atman*. Therefore, they do not affect the *atman*. They only affect physical objects made of five primary elements. *Atman* is

not an element. The changing, piercing, and burning is possible only in objects made of five primary elements. Changes are not possible in something not made of primary elements.

A question can be asked here: when ordinary fire cannot burn it, would not the Sun having thousands degrees of temperature melt the *atman*? Even the hottest of the hot cannot burn or melt the *atman*. It does not burn. It cannot be heated by any means. This has been expressed thus to explain that *atman* is not one of the five physical elements. Therefore, it is not **affected as** any other physical object is effected.

Now describes the density of *atman*-

“nitya sarvagatah sthanurnachloyam sanatanah”

In verse 20, the Eternal, which is beyond limitations of time, was explained.

‘Sarvagata’ – which is everywhere- which is present everywhere, reaches everywhere, present in everything i.e. omnipresent. There is no place, where *atman* is not present. But we find that the *atman* is active only in a body. It appears limited by the boundaries of a body. The *atman*, which is present in a body, how can it be believed that it is present at some other place at the same time?

Atman is an all-pervasive entity. Just one of its infinite rays comes in a body and does the entire wonderful play (*lila*). That alone makes one's personality. The same single **entity** (*atman-satta*) manifesting in different bodies appears differently **and also** behaves differently. The same electricity acts differently in a heater, a bulb and a motor. Differences in nature are due to ego. The differences in bodies are reflected in *atman* too. Light is without colour, but it appears of the colour of the glass through which it is seen and acquires corresponding properties.

In its greatness and in its awareness (*atmanbhav*) we are all one. The *atman* is beyond the mind, the intellect **and the** ego. **Atmans does not multiply yet its** multiplicity appears because of **perceptions** of our mind and the intellect. They are not related to the *atman*. The awareness of the Self (*atmanbhav*) is beyond multiplicity. Therefore, multiplicity is limited to the sphere of expression. Similarly, it is limited to whatever it could be thought of and could be expressed. Where thinking comes to an **end, how** could there be any multiplicity?

In fact, what is singularity there? In *atman* there is only existence and silence. *Atman* is beyond boundaries of space. That is why, it is called ‘*sarvagata*’ i.e. omnipresent or being everywhere. Whatever has boundaries can be present at some specific place and cannot be present elsewhere. Boundaries define region of existence. ‘There is’ and ‘there is not’ is instantly created. *Atman* is without boundaries and so it is everywhere. It does not have to go from one place to another. It is always present everywhere. By saying ‘*sarvavyapak*’ i.e. all pervading, one is reminded of pervasiveness of the pervaded; means, it gives an impression of presence of one thing in another thing. However, ‘*sarvagata*’ i.e. the omnipresent is even beyond that. In reality, every atom is in it and it is in every atom and in a manner every thing is in it. All physical objects are in the same space. As threads are present in cloth, as water is present in ice, similarly you can find the *atman* everywhere.

It is present in every thing, both inanimate as well as in animate. In reality everything exists due to its presence. They emanate from it and are in it. In animate it is perceptible. In inanimate the veil is so dense that there is a false impression that perhaps it is not present but it is very much there. While talking about 'kshetra' and 'kshetranya', Shri Bhagwan says,

kshetranya ch'api mam viddhi sarvakshetreshu bharat||13/2||

O' Arjuna! Know Meas'kshetranya' in all 'kshetras'. And he also said-

Ishwarah sarvabhutanam Hraddeshe 'rjuna tishtati ||18/61||

'O, Arjuna' *parameshwara* is present in the heart of all beings. What then is this 'sarvagata'²¹ *atman*? From the philosophical point of view, there are two modes (*prakriti*) of the Supreme Being (*Purushottama*) – 'para' and 'apara' i.e. higher and lower. This is the philosophical research of the Gita. 'Para' *prakriti* or the higher one is 'kshetranya' i.e. the knower of field. That is the Self, the *atman*. That is no different from the Supreme Being (*Paratpar, Purushottama, Paramatman, 'Ishwar'*). This is one of His expressions and is also His nature. As there are two sides of a coin, the two *prakritis* are the two sides of the Supreme Being (*Purushottama*). They appear to be different but they are not; they appear to be the same but they are not the same.

The literal meaning of the word 'sthanu' is the one that remains stable or firm. A pole is called 'sthanu' because once it is fixed it cannot be moved. Its place cannot be changed. This is the nature of *atman*. Space is in *atman* but *atman* is not in space. Objects move in the *atman* like a fish moves in water. Where can the *atman* move? If there can be movement in it then with reference to what it will move? It is the body, that moves. Electric train moves with power, but powerhouse does not move. *Atman* is the most comprehensive awareness of our existence. To know it is to become one with it, is to become stable like a pillar. Stability of the *atman* manifests itself in the mind and the intellect as we gradually realise our self i.e. attain *atmanbhav*.

An inanimate object is unconscious but *atman* is conscious. This difference should always be remembered. Immovable is the one, which does not move or does not change. Everything in the universe is subject to change. *Prakriti* with *gunas* is unstable. '***chalam cha gunavratam***' – to remain active, to keep changing is the nature of *gunas*. Moment to moment change is the nature of the universe. The *atman* is entirely opposite to it. There is never a change in the *atman* unlike the physical world which always changes. The change can be with reference to external objects and can also be within. Both kinds of changes take place in a body. Walking or like activities are the changes with reference to external objects and circulation of blood and other activities inside the body are internal changes. Both kinds of changes take place in bodies, which are qualitative. By saying 'sthanu' absence of any change with reference to external objects is indicated and 'immovable' indicates absence of even internal changes. The *atman* is absolutely uniform. *Gunas* do not constitute it and it is beyond them. Despite being immovable (*achal*), it is full of hidden vibrant consciousness. Its vigour is perceived by nature (*prakriti*) and manifests itself through the mind, the intellect, etc. Though being immovable (*achal*), these changes do occur. This is the uniqueness of the *atman*. This is also evolution of the *atman*.

²¹ sarvagata : the all pervading self or omnipresent

'*Sanatan*' means eternal, which has been at all times and will remain for all times. The *atman* is beyond the frontiers of time and this is what the word '*sanaan*' indicates. The *atman* is never born and it never dies. But because of its presence or absence, existents appear and disappear. And it is eternal. The *atman* makes a body dance. The dance of death and the celebration of birth take place on the canvass of body. Time cannot make the *atman* old. Time is unable to affect the *atman*. So unique is *atman's* existence! Even by witnessing many births, and witnessing many bodies it remains stable like a rock. Entire drama is played by the *atman*.

In the next verse (25) an effort has been made to describe the *atman* in greater detail. '*avyakto'yam*' – the *atman*, which has been discussed above, is not manifest. Manifest is the visible realm. Whatever we can see, that is the manifested realm. We will have to explore deeper. As eye is an organ, and so are other organs. Whatever is not visible to the eye, can manifest by touch of skin? Air is not visible to the eye, but is experienced by the feeling of touch. Similarly, odour is smelt by nose, though eyes cannot see it. Taste is also like that, and so is sound. Whatever we can know through the sense organs is manifest, and what cannot be so known through them is un-manifest. This is the limit of the manifest ('*vyakt*'). '*the atman*' cannot be known by sense organs. In reality, the *atman* residing in the sense organs alone knows. Who will be able to know the knower? Eye is only an instrument of seeing and the seer is the *atman* within. If the *atman* is not active, eyes cannot see. As despite the bulb being there, there cannot be light without electricity. Similarly, without the energy of the *atman*, organs cannot function. Only the existence of the *atman* working inside sense organs perceives the external world. It is said in the Upanishad -

vigyataram are kain vijaniyat

Through whom the knower (*vigyata*) be known? The eyes can see the external world, but how they can know the knower hidden inside the eyes? '*Kenopnishad*' fully clarifies this subject.

'*achintyo'yam*' - the *atman* is unthinkable. What can be thought of is, '*chintya*' and which cannot be thought of is '*achintya*'. Thought (*chintan*) is caused jointly by the inner senses and the intellect. The impressions received by sense organs are coordinated by intellect. The intellect synthesises the impressions collected by sense organs. Intellect completes the external image, after coordinating with diverse images recorded in the past, and decides whether it is real - unreal, just - unjust, important-unimportant. This is discrimination. The activity of the intellect is possible only if there is an image. Where sense organs do not function, what can intellect do? And, what cannot be perceived by a specific sense organ, how that can be understood by the intellect? With what will it compare? For this reason, the *atman* is called unthinkable (*achintya*). In fact, the existence of the *atman*, which is being discussed here, is beyond both the senses and the intellect. '*yato vacha nivartante aprapya*'. '*mansa saha*' – which can not be reached by the mind and the speech – the *atman* is so described in *Upanishad*

'*avikaryo'ayamuchayate*' – The soul is called '*avikarya*'. Wherever there is a possibility of mutation or change that is '*vikarya*'. Whatever is not subject to mutation or change is '*avikarya*'. Mutation is perceived through the sense organs, the mind (inner sense) and the intellect. Where they have no access, how can there be, in that, any possibility of change?

Beyond the cognition of the sense organs, it is impossible to imagine any change. It should also be understood that apart from gross sense organs, there are subtle sense organs and there is a subtle world distinct from the physical world. Whether physical or subtle, the function of organs is to measure and that is the basic purpose of sense organs. The *atman* is not even the object of subtle sense organs. It is impossible to imagine any change in it (*atman*). That is why it is called '*avikarya*' or immutable.

All this has been said about the imperishable higher (*para*) *prakriti*. This is the self or soul-existence (*atman-satta*) and is a part of the Supreme (*parameshwara*) or Supreme Being (*Purushottama*). This is our Self (*atman-satta*) which is immortal, eternal and remains same in all births. This is our real Self. Like beads on a thread, pearls of our life are woven around the *atman*.

Therefore, knowing the *atman* like this, O Arjuna!, it is not proper for you to grieve, Shri *Bhagwan* said.

If we know the *atman* like this, there is no reason to grieve on death of any one. Death for the *atman* is like darkness for the Sun. As the darkness can never see the Sun, it can never face the Sun, so the death can never face the *atman*.

During coma, consciousness is not lost; it only gets separated from the physical body. Even on death it only separates from the body but is not lost. When there are clouds the Sun is hidden but in reality it is not absent. Exactly like this is the *atman*, the form of pure consciousness, is '*chidrupa*' (omnipresent). What is its absence? How can there be non-existence for it?

*atha cai 'nam nityajatam nityam va manyase mrtam|
tatha api tvam mahabaho nai 'vam socitum arhasi||26||
jatasya hi dhruvo mrtyur dhruvam janma mrtasya ca/
tasmad apariharye 'rthe na tvam socitum arhasi||27||*

"And if you think that it repeatedly born and repeatedly die, even then, O' Valiant one! (*Mahabahu* – having long arms), you should not grieve." (26)

"Whoever is born will certainly die and whoever dies will certainly be reborn. Therefore, for what is inevitable, you should not grieve." (27)

Shri *Bhagwan* told Arjuns that *atman* is immortal. Only body destroys. Then he considered the problem from another perspective. 'If you consider a man from worldly point of view as a body, then by focusing on the gross you should not grieve. From philosophical point of view, there is neither birth nor death for the *atman*, as that is forever. From temporal point of view, it appears that a man takes birth, grows and then dies. Even after death, a man is not fully destroyed. Something subsists, which again takes birth. A plant grows, becomes a tree and after some time, one day it dies but before dying it leaves behind seeds from which it reappears as if the same plant grows again'.

The intention of Shri **Bhagwan was** -- if Arjuna was unable to understand the philosophy, then from temporal consideration also the same conclusion was reached.

Whoever **is born, he dies** - it is easy to understand but it is difficult to understand that whosoever dies will be born again. Statements in scriptures and the popular belief are the only sources behind this concept. From the scientific point of view, no destruction of energy is ever possible; only its form can change. Pot is made from mud and mud from the pot. Burning of wood is only a change of form. Its molecules are present in space in another form. With time forms keep changing. Sometimes they are invisible and at other times visible. Birth and death are only transformation of form. This is another kind of transformation. The force of *karma* drags a person back to this gross world.

Here a question can be asked. If it is so, will there never be a possibility of getting freedom from this cycle of birth and death? Whatever has been said in this verse **happens ordinarily**. It is possible to get freedom from (the cycle of) birth and death. This **is mentioned** in the Gita at many places.

'Jaramaranmokshaya mamashritya yatanti ye' (verse 29 chapter 7)– those who make efforts to get freedom from old age and death by surrendering to Me are not reborn – **'punarjanma na vidyate,'** etc.

If birth and death are natural then why should one grieve on death? If this transformation is natural in the world, why then one need to grieve? Nothing **abnormal will** happens, if they die. Those who are born will have to die. 'Are you going to do anything abnormal by killing them in the battlefield'?

This concept is clarified in the next verse.

'Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh', whoever is born, his death is certain. '*hi*' indicates certainty and '*dhruva*' indicates absolute certainty. There is absolutely no doubt about it that one who is born will certainly die one day. One can live for a '*kalpa*'²². One can live even for seven '*kalpas*'. Nevertheless, body will certainly perish one day. The creation itself ends one day (*pralaya*²³). The cells, which make the body and the mind, are destroyed. How can then the body and the mind survive?

'dhruvam janma mritasya ch' -- the people who will die will be born again, because after **death rebirth** is certain.

It is, therefore, not proper to grieve. What will happen by your grieving for any one? You cannot save anyone from death and you cannot prevent the birth of the one who dies. Therefore, grieving is useless. This process of birth and death is inevitable. It is impossible to even avoid death. It is futile to grieve for what cannot be prevented.

²² kalpa: measure of time

²³ Pralaya: Vedic philosophy believes in cycle of creation and its delusion of whole world. The delusion of the world is called Pralaya.

How simple is the concept; but it is difficult to understand. On the death of a near and dear one, on the death of a friend, people do become miserable. Either they forget this wisdom or do not believe in it. Even if the mind understands that there is no point in crying because the departed one will not come back the heart does not accept this truth. The sorrow is overwhelming. Nothing remains pleasant in the world. Life appears futile. Memories of the dead keep haunting. Reason gives no solace. How little control intelligence has over our emotions, this can be understood only in such situations. It is easy to speak words of wisdom to others, but it is difficult to remain composed on the occurrence of personal sorrow.

Arjuna was very emotional and his emotions were hurting him. His heart was not able to accept the words of wisdom. In fact, heart is not rational. In order to influence the heart, something beyond **reason is required.**

*avyaktadini bhutani vyaktamadyani bharata/
avyaktanidhanany eva tatra ka paridevana||28||*

“O'Arjuna! Beings are unmanifest before coming as being, manifest in the middle and unmanifest again after their end. Then what is there to grieve in this matter.” (28)

Beings (*bhu*²⁴) are made of a body, the mind and the intellect. Whatever is mutable, whether it is gross or subtle, is called being. The existence **that deals** is 'being'. Before coming into existence every being is un-manifest. What is perceptible is called manifest and what is not perceptible is called unmanifest. Whatever can be related to or is perceived by the sense organs, by the mind or by the intellect can be called manifest in the broader sense of the term. Birth and death relate to beings. By birth, beings manifest in physical form and the same beings become subtle on death, and the subtle forms are invisible for our gross perception.

Before coming into existence all beings (*bhutas*) are un-manifest. All beings are born from *prakriti*. That *prakriti* is un-manifest. In the state of non-existence, they cannot be experienced in any manner. During the period of their existence, which is their middle state, they are manifest. They can be known by the mind and the intellect and their gross form can be perceived by the sense organs. Their play comes to an end in the state of dissolution. As sense organs of a sleeping person are dissolved in mind, there is no light in the evening; similarly all existents disappear in the un-manifest *prakriti*.

Human beings also have a sequence similar to that of existents and *prakriti*. Before birth a person lives in a subtle state. At that time, he is un-manifest for our gross perception. The same becomes manifest after birth and until death. The play of **life (*jeevan lila*)** continues during manifested existence. We can hear him, we can see him, and we can deal with him. On death, he again becomes un-manifest and can neither be seen nor heard. This is natural. This is the nature (*dharma*) of existents. Where then is justification for grieving over death? Therefore, it is futile to grieve.

*ascaryavat pasyati kascidenam
ascaryavad vadati tathai 'va ca 'nyah|*

²⁴ Bhut: this term signifies 'beings' or 'physical existence'

*ascaryavac cai 'nam anyah srnoti
srutva 'py enam veda na cai 'va kascit//29||*

The discussion about *atmanis* concluded in verses 29 and 30.

"Someone looks upon the Self (*atmanbhav*) with wonder; someone speaks about it with wonder; and someone hears about it in a state of deep wonder. And, some even after hearing do not understand it." (29)

Shri *Bhagwan* wants to impress upon Arjuna that the subject, which he discussed with him, is not an ordinary one. It is deep as well as divine. The concept of the *atman* (*atmantatva*²⁵) is entirely different from all physical objects. It cannot be understood by illustrations of physical objects. For physical objects are limited in time and space, and come into being and pass away into a state of non-being. On the other hand the *atman* is infinite, eternal and perennial. It is omnipresent and immortal. Therefore, it becomes the subject of wonder in all respects.

Whoever is able to understand this concept, or is able to experience it is also wonder-struck. It is difficult to endure its realisation. It is difficult to handle this realisation. After its experience it is difficult for some people to maintain even mental balance. When a knower starts discussing about it, he himself is wonder-struck. '*anorniyam mahto mahiyan*' – it is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest at the same time. '*taddure tadvintike*' – it is far and is also near.

The more one analyses the nature of the *atman*, more he gets bewildered. No wonder if an ordinary person is mystified. Even the one, who realises it, is also mystified. What to say of the one who simply hears (about it)? He listens to it with wonder. Even after listening to it, only rare people are able to understand.

The concept of the *atman* (*atmantatva*) is an extremely subtle. Only a person of sharp and stable intellect can understand this. It is beyond the capability of an ordinary and immature person. About this concept, Yama says to Nachiketa in the Kathopanishad -

*na narenavaren prokt aish suvigayo bahudha chintyamanah /
ananyaprokte gatiratra nastyaniyan hyatrkyaamanupramanat //*

In fact, this is not a subject of arguments. Only a person having right understanding after his heart is purified by spiritual practice (*sadhana*) can understand this.

By hearing long discourse of Shri *Bhagwan*, Arjuna was, perhaps confused. He could not comprehend the concept completely. He was assured – 'If you have not understood the concept properly, there is nothing surprising because the concept is like this.'

*dehi nityam avadhyo 'yam dehe sarvasya bharata|
tasmad sarvani bhutani na tvam socitum arhasi //30||*

In the present context, this is the last verse. This sums up the entire discourse.

²⁵ Atmantatva : metaphysics of self

“O’Bharat! **The dweller** (*atman*) in the body of everyone cannot be killed. You should, therefore, not grieve for anyone.” (30).

The atman is immortal. The body is mortal. This principle does not apply only to human beings. It applies to alliving beings. Therefore, you should not grieve on the destruction of any existent. Death is only a transformation of elements. The *atman* is perennial uniform light behind everyone and is not affected by transformation. This transformation is inevitable and cannot be prevented. Therefore, it is foolish to grieve on this transformation. Nothing changes in the self (*atmansatta*) by death. Therefore, why should any one worry about that?

Discussion of the concept of death and of the *atman* concludes here. All this was spoken to motivate Arjuna to fight because he had become averse to fighting for fear of death of his near and dear ones. If he had properly understood this truth, his anxiety would have subsided and he would have been ready to fight.

*svadharmam api ca ‘veksya na vikampitum arhasi/
dharmyad dhi yuddhac chreyo ‘nyatksatriyasya na vidyate//31||
yadrechaya co ‘papannam svargadvaram apavrtam/
sukhinah ksatriyah partha labhante yuddham idrsam//32||*

"You should also not falter in regard to your own duty (*dharma*). Because for a warrior, (*kshatriya*) there is no greater good than a battle enjoined by his duty (*dharma*)." (31)

"The door of heaven is open on its own as such a war has come of its own. O Arjuna! Only fortunate warriors (*kshatriyas*) get an opportunity of fighting in a war." (32)

After describing in detail the immortality of the *atman*, Shri **Bhagwan examines the** situation from the perspective of performing one's own duty (*svadharma*). In fact, by simply understanding the immortality of the *atman* and mortality of the body all problems of life are not solved. If we take recourse to the concept of illusionism (*mithyavad*²⁶) and start thinking that this world is an illusion then there is no doubt that all problems are solved. But, the one, who has to live his life, needs to have solutions for his day-to-day problems. By ignoring and calling **everything** in life as an illusion, by considering sin-virtue, profit-loss, happiness-unhappiness as illusion, by considering body as illusion (like **illusory horns** of a hare) problems of life are not solved. In life one does face dilemma of what ought to be done or what ought not to be done, what is duty and what is non-duty. Without resolving such dilemma what will one be able to do? A similar dilemma was before Arjuna. Even if we accept that the *atman* is immortal and body is mortal, then also why should one fight or do his duty? **The karma of** fighting is terrible. Many warriors die. Women become widows and their children orphaned. There is so much of loss of life. After all, why should one fight? Why one cannot leave all this and retire to the forest, or live his life by resorting to some other means of livelihood?

²⁶ mithya: illusion - one that appears to be real but is not so. A rope in darkness appears to be a snake. This is an illusion of snake.

Answer to this question is the core of the Gita. The basic principle of the Gita is performance of one's own duty (*svadharma*). Without this message, the Gita does not remain the Gita and by just understanding this concept the key of the Gita is found.

Where from inspiration to perform an action comes? What is that inspiration? Why should an ordinary person **do his karma**? Physical needs like hunger, thirst, and needs for clothes and shelter impel a person to perform *karma*. Security is also another instinct for action. The desire for self-growth also inspires a person to do *karma*. From a broader perspective it can be said that an action is usually inspired by dual objectives: to attain happiness and to avoid unhappiness. As the civilization advances, this desire takes many forms.

Desire to achieve **some object** in the physical world motivates a person to act. The **objective** may be either to remove **an undesirable** condition—suffering, pain or unhappiness, or could be to bring about desirable condition—satisfaction, fulfillment or happiness. A person is impelled to perform his *karmas* by these basic instincts and he develops *rajoguna*, acquires dynamism and develops ability to think and understand. Then by the resultant feelings of happiness or unhappiness, his heart **develops; enjoys and consumes consequences of karmas**. Earns and spends **money by his** efforts. One achieves status but that does not last forever. However, efforts made to achieve all this become a cause for development of different faculties in a person. The faculties, so developed, in a person are permanent. Consumption of external results does not destroy these faculties. For example, one may forget the lessons learnt in school but the intellect developed due to the efforts made while learning lessons is not lost. (Every event in life leaves an imprint in mind and these imprints keep modifying the personality and character of the person, which influence his behavior and nature of his dealings with others.)

For the development of human **consciousness, karma** (action) is necessary. Development from *tamoguna* to *rajoguna* is possible only through action i.e. *karma* and then only it becomes possible for a person to enter *satva* (goodness, real, and purity). It is impossible to acquire *satoguna* directly from *tamoguna*.

The basis of the concept of *svadharma* is this truth. **Karma is** are the means of one's **evolution; and** one should do it. Now the question is, whether some specific **karmas are** means of evolution or all **karmas are** equally helpful in evolution. Not every action is beneficial for everyone. Every one has his own requirements. One might have already made some progress on the path of his evolution. The *karmas* as are appropriate for a person are alone beneficial to him.

This principle was the basis of the caste-system (*varnashram*). It was believed that a person was born in a specific caste according to his inherent tendencies (*samskars*). Those with **brahmnical tendencies** and their *atman* having potential of benefiting from performing *karmas* befitting **Brahmins were** born in *Brahmin* caste and by observing duties enjoined on **Brahmins were** able to make faster progress in their evolution. Similarly, *kshatriya*²⁷, *vaishyas*²⁸

²⁷ kshatriya: Warrior class

²⁸ vaishyas: Business class

and *shudras*²⁹ could also progress by doing works as were appropriate for them. . As a child capable for first standard is admitted in the first standard so **that he** can properly learn lessons of that standard. Like wise, it was considered in the interest of the *shudras* that they do *karmas* befitting them. If a child fit to be a student of first standard goes to third standard considering it of higher value, he will not be able to learn anything. Similarly, an attempt by a *shudra* to do the work of a *Kshatriyas* not helpful for his growth

This caste system was conceived for spiritual development of the people. A *shudra* following the tenets of his own caste could be a *vaishya* in a future birth; *vaishya* following the tenets of his caste could be born as a *kshatriya*. A *kshatriya* could likewise be born as a *brahmin* and then by doing penance, self-study and worship and purifying himself he could make himself eligible for philosophical wisdom of Vedanta and then by renouncing the world he could attain liberation, *moksha*, and could merge with the Supreme Self (*Paramatman*) after his death.

In this manner, the caste system was like a school. Those, who were born in a particular **caste** and followed the duties enjoined on their caste, used to progress upwards gradually. They had an easy path of progress. The society also benefited by the arrangement. There was proper division of work in the society. Consequently, different castes acquired special skills and maintained harmony in the society.

Therefore, observance of one's own duty (*svadharma*) is necessary for every person. By discharging his own duties (*svadharma*) a person not only benefits himself but also becomes useful to the society.

Devotion to one's own duties (***svadharma***) automatically removes desire for fruits of **action. Need** to perform one's own duty **is important**. We must do our own duties even if jobs pertaining to any other caste may be more rewarding. Others work may be more rewarding, but the sin that is committed by doing that work, the loss from the spiritual viewpoint, is relatively much more. The worldly gains in comparison are insignificant. Those gains we will **leave behind** but the spiritual loss will go with us. Therefore, performance of our duty is always more beneficial because that is our *svadharma* – it is a ladder for our own spiritual growth and well-being. Worldly gain or loss from the point of view of our attachment with results are immaterial. The observance of *svadharma* purifies the inner-self and develops inner evenness and firmness.

Shri *Bhagwan* tells Arjuna that he was born in a ***Kshatriya*** family and trained as a warrior. For a warrior fighting is his *svadharma*. It is the path of his wellbeing. For that reason also he should not hesitate from fighting. There can be no sin in the performance of one's own duty. *Svadharma* is always beneficial because it is one's responsibility. That duty may be fighting in a war, work of a scavenger or of an administrator of an empire. Fighting in the war was alone the path in the interest of Arjuna.

For a *Kshatriya* nothing other than fighting in a righteous war can be more beneficial.

²⁹ shudras: Menial class

Righteous war? Those people who raise questions of violence and non-violence say that war is always un-righteous. It is against ethics (*dharmā*). It involves violence. How can it ever be ethical? In fact, there is no question of violence or non-violence in observance of one's own duty. If fighting in a war is *svadharmā*, i.e. duty, then that is our responsibility towards the society and is in our interest. Where is then the question of violence? It is not our objective to make any body unhappy, or to gain any kind of material benefit for ourselves. We are only discharging our own duties - whatever be its effect in the outer world, let it be.

A person **having an** understanding of spiritual development can alone understand this logic but a person of a narrow vision cannot understand it. Violence – non-violence, birth-death, happiness-unhappiness, loss-gain are essential for spiritual evolution. The inner-self (*antahkarana*³⁰) free from attachments is a definite indication of a person progress towards his spiritual development. So is the evenness and firmness of the intellect. Devotion to *svadharmā* brings this. Moreover, society has not reached an ideal state of evolution. Even from external considerations, both violence and non-violence are necessary for maintenance of social order. It is necessary to punish a robber and only a person having authority should do that. Protection of the society is necessary and for that use of arms is also necessary. Therefore, war can also be *svadharmā*. For a *Kshatriya* war alone is *svadharmā*, as it is for a soldier of a country.

Which war is a righteous war? Righteous means according to *dharmā*³¹. The war for the defence of righteousness (*dharmā*) against atrocities, the one for protection of the weak so that atrocities are not perpetrated on them, is a righteous war. The war of Mahabharata was for establishment of justice and forcountering injustice and was, therefore, a righteous war i.e. was according to *dharmā*.

Why is a **war beneficent**? Duties of a warrior (*dharmā* of *Kshatriya*) **are** mentioned in verse 43 of 18th chapter.

*sauryam tejo dhrtir daksyam yuddhe ca 'py apalayanam|
danam isvarabhavas ca ksatram karma svabhavajam||18/43||*

The inherently natural characteristics of a warrior (*kshatriya*) are bravery, valor, brilliance, patience, courage, and leadership, not fleeing from the battlefield, to give charity and to administer.

Amongst these, war is such a duty, which demands ultimate sacrifice. A *kshatriya* goes to the battlefield by putting his life at stake. That sacrifice makes him immensely pure. The worldly temptations become immaterial for him. The desire for life is quietened. It is because of this great sacrifice that war is beneficent.

It should be understood that, '*svadharmā*' was based on caste system, and the caste system was based on inherent qualities and duties related thereto—

chaturvarnyam maya shrastam gunakarmavibhagshah /

³⁰ antahkarana: it is the sixth organ of perception

³¹ Dharmā: duty, ethical, moral, values of the society,

The concept of '**svadharna**' becomes meaningless without reference to abilities, capabilities and aptitude of a person. If a **Brahmin does** not have qualities befitting his caste and is not able to perform *karmas* prescribed for a *Brahmin* then he is not a real *Brahmin*. Duties prescribed for **Brahmins are not svadharna of such a Brahmin**. Performance of those duties as prescribed for *Brahmins* by such of a *Brahmin* will not lead to his growth. If a child suitable for third standard is admitted to fourth standard by mistake, the lessons of the fourth standard will not be beneficial to him. According to his ability he should study lessons of third standard otherwise he will not be able to make any progress.

The proper state of the caste-system is one **where every** soul takes birth **in a caste** suitable for his abilities and faculties. An *atman* born as *Brahmin* should have *brahminical* qualities and the *atman* born as *kshatriya* should have innate qualities (*samsakar*) of a *kshatriya*. Any other state is a hybrid state. In hybrid state, caste and duties (*svadharna*) cannot be determined by birth. Therefore, the performance of *karmas* according to caste does not remain meaningful to persons born in a caste.

The situation of the modern society is a state **of confusion**. Due to that, social system has become very complex and practically there is no order at all. Only remnants of caste system are seen and that too without any purpose. It was not like that when Shri *Bhagwan* spoke to Arjuna. Arjuna was a perfect *Kshatriya* and his duty was to fight.

'yaddriyachya choppannam' – A war without asking for it. Pandavas had made all possible efforts to prevent war. Shri Krishna himself had gone (to the assembly of the Hastinapur Empire) as an emissary of peace. However, Kauravas had rejected all his efforts to resolve the dispute peacefully. Consequently, the war had become inevitable. Therefore, Kauravas were responsible for that war. For Arjuna, war had come without asking for it.

Such a war is **'swargdwarampavratam'**. The door is ajar through which a warrior could easily enter heaven without making any effort to open it. After death in war, a **Kshatriya goes** to heaven – so is said in scriptures (*shastras*). **'hato va prapasyasi swargam jitva va bhokshayase mahim'** - will go to heaven after death, or will rule the earth on victory.

'sukhinah' - means the fortunate, virtuous. Only the fortunate ones have such a good opportunity of going to heaven easily. People do great sacrifices (*yagyas*³²) to gain heaven. Then only they go to heaven. You have this opportunity of war where you can easily gain heaven. Therefore, there is nothing but only gain for you. The path of **discharging svadharna leads** to heaven.

Before moving further, it becomes necessary to answer the question that how can one recognise his own duty (*svadharna*) in the present age of caste confusion? From a practical point of view, this is a very important question. For without properly understanding *svadharna* how one can observe it. Without knowing his *svadharna*, one cannot follow the sermon/preaching of the Gita.

³² Yagya: Sacrificial ceremony

There is no doubt that when the caste-system was prevalent in its pure form, the caste decided **duties, svadharma**. The *Kshatriya* caste of Arjuna decided his *svadharma* i.e. to fight in a war and, therefore, Shri **Bhagwan directed** him to follow it. However, today, in *Brahmin* families, souls having **Kshatriya or vaishya** temperament are born. *Brahmins* themselves behave like **kshatriyas or vaishyas**. How do we know then, what should we do? As regards the question of our livelihood, we should try to evaluate our aptitude and capabilities. These days, in western countries, psychologists conduct many tests to find out aptitude of children. Also, conduct Intelligence tests and assess aptitude of a child through these tests, and identify a vocation appropriate for him. Pursuance of the identified vocation by a person could also be beneficial for the society. By employing a right person for the right job, the job is performed more efficiently, and helps in the progress of the society and of the country. This method identifies potentialities of a child and helps in preparing him for a work appropriate for him.

However, the scope of *svadharma* is not simply limited to search for one's profession. This is something which helps us in finding our way at every step of our life. Many times, there is a dilemma in life – what one should do and what one should not do. In our chosen vocation of our livelihood and in our daily life we **face problems** of deciding between what is right and what is wrong, what is our duty and what is not our duty. **Like the** dilemma Arjuna faced.

Svadharma is the formula of our evolution. *Svadharma* is in fact an awareness. A person, who is aware of his *svadharma*, says 'I abide by my duties and I discharge my duties and responsibilities towards myself and also towards the society'. Performance of actions with that understanding means that whatever work one considers his own duty he does that without bothering about his personal happiness-unhappiness, loss or gain, and praise or criticism. The benefit of following the path of duty is fully dependent on this faith - sublime. Actions performed with this belief gradually uplift a person from the bonds of his ego. Not only from one's likes-dislikes, and craving for happiness, one becomes free from all attachments too. Consequently, he develops inner purity. As the bonds of attachments are removed, one is not confused because of his ego and he also becomes free from the bonds of his *karmas*. In this manner, by devotion to *svadharma*, a person progresses on the path of his evolution.

Any **karma can be a sin** or a virtue depending upon the extent of attachment or non-attachment with which it was performed and to the same extent it results in happiness or unhappiness. When we have faith in our duty (*svadharma*), when our objective is to perform our duty (*svadharma*) with devotion without any attachment then the results of such *karma* will not influence us. It is the bond of attachment, which binds a person with his *karma* and also with its results. From the point of view of one's devotion to duty (*svadharma*) virtue and vice are meaningless and the work does not result any consequences to the doer.

After proper understanding of this concept, it is not difficult to decide one's duty in any situation. A person ignores his *svadharma* when he decides his **karma for selfish** considerations. 'By doing this I will be happy and my people will be happy and by not doing this just the opposite will happen' – this is the result of our attachments. Therefore, in order to decide *svadharma* one should in every situation, as far as possible, ignore all attachments and then reflect: 'what does the

situation demands from me'. After a thorough examination of this question, whatever the intellect decides one should perform as his duty, as one's *svadharma*. By so doing one will gradually make progress. His attachments will gradually reduce and he will gradually come to recognise his duties much more clearly. One may ask that if a person takes a wrong decision, what will happen. If his devotion to duty is perfect, he will benefit even when his decision is wrong and he takes wrong action. In fact, *svadharma* depends on both the person and the situation. When the situation does not change but the person changes, whose inner-personality is different, his *svadharma* will change. Moreover, when the situation changes *svadharma* will also change. Therefore, whatever is my *svadharma* today may not possibly be my *svadharma* after a lapse of time. Reading books of the first standard is *svadharma* of a student of first standard but once he goes to the second standard, reading books of second standard becomes his *svadharma*. The child is the same but his inner changes have changed his *svadharma*. There surely is a difference between the *svadharma* of an unmarried person and that of a married person because of change in the situation.

A person makes progress by performing his duties, *svadharma*, with full devotion. Whatever he did in the past might not appear appropriate for the present but in the past that *karma* was alone proper for him for his evolution. What is appropriate for him today he could not perceive so earlier and even if he had perceived it appropriate and had attempted to do that then there could have been a revolt within him? Therefore, there is no need for repentance in this path. One should only try to be honest and try to remain true to the present. He will not then be deceived. From worldly point of view, even if he commits a great sin, that will not affect him. This is the principle of spiritual morality.

This is the foundation of *karmayoga*. Without understanding this basic principle, one cannot understand *karmayoga* and by understanding this principle there will be no confusion about *karmayoga*. Only a person with devotion can tread on this path. For this reason, so much emphasis is given for firmness of intellect (*buddhi*). For worldly considerations, one may deviate from the right path and lose sight of right direction.

The test of *svadharma* is that it should take us forward on the path of our evolution and by following the path the inner-self should become pure and sublime, attachments should diminish and we should be nearer to *parameshwara*. The level of happiness which we may get in this world or in the other world after doing a *karma* is certainly not the test of observance of *svadharma*. It should instead break the bondage of *karma*.

*atha cet tvamimam dharmyam samgramam na karisyasi/
tatah svadharmam kirtim ca hitva papam avapsyasi//33||
akirtim ca 'pi bhutani kathayisyanti te 'vyayam |
sambhavitasya ca 'kirtir maranad atiricyate //34||*

*bhayad ranad uparatam mamsyante tvam maharathah/
yesam ca tvam bahumato bhutva yasyasi laghavam//35||
avacyavadams ca bahun vadisyanti tava 'hitah|*

*nindantas tava samarthyam tato dukhataram nu kim//36||
hato va prapsyasi svargam jitva va bhoksyase mahim/
tasmad uttistah kaunteya yuddhaya krtaniscayah//37||*

"If you do not fight in this war for your rights then you will fail in your duty (*dharma*) and will lose your reputation as a warrior of eminence and will also incur sin." (33)

"People will forever recount your ill-fame, which will never diminish, and (you know) for one who has a reputation, ill-fame is worse than death." (34)

"Great warriors (master charioteers) will think that you ran away from the battle field out of cowardice. You will become small in the eyes of those for whom you are highly esteemed and respectable today". (35)

"Your own enemies will belittle your abilities and will call you with many unbecoming names (abuse). What could be more painful than that?" (36)

"If you die, you will go to heaven. If you win, you will enjoy the sovereignty of earth. Therefore, O Arjuna! Get up with a resolve to fight." (37).

Public honour and appreciation is a great weakness of a person. All great people of the world are overwhelmed by their praise and are ever anxious to maintain their glory. Equally strong is the fear of going down in public esteem. At the altar of the public praise, many public leaders kill their conscience ignoring public interest and tread on the path of evil. In *kshatriyas*, desire for public appreciation is predominant. For the sake of their glory, *kshatriya* kings used to organise great *yagyas* and used to give their wealth in charity. Arjuna was a *kshatriya* and he was brave and famous. Therefore, a strong desire for public appreciation was natural in him. Shri *Bhagwan* attempted to create a strong desire in him to fight by arousing his craving for public appreciation. Earlier too Shri *Bhagwan* had made such an attempt. This chapter started with that topic. However, the inner conflict of Arjuna was deep. His inner-self was struggling to find a way out. The basic problem of his life had surfaced in the form of his distress. The desire for public appreciation and glory could not dissuade him from his resolve to leave the battlefield. He was deeply hurt.

While discussing about the *atman*, Shri *Bhagwan* attempted to make Arjuna understand that death was not worth grieving and he was unnecessarily worried about the prospects of death of his near and dear ones. Shri *Bhagwan* explained to him the need for performing *svadharma*. He further told him the consequences of not fighting and painted a vivid picture of consequences before him. All this was done so that Arjuna could visualize the terrible picture of the consequences of his not fighting in the war, he got frightened and became ready to fight.

What would be the harmful consequences of his not fighting? He would fail in his duties as a *kshatriya*. Failing to perform his duties, he would make his future dark and would be losing the game of life. God had given him human life. His further progress could be only by performing his *svadharma*. By not performing his *svadharma*, one throws himself in a gutter. Not fighting would make him '*dharmachyut*'³³; i.e. a deviator from his duty.

³³ Dharmachyut: the one who has ignored his duties.

If he did not fight, he would lose his fame earned in his life. Arjuna was well known for his bravery. If he left the battlefield, he would lose his fame as a great warrior. Then no one would call him brave. How can the one who leaves the battlefield be called brave? He would incur sin. Conduct according to *svadharm* was the only alternative. According to scriptures, this was his duty. By abandoning *svadharm*, a person becomes guilty of committing sin. He degrades himself. This is logical, consistent and is clear. *Svadharm* is like that. If we want to progress in life we cannot ignore our *svadharm* and if we ignore it then it is impossible to grow. We will disgrace ourself. For whatever reason we ignore our *svadharm* that reason becomes a cause of our downfall.

In the next three verses, in order to frighten Arjuna, consequences of infamy are mentioned in detail.

All beings would talk about Arjuna's disgrace. '*Bhutani*' is a very comprehensive word. This word covers not only human beings, but all existents –animate and inanimate. Arjuna's fame was wide spread. He was famous not only on the earth but also in the whole universe. Then the tales of his disgrace would be equally wide spread. His un-ending glory would end. His disgrace would be unending. For ages, people would gossip that Arjuna was a coward and that he had ran away from the battlefield.

Insult of a person honoured by the society is a very serious matter. For him death is preferable than being insulted. The more cultured and civilised a person is, higher are his values. His sense of self-esteem becomes equally higher. For him insult is equally a matter of disgrace. For honour he is ready to sacrifice his life. In the path of evolution, one has to pass through such situations. A dull inactive person devoid of enthusiasm in life (*tamoguni*) is like a piece of stone. He bears insult without much reaction. A person predominantly *rajoguni* (materialistic) in nature is highly sensitive. His ego is enlarged. Higher the ego, greater the hurt he feels on being insulted. When *satvaguna* (purity) is predominant, one becomes tolerant and full of understanding. A *kshatriya* cannot bear his insult. Arjuna was a *kshatriya*. Shri *Bhagwan* said to Arjuna 'it is better to die than be insulted. It is better to give life than to run away from the battlefield. At least then you will not be disgraced.'

'Great warriors, who are as great as Bhishma and Drona are, will say that seeing us in the battlefield Arjuna got frightened and ran away to save his life. No one will believe that you left the battlefield because you did not want to kill your relations and considered the war as sinful. In plain terms they will say, Sir, all that is figment of imagination. That is an alibi to deceive. In reality, Arjuna was frightened.'

'Today all of them look at you with respect. They respect you. They acknowledge that you are brave. But hereafter they will not consider you worth two dimes (*cowries*³⁴). Is the one who runs away from the battlefield worth anything? No one will accept you even as a *kshatriya*. One, who has shown his back to the enemy, is a great sinner. Your enemies will call you with many such unbecoming names.'

³⁴ cowries: a small sea shell which was once used as a coin.

If we are well disposed towards someone then his bad habits also appear good to us but if we do not like some one even his goodness appears bad. Public criticism is based on this (psychology). '*guna gunagyeshu gunah bhavanti te nirgunam prapya bhavanti doshah*' – it is an old saying. For the discerning, virtues are good qualities. Those who do not have discerning eyes, same qualities become faults. This is true in social dealings also. A person about whom we have an opinion that he is ill disposed towards us then even his friendly words would appear to us ironical. Even his conscious actions for our good, appear to us as his clever moves. Arjuna was famous in his times. Even his enemies did not have the courage to censure him. In future, they would get an opportunity to speak ill of him. They would use proper as well as improper words about him. They would also try to ridicule Arjuna's bravery. About the bravery shown by him in Viratnagar it could be said that Kauravas had not really gone to steal cows and that war was a mere joke. They (kauravas) did not fight properly. They had not gone there to initiate a great war like Mahabharata. If the Pandavas were really brave, why they had wandered in the forests for twelve years? They could have obtained their share by fighting. Shri *Bhagwan* told Arjuna that, 'what could be more painful in the world than such insults? People will be indulging in all kinds of such talk and you will have no answer. By leaving the battlefield even once, you will yourself provide them proof of whatever they will be saying.'

"On account of the intensity of your distress, you cannot even imagine now what they will be saying. But, later on, you will feel badly hurt and will repent saying, ha! What I did? But then there will be no remedy. Therefore, considering such future possibilities you must reconsider your decision." (36).

Shri *Bhagwan* said: 'my advice is' –

'You should fight. Be ready to fight and get up. Fighting is beneficial for you in all respects. If you are killed in the battlefield, you will attain heaven by doing your *svadharma* and if you are victorious, you will rule the earth and will enjoy the pleasures of life. Therefore, there will be no loss either way. By not fighting, you will spoil this world for yourself – will lose your honour, will be disgraced and the kingdom you would have already lost. And by not observing the *svadharma* (your duties) you will spoil the other world too – instead of heaven you will go to hell.'

Considering all these aspects, Shri *Bhagwan* gave Arjuna the advice that fighting would be beneficial for him in every manner and he should be ready to fight.

***sukhaduhkhe same krtva labhalabhau jayajayau /
tato yuddhaya yujyasva nai 'vam papam avapsyasi ||38||***

"Considering alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, get ready to fight. Doing thus you will not incur any sin." (38)

After having said all that, Shri *Bhagwan* gave Arjuna his unambiguous advice. From Arjuna's point of view the great obstacle in fighting was his thought that the war was sinful. He thought that by killing friends and relations in the war for the sake of winning kingdom he would be committing sin. Shri *Bhagwan* told him the way to save himself from committing that sin.

Consider pleasure-pain, gain-loss and victory-defeat as equal. For doing *akarma*, desire for happiness or victory should not be the prime motive. If we go to the battlefield for gaining happiness, some material gain or for victory then we may be incurring sin. If a *karma* is done to fulfill a desire then the *karma* becomes a cause of bondage. If one can act being free from any desire then he will not be incurring any sin. In fact, by doing so, one can even rise above even virtue. So there will then be no bond or consequence of action (*karmaphal*).

This means: 'do not fight for the sake of kingdom'. Was there any need to say all this after discussing the philosophy of Samkhya? Is the knowledge of the Self (*atman*) in itself not enough for liberating a person from the bonds of *karma*? Is knowledge about the eternity and immortality of *atman* not enough? It appears that a person becomes finally free from the bonds by knowing the secret of doing *karma*. The principles of Samkhya discussed by Shri *Bhagwan* earlier only described the nature of the *atman*. It neither kills nor gets killed. All this is a play in nature.

Normally, the path of *karma* (*karmayoga*) is considered totally unrelated to the path of wisdom (*gyanyoga*), but it is not so. Faith in Samkhya usually develops and can sustain when the burden of *karma* becomes light and cravings are removed to some extent. For a layman it is easy to believe that he is *atman* and is a non-doer, but it is difficult to remain firm in that belief. As long as wisdom is a mental exercise and the higher consciousness behind that has not awakened it remains at best a preparation for the journey.

The journey is yet to begin. This is true but when that belief becomes firm by an awakening of higher consciousness then that cuts off all bonds, burns inherent tendencies (*samskaras*) created by all past *karmas*. But the awakening of that consciousness also demands purity of the inner-realm – demands destruction of desires and attachments. That is why, for gaining wisdom four-fold practice (*sadhan-chatushtya*) has been prescribed. For this reason emphasis is on purification of the inner-realm by doing *svadharma* and rituals.

When we pay attention to the condition of Arjuna, then we can appreciate, why it was necessary for Arjuna to know the secret of *karma* (*karma-rahasya*). The one, who has overcome greed and attachments through one's *sadhana* of many lives, then alone he can be firm in this wisdom. Then, it is not necessary for him to have any outside motivation for doing *karma* as duty.

Even if after discussion of that wisdom, Arjuna had developed faith in himself (*atmanishtha*), then also the problem of fighting or not fighting in war would not have been easily resolved. One can know the secret of *karma* in the field of action (*karmakshetra*). As to how *karma* be performed, an answer to the question primarily relates to *karma* itself.

Then why Shri *Bhagwan* had not mentioned about the philosophy of Samkhya to Arjuna? That philosophy is the foundation of the entire discourse. Without intellectual awareness of the path of self-development that has been preached, it is impossible to understand and apply these lessons. We are *atman*; we have to pursue the path of virtue and have to unite ourselves with the Supreme Self (*Paramatman*), who is verily free from bonds of *karmas*. We can move forward only by knowing all this.

Was the advice given to Arjuna to fight, considering loss and gain, etc. as equal, was as per the principles of Samkhya philosophy? Is it not related to *karmayoga*, which will be discussed later on?

The doctrine of Samkhya describes *prakriti* as the doer and *atman* as the non-doer, the non-enjoyer. There is no question of *atman* doing any thing. For the *atman*, the only question is to see and to recognise. There is just an impression that the *atman* is doer and this impression needs to be removed.

The advice to fight considering loss and gain, etc. as equal was only incidental, being relevant to the subject matter. In fact, it appears that through that advice a bridge was built for moving from Samkhya to *karmayoga*. The description of *karmayoga* starts from next verse.

Subsequent verses give an introduction of *karmayoga*. Shri Bhagwan lays intellectual foundation for proper understanding of *karmayoga* and removes any possibility of misunderstanding by clarifying difference between *karmayoga* and rituals (*karmakanda*³⁵).

***esa te 'bhihita samkhye buddhir yoge tv imam srnu |
buddhya yukto yaya partha karmabandham prahasyasi //39||***

"(So far) the wisdom given to you is based on Samkhya. Now listen about principles of (*karma*) *yoga* (which is being described now). Equipped with this wisdom you will be able to get over the bonds of *karma*". (39)

The knowledge, which Shri Bhagwan gave to Arjuna so far, was based on the philosophy of Samkhya. Samkhya is the philosophy of discrimination (*vivek*). The discrimination between *purusha* and *prakriti*; and *atman* and *anatman* are its main concepts. The discussion was primarily related to that philosophy. The philosophies of Samkhya and the Vedanta are not much different. In fact, it appears that during the time of the Gita, the path of knowledge (*gyan*³⁶) was known as 'Samkhya'. Whatever may be, in the present context Samkhya stands for knowing difference (*viveka*) between *atman* – *anatman*.

Shri Bhagwan had told Arjuna that *atman* was immortal, and body was mortal. Therefore, one should not grieve over death.

The forthcoming discussion relates to *yoga*. *Yoga* stands for *karmayoga*. In fact, this is such a comprehensive subject that *karmayoga* is mentioned by the word 'yoga' (without any adjective). 'Yoga' implies *karmayoga*. In this, our *karmas* (actions) become a means of bringing us near *parameshwara*. Unlike other *yogas*, this *yoga* does not have any distinct identity of its own. This *yoga* has been discussed right from this verse till the end of the second chapter. In the context of this *yoga* behaviour of a person of stable mind, of commitment, (*sthithpragya*) has been described and the characteristics of a realised person (*siddha purusha*) have been mentioned.

³⁵ Karmakanda: the portion of the Vedas prescribing religious rituals/ yagyas and their procedure

³⁶ Gyan: knowledge, wisdom. In the present context it primarily relates to spiritual knowledge

The title of the second chapter is Samkhya-yoga but we notice that the discussion of samkhya yoga ends with verse 39. In fact, the rest of the verses of this chapter describe *karmayoga*. This description continues in subsequent chapters and permeates through the entire Gita. Since Samkhya has been discussed only in this chapter and nowhere else in the Gita, this chapter has been rightly titled as Samkhya-yoga.

After giving an introduction of the term '*karmayoga*' in one-half of this verse Shri Bhagwan starts discussion. Firstly, he mentions the objectives and the effects of this yoga.

'Arjun, with the wisdom (*buddhi*) of *karmayoga* you can cut the bonds of your *karmas*.'

Buddhi here means knowledge, wisdom, faith, belief, trust ('*nishtha*') or a stable mind towards any subject especially towards life (*sthir-mati-jeewan*). Samkhya has its own belief. Consciousness or wisdom awakened in a person having faith in that (*Samkhya*) philosophy can give him complete fulfillment. In *karmayoga*, trust (or devotion) is every thing i.e. it is most important. One does same *karmas* which he was doing earlier.

The difference is only in the perspective. One does not do *karmas* for selfish interest but for the sake of *parameshwara* as an offering to Him. He performs *karmas* as duty without any expectation of any reward. When performed like this, *karmas* do not create any bonds. Not only they do not create new bonds but they also remove bonds of past *karmas*.

What is the bond of *karma*? A person performs *karmas*. Its consequences (*samsakars*) compel him to enjoy its results. To enjoy the consequences of his past *karmas* one has to live in an appropriate environment and has to get a suitable body according to his past *karmas*. In this manner *karmas* become a form of a debt of *prakriti*, which a person has to repay. And so while enjoying the results of his *karmas*, he has to perform many more *karmas* and they become cause of further bonds. In this manner the chain of *karmas* never comes to an end.

In order to enjoy consequences of *karmas*, one has to acquire a body with mind, intellect and sense organs, irrespective of whether they are gross or subtle. It is for enjoying consequences of his past *karmas* a person is bound to bear variety of pleasures and pains.

If no new bond (*samsakar*) is created the old bonds of past *karmas* are gradually removed. No new bond (*samsakar*) is created when one does *karmas* with devotion, without any expectation of their results. When there is full devotion, there is no attachment and consequently there is no desire for results of *karmas*. As a result *karmas* do not bind.

In the matter relating to bonds of *karmas*, devotion is like the edge of a knife. *Karmas* are like using a knife. If a knife is not used its edge becomes blunt, similarly by mere devotion nothing happens without doing *karmas*. Full devotion is very necessary while performing *karmas*. *Karmas* performed without devotion are like using a blunt knife. A blunt knife cannot cut. Similarly, mere doing of *karmas* without devotion cannot remove bonds.

In fact *karma* by itself can neither give freedom nor can bind any one. If there is any attachment behind doing *karma*, it binds. If there is devotion without attachment with results then *karmas* remove bonds. Zero by itself is of no consequence. But when it is placed after a digit it becomes valuable. *Karmas* also acts like this.

This devotion, which Shri Bhagwan called conviction (*buddhi*), is a very important concept. This is attained with great difficulty. Only '*sthitpragya*³⁷', the one, who has conviction can have firm devotion. An ordinary person is bewildered by different views. His own inherent tendencies confuse him about virtue and sin and he strays from the path. But a person with conviction can convert his *karmas* into spiritual practice and by doing so can transform his entire life into worship (*sadhana*).

The Gita is based on this very concept. Shri Bhagwan did not prohibit any action or *karma*. He ordained performance of *karmas* with conviction as a service of *parameshwara* i.e. as an offering to Him. The statement, 'I do not do any *karma* and *Prakriti* does' is also an expression of this devotion. In fact, the path of spirituality is primarily a path of devotion. This requires a great faith, requires firmness and also requires a lot of effort. Even a minor *karma* performed with conviction is highly effective as compared to a great *karma* performed with great effort but without conviction.

This wisdom (*buddhi*) discussed in detail in the seventeenth chapter is not a matter of faith alone. It is much more than mere faith. It relates more with duty (*karmas*), field of activity and purpose of life. It is much wider and gives direction to life.

Shri Bhagwan said to Arjuna, 'if you understand this *yoga* of equanimity you can cut the bonds of your *karmas*. Not only this, you will not incur any sin (verse 38) and will be able to remove the bonds of your past *karmas*. *Karmas* performed in this manner is *yoga*, is *tapasya* and is worship.

This is the uniqueness of *karmayoga*. *Karma* is a means for spiritual evolution and for realisation of *parameshwara*. In other words, if we accept this with proper understanding then the entire life can become a spiritual practice (*sadhana*).

This is proper synthesis of spirituality, social behavior and worldly affairs - between the paths of *parameshwara* and worldly affairs. This is the remedy for the desire of renouncing the world on an awakening of longing for *parameshwara*. It is a unique harmony between one's own interest and the interest of others. There is no need to run away from the world. Stay wherever you are. Do whatever you are doing. Just change your perspective and your thinking. There will be no bondage of *karma*. There will be no burden of any kind. One will not see garbage. The *karma* itself will become continual worship. This is the unique reality of the spiritual world. This is the greatest contribution of the Gita. For the present age, it appears to be the best prescription for spirituality. It is easy and extremely beneficial.

³⁷ *sthitpragya*: a man of stable intellect, and firm conviction.

The path of wisdom (*gyan*) usually advocates renunciation of *karmas*. However, this path of *yoga* instead advocates performance of *karmas* but with proper motive and devotion. Both paths give same result yet they are different.

**ne 'ha 'bhikramanaso 'sti pratyavayo na vidyate |
svalpam apy asya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat||40||**

Before describing the technique (*gyan*) of *karmayoga*, its benefits are being described. It was explained in the 39th verse that with this knowledge, the bonds of *karma* can be severed. What are other merits of *karmayoga*?

“No effort is ever lost. There is no obstacle either. Even treading a little on this path saves one from great fear.” (40)

It has already been said that *karmayoga* is devotion – commitment and dedication. *Karmayoga* is not recognised by the form of *karmas* but by the motive of the doer behind his *karmas*.

'No effort is ever lost'. Any effort made in doing *karmas* with devotion is never lost. It is always beneficial. There are many medicines, which if discontinued before completing the full course, their benefit is lost. Similarly, there are many activities, which become useless, if discontinued after some time they are started. In fact the devotion required for *karmayoga* cannot be achieved suddenly. One can become proficient only by regular practice. Then only a person will be able to function, according to this *yoga*, in every field of his life. If there had been a possibility of an effort going waste then it would not have been possible to develop faith in *karmayoga* while doing *karmas*. It then would have been impossible for any one to practice *karmayoga* in his life.

Gross *karmas* end after giving their results. Gross effect of a *karma* ends after it is done but the imprints left in the mind do not end with the *karma*. They are not gross, they are subtle and everlasting. Especially those influences, which are very intimately and deeply related to us, become part of our thought process. An aspirant (*sadhak*) knows how deeply these influences change his personality and how difficult it is to be free from their effect?

Devotion without any expectation is of great value. The equanimous mind is beyond the realm of argumentative mind. The tendencies created by devotion to one's *karma* are very stable, as compared to other mental tendencies.

In fact devotion to *karma* is very helpful for our evolution. Noble tendencies are deep-rooted and stable. It is impossible to destroy them. They can be overshadowed for a while but base tendencies cannot weaken them. It is only the higher consciousness, which can weaken base tendencies. If this had not been the arrangement then there would not have been any scope for the growth of a person nor of his moving forward in the process of his evolution. In this world we find preponderance of base tendencies. This arrangement verily is the blessing of the benevolent Divine Mother. By understanding this concept it becomes clear that the Divine Mother wants us to make progress. She also helps us. She has so created the field of activity.

Perhaps the purport of what Tulsidas had said about *kaliyuga*, i.e. '*manas punya honhin nahin papa*' (men do good deeds not sins) is like this. '*Abhikrma*' is called for beginning.

'*Pratyavaya nahin hota*' *Pratyavaya* means 'reversal i.e. reverts back'. There is no reverse effect. There remains no possibility of any loss. There are many such activities which if discontinued midway after commencement lose their effect. If a shop is closed after it is opened, it costs dearly. Some medicines are also like this because if they are discontinued before completing full course they become harmful. About the fountain of knowledge too it is said: 'either do not touch it or if you touch it, drink it to your hearts content.' 'A little learning is a dangerous; drink deep, or touch not the *Pierian Spring*.'

But, in *karmayoga* i.e. the yoga of performing action without any attachment or desire, there is never a possibility of any loss. If you have done even a single act without any attachment then you will certainly get its benefit. The tendency generated by that act itself will elevate you and will dilute bonds of your past *karmas*. The more you practice, more positive your thinking becomes. You will certainly be benefited by its effect. Under no circumstances it can cause you any harm. How harmless is this medicine? As if this *yoga* is a bio-chemic pill.

For this *yoga* there is no requirement of eligibility or of any special training. Even in the worship of gods, any deviation from prescribed ritual or any kind of undue effort can result in harm instead of benefit. By leaving a ritual in the middle you may get a curse. But here, in this *yoga*, there is no such possibility. In this *yoga*, we do not have to depend upon any external force/power (*shakti*), which may get angry with us and punish us. In this *yoga* we only generate noble tendencies within us, which make baser tendencies ineffective. Therefore, this is a self-reliant process and devoid of any possibility of harm.

'Even little of such *karma* saves one from great fear.' This means that if we take up this path it protects us. If we understand this concept of desire-less effort and try to practice it in every walk of our life, we can be free from many fears. How can this be possible?

Expectation of results is the main cause of fear. In certain circumstances, attachments find expression in the form of expectations. When attached to wealth, one may have fear of losing it. One wishes to preserve his riches. In every field of life, a person not only wishes security but also wishes growth. He thinks that the body should not only remain as young as it is but should also get better. He desires that his present social and economic status should at least remain as it is, if it does not improve.

All these thoughts are so deeply embedded in our mind and in psyche that we do not notice them but because of them the clouds of fear keep hovering over our head. Fear from friends, fear from enemies, fear of being, fear of not being, fear of life, fear of death, fear of remembering, fear of forgetting, fear of doing, fear of not doing and many other kinds of fear torment a person. He is so much used to them that they do not appear to him as fears. Instead, they look like essential components of life. It appears to him odd when he does not have such fears.

Attachments are at the root of all these fears. They often get converted into rays of hope. The understanding of *karmayoga* hits on this 'attachment'. Therefore, when you practice *karma yoga* freedom from fear is obvious.

This understanding of *karmayoga* gives us a very different perspective to evaluate the value of material objects. The devotion of *karmayoga* gives us a different perspective to look at the world and also at ourselves. We do not have any fears when we look with that perspective. We become fearless. This topic will again be discussed later.

For proper understanding of *karmayoga*, it is compared with the intellect swayed by desires. The next verse deals with this comparison.

*vyavasayatmika buddhir eke 'ha kurunandana /
bahusakha hy anantas ca buddhayo 'vyavasayinam ||41||*

“O *Kurunandan* (son of *kurus* – Arjuna)! There is only one resolute understanding, but the thoughts of irresolute are endless and have many branches.” (41).

Straight path is always one. There is only one straight line connecting two points, and is shortest in length but a person can draw as many crooked lines as he wants. To connect two points many crooked lines can be drawn but there can be only one straight line between them.

On this subject, there is a saying in Punjabi “*saun siyaniyan ekko matta murkhanapo apni.*” (Hundred wise men have one opinion but fools have their own and different opinions.)

So long as we do not have firm and stable base for our thinking, we will not be firm on our decision. For having correct measurement, we should have a standard measuring scale and it should be stable and firm. For measuring length and width of any thing we need a standard scale. If that scale is correct, we will get correct measurement but if everyone uses his own homemade scale then everyone will get different measurement. Nobody’s measurement will tally with that of others. Somebody’s ten inches will become twelve or eight inches of another.

We do see such a drama in every day life. People have their own scales. Therefore, there is seen so much discord and confusion. What one approves, others condemn. In fact, such differences are natural as long as human consciousness is limited to the argumentative intellect. In an analytical mind instability is evident.

Consequently arguments are unstable, have no legs. An analytical mind does not have the ability to reach definite conclusion. It assumes something as self-evident which has potential of creating confusion.

Secondly, mind and sense organs influence the intellect at every moment of life. Our mental attachments and detachments, our mental desires, likes and dislikes, our wishes, have their influences and change our mind, and so our chain of arguments keeps changing. We like a person who serves our interest today but tomorrow the same person may appear to be our great enemy, a cheat and a scoundrel. Our understanding depends on influences on our mind.

Third thing, which needs to be understood about our intellect is that our perceptions keep changing with our experiences. Considerations of youth become meaningless as we grow into adulthood. Experiences of the period of one's failure appear foolish in one's own success. Moreover, our decisions depend upon our wisdom and knowledge. It is incorrect to say that we know every thing about a subject. Therefore, a decision taken by the intellect is always unstable and it has the possibilities of change. The analytical intellect is always infected by uncertainty.

Who is a 'vyavsaee'? He who is practical and has stable mind, his views do not waiver. In reality stable mind is not purely argumentative. That is a consciousness beyond intellect, which provides it with inner vigour and certitude. Such intellect is the foundation of *karma yoga*. Desire-less *karma* is the means for purifying mind and the *atman* and irrelevant factors do not influence the intellect. Continuous practice achieves this gradually.

The truth revealed by Shri *Bhagwan* is absolute and this devotion is also absolute. There is no scope for any doubt in it. After a person having firm conviction has no doubts about his duty and non-duty. He also does not have doubts about sin and virtue. The path becomes clear to him.

Desires and attachments are at the root of confusion. Dwelling in the mind and the sense organs they create restlessness and make intellect unstable. As a result one is unable to arrive at a firm decision. The nature of such people will be discussed in subsequent verses. There is a lot of difference between the intellect of the people who have no desire and of those swayed by desires – and the difference keeps increasing from the initial stage of practice till the final stage of realisation.

*yam imam puspitam vacam pravadyant avipascitah /
vedavadaratah partha na 'nyad asti 'ti vadina //42||
kamatmannah svargapara janmakarmaphalapradam /
kriyavisesabahulam bhogaisvayagatim prati //43||
bhogaisvayaprasaktanam taya 'pahrtacetasam |
vyavasayatmika buddhih samadhau na vidhiyate //44||*

For the people performing *karmas* for fulfillment of desires, it is said –

“O Arjuna! This discussion will remove the misunderstanding of those of immature intelligence, rejoicing in the letter of *Vedas* saying that ‘there is nothing other than this’. And of those whose *atman* is overpowered by desires, considering heaven as the ultimate objective. Moreover, intellect of those who speak flowery language proclaiming rebirth as the fruit of *karma*, and recommending performance of specific rituals for attaining enjoyments and prosperity is not definitive and they do not have solutions for difficulties of day to day life. They are attached to enjoyments and glory. And through glorifying rituals (rejoicing in the letter of *Vedas*) their intellect gets clouded and their intellect remains indeterminate; and they can not find solutions (for the problems of life).” (42-44)

During the time of the Mahabharata, practice of performing *yagyas*³⁸ was very popular. It was believed that the objectives of life could be achieved through performance of *yagyas*.

³⁸ *yagyas*: offerings/sacrifices made in sacred fire i.e. hawan

Brahmins used to spend their entire life in learning rituals of *yagyas* and conducting *yagyas* as ordained in Vedas. The various *yagyas* and their results, which could be obtained by their performance as per prescribed procedure, are described in detail in the Vedas. One could even attain heaven by performing *yagyas*. Those who emphasized the importance of rituals prescribed in the Vedas considered the attainment of heaven as ultimate objective of life. For such desire-driven devotees, it is said that they can never have decisive intellect. They will continue to be indecisive.

That was a great problem in the times of the Gita. We cannot fully appreciate its magnitude now. It appears that this practice was so popular at that time that Shri *Bhagwan* considered it necessary to demolish that belief forcefully so as to establish his own point of view.

Vedas are the main source of Hindu-religion. All other scriptures are supposed to be based on them. One, who criticized Vedas was considered an atheist. To have or not to have faith in God was not the determinant factor for a believer or a non-believer, instead acceptance of the authority of Vedas was an essential requirement. *Yagyas* were ordained in the Vedas and considered authentic. Those, who did not believe in them, were considered as to have refused the authority of Vedas. *Brahmins* had very strong arguments in favour of *yagyas*. Their arguments influenced people. Therefore, the *Yagyas* were very popular.

Reference of Vedas worked like a magic in entire religious thought process. Whenever validity of any statement was to be ensured, reference of Vedas was enough, and to disprove the authenticity of any statement also, such lines of Vedas, which could be interpreted to suit the purpose were enough. So great was the importance of Vedas. Another surprising aspect is that very little effort was made to understand Vedas and even that effort was not for very deep understanding. The importance given to the *yagyas* made other things in Vedas insignificant. It appears that Vedas had become synonym of *yagyas*.

In fact, Vedas contain many other things including laws, rules, and procedures beneficial for people at all levels of society and also for people at different levels of evolution. In *Atharveda* we find mention of black magic and of *purusa sukta* and *'nasdiyasukta'* in *Rgveda* and *Yajurveda*. Man understands things as he likes and starts believing that as truth. Other things he does not understand. What he understands he interprets as per his convenience. This happened during that time also. The belief that desires for enjoyments and power could be fulfilled only in heaven was prominent. Religious sacrifices were perceived to be the means for achieving that objective. Consequently, the Vedas were visualised as filled with the spirit of *yagyas*. Those people could not see higher ideals and objectives of the Vedas. They could not even understand the deeper purpose of sacrifices (*yagyas*) prescribed in the Vedas. The Gita, however, without condemning those views puts them at their proper perspective. The *yagyas* prescribed in the Vedas are indeed very great but they should be performed without desires otherwise they will also become a cause of bondage. The *yagyas* need to be performed as the world is dependent upon sacrifices (*yagyas*) and sacrifices are a form of the God (*yagayaeshwara*). These need to be performed as a form of offerings to gods. Any sacrifice performed with desires is in reality not a sacrifice at all. Just by a little change in the outlook, Shri *Bhagwan* unveils the deeper truth and converts copper into gold.

Firmness of mind is not possible when desires are predominant. In a state of uncertainty, there cannot be conviction and it will be impossible to follow *karma yoga*. Bonds of *karma* cannot be removed. Therefore, the desires need be given up, even if they relate to sacrifices (*yagyas*), which are prescribed in Vedas.

Verses 42, 43 & 44 make one sentence. The composition of this sentence is strange. However, it is not difficult to understand its purpose.

For those, who consider sacrifices (*yagyas*) as all-important and propounded them as such, certain adjectives have been used.

‘avipashchitah’--immature, devoid of mature understanding. Why are they immature? They are immature because they are yet not aware of the ways beyond (their knowledge). They are like a frog in the well. They consider whatever they know as everything.

‘vedvadartah’ -those rejoicing in the letter of the Vedas. Letter of the Vedas is used literally for the rituals of the Vedic sacrifices (*yagyas*). It appears that in those days, the Vedas and sacrifices (*yagyas*) prescribed therein had become synonyms. ‘To be rejoicing in’ means so deeply immersed in something that one becomes oblivious of everything else. That was the condition of people of those times. They were mad after performing the Vedic sacrifices (*yagyas*).

‘na nyad asti ti vadinah’ i.e. those saying that there is nothing else and heaven could be attained only through *yagyas*. Moreover, after enjoying pleasures in heaven, one had to return here (to earth). One had to perform *yagyas* again to gain heaven. There was nothing like deliverance (*moksha*) from this cycle as that was a futile and impossible dream. Such was their thinking.

‘kamatmannah’—for whom desire alone is the self (*atman*). They had such a strong craving for enjoyments and glory as if it was their self (*atman*). They had become desire personified. The enjoyments had become most important in their life.

‘swargaparah’—for whom attainment of *swarga* i.e. heaven is the ultimate objective of life. They lived and worked (did all their *karmas*) for attaining heaven.

These adjectives give a beautiful description of those people believing in religious sacrifices (*yagyas*). A description has been given about the language such people used—what was their language?

‘pushpitam’ - flowery i.e. very tempting. In very attractive language enjoyments and glories in heaven were described. By that language, people were easily enticed. As a bush or a plant laden with flowers attracts us similarly their speech used to attract people.

‘kriyavisheshbahulam’—full of different rituals. Procedures prescribed for the performance of those *yagyas* were very complex. Many things of specific variety were required. ‘*Yagya kunda*’ and ‘*yagya-vedi*’ needed to be of prescribed specifications. Every ritual of the *yagya* needed to be performed exactly as laid down in the Vedas. Every hymn of the Vedas was to be recited correctly in specified rhythm, otherwise instead of giving desired benefit it could result in harm. Even a slight variation in sound could destroy the *yajman* (the one who requests and pays for the

performance of a ritual). All those complexities were the specialty of their speech. For those complexities, justification was also given in support.

What was the purpose of such speech?

'bhogaishvaryagamim prati' - for obtaining pleasures and glories – for attaining heaven. All those statements were made to create craving for heaven as the desired objective and then to satisfy that craving performance of *vyagyas* was stated as essential requirement.

In the first part of the 44th verse, *Shri Bhagwan* briefly describes the state of such persons and mentions about their condition.

The people were deeply attached (*prasakta*) to enjoyments and glory. So much so, they had lost their power of discrimination (*vivek*) and their ability to think.

'prasakta' means deeply attached. When the attachments become intense a person cannot think of anything other than the object of his attachment. He becomes mad after that object and his mind becomes crippled.

Such used to become the state of people under the influence of flowery speeches. People reached such state that they had started performing those rituals blindly. In other words, they had lost their reason.

The second half of the 44th verse runs thus –

'Their business like wisdom does not translate into the state of *samadhi*' - this is the literal meaning. They did not have even practical wisdom. They did not have determination. Then why is it said that their wisdom was not established in *samadhi*? This is just a method of saying. This is a specialty of Sanskrit language. For some statements adjectives are used. For others verbs are used for that purpose.

'*Samadhi*' is used for concentration and for balance of mind. Absence of capriciousness is its special characteristics. To have better understanding of this concept we should see verses 52 and 53 of this chapter. Characteristics of '*sthitpragya*' relate to this (*samadhi*) state.

How much important is the determinate mind for *karmayoga*, this will be known from subsequent verses. In fact, the rest of the chapter describes this aspect. And, '*karmayoga*' has been indicated by the word '*buddhi*'. It should be understood that the determinate mind i.e. '*Buddhi*', is a friend of *karmayoga*.

***traigunyasaya veda nistraigunyo bhava 'rjuna |
nirdvandvo nityasattvastho niryogaksema atmanvan ||45||***

After describing the condition and the objective of such people, *Shri Bhagwan* tells Arjuna the objective of 'Life'. What state one should achieve in his lifetime?

“Three ‘*guna*’ (constituents) are the subject of the Vedas. O’ Arjuna! Rise above the three *gunas*. You should have conviction free from conflicts, firmly fixed in purity, without caring for acquisition or preservation and be possessed of the Self.” (45)

In what forceful words, the objective of life is stated. How clear and strong is the difference between the two objectives? In comparison to the objective of *Karmayoga*, how very mean is the objective of the believers of the Vedic rituals. In subsequent verses, we will not only get a description of this objective repeatedly but we will also have its comprehensive understanding.

‘*traigunya*’ (three modes or constituents) are the subject of the Vedas. ‘*traigunya*’ is the combined name of the three modes – *satva* (purity – goodness), *rajas* (activity or passion) and *tamas* (darkness or ignorance) taken together. The entire creation, its pleasures and grandeur i.e. heaven and the other worlds, rituals of *yagya* etc. have these three modes. Everything mentioned in the Vedas relates to these three modes. Here a question could be asked whether Upanishads are not a part of the Vedas? In Upanishads, a state beyond the three modes is also mentioned.

In the present context it appears that the use of the word 'Veda' in this verse is for Vedic rituals (*yagyas*), which was the objective of believers in the Vedas. Shri *Bhagwan* wants to tell Arjuna that everything that can be achieved through *yagyas* have three modes (*gunas*).

Shri *Bhagwan* asks Arjuna to go beyond these three modes. The state of being beyond the three modes is much more exalted than the state of being in the three modes. In fact, the two states cannot be compared. The state beyond the three modes (*gunas*) is a state beyond the bonds of *prakriti*, is the bliss of *atman*. There is total absence of sorrow and misery. Only in that state there is real freedom and a person abides in the Self (*atman*) and has real lordship. For more information, refer to chapter 14.

Nirdwanda is free of conflicts, the one who is indifferent to opposites or is free from dualities of pleasure or pain, honour or insult, hot or cold, etc. One dwelling in the Self (*atman*) alone can be free from dualities (*nirdwanda*). By mere external efforts for control, rising above the dualities is impossible. Only the higher consciousness awakened by equanimity can make a person even towards every situation and everything.

'*nityasatvastha*' – ‘*satva*’ is also used for *satoguna*. This word is also used for the state of inner purity. *Vedantic* (followers of vedas) also use this word for '*sat-padartha*' (good things), and the self (*atmantattva*). '*nityasatvastha*' is the state where one is beyond the three modes of *prakriti* as he abides in his purified inner-self i.e. whose inner-self has become completely pure and sublime. Many questions can arise from this statement but we will not discuss them here.

'*niryogakshema*' - *Yoga* is called for acquiring what is not acquired (acquiring – collecting) and '*kshema*' is preservation of what is acquired. '*niryogakshema*' is a carefree state in which there is no desire for acquiring anything or of preserving acquisitions. Later, this concept will again be discussed.

‘*atmanvan*’—the one who considers his Self as *atma* can alone be called ‘*atmanvan*’, a person having confidence in himself. Such a person is normally in control of his mind, intellect and senses.

Shri *Bhagwan* asked Arjuna to make such a state of his mind as his goal and he will certainly tell means for (achieving) such state in forthcoming verses.

*yavan artha udapane sarvatah samplutodake /
tavan sarvesu vedesu brahmanasya vijanatah*||46||

“As is the utility of a pond when the earth is flooded with water everywhere, so is the utility of all Vedas for a *brahmin* who understands.” (46)

In the last verse, Shri *Bhagwan* had placed a lofty ideal before Arjuna. In this verse an effort has been made to make him aware of the loftiness of that ideal by comparing it with Vedas.

A pond has no utility when water is everywhere. Why does it not have any utility? Water is required for irrigating fields, for animals to drink water, for washing clothes and for drinking purposes. When there is water everywhere, all these needs can be met anywhere. Those who drink water from ponds can also drink rainwater. That is more fresh and clean. Ponds are usually dirty in many ways and are polluted.

Similarly, for a *Brahmin* who understands Vedas cease to have any utility. For him Vedas become useless. If a person thinks that the Vedas prescribe only *yagyas*, then it is clear that he cannot learn anything from the Vedas. Pacification of desires is necessary for gaining highest awareness. If all desires are pacified, then what concern such a person has for performing *yagyas* mentioned in Vedas?

But here ‘*sarveshu vedeshu*’, i.e. 'in all the Vedas', has been used. All parts of the Vedas i.e. *karma kanda*, *upasana kanda* and *gyan kanda* (*karma kanda* relates to rituals, *upasana Kanda* relates to worship and *gyan Kanda* relates to *gyan* i.e. wisdom) -- seems to be pointing towards one objective. Wisdom is possible only after success in worship. After the objective of worship is achieved, entire knowledge relating to worship becomes useless. Similarly, whatever *gyan kanda* teaches, if that is directly experienced then what purpose the *gyan kanda* will serve. Until we do not reach our destination, there is curiosity about the journey. Once we reach the destination, the entire literature, which gives us travel information, becomes useless.

No proof is better than direct experience. After having direct cognizance of the *atman*, no expectation or desire, internal or external, can subsist. If there is still some kind of desire left then the person is not yet aware of his *atman*. After considering characteristics of a ‘*sthitpragya*’ this concept will become clear.

Many people think that the Gita denounces Vedas. The Gita certainly does not denounce Vedas. This only makes us understand that how great is the achievement of the objectives of Vedas. Vedas do not bind us. They can totally remove our bonds and can make us self-reliant. This statement only highlights the importance of Vedas.

'*vijanatah*' – knower with certainty, definitely. Intellectual knowledge is not science or knowledge of manifest (*Vigyan*³⁹). So long as there is no understanding about the difference between the knower and the known, knowledge is always incomplete. When that difference is understood then it becomes science, knowledge of the manifest. '*Vigyan*' and '*Vijanatah*' are the words formed from the same root. The Gita discusses the concepts of '*gyan*' and '*Vigyan*' at many places. '*Gyan-vigyan-yoga*' is the title of the seventh chapter. It appears that the word '*gyan*' is used for 'self-awareness' (*atman-bodh*) i.e. the awareness of beyond *prakriti*, for the knowledge of the unknown and the world '*Vigyan*' is used for knowledge of *prakriti*, the material world. The Vedas include knowledge of both '*gyan*' and '*Vigyan*'. In fact, Vedas are not complete without both of them. By learning the Vedas '*gyan*', and '*vigyan*' are automatically known.

It appears that the use of the word '*brahmnasya*' covers both '*gyan*' and '*vigyan*'. The word *Brahmin* normally conveys the first caste of four-fold *varna*-system. But the ideal that Shri *Bhagwan* mentioned to Arjuna was not for the *Brahmin* of *varna*-system. Arjuna himself was a *Kshatriya*. Sri Krishna was also not a *Brahmin*. In fact, *Brahmin* is a comprehensive word and is not restricted to any particular *varna* of the *varna*-system. It is clear from the ninth chapter of the Gita. By knowing the nature of one's objective, it is not difficult to understand that the door of *parmatmana* or of self-awareness (*atman-bodh*) is not closed for anyone. Perhaps the word *Brahmin* has been used for the knower of *brahman* (the objective). Accordingly, the word '*brahmnasya vijanatah*' has been used for that person who knows both '*gyan*' and '*vigyan*' i.e. the one who knows his own Self and has full confidence.

In fact, status of a saint is very exalted. He himself is a form of *parmatmana*. Nothing else can compare with the realization of the self, which makes a saint a saint. He needs no certificate or evidence. He is enlightened and is himself a *jyoti* (a light).

This is an emphatic and an unambiguous statement to demolish the faith of those who believe in the letter of the Vedas. The Vedas can be ignored, as knowing the *Brahman* (the self, the mind, the objective of life) should be an ideal for every human being.

Now mentions the means to achieve the objective –

***karmany eva 'dhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana /
ma karmaphalahetur bhurma te sango 'stv akarmani ||47||***

"You only have a right to doing *karmas* but never to fruits thereof. Do not become a doer of *karmas* for their results. Nor should you be attached to *akarma* (inaction)". (47)

This is the basic principle of *karmayoga*. By understanding this principle and taking this to heart, an aspirant (*sadhak*) can easily find his way.

'*karmany eva 'dhikaras te*' - You have a right of doing *karmas* or you have a right over your *karmas*. Man can only do *karmas*. He has freedom for doing *karmas* and also has freedom for not doing any *karma*. This freedom we can experience in our behavior. If we feel that we are

³⁹ *vigyan*: knowledge of the specific or the manifest

bound then it is because of our own innate tendencies (*samsakars*). There is nothing to bind us from outside.

Many people refuse to accept that everyone has freedom for choosing his *karmas*. In the present context we do not have to discuss the concept of freedom of doing *karmas*. Still we must tell such people that if they feel that there is someone else who does *karmas*, or gets them done, and they are only instruments then *karmayoga* is not for them. When ego is destroyed then you meet the requirement of *sadhana*. However, this cannot happen by mere intellectual effort but can happen only by a real change in internal state.

Karmayoga is for a person who is conscious of his duties. He considers himself as doer of his *karmas* and enjoyer of their consequences. Such a person also feels: 'I do my duty (*karmas*)'.

The right to decide as to what to do and what not to do relates to practical situations arising in every day life. Man has to choose an alternative and act accordingly. He has discretion. That needs decision. Man has full freedom to take his decision.

Man has no control or right over the consequences - the results of his actions. A student can work hard but at the end of the year what will be his result that is not in his control. A farmer can work as hard as possible for him, but he cannot say what will be the yield of his crop. Similarly, parents can make every effort to make their child capable, but whether the child will come up to their expectations or not, is something, they cannot predict.

What is the reason for this uncertainty? Fruits or consequences of *karmas* are not solely dependent upon efforts or on labour. They are dependent upon many other factors. Most important factor is the unknown and unseen component of destiny.

Quite unknowingly, the destiny comes in between and changes the complexion of every thing; can change sugar-cake into cow-shit and cow-shit into sugar-cake. Destiny is unpredictable. There is so much of uncertainty. In the world, there are wide differences between the labour employed and reward received. Reason for that disparity is only this unknown factor.

One may say that it is 'mere fatalism'. Sit idle, do nothing. If destined, one will get food. *Karmayoga* certainly does not teach this approach. However, we have to understand the reality properly. Whatever we do that certainly counts. Moreover, whatever we did in the past that also counts. Those who refuse to accept that the consequences of our past *karmas* (which are invisible) do influence the results of our *karmas*, have inadequate understanding like those who consider that the efforts made in doing *karmas* are immaterial. However, when we look at the full picture it becomes clear that everything is not in our hands. There is so much beyond our control.

Take example of a student. He had prepared well for his examinations. He had full confidence that he would pass with very good grades. On the eve of the examination he was obsessed with a desire to revise the entire course which he did till 4 O'clock in the morning. The examination was to start from 7 O'clock. He slept with an intention of getting up well in time. But

he got up only at 8 O' clock. His entire labour went waste. Evidently, he did not do that deliberately.

A farmer had sown his crop with expectation of a good yield. When his crop was ripe, his expectations soared. He thought that the crop would surely come home and the coming year would pass off comfortably. During the night, a flock of hare invaded the field and destroyed half of the crop. What was the fault of that poor farmer?

Son was given best education. He was worthy and promising for a great future. He went to the university and there he came in contact with communists and got influenced by them. He neglected his studies and became worthless. What was the fault of his father?

The entire history of science is a study of the history of unknown factors that are responsible for events taking place in different fields. Those factors are studied separately by putting them in different combinations to identify essential and variable factors for happening of an event. Gradually, by controlling these factors, occurrence of events in physical field is controlled. Great inventions are results of such efforts. The question is whether or not such control over human behaviour is possible. It is clear that so far this has not been possible. We still do not have control of this kind. Despite all round social controls of socialists or the advances made by life-scientists, psychologists and medical scientists we are still very far off the controls of this kind. If we have even a little understanding of the elements of human evolution and of the subtle and deep concepts of spiritual literature then it will not be difficult to accept that this kind of control is impossible. If such control ever becomes possible then the entire process of present human evolution will become meaningless. Moreover, we will not be able to learn lessons, which we need to learn in this field. Man will no longer remain a man. He will become a robot – a machine. That will then be a virtual destruction of humanity. It can never happen like this. We can understand this by developing an understanding of subtle factors of life.

And, 'ma phaleshu kadachan' – may or may not get the expected result -- results of *karmas* are not in the hands of the individual. This is practical truth of life. From an aspirants point of view this is the whole truth. From experiences of life this appears to be the right conclusion.

But on one side a person boasts, 'I will do this, I will do that' and on the other side he is always seen riding the horse of hopes, may not in his behavior but may be in his imagination. He is no better than a crazy person. In reality, the hope mingled with a tinge of ego manifests in a form of boasting. A wise person very well knows that all that is childish. 'A person does not know what is going to happen tomorrow. He does not know that the death is just lurking over his head, yet he brags. The truth is only this, 'I will try as much as possibly to achieve my objective'. When a person becomes aware of this truth, he recovers from the state of intoxication. He realises his helplessness arising due to external and unknown factors as well as due to internal tendencies (*samsakars*). Either his own enthusiasm may become weak or the opposite desire to fight may arise which may gradually suck off his energies. His body may also become incapable of doing hard

work. His intents may also change. The one who can look within himself and within others by being neutral can clearly see the whole drama. It indeed is a very interesting drama.

When a person has so little control over his *karmas*, then how limited control he will have on their results. Despite this, we usually do *karmas* considering their results important. The pursuit of results seems to be a mirage, an effort to catch shadow or to run after the uncertain. Even from external point of view, doing of any *karma* with the sole intention of achieving any specific result is sheer foolishness. Evidently, this is like imagining the entire universe present in a water bubble. It is also as someone may think of marrying the son of a son of his son, yet to be born, with the daughter of a daughter of a daughter of someone, and then dreaming to see their progeny too.

When hope is lost, the heart sinks and hands tremble. When hope breaks, heart also breaks and the person is completely shattered. On the contrary, when hope is realised new hopes generate. In addition, the person goes on binding himself in a web of ever-new desires. He will have a heavy load of his bonds for his future births. By so doing, his *karmas* will be the cause of his bonds and will be the cause of his unhappiness. This is a bad bargain. This is foolishness. The *karmas*, which we could have used for removing bonds, we use them to become slave of *prakriti*. Instead of being free, we become prisoner.

Karmayoga makes *karmas* a means for achieving freedom from our inner attachments. Attachments lead to desires, and desires to bonds. *Karma* by itself does not create bonds. It is the desire or expectation of results which binds us. *Karma* done with proper understanding and devotion weakens desires and gradually makes attachments ineffective, burns away passions, makes our inner-self pure and loosens the bonds of *prakriti*. *Karmayoga* is that magic which makes the *karma* very effective and beneficial. *Karma* is a force. This should have been clear by now that results of *karmas* depends upon the purpose for which they are performed. Mere *karma* neither binds us nor liberates us. *Karma* done with due devotion can take us to Rama (the God) otherwise will bind us with uncertainties. A knife that can slit a neck can also cut a noose. It all depends upon the purpose for which it is used..

Once the basic concept of *karma* and *karmayoga* is understood, then it will not be difficult to understand that *karmayoga* is not mere fatalism. *Karmayoga* does not teach us inaction rather it teaches us diligence (*karmasheelta*). Only a *karmayogi* understands the real importance of doing *karma* with diligence. Those who hope for results of their *karmas* barter their actions for a pittance.

Who has understood this will never be inactive. So it is said '*ma te sangoastvakarmina*' – you should not be attached to inaction. Inaction is darkness, ignorance and is regressive. An inactive person rots while lying all the time.

*yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhanamjaya /
siddhyasiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga ucyate*//48||

“O Arjuna! By being firm in *yoga*, do your *karma*, without having attachments and with an even mind towards success and failure. For evenness of mind is called *yoga*.” (48)

Description of *karmayoga* starts from verse 47. All subsequent verses up to verse 53 are for explaining this concept clearly.

In the last verse, it is said that the *karmas* should not be done for the sake of results. And one should also not be averse to *do karmas*.

Obviously, the question arises – why should *karma* be done? If result is not to be the motive then why be the *karma* done?

There should be absence of attachment. Attachment is a tendency to hold on something. Normally it is called 'fondness'. Attachment could be for the results and could be for the *karma* itself. What kind of attachment one should not have? Hope for desired results arise out of attachment to the result. That attachment is to be avoided. If while doing any *karma* its result is important due to attachment then the said *karma* will generate a new tendency in us, which becomes a cause for further bondage. Therefore, there should not be any attachment with the result.

When performance of any *karma* gives a feeling of self-satisfaction, then also an attachment with that *karma* grows. The attachment with *karma* is very subtle. Therefore, the bond caused by the attachment with *karma* is also very subtle. Until the attachment continues the result will be unhappiness. The result of attachment is always unhappiness, irrespective of the fact that it is gross or subtle. The traveler of the path of this yoga, the practitioner, has to rise above all kinds of attachments. In 18th chapter, Shri Bhagwan says:

**na dvestyakusalam karma kushale na'nusajjate |
tyagi sattvasamavisto medhavi chinna samsayah ||18/10||**

A self-sacrificing (*tyagi*) person does not hate disagreeable *karma* nor is attached with a desirable *karma*. This is an ideal for renunciation of attachments.

The other advice given is, '*sidhaya asidhayoh samo bhutvai*'. e. by being even towards success and failure. Evenness should be complete, both of mind and of heart. We often think, we did our duty but the result was not in our hands. If we have failed, it is all right. We are satisfied that we have done our duty. But some kind of regret persists. The goal of evenness is that there should not be any feeling of regret. Shri Ramachandra jee came to know that instead of coronation he was being sent to the forests for 14 years, even then there was no change in his equanimity and his facial expressions. Equanimity was innate in him. By making efforts, one can control heart. Endurance of the blows of success and failure gradually makes the heart equanimous and even. Mental equanimity gradually influences the heart.

For a *karmayogi*, results of his *karmas* are of no importance. What is important for him is the right reason. For him success and failure are equally unimportant. Therefore, he is even towards both of them. *Karma* has its importance from the point of view of spiritual discipline (*sadhana*). For *karmayogies*, results are not important.

A person experiences real evenness only when consciousness of equanimity, which is divine in nature, is awakened and then his mind and heart become even and calm. No one can fathom the depth of his heart. He becomes an ocean of peace and poise.

The third direction is for doing *karmas* by being established in *yoga*, '***yogasthah kuru karmani***'. What does this mean? What is the purpose of this directive? *Yoga* indicates one's outlook towards life. It demands that *karmas* be done considering life as a spiritual voyage (*sadhana*), considering *karma* itself as *sadhana* and considering it as a path towards *parameshwara*. In fact, the difference between a *karmayogi* and an ordinary person is of outlook. Outworldly *karmas* of both of them look similar. A person will do some work for the society to earn his livelihood, so also a *karmayogi* will do. Their attitude and faith make a big difference as is between heaven and earth. Dedication towards duty is an indicator of devotion (*yoga-nishtha*). This dedication is not for any specific *karma*, but relates to one's attitude and approach towards life. This has already been discussed in detail.

Lastly, in the fourth part of the verse it is said, - '***samatvam yoga uchayate***' - what is the essence of *yoga*? What is that without which this *yoga* fails? Evenness - equanimity. If we cannot consider dualities (success and failure) equally and we do not remain even towards them then we cannot make progress in this path.

Why is evenness so important? Attachments lead to unevenness. This unevenness assumes a form of hope. A person doing *karma* for the sake of getting desired result continues to create bonds for himself.

If gain and loss become equal for us then there is no desire. Only performance of one's own duty (*svadharma*) is important - results do not matter. By doing his duty (*svadharma*), a person keeps progressing. His bonds keep vanishing.

That is why evenness is the basic requirement behind *karmayoga*. This is the measuring scale which measures the state of a *karmayogi*. This is the measuring scale of spiritual evolution too. The inner evenness alone is meaningful. This evenness is at the root of the outlook. In due course, this becomes the mission of life for the one, who has divine vision (*Brahman-drishhti*). Refer verse 54 of the 18th chapter.

***durena hyavaram karma buddhiyogad dhanamjaya /
buddhau saranam anviccha krpanah phalahetavah //49//***

“O’ Arjuna, as compared to *karmas* done by applying mind (*buddhi-yoga*), other *karmas* are far inferior. Take recourse to reasoned intellect (*buddhi*). Those doing *karmas* for the sake of results are miserly.” (49)

In the present verse, by making a comparison, importance of *karmayoga* has been highlighted.

Karmayoga itself has been called ‘*budhiyoga*’ i.e. the reasoned intellect’. Trust in reasoned intellect (*buddhi-nishtha*) is important in this yoga. *Karma* can be destroyer of bonds or of creator of fresh bonds depending upon the nature of the faith, the motive, behind it..

Those who do *karmas* for the sake of results are mean. Their vision is limited to external form of *karma* and to its gross results. Because of their meanness, they bargain their *karmas* at a very cheap price. Due to their ignorance, they sell diamonds at the price of a stone. *Karma* can unite us with *parameshwara* beyond *prakriti* provided our faith is firm. By practicing *karmayoga*, we not only become free from bonds of *prakriti* but also become its master. Because of our short sightedness and our greed we can neither see far nor can we have patience.

To have conviction i.e. *buddhi* is to develop faith in *Karmayoga*. Shri *Bhagwan* was asking Arjuna to do that, so that he could go beyond both virtue and vice.

A *karma* done by a *karmayogi* and the same *karma* done by an ordinary person have wide difference in their effect. One leads to union (*yoga*) and the other to separation (*viyoga*). One leads to deliverance (*moksha*) and the other to bondage. One removes attachment and the other strengthens attachment. One is the cause of detachment and the other leads to attachment. The difference is as wide as between heaven and earth.

*buddhiyukto jahati 'ha ubhe sukrtaduskrte |
tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam //50//*

“A person having wisdom (of *Karmayoga*) becomes free from both evil and virtue in this world. Therefore, do strive for this *yoga*. *Yoga* is skill in doing *karmas*.” (50)

Now Shri *Bhagwan* describes the effects of *karmayoga*.

An ordinary *karmata* taints the doer with vice or virtue. While analysing the nature of *karmas*, Vyasji (while commenting upon the aphorisms of Patanjali) writes that *karmas* are of four kinds - *shukla*⁴⁰, *krishna*⁴¹, *shukla-krishna*, *ashukla-krishna*. *Shukla* means a virtuous *karma* and only by *yogis* can do such *karmas*. *Krishna* is a sinful *karma*. *Shukla-krishna karma* is a mixture of sin and virtue. *Ashukla-Krishna* is that *karma* which is neither sin nor virtue. A virtuous *karma* is the cause of happiness and a sinful *karma* is of unhappiness. A *karma* done by an ordinary person is a mixture of sin and virtue. Only a *karma* done by a *yogi* is full of merit. By doing *karmas* whatever pleasure or pain a person gets for himself he has to endure. The bonds created by *karmas* keep a person in the cycle of birth and death.

Every person aspires to be always happy. Virtue results in happiness⁴². Every person wants to be happy. But the compulsions of the world as well as our own compulsions make us commit unwanted sins along with virtues. Consequently, we receive mixture of both happiness and unhappiness. The desire of flowers drags us to thorns. The desire to eat sweets forces us to taste bitter things too. There is no device by which we can gather only virtues and remain free from sins. For a *yogi*, that is possible. But his life and his *karmas* are of a different level.

⁴⁰ *shukla*: means bright, white or virtuous

⁴¹ *Krishna*: here this word has been used to mean dark or evil

⁴² Pleasure and happiness have been used for the same experience.

In fact, bonds of our *karmas* lead to our happiness and unhappiness. Their enjoyments limit us in this finite world. Therefore, virtue and vice, which cause happiness and unhappiness, are a form of our bonds. Only on becoming free from them, we can be free from the cycle of birth and death. We can be peaceful only after becoming free from both vice and virtue.

Of course this is strange. We want to avoid unhappiness but with that we have to forego happiness as well. Is there a way by which we can avoid unhappiness and can always be happy? If we look at it carefully then we will find that what we call 'happiness' is so closely related to unhappiness and eventually becomes a form of unhappiness. The efforts required for achieving happiness and hope and despair associated with them are all forms of unhappiness. One can have peace only by going beyond both happiness and unhappiness.

The state beyond happiness and unhappiness is the state of inertness. As compared to human beings, animals have less feeling of happiness –unhappiness. Vegetation has still less. Inert world normally does not have any feelings. Will it not be going back in the process of evolution by losing the ability to feel? This question arises.

The state of being beyond happiness and unhappiness is very different from the state of consciousness of the inert world. The state beyond happiness has wisdom, has peace, and has bliss. That bliss, which is like absolute satisfaction whose basis is not the absence of desires but is the fullness of *atman*, our innate bliss. That feeling is of much higher level and is stable than happiness. This is an advanced stage of evolution. After attaining this state a person is beyond dualities of happiness and unhappiness.

In the process of evolution, transgression of both happiness and unhappiness is absolutely necessary and so also of both virtue and vice. The obvious meaning of this transgression is disappearance of the feeling of committing sin or virtue. This state may look like the state of an animal, but in reality, it is very different. Such a person feels himself in everyone and everyone in himself. He abides innately in the Divine. He becomes free from any possibility of having likes and dislikes, from any upsurge of passions and anger, and from the bonds of ego, which are verily roots of evil.

To get over both vice and virtue in this manner is necessary for progressing in the process of evolution and to achieve freedom from the cycle of birth and death. A person acting with the wisdom of *karmayoga* becomes free from both vice and virtue.

The desire for results binds us with *karma* in its gross form. The tendency of *karma* (*samsakara*) sticks to us and forces us to enjoy its results. Only our desire drags us to the physical world. Practitioner of the *buddhi-yoga*⁴³ by making efforts gradually becomes free from the desire of results. The result of *karma* does not remain an inspiration for doing *karma*. For him duty becomes his inspiration for his *karmas*. Gradually his inner-self becomes pure. His selfish desires are destroyed. Evenness of his intellect strikes at his ego. The person becomes free from the feeling of doership. Since he does his *karmas* in discharge of his duties and responsibilities he does

⁴³ Buddhi-yoga: the one who follows yoga with wisdom

not bother about the consequences of his *karma*. The result of his *karmas* do not bind him as if some one else has done it. He is free from both vice and virtue. In spite of being a doer, he is not a doer. That is the state of '*naishyakarmaya*' i.e. a state where *karmas* become impotent'. This is the success of *karmayoga*.

Shri *Bhagwan* motivates Arjuna to follow the path of *karmayoga* and in praise of that path he says, '*yoga* is a skill in doing *karma*'.

'*yogah karmasu kaushalam*' does not mean that only skill in doing *karma* is *yoga*. It is exactly opposite. It means that *yoga* is the skill of doing *karmas* without attachment. There is a world of difference between the two. The one considers *yoga* as one's skill and diligence in doing *karmas* as a sign of *yoga* irrespective of the motive behind his *karma*. He may or may not be desirous of the results of his *karma*. In his view the one who is skilled in doing his *karma* is a *yogi*. This view is not necessarily correct. A *karmayogi* does his *karmas* as a form of *sadhana*, as his duty, and therefore, he is able to concentrate his energies on his *karma*. But it is not necessary that he will always be successful.

Then, how is *yoga* a skill in *karma*? A *yogi* remains free from the bonds of *karma* even while doing his *karmas*. An ordinary person is bounded just by doing *karmas*. His *karmas* create tendencies in him and they become the cause of his rebirth. He is tainted by evil as well as virtue. But a *yogi* does not bind himself as he does his duty as his *karmas*. He also weakens his old tendencies by doing his duty with his reasoned understanding. Gradually his old tendencies are destroyed. Ultimately, his *karmas* become pure. In due course of time he makes every *karma* a means of his liberation, whereas an ordinary person creates bonds for himself. This skill is *yoga*.

It is necessary to understand this specific skill for a correct understanding of *karmayoga*.

*karmajam buddhiyukta hi phalam tyaktva manisinah |
janmabandhavinirmuktah padam gacchanty anamayam ||51||*

"Wise men united in their *buddhi*⁴⁴ renouncing possible fruits⁴⁵ which their *karmas* could yield and freed from the bonds of birth reach a state free from unhappiness." (51)

In the previous verse, it was said – '*budhiyukto Jahatih ubhe sukritdushkrite*' i.e. a person endowed with balanced mind is free from both vice and virtue. What then is the result of this freedom from vice and virtue? An answer is given in this verse.

Is there any difference between the first part of the previous verse and the first part of this verse? There does not appear to be any significant difference. In the previous verse renouncement of both vice and virtue was advised. In this verse, renouncement of the fruits of *karmas* is advised. By renouncing both vice and virtue, a person becomes free from happiness and unhappiness, which his *karmas* can give. The result of *karma* gives happiness or unhappiness. Apart from this, the tendencies created in the doer of *karma*, which become cause of future desires and passions, are

⁴⁴ *buddhi*: connotes the wisdom of a *yogi*. In the present context a *yogi* means a *karma yogi*.

⁴⁵ "Fruits" refer to the desired result of action - that for which an ordinary person works; that which is the cause of his unhappiness or happiness.

more important. They bind the doer. They start the chain of bonds. It is much more difficult to be free from these tendencies. A person can only be free from happiness and unhappiness after he bears the fruits of his *karmas*. Like, the bullet fired from a gun hits the target, but the backfire of the gun hurts the gunman himself. Similarly, *karmas* have two-way effect. The backfire of the gun is weak but has a very deep impact. Similarly, the tendency created by karma has deeper impact within the doer.

If the *intellect* has really become equanimous, if the *karma* has become perfectly natural, if the doer of *karma* has lost all desire for its results, then the doer can be free from the effects of his *karmas*. This is called equanimous intellect or balanced mind i.e. *buddhi*. This is faith in *karmayoga*. *Akarmayogi* is neither happy nor unhappy and there is no possibility of emergence of any desire in him due to his *karma*. His *karma* becomes like a line drawn on the surface of water. The *karma* done by him disappears as soon as it is done.

This is the state of perfection (*sidhavastha*) of equanimous mind. When a person continues to do his *karmas* with devotion and equanimity his inner self gradually becomes pure and that weakens his passions. He loses even a subtle expectation for results. Even the feeling of doer-ship starts vanishing. For him *karma* becomes as natural to him as it is for the Sun to give light, for fire to give heat, etc. The sunlight creates different effects at different places. At some places it is a cause of life and at other it becomes a cause for death, but Sun cannot be blamed. Similar is the result of observance of *svadharma* by a *karmayogi*. He has no personal motive behind his *karma*. His *karmas* do not give him any satisfaction or dissatisfaction. He does his *karmas* without any expectation. This is the state of perfection (*sidhavastha*) of a *karma yogi*. A person attains this state by regular and continuous practice.

Such a person is really a sage. One whose duty consciousness is his inspiration to work, who has considerable mental strength and whose mind can understand subtle aspects of any subject, is called a sage. The practice of *karmayoga* is not for fools. A *karmayogi* always remains internally alert. He always has to keep an eye on the outer and inner effects of his *karmas*. He also has to be watchful of latent desires for results. He always continues to make an attempt to purify his thoughts by proper and concentrated efforts.

An aspirant by continuously practicing *karmayoga* becomes internally pure and sublime and he gradually becomes a sage. As the veil of love and hate is lifted, his intellect is strengthened and purified gradually..

Such a perfect *karmayogi* becomes entirely free from the bonds of birth and death. Why are there bonds of birth and death? The desire for enjoyments alone brings a person back to this world. After return to the material world again, he again performs *karmas* and reinforces desires. The cycle continues. A *karmayogi* cuts the cord of desire by doing his *karmas* without any expectation. As a result, he will have no need for rebirth. There will be no bonds because it is the desire that binds a person. Nothing external binds him. In this manner intellect of a *karmayogi* becomes free from desires and tendencies and acquires freedom from all causes of bonds.

What is the result of acquiring this state? It is attainment of the state of 'anamaya' i.e. freedom from unhappiness. 'amaya' is unhappiness. A person attains a state where there is no possibility of any unhappiness. We expect happiness from outside world. However, we get unhappiness also along with happiness. When we do not have desires we do not have to get anything from outside world. Then we are free from unhappiness and along with that we also do not expect any happiness from *prakriti*. Freedom from evil frees us from virtue as well. The person becomes free from consequences of his *karmas*. In reality, virtue is as much a bond as a vice. Along with pleasures of *prakriti*, pains are linked. A *karmayogi* achieves the state of freedom from unhappiness. He goes beyond the bonds of nature. This is the state where *karmas* become infertile (*naishyakarmaya*). A *Samkhya-yogi* also does his *sadhana* with this objective. This objective easily achieved by doing *karmas* (by performing duty) with full devotion.

The means for achieving this wisdom (devotion in *karma*) is now discussed. After this, characteristics of such wisdom (*gyan*) will also be described. The next two verses 52 & 53 discuss these two important aspects. In fact, without knowing the means, willingness for doing *karmas* desirelessly cannot be developed. This is not merely a matter of understanding because it completely transforms one's entire life into an entirely different mould. The next verse deals with the practice of *karmayoga*. Without knowing this method of practice the entire discussion of *karmayoga* reduces itself to sheer verbosity.

*yada te mohakalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati /
tada gantasi nirvedam srotavyasya srutasya ca //52||
srutivipratipanna te yada sthasyati niscala /
samadhav acala buddhis tada yogam avapsyasi //53||*

"When your intellect (*buddhi*) properly removes this veil of (mire of) delusion, then you will become indifferent towards what has been heard and what is yet to be heard". (52)

"When your intellect, confused by Vedas, becomes firm and stable in the state of *samadhi* then you will attain this *yoga*." (53)

Why was the intellect of Arjuna confused? Why was Arjuna deviating from the path of his duty? Why was Arjuna worried about fighting? For the intellect of Arjuna was in the mire of delusion. He was unable to correctly perceive his duty due to the veil of delusion, which had covered up his intellect.

Delusion is indicative of ignorance. To be deluded means to become devoid of consciousness, or being unconscious. In the state of delusion, one does not have proper awareness of the self and of the situation. Mother has affection for her child; a wife for her husband; and friends for their friends. An attachment is indicative of love. Delusion indicates confusion in mind due to that very love. A mother in the state of delusion does not know what is good for her child. An indulgent mother feeds him excessively. Because of her love, she overlooks bad habits of her child. She behaves in this manner without being aware of her own condition and of her child. Her ignorance harms both of them.

This was the condition of Arjuna too. He was attached to his relations. He was unable to bear the possibility of physical harm that might be caused to them or the possibility of their death. Consequently, he considered war as undesirable. Overwhelmed deeply in his attachment, Arjuna could not even understand what was his duty at that time. This confusion was the cause of his distress.

For following the path of *karmayoga*, qualities of firmness of mind, capability of taking decision after due consideration of alternatives, and to remain firm about the decision taken, are necessary. Why is a person unable to decide and continues to have doubts? The main cause is his delusion, because of which he is unable to think clearly. As he does not have proper understanding of the situation, he is unable to appreciate merits of various alternatives before him. Consequently, he keeps vacillating between various alternatives.

Besides this, we hear many opinions. Once we have proper understanding of the situation we can correctly understand various views. We can understand a the situation and can take appropriate decision. Because of inner impurity of the intellect we do not correctly understand teachings and the directions of scriptures (*shastras*) and also the advice of experienced people. We are not able to find proper solution for a given situation. Therefore, our doubts persist. Scriptures give directions to people according to their ability and as required in different situations. Only the one who has clarity of thoughts can understand those directions.

When a person does not have his own understanding, he consults others. But, once he is clear in his mind, he need not consult others. He knows what he wants to do. He is aware of his own weaknesses. He only needs will power to act. He knows that everything can not be achieved in one day.

A person can understand the substance of what he has heard. He can understand that in practical terms. Therefore, he becomes indifferent to them. In the state of perfection (*siddhi*) of *karmayoga*, every thing which has been ever heard and which needs to be heard becomes useless because the purpose of scriptures is already served. For he has already attained enlightenment for which scriptures give directions.

Shri *Bhagwan*, therefore, told Arjuna that 'when the veil of confusion is removed from your mind, you will become indifferent to what others say'.

In the next verse (53) it has been clearly stated that scriptures sometimes confuse the mind. They toss from one side to the other and do not provide clarity. This clarity comes from within. The inner clarity can only come by doing *karmas* as per the procedure prescribed in scriptures. Mere listening to scriptures does not provide clarity. Shri *Bhagwan* has himself validated the scriptures in chapter 16 (verse 24).

It is necessary to properly understand the utility of scriptures. Scriptures are the authority for defining duty and non-duty. Scriptures prescribe duties of a warrior (*kshatriyas*). Arjuna should follow them. As a result of performing those duties he would be able to get over his confusion and in due course his intellect would also stabilise. Moreover, scriptures define violence and non-

violence, prescribe offerings as oblations to departed souls, and speak of many other things. By knowing that, intellect of a person is confused. What is the direction of the scriptures for a given situation is all that needs to be known and followed. Every thing else create confusion. Normally scriptures confuse the minds of people.

A person whose intellect has become stable can alone understand the importance of various subjects discussed in scriptures and can become capable of taking his own decision about his duty and non-duty.

The intellect is stabilised when a person understands the importance of his duties for taking him on his spiritual journey and then he undertakes his journey. Arjuna was confused primarily due to advice he received from others. He had lost the power of taking his decision about what he was required to do. Shri *Bhagwan*, therefore, told him that when his delusion is removed and when the confusion of his mind created by what he heard removed then only the right course of action will be clear to him.

‘*samadhavachala*’ i.e. stable in *samadhi*⁴⁶. ‘After the removal of confusion, your mind will stabilise in *samadhi*’. What is this *samadhi*? Is it the state reached by making senses introvert after closing the eyes? That is not *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is a state of calmness of mind for finding a solution. It is a peaceful and poised state of intellect. It is immaterial whether the eyes are open or closed. In the state of *Samadhi*, mind is free from capriciousness, sense organs do not disturb and the intellect is stable. *Samadhi* can also be with open eyes.

That *samadhi* is effortless (*sahaz*) *samadhi*. In the state of *samadhi*, mind is stable and devoid of volitions; and is peaceful and poised. Such a state is in reality a state of steady mind.

Shri *Bhagwan* says: ‘when this kind of stability becomes your second nature then you will attain to this yoga’. Then only Arjuna could become a perfect *karmayogi*.

Subsequent verses of this chapter describe how a *karmayogi* has to achieve this unique state of mind. How does a *karmayogi*, becoming free from temptations, convert his *karmas* into a means for his *sadhana* and how does he easily attain to the stage a sage or an aspirant of the path of meditation attains with much difficulty. In the following verses, this has been described.

arjuna uvaca
sthitaprajnasya ka bhasa samadhisthasya kesava |
sthitadhih kim prabhaseta kim asita vrajeta kim ||54||

Arjuna spoke thus -

“O Keshav! How will you describe the person whose mind is stable in *samadhi*? How a person of stable mind speaks? How does he sit and how does he walk?” (54)

The remaining verses of this chapter are for explaining the concept of ‘*sthitpragya*’. In the preceding verse, it was said: ‘when your mind will be stable then you will attain to this yoga’.

⁴⁶ Samadhi: the highest state of consciousness in which the self is in tune with the divine self.

Therefore, stability of mind is necessary for the practice of *karmayoga*. In fact, the attainment of firmness of mind is indicative of success in *karmayoga*. Arjuna raised this subject by a question.

Since this question has arisen from the previous verse, 'the state of *samadhi*' and 'the firmness of mind' have been used to answer this question

Arjuna wanted to know about the state, which Shri *Bhagwan* indicated earlier. After all what happens by attaining firmness of mind and by achieving an inner peace and tranquility? What are internal and external signs of that state? The definition of a word or of a state explains and communicates their correct meaning to others.

How does a '*sthitpragya*' sit, walk, etc? The purpose of this question is the same i.e. Arjuna wanted to know in detail about the state of '*sthitpragya*'. In reply to this question, we are fully apprised about the practice (*sadhana*) of *karma yoga*. We will get the description of the state of success of '*naishyakarmaya*' in the fourth chapter.

shri bhagavan uvaca
prajahati yadakaman sarvan partha manogatan /
atmanny eva 'tmana tustah sthitaprajnas tado 'cyate ||55||

Shri *Bhagwan* said -

O Arjuna! When a person leaves all his desires arising in mind and his *atman* is content in *atman* (i.e. he is satisfied in himself), then he is said to be of stable mind (*sthitprajna*). (55).

When does mind of a person become stable? This question has been answered. Firstly, after all desires, arising in mind, need to be abandoned. Secondly, person has to be content within himself. These two requirements need to be understood properly.

Desires arising in the mind are those, which have deep influence on us and through which direction to our mind and heart is given. When a person has desire for a son, he remains agitated. His heart longs for a son from time to time. Similar are the desires for wealth, for recognition in the society, etc. A desire to take revenge entering deep within can also create agitation in mind. The desires arising in mind cast a veil over the intelligence of the person concerned. A person starts looking at the world in the light of his desires. The means for satisfaction of these desires become necessary and those obstructing satisfaction become futile. One is unable to appreciate real merits and demerits of his means. Consequently, the intellect of the person is corrupted. He starts diverting his energies for the satisfaction of his desires and that makes it difficult for him to remain peaceful. With the awakening of desires, there is turmoil within. Consequently, due to the flush of desires, intelligence becomes restless and uncertain, and incapable of knowing the reality. Is complete absence of desires necessary for the firmness of intelligence? A person in the grip of his desires feels life meaningless without satisfaction of his desires. He feels that happiness is possible only by fulfillment of desires. Such people feel that without desires life of a man is like that of animals.

Human beings are not animals because they have desires. Desires emerge as a result of the development of the power to think (*manomaya kosha*) and it is only because of desires a person becomes able to experience happiness and unhappiness. Unlike animals, man can experience happiness and unhappiness. When desires give happiness, then they also give unhappiness. This is an inevitable relationship. If we want happiness, arising out of desires, then we should be prepared to experience unhappiness too. If we want to be free from unhappiness, then we will have to abandon desires and also the happiness associated with them.

The consciousness beyond that of a normal human being is the one beyond happiness and unhappiness. Evenness of mind is its basic requirement. Evenness of mind is in the form of firmness, peace and poise. Desire is at the root of mental disturbance. In the state of evenness, desires do not exist. Therefore, a complete abandonment of desires is necessary for evenness. The state of peace and poise is not like a state of vacuum. In reality this state, when fully developed, is full of bliss and knowledge. This bliss is infinitely greater and satisfying than happiness. From that perspective, happiness gained by satisfaction of desires appears like unhappiness. Unhappiness is indeed unhappiness.

Such a person does not become good for nothing. In him, the place of desires is taken over by the will of the Divine as his inspiration for work. He becomes an instrument in the hands of the Divine.

The other sign of *sthithprajna* is "satisfied withinself". A person tries to gain happiness from *prakriti* through his mind and sense organs. He wants to be happy by seeing beautiful objects with his eyes, by hearing melodious music with his ears and similarly wants to be happy by enjoying other objects through other sense organs. He is happy by hearing his own praises. He gets pleasure through the satisfaction of his desires. Such happiness depends upon two factors: (i) sense organs, mind and inherent nature; and (ii) outside situations i.e. external environment. This happiness cannot be gained in the absence of any one of them. One cannot be happy if there are eyes but no beauty, and if there is beauty but no eyes to admire. The happiness that we get internally, through our faith and feelings, depends upon our mental state. If we are not in the right frame of mind, we cannot be happy. And to a great extent, our mental condition depends upon our physical conditions and circumstances. Therefore, we are dependent on *prakriti* for our happiness but it is never stable.

Therefore, till such time, we need such happiness, we cannot become stable. The absence of such happiness will make us restless. Desire for happiness makes us restless. And even while having pleasures, mind may still be restless. So there cannot be equanimity while having pleasures and while not having them.

A person, who has no such expectations, can alone remain equanimous. One whose consciousness is established in *atman* and who has started experiencing self-satisfaction, he alone can be indifferent to such happiness (happiness gained by the satisfaction of desires). His happiness is alone stable. Until the consciousness of a person is not united with his *atman* he will continue to be influenced by *prakriti* and the changes of *prakriti* will continue to create disturbance in him.

Intellect itself is of *prakriti* and so restlessness of the intellect is innate and natural. But when the consciousness of a person is firmly established in *atman* then the stability of such consciousness stabilises the intellect too. That consciousness of the Self changes its nature and the intellect having become pure appreciates this truth properly.

A person free from desires can alone attain full contentment in *atman*. *Atman* becomes the means of his happiness. He does not experience happiness in his mind and sense organs, but in his *atman*. The absence of satisfaction of desires does not disturb his happiness because he has no desires. Secondly, his happiness is not from *prakriti* but is from his *atman*. Therefore, he remains free from external influences. The intellect of such a person always remains stable.

This state is possible only when our consciousness beyond the intellect is awakened and we start rejoicing in it.

***dukkhesv anudviganamanah sukhesu vigatasprah /
vitaragbhayakrodhah sthitadhir munir ucyate ||56||***

In this verse characteristics of a '*sthitpragya*' have been mentioned -

“One whose mind is not troubled in sorrow, who has no desire for happiness and who is free from passion, fear and anger, is called a sage of settled intelligence (*sthitadhir*).” (56)

Now the state of mind of a *sthitpragya* is described. Distress in midst of sorrows is natural. Craving for pleasures is also natural in a person. However, in a *sthitpragya* person neither distress nor craving for pleasures exists. He does not become restless in sorrow. He has no longing for pleasures. In fact, pleasures and sorrow are from the point of view of others. For him both become equal. In both situations, he continues to be serene.

In the world, people become hardened by repeatedly hurt. Then they do not feel pain in hours of crisis. Because of insensitivity they develop, they lose the ability to laugh or being happy at times of happiness. This is not the condition of a *sthitpragya*. He knows everything but such instances do not influence him. He correctly understands situations and can also know possible losses accruing due to them, but he does not become restless. Similarly, while anticipating happy situations of life, he is not overjoyed. Knowing and becoming happy or unhappy is not the same thing. In an ordinary person, the two are so inter-mingled that he is unable to differentiate between the two. Hearing an abuse and becoming angry happen simultaneously. The reactions of a stable minded person (*sthitpragya*) are in his control and are not mechanical. He acquires this capability.

In fact his mental faculties are so developed that he never loses his composure. His mind is so firmly fixed in his awakened consciousness that no aberration is possible and he is neither distressed in unhappiness nor is he overjoyed in happiness. Without any effort, he remains peaceful and poised.

'*vitragbhayakrodhah*' i.e. free from passion, fear and anger. This is another characteristic of such a person. He is beyond any passion (*raag*), fear or anger. Intense desire is called 'passion

(*raag*)'. He has no passion and no fear and he does not become angry. The advice is for gaining freedom from all the three but not for getting over them by making forceful efforts. This is clear that in such a person there is no possibility for such reaction. If passion, fear or anger is possible, how then can his mind be peaceful? Attachments influence the mind instantaneously. The person starts perceiving differently. Fear also disturbs the mind. What to say of the mind, fear makes the body tremble. In fear, a person loses his capacity to think. This is so in anger also. Anger can make a person totally indiscrete. In anger, a person has no awareness for right or wrong and of proper or improper. As if under the spell of a ghost, a person commits misdeeds and repents for them later.

These three are lower tendencies of the mind (*manomaya*). Only on getting over these lower tendencies that the mind becomes peaceful and the intellect can remain stable, otherwise the intellect keeps on vacillating under their influence. Therefore, a stable minded person (*sthitpragya*) is said to be free from them. Then, how can one achieve freedom from them? The follower of this path has to be ever watchful. He will have to overcome his passions (*raag*), fear and anger arising within with the help of his determination. Firstly, one has to learn to recognise them. Their influence reduces when a person becomes his own witness. Then our determination and firm resolve can gradually free us from these aberrations of mind. A *karmayogi* makes an effort to get over them by exercising his power of discrimination and using the strength of his resolve. Changing situations help him to learn to remain stable in the turmoils of life. His intellect supports him.

He who contemplates is as a *sage* (*muni*). He is a true *sage* in whom capability to discriminate between right or wrong has developed. One does not become a sage simply by living in forests and eating vegetable roots, but becomes so by having the power of discrimination. Without this capability how is self-control possible? Therefore, this word, has been used for a stable minded person (*sthitpragya*)

***yah sarvatra 'nabhisnehas tat-tat prapya subhasubham /
na 'bhinandati nadvesti tasya prajna pratisthita ||57||***

“Who remains undisturbed in different situations, good or bad, who is free from all attachments and who neither welcomes auspicious nor detests evil, his intellect (*buddhi*) is stable”. (57).

One achieves the state of stable mindedness (*sthitpragya*) by firmness of intelligence, and by stability of sense organs and the vital (*prana*). Only on these two becoming stable, the intelligence is stable otherwise on their being disturbed, intelligence is also disturbed. In the last two verses (55-56) the stability of the mind has been discussed in many ways. To make the concept clear it is again discussed in the 57th verse.

Auspicious normally gives happiness and desired by the people of the world. Gains of wealth, birth, honour, victory, etc. are auspicious. Normal people always hope for them. When something good happens, they welcome it. Drums beaten, victory columns erected and feasts arranged. By having good experiences, the heart is overjoyed. This is normal human behaviour and is normal mental reaction.

Opposed to them are evils like death, disease, loss, insult, etc. A person never wants them. However, they do come in life. Despite knowing this, one avoids them and is not prepared to accept them happily. One wants to avoid them or to remain away from them. This is also the normal human behaviour and is normal mental reaction.

By spiritual practice (*sadhana*) mind changes. One's nature may also change radically. Gradually evenness develops. Internal evenness brings about evenness in external behaviour.

Good and evil become equal for a person having internal evenness. Neither he has a desire for having auspicious nor for avoiding evil. He accepts both good and evil by remaining even.

Shri Ramchandraji was about to be coronated. There was no special expression of happiness on his face. As if nothing great was about to happen and when he was asked to go in exile there was no trace of dejection in him. This was the evenness of his mind. Even on becoming a beggar from the king, there was no turmoil within. Raghunathjee was stable minded (*sthirmati*). The condition of citizens of *Ayodhya* was entirely different.

Stability can be achieved by making efforts and by controlling emotions but then such stability is not deep. There is always a possibility of disturbance under pressures. The turmoils of life gradually make a person even. One, who never had any set back in his life, becomes highly worried even under a minor set back. One, who had many set backs, is seldom worried. It also happens in happiness. One who is generally happy any new happy event does not make him overjoyed.

New experienced disturbs a person more. Experiences of life play an important role in the development of consciousness. Lessons learnt by experiences are never forgotten. They go deep within and do not remain confined to the mind. In fact, they go deep in the psyche through the mind.

A person attains complete evenness with the descent of higher consciousness of the mind, and that transforms his character. This we will discuss later.

In previous three verses (55, 56 & 57), we find characteristics of an even minded person. Along with that the concept of '*atmannyevatmanna tushtah*' i.e. the Self is content in the Self, has been discussed. The sign of contentment relates to the mind. Mind has no rest without contentment. As long as there are desires, likes and dislikes will also exist.

Therefore, the mind of a stable minded person (*sthitpragya*) is even. He is free from all disturbing tendencies.

After this, the state of his sense organs and of his vital (*prana*) are now being described.

*yada samharate ca 'yam kurmo 'ngani 'va sarvasah|
indriyani 'ndriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita ||58||*

“As a tortoise withdraws his limbs from all sides, likewise when he (a person) withdraws his sense organs from objects of senses then his intellect becomes stable”. (58)

A tortoise can withdraw his limbs within his back whenever he wants. Only an outer shield remains visible. Neither his head nor his legs are visible. Nobody can hurt him. When an aspirant attains such ability, his intellect can remain firm. *'Indriyarthe'*- objects of senses attracts sense organs. Sense organs drag the mind and restlessness of the mind makes the intellect restless. Therefore, as long as we are unable to detach our senses from their objects, whenever we want, stability of our intellect will not be permanent. We can become victim of our likes and dislikes anytime. Our evenness can be disturbed.

Saints practice this. Through various methods of meditation, this capability is developed. By concentrating on one subject, consciousness of the body is lost.

This means that whenever an object attracts respective sense organ should be withdrawn from that object and then we will be able to escape from the grip of that specific object. This race of cat and mouse becomes an every day game of our life. The forceful withdrawal of sense organs from their objects like closing the eyes on seeing a beautiful object, to make the tongue insensitive to taste while eating tasty food, or to close the nose to prevent sweet smells, has the same effect irrespective of whether the attraction is from outside or it comes without our specific efforts. The sense organs can be made insensitive by acquiring control over the centers controlling sense organs by strong determination.

This is a state where attraction for objects does exist but at the same time ability to escape from that attraction is also developed in us. This is not a state of an innate and fearless control. In perfection of self-control, there is no need for external control. If there is still a need for an effort to control then self-control is not yet fully achieved. In this state, the possibility of a downfall is always there. In such a state the evenness of the intellect is neither firm nor it is innate.

We find many examples. Great saints lost their self-control by the mere sight of a woman. Shrangī Rishi could not bear the sight of Shanta. *Puranas* are full of such stories, and in this world many instances come to our notice where saints lose their self-control. This control is only an egocentric psychological wall, which easily falls to the ground before the attraction of objects (of passionate desire).

For complete fearlessness, the only remedy is total eradication of passions. After destruction of all tendencies. The mind of such a person is so changed that activities of passion become impossible. It is impossible to achieve such control as long as tendencies exist. Once complete transformation takes place desires do not exist.

In this verse we get the description of the limit to which the method prescribed by the protagonists of self-control can take us.

The next verse introduces us to a stage beyond this.

*visaya vinivartante niraharasya dehinah |
rasavarjam raso 'py asya param drstva nivartate ||59||*

“Persons who abstain from the objects of senses i.e. remain ‘*nirahaar*’, do not lose taste for them. One loses taste after the Supreme (*parameshwara*) is seen.”(59)

‘*ahaarah*’- whatever is experienced by sense organs is called *ahaara*(its food). Therefore, enjoying sense objects is like taking food (*ahaar*). He who does not enjoy sense objects is without food (*nirahaar*). As has been stated in the last verse, by withdrawing sense organs from their objects a person abstains from their *ahaar*. Objects turn away from such a ‘*nirahaari*’ person. As the practice grows, the grip of objects weakens. The more we enjoy the objects, more attraction we have for them. Why will the objects trouble a person living in forest? They do not come to him. Therefore, how could there be restlessness in him?

By remaining ‘*nirahaar*’ in this manner, the sense objects do not hold a person in their clutches but the person does not lose taste for them. The taste developed by enjoying objects is the cause of their grip. As soon as an object becomes available, the person is entrapped. That leads to his downfall. As an explosive does not explode till it gets the spark, but the moment it gets spark it explodes. The same is the condition of such a person. His inner-self is full of explosive. As soon as the fire of objects comes in contact the self-control of the person explodes.

Therefore, the follower of this path will have to move very cautiously. He will have to ignore sense objects. In fact the inner tendencies are very powerful. So long as inner desire for enjoyments is present deep within there is danger. The tendencies will have to be exhausted by enjoying them either in the gross or in a subtle form. While trying to escape from sense objects, we always battle against latent desires. The discrimination of the intellect also blows over by the force of these latent desires. Even great scholars lose their presence of mind and become blind i.e. they become indiscrete.

For the followers of this path of ascent i.e. the path of self-control, there is no alternative.

Is such a state possible where the person is free from the fear of a downfall? This state is possible when the objects do not attract him, when they cease to be objects of enjoyment. This state is reached by union with the Supreme and that becomes an enjoyment in itself.

Shri *Bhagwan* says that such a state is possible. This can happen when one has the vision of *parameshwara*. Then one loses interest in objects of senses. After having the vision of the Supreme Being i.e. *parameshwara*, what other object can attract a person? Only just one glimpse of Him makes one inebriated and makes him free from all desires. That makes a person forget himself and rises above lowly objects of this world. Why did Meera move in the state of intoxication? Why did Surdas and Tulsidas, leaving everything, remained in intoxication for *parameshwara*? Why Gopis were always lost in His thoughts, forgetting everything else? The vision of the Divine raises a person above the clutches of sense objects and burns all his lower tendencies. A person is so engrossed in that state that nothing else can catch him in its grip. The vision of the Divine and yearning for Him together make an aspirant pure and sublime. He goes beyond any possibility of a downfall. Gradually, for him everything becomes filled with the Divine. The *advaita*⁴⁷ of *Vedanta* becomes a reality for him.

⁴⁷ Advaita: non-duality

This is the result of having the vision of the Divine. It is just beyond our imagination as to what will happen when one abides in His Being.

Since a person can be completely free from the influences of objects only after having seen Him, why then should he not make an effort to see Him first? If the ultimate solution of the problem is not in building a dam, then it is useless to build it. This is the viewpoint of a devotee.

How does one see Him? He can be seen by having an unconditional devotion. How one can have unconditional devotion? That devotion one gets by the grace of the Divine, by the blessing of a saint, or by the auspicious influence of the name of the Divine. Then, why should a person not use his energies in that direction? By thinking so evenness does not remain the objective of life. Devotion to the Divine becomes one's goal of life. This is an easy way to attain evenness in life. This is the view of the path of descent. And in this path, everything begins to happen on its own.

As the Divine consciousness descends in an individual, he automatically gains self-control. Without an effort of any kind, attraction for the sense objects is lost. An unknowing aspirant is himself astonished to experience at what happens to him. Sometimes he gets worried to note that he has lost interest in many good things of life as they lose all attraction. There are many such examples in life.

The name of Shri Bhagwan is an easy way for self-control provided the name gets awakened in us and we have the will to follow the path.

By the blessings of a saint, name awakens in us. This journey is completed by the Grace of the Divine and then total freedom from sense objects is attained. Then, no new tendency is created in a person even while he enjoys all the pleasures of life and yet he is not caught in their grip. People do not call him indulgent because there is no difference in his indulgence and in his union with the Divine. Such a person remains untouched like a lotus in water.

In fact, self-control is the basis of (in the present context) the state of stable intelligence (*sthitpragya*). This spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is as per *Samkhya Yoga*. Devotion is not its basis. This does not depend upon the Grace of the Divine. Here reference to the subject of devotion is only by way of introduction for taking it up later. Devotion is not an essential part of *sadhana* of the path of Samkhya. The final state of realisation of this *sadhana* is called: '*brahman nirvan*'. Refer to verse 72 of this chapter.

Therefore, a warning is being given for exercising self-control.

*yatato hy api kaunteya purusasya vipascitah/
indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah ||60||
tani sarvani samyamy yukta asita matparah |
vase hi yasye 'ndriyani tasya prajna pratisthita ||61||*

“O’Arjuna! Sense organs, which have the tendency of creating mischief, forcibly drag the mind of even an experienced (wise) person striving for having full control over his self.” (60)

“The person should remain firm in yoga by controlling all his sense organs and surrendering himself to Me. He whose sense organs are in control, his intellect (*buddhi*) is firm and well stabilised”. (61)

‘*vipaschit*’ - well experienced and mature i.e. experienced and discerning. One who has had different experiences of life and has attained knowledge about self-control.

Sense organs are ‘*pramathi*’ i.e. obstinate, which agitates – churns. That which churns vigorously is ‘*pramathi*’. Everyone has the experience of the manner in which passions arising in sense organs torment a person. There is a storm within the heart, which churns the nervous system (*gyansanstan*). How very violent is the storm, which Shri *Bhagwan* describes in the following words.

*shaknoti hai va yah sodhum praksarivimokshnat|
kamkrodhadbhavam vaigam sa yuktah sa sukhi narah || 5/23||*

“Whoever is capable of bearing, while living, the force of passion (upsurge of senses) and anger, that person is a yogi(*yukta*), is happy”. (5/23)

Here we are concerned with the force of sex. The force of sex is most powerful and also agitates the most. It agitates even the great scholars so much so that they dance to its tune and forget all their learning. It had agitated even Naradji.

The sense organs are obstinate (*pramathi*) and forcibly captivate the mind. The mind is subtler than these sense organs and is more powerful - ‘*indriyebhyah param manah*’ (verse 42, chapter 3). How then the sense organs captivate the mind.

The mind is subtle and powerful. Its ability manifests after it is cultured, controlled. Normally, it serves the sense organs. Like a foolish king becomes a tool in the hands of scoundrels. Sense organs influence the mind and awaken passions in it. The desire for obtaining those pleasures awakens again-and-again. The sense organs really want their pleasures. They repeatedly demand experiences of their pleasures. Under their influence, the mind starts working full-time for their attainment. It loses its evenness due to likes and dislikes, desires and cravings. Even the intellect vacillates, its stability is disturbed and the person is debased.

In the context of control of senses, it is immaterial whether one is wise or ignorant. On one side is the force of the innate tendencies (*samsakars*) and on the other is the force of our discretion. Despite having a lot of discretion, if the tendencies are more powerful then the discretion will be shattered. Some *rishis*, despite being highly discerning and great ascetics, had suffered such a fate. If, however, the tendencies are weak and depleted then even our little discretion is quite helpful.

In such situation, how a person can blame any one and for what can he brag for any control?

The follower of the path of self-restrain has to remain cautious all the time. He should instantly become alert on seeing the red sign of danger. One should always endeavor to increase the strength of his discretion and should proceed by withdrawing his sense organs like a tortoise does anticipating danger.

One should have control over all his sense organs. If even one sense organ gets out of control that alone can become the cause of downfall.

'matparah' - surrendering to *parameshwara* by making Him the goal of all efforts.

'yuktaseet'-remain firm in yoga, always make efforts and continue to develop evenness within.

In the end - 'how very rightly said - whose sense organs are under control, only his intellect can remain firm and stable'. The stability of mind is dependent upon the control of sense organs. Therefore, the firmness of the intellect is ultimately dependent upon the control (of the sense organs).

Objective of a *'sthitpragya'* is total control of the sense organs.

This is about the path of self-control. At this point, it will not be improper to make a mention of the path of descent (*avaroh-path*) i.e. the path of self-surrender (*sharnagati – path*).

A devotee accepts all enjoyments given by *parameshwara*. He does not run after any enjoyment nor he runs away out of fear from any enjoyment coming in his way. Whatever he receives, he enjoys that as a gift from *parameshwara*. He always surrenders to His wishes. Such devotion takes him nearer to *parameshwara* even while he is enjoying the pleasures of life. The consciousness descending as His grace uplifts him above the attraction of the objects. He does not have to fight with himself for self-control. His one and only means is the remembrance of *parameshwara*.*

The next two verses make a psychological analysis of self-control and downfall. What a great truth has been revealed, by Shri Bhagwan in these verses -

*dhyayato visayan pumsah sangas tesu 'pajayate|
sangat samjayate kamah kamat krodho 'bhijayate ||62||*

*krodhad bhavati sammohah sammohat smrtivibhramah /
smrtibhramsad buddhinaso buddhinasat pranaasyati ||63||*

“By continuous thinking of sense-objects person develops attachment for them. Attachment leads to desire and desire creates anger. Anger leads to delusion. Delusion leads to memory loss. Loss of memory destroys the intellect, and with the destruction of intellect one perishes.” (62-63)

* for more knowledge on the subject, please see chapter on self-control in Adhyatmika Sadhana, part II by the author Swami Ramananda

Shri Bhagwan has described the sequence of fall very elaborately. A person thinks about sense-objects. One can think of objects experienced by him or the ones experienced by others. One can be a witness of the experiences of others. One can start thinking about objects merely by remembering them.

Why does one start thinking about sense objects? We start thinking about sense objects because we have in us latent desire for enjoying them. One tends to think of these objects due to the tendencies (*samsakars*) created by experiences and the craving developed for the pleasure they give. 'What a tasty food was taken by us'? The picture of that food comes before our eyes. The tongue starts feeling the taste. The desire for eating that food awakens in us and the thinking strengthens this desire. It becomes easy to remember it again. To remember a third time becomes still easier.

Satisfaction of the vital (prana), gained by eating tasty food, becomes all the more intense. Therefore, we again desire that satisfaction. Whenever that satisfaction is remembered one has a desire for its repeat experience and that desire for that satisfaction grows stronger. It influences the mind. For that specific tasty food, an attraction becomes stable within. One even starts desiring that pleasure while hearing about it. This is the sign of attachment with any specific enjoyment. What is true about taste is equally true about other pleasures of senses like sex, etc.

About this subject, we should know that these experiences of pleasure become the basis of our thinking about the objects. In animals, thinking is impossible because there is no association of the mind with the senses. Therefore, in animals tendencies remain confined to the realm of vitals alone. In human beings, however, the mind can revive memories and desire the experiences through memory. Consequently those memories transcend their natural boundaries of the vital and get distorted. It is for this reason that a person becomes intemperate and he needs to control himself. Animals cannot think of objects of pleasure. In them the instrument of thinking i.e. the mind is not developed. Consequently, animals are not affected by the attraction of objects. A person can make an animal indisciplined and sick by his company.

Human beings have an ability of getting attached to things or people. Wherever there is attachment there is attraction. Just as there is a way for the water to flow, similarly for the flow of one's mind there is the object for which there is attachment. Without any effort mind gets drawn towards that object. Moreover, attachment is the initial form of love.

Company – attachment -- This is the state of an ordinary person. The person who is still involved in the world, who does not have the awareness of the Divine as yet, he thinks about worldly objects and gets attached to them. But a stage comes in his life when attachments lose basis, when he is so deeply absorbed in the divine consciousness that nothing attracts him and he is not attached to any thing. Then, neither enjoyment of objects nor their discussion can bind him. At that stage creation of new tendencies in him is not possible. How could there be any kind of attachment? This state is different. Until such a state is reached and experienced, a person cannot believe that such a state is even possible. Passion is born from deep attachment. What is this passion? Passion is a form of mental craving. Passion is born in the mind. Passion is also a form

of intense desire. Desire gives impetus to the mind. Desire can be a demand of the gross world and can also be a demand for intellectual knowledge. This is the form of passion. It makes a person restless and it disturbs his inner poise. It creates commotion. A person loses his balance. He loses control over himself.

Cohibition or sex is a gross form of passion in living beings. Its gross manifestation in living beings is a desire for sexual indulgence.

For any kind of satisfaction, the tendency of consciousness moving outwards is known as passion. This is the result of excessive attachment. With whomsoever we are attached, we start liking him or the respective object. Disturbance starts within. In our life we encounter such situations everyday. All habits are formed like this and addiction to all bad habits also grows in this manner.

As the awakened desire becomes stronger, the internal turmoil increases proportionately. The vital is agitated for its satisfaction. Moreover, for the sake of its fulfillment, mind too becomes impatient. Nothing can represent the impatience of the vital better than of the person blinded by passion. The intensity of that powerful commotion can be seen in the greed of the greedy, in the love of a mother, in the impatience of the beloved for her lover and in efforts of a person, having a blind faith in his own religion, for spreading his religion.

The disturbance of this kind is anger. That churns a person badly. Person loses his self-control. This is anger. The state of mental faculties in anger is the same as reached due to strong churning by desires. This results in tiredness. The nervous system comes under great pressure. Mind is exhausted. This is much more serious than physical tiredness.

By disturbance of this kind one is totally deluded. Delusion (*moha*) is a state of unconsciousness. The meaning of the word *sammohan* is total unconsciousness. A person loses his entire mental balance i.e. his consciousness. An unconscious person does not have any awareness – neither internal nor external. He reaches this state.

The result of such a state is loss of memory. Memory gets confused: 'who am I? Where am I? What am I going to do? What is my condition?' He forgets all this. He also forgets experiences gained in past. He becomes virtually blind. Even while seeing he does not see.

Then the intellect is destroyed. Intellect has the capability of discretion, capability to understand what is right or wrong. The intellect decides, what is just and unjust or right and wrong. Intellect alone shows us the path for doing our *karmas*. However, in such a state a person is devoid of discretion. Consequently, he perishes.

'*pranashyati*' – he is perished absolutely. What is the meaning of '*pranashyati*'? Does a person after having fallen from human-life go to a lower life? Elsewhere *Shri Bhagwan* has said: 'I throw them to demoniac lives. By not attaining Me they go to lowly destinies.' However, at this point it does not seem necessary to arrive at such a serious conclusion. A person commits some

bad deeds, commits some sinful acts and that alone is enough to understand by these statements. He goes astray from his path of virtue.

While describing the characteristics of a stable mind (*sthitpragya*), what was the necessity of bringing in this topic? For disciplining of the internal state of '*sthitpragya*', it is necessary to understand the behaviour of sense organs. Secondly, *Shri Bhagwan* not only tells the characteristics of '*sthitpragya*' but He also shows us the way to achieve that state.

Contemplation of objects is the root cause of the process of fall. Only by removing roots of that process, there will be neither trunk, nor the branches, nor the leaves, nor the flowers, nor the fruits. The tree of objects will dry up. Any possibility of a fall will be eliminated forever.

Self-control is essential for having the state of stable mind, '*sthitpragya*'. Only on the path of ascent, a devotee attains such a state by this means. A devotee learns something entirely different from this topic. If by contemplating of sense objects one gets attached to them, then by contemplating of *Shri Bhagwan* why will one not get attached to Him and then why will he not develop a craving for Him? Therefore, one should always think of *Shri Bhagwan*.

A stable minded person (*sthitpragya*) has control over his mind and over his sense organs. We have already discussed about the control over one's mind. We will now discuss about the control over the sense organs.

*ragadvesaviyuktas tu visayan indriyais caran |
atmanvasyair vidheyatman prasadam adhigacchati ||64||*

“A person who has control over his inner self, who has attained full control over himself (mind, intellect and sense organs), who is free from likes and dislikes, achieves mental stability, purity and happiness, even while enjoying through his sense organs.” (64)

Shri Bhagwan has shown the result of following the senses. Man is debased. But, is that the result of enjoying the sense objects? Is it possible to escape the ill effects of enjoying the objects? The answer of *Shri Bhagwan* is that one can certainly escape. If this has not been possible then it is not been possible for a person to remain free from their bonds even while being indulgent. An external renouncement of *karmas* would have been the only way out and that too would not have taken him too far, because, total renunciation of *karmas* is impossible. Moreover, performance of *karmas* automatically leads to enjoyment of objects.

The yoga of the Gita proceeds by accepting this reality. This is not bare idealism. As long as a person is in a body, he will have to use his eyes, hands, feet, tongue, etc. he has to enjoy objects, pleasures of the world. Therefore, such remedy is required, which can help us to get freedom from the bonds of pleasures of life even while enjoying them. Moreover, a total renouncement of enjoyments of objects is a mere imagination. Then what is the remedy? Enjoy the objects without any like or dislike. It is said in the 34th verse of chapter 3 -

*indriyasye 'ndriyasya 'rthe ragadvesau vyavasthitau |
tayor na vasam agacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau ||*

“Likes and dislikes for objects of sense organs continue. An aspirant (*sadhak*) should not come under their sway. Both are his enemies”.

Enjoy the objects without any attachment or aversion. One may see from eyes but he should not have craving for seeing beautiful objects. Ears desire to hear only sweet melody. Tongue desires to taste only delicious food. We try to avoid unwanted experiences. A person, who is under the influence of likes and dislikes pertaining to sense organs, tries to gain only pleasing experiences again and again and avoids detestable experiences. The one who is not influenced by likes-dislikes, continues to accept all experiences as they come to him normally. He neither runs after desirable experiences nor runs away from undesirable ones. This is the state of his equanimity.

Outlook of such an aspirant (*sadhak*) becomes lofty. He does not use his sense organs for achieving pleasures. He does not consider them as means of his happiness. The sense organs are the means for using the body and consciousness for having experiences of the material world. They are the horses and riding them various activities of life are performed and experiences gained. Every sense organ has its own specific area of knowledge and activity. Their use in that specific purpose alone is proper. Their use as means of happiness creates bonds of likes and dislikes. Tongue has its utility. It helps in chewing food, and helps in selecting the right food. This faculty is present even in wild-animals. If by misuse we do not make the tongue deviate from its natural functions, then our tongue can easily decide what food is good for us and what is not good food for us? It is wise to follow the tongue faithfully through its function. This is its correct use. Proper use of senses itself controls our likes and dislikes. As against this, craving for eating any thing tasty and likeable is neither self-control, nor freedom from likes and dislikes, nor is wisdom. This is sheer foolishness and harmful.

When an aspirant (*sadhak*) continues with his spiritual practice (*sadhana*), *Shri Bhagwan* blesses him and when the Supreme power (*mahashakti*) descends in him, then all his sense organs gradually follow their correct course. Likes and dislikes are pacified. There are no temptations. Then there is no problem of self-control. That descending higher consciousness establishes a new exalted empire in the realm of sense organs. The sense organs also develop a sense of discipline.

The path of spiritual discipline (*sadhana*), being discussed here, requires efforts for remaining uninfluenced by likes and dislikes, while using the sense organs. A person has to remain alert. The interests developed by likes and dislikes have to be identified and discarded.

What happens to him who behaves in this manner? What does he achieve from this spiritual practice (*sadhana*)? That is discussed now.

For the sense organs, one adjective has been used – '*atmanvashaiyah*' -which means control of the self. The sense organs due to likes and dislikes come under the influence of their objects. The objects forcibly drag the senses. *vayurnavmivambhasi* - as the wind takes with it a boat in water. As likes and dislikes gradually eliminated, control of objects on sense organs diminishes.

As long as there is strong liking for *rasogullas* (a sweet), a person after seeing them cannot resist himself from eating them. Whenever a person having liking for *rasogullas* sees them, even with full stomach, he feels like eating them. The one on whose tongue *rasogullas* have control then that person cannot resist himself from eating them. If he has control he will not be tempted to eat *rasogullas*. However, when he has no control, he cannot resist from eating them, even if he does not want to eat. He knows that his stomach is full, eating *rasogullas* will create discomfort but still he is unable to resist himself from eating.

Evidence of '*atmanvashikar*' i.e. the one who has control on his self, is his control over himself. He decides what he wants to do. Whenever he does not want his eyes to see, his eyes will not see. Whenever he does not want to eat, he will not eat. The term '*vashikar*' does not mean magic of a magician. It means a person, who by sheer strength of his will, does whatever he decides to do. A person of feeble determination is over-powered by the liking of objects. He who has acquired control over himself and his sense organs is a '*vashikar*' and is free of attraction for objects. One, who still needs to withdraw himself from the objects is still an aspirant of this path.

An adjective has been used for an aspirant. It is '*vidheyatmana*' i.e. the one who is conscious of his duties and responsibilities of his life and is in control of his Self (which includes mind, intellect, sense organs and the body). He is the one who has acquired control over his self. Generally, the mind and the intellect have their own likes and dislikes, and do not obey the mandate of consciousness. They tend to follow their own path. Therefore, a strange inner conflict and indiscipline exists in a person. Sometimes, intellect revolts, sometimes heart, vital (*prana*) of a person cry and sometimes the body. In spite of being a king we have no control and the limbs of this great empire do not obey our command.

As an aspirant (*sadhak*) attempts to rise above likes and dislikes, a new empire starts establishing and everything starts obeying the presiding consciousness i.e. the *aadhishthan-chaitanya*. All of them become obedient.

When an aspirant reaches such a state he receives the '*prasad*' (reward-grace) i.e. '*prasadamadhigachati*'. What is that '*prasad*'? '*Prasad*' stands for grace and for purity. The purity of water is blissful. Purified consciousness is without any confusion. It is transparent. A person can see his entire inner self. One's own self does not remain hidden from him. Internal deceptions vanish.

On attaining this state, heart blooms within. Laughter bursts forth. The person starts remaining cheerful. That is why said --

*prasade sarvadukhanam hanir asya 'pajayate |
prasannacetaso hy asu buddhih paryavatisthate //65||*

"Once a person receives the grace (of *parameshwara*), all his sorrows disappear. The intellect of the person, who remains cheerful, soon gets properly stabilised." (65)

One receives grace on removal of stress. Attraction for objects creates stress, which is released only after attainment of the desired object. Soon after, same situation develops again due

to emergence of latent tendencies. An unseen internal conflict goes on until internal passions are active. On their complete pacification pure, peaceful and sublime states are reached.

On reaching that state, our unhappiness vanishes for good. Unhappiness is born out of our likes and dislikes. These appear in the sense organs, the mind and the intellect. In the peaceful and equanimous internal state, how can one experience unhappiness? Unhappiness is a state opposed to the state of grace, '*prasad*'..

Normally it is believed that one, who is rich and prosperous, for whom all pleasures of life are easily available, is happy and can remain cheerful. Worldly possessions are not the measure of happiness. Happiness is a state of one's individual consciousness and that depends upon how he reacts to various situations. One can be happy in one situation and another person can be unhappy in a same situation. If we are able to maintain purity, sublimity, equanimity and poise within us, irrespective of what happens to us in the world outside, we can remain cheerful. When such a state is not there, we are unhappy. The more we are able to use our sense organs with the mind free from likes and dislikes more we experience happiness.

The word '*prasad*' (grace) is a very good indicator of internal serenity. It is the initial state of bliss. Craving for objects hinders it. Emotions of hate or dislike towards anybody spoil it.

In *yoga-darshan* there is a mention of *chit-prasad* i.e. of graceful consciousness –

maitree karuna muditopaiksharam

One is cheerful by having friendly attitude towards good persons, indifference towards persons without merit, pleasantness towards happy people, and compassion for the miserable. Such an attitude keeps a person cheerful. Patanjali Rishi taught this method for keeping the mind cheerful.

Regarding sense organs what Shri Bhagwan said, *yogacharyas* tried to prove the same differently. What *yogacharyas* said is a practical approach for being peaceful in life. Shri Bhagwan preached control over the sense organs for the same purpose. It is desirable to adopt both approaches in life.

The mental dejection is not only because of likes and dislikes relating to sense organs, but also because of mental agonies. We lose the Grace (*prasad*) of *parameshwara* when we are jealous on seeing a happy person or become miserable on seeing an unhappy person. Similarly, awakening of un-desirable feelings becomes a cause of worry.

It is mentioned before that the intellect can be stabilised only by the control of the mind and the sense organs. The same statement is made here. The intellect of a cheerful person is easily stabilised.

To be cheerful is a very good temperament. A cheerful person not only himself remains cheerful but also radiates happiness all around him. Happiness easily removes mental tensions. A man breathes freely. It has a healthy influence on both the mind and the body.

Innate cheerfulness and spiritual life go together. A person devoted to *parameshwara* and dependent on Him can remain happy and cheerful. Such a person can happily bear struggles of life and can be free from fear. A person free from likes and dislikes can alone play in the lap of the Divine.

The depth of our cheerfulness is the evidence of our spiritual enlightenment and of our unflinching devotion.

To remain cheerful should become second nature of a devotee of *parameshwara*. Why should he, who lives under the protection of *parameshwara*'s Grace, worry?

One should be serious at times but it is not proper to remain serious all the time. To remain depressed or to keep a serious disposition all the time, appears to me, is against spiritual life. There is no place for seriousness in the path, which I know.

It will not be an exaggeration, if I say, 'more cheerful we are, more evenness we develop within us'. This is also a way for changing one's internal nature and by experience its veracity can be tested.

Humorous nature, which is only playfulness and nothing else, which has no tolerance and has fictitious laughter, is not cheerfulness. A nature, which has humour on one side and on the other side are red eyes full of anger is not cheerfulness. It is simply a manifestation of *rajoguna*. Cheerfulness can blossom the heart of a sad person. By going to a cheerful person, one forgets one's sorrows. Anger is miles away from him. The laughter in clubs is very much different than cheerfulness.

Stability of the intellect and real happiness go together. A mind free from likes and dislikes alone can be happy. The intellect free from likes and dislikes is stable..

Shri Ramchandraji was cheerful by nature. There was not even a trace of sorrow on his face when he was exiled to the forests. He had no desire for kingdom and had no bad feelings towards Kaikeyee or Dashrath. That is why he could remain cheerful. Therefore, Shri Ram is the symbol of this cheerfulness and Grace (*prasad*).

*na 'sti buddhir ayuktasya na ca 'yuktasya bhavana /
na ca 'bhavayatah santir asantasya kutah sukham ||66||*

"The *ayukta* (uncontrolled) has no intellect nor does he have sentiments. One devoid of sentiments does not have peace and how can the one who has no peace be happy?" (66)

In the previous verse it was said: 'the intellect of a cheerful person is easily stabilised'. Why now is this topic of the *yukta* (disciplined) and the *ayukta* (indisciplined)? What is its relevance to the topic under discussion?

Earlier it is said, the stability of intellect depends upon the control (*vashikar*) of the mind and the sense organs. Whoever controls his sense organs, whoever enjoys the objects through them being free from likes and dislikes is alone disciplined (*yukta*). '*yukta* i.e. the

disciplined person is cheerful and his intellect stable. Now mentions the result of being *ayukta*. There cannot be peace without being *yukta* or disciplined.

The *yukta* here means - the doer of proper and balanced efforts. He is *isyukta* i.e. disciplined, whose efforts are not at random but are properly directed towards achieving the specified objective. He is 'yukta,' who makes proper efforts to move on his path. *Yukta* here means *yoga-yukta* (devoted to *karma yoga*).

A person, who does not have control over his own self, who does not make any effort to get over his likes and dislikes, is not reasonable. Moreover, he lacks discretion. His intellect is not stable. He is fickle minded.

Ayukta does not have commitment. Commitment is the creative strength of our mind. Devotion is nothing but commitment. In the fickleness of mind, devotion is not possible. For a moment we look at someone with respect and the next moment our disposition changes and we are ready to shoot that very person. At one time, we prostrate before the God and soon after we become angry with Him and we proceed to tear off His picture. In the absence of reason, devotion is impossible. What is so unstable that is emotionality. That cannot be commitment.

Whoever is a victim of likes and dislikes residing in the mind and the sense organs, and who is not able to get over them, has no commitment. What is the value of the respect given by such a person? What is the worth of his love? How can the love of such a person be trusted? He does not trust himself. He tosses between likes and dislikes. He is just a toy of passion and anger. He deserves pity.

As long as a person has no commitment, he cannot have any peace. Without commitment/devotion there is no peace. Without trust, devotion is not developed. If there is devotion then only commitment develops and diversified mental energies get unified and can flow in one direction. Then only can a person feel the presence of the reality beyond the mind. Then alone there is peace.

The Mother Divine is a woman. On awakening of motherly feelings, touch of the mother gives peace. In its absence, on awakening of sexual passions the same touch becomes inflammable. Commitment makes the life of a person. Commitment develops higher ideals. Commitment paves way for stable flow of human energies. From then heart and mind move together in one direction resulting in peace. The cause of our restlessness is our desires. But even in the absence of desires, sometimes we do not have peace. So till such time, as our energies do not get a proper outlet for expression, they continue to create trouble within us, creating conflicts and going deep into the interior of our being. Commitment helps us to do this work easily. The higher and the more stable our Commitment is, higher and loftier we rise in our life.

Holy Scriptures, our history and biographies of great persons awaken a sense of commitment in us. They unknowingly lift the level of humanity and become the source of peace for mankind.

In the end, it says, where is happiness for the restless one? How forceful the truth is? Once a person understands this truth, he can rescue himself from many follies in his life. Forgetting that 'peace is the source of happiness' we search for happiness in wealth, in honour, in sons, in grandsons, etc. Moreover, in that search we do injustice to others. In our anxiety, we become victims of passions and anger. We invite trouble for ourselves. We move out in search of happiness but we get unhappiness instead. It reflects the ideal of a person who in his desire to become a king becomes a pauper.

Peace is the source of happiness and is two-dimensional. One has peace if properly adjusted with the situation. Proper internal understanding is necessary. For without understanding, we will be unable to appreciate a situation in the right perspective. In addition, we need to channelize our energies for proper internal understanding. That in turn requires commitment and for that a person has to unite with yoga i.e. 'yoga-yukta'. Therefore, one cannot achieve happiness by merely looking outwards. It comes naturally by being 'yoga-yukta'. It will come to you without your ever asking for it. The words of Shri *Bhagwan* take us to this conclusion.

Now we revert to the earlier topic relating to control of sense organs.

*indriyanam hi caratam yan mano 'nu vidhiyate /
tad asya harati prajanam vayur navam iva 'mbhasi ||67||
tasmad yasya mahabaho nigrhitani sarvasah /
indriyani 'ndriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita ||68||*

"Of the sense organs indulging in their respective objects, whichever organ the mind follows, the same sense organ carries away the intellect of the person just as the wind carries away the boat sailing on water". (67)

"Therefore, O' Brave one, only his intellect is properly stabilised whose sense organs are fully withdrawn from their objects and are within his control." (68)

In the 60th verse, Shri *Bhagwan* gave a warning about this danger. He says that not only ordinary persons, even the striving ones fail in controlling their mind. The mind is very powerful. He now explains the same concept more clearly.

Sense organs do enjoy their objects. So long as the consciousness does not awaken in an individual, sense organs continue to play their game. Eyes will see, ears will hear, tongue of course will enjoy taste, etc. These natural functions of organs are not the cause of bondage of a person. After all animals also have the sense organs. They also enjoy the objects. However, they do not deviate from their nature. They do not become blind for the enjoyment of objects of their senses. They naturally enjoy objects for maintaining life and for procreation. Their life moves most smoothly, but for a human being enjoyment of sense objects becomes a purpose of life as if he has no other purpose in his life. He does not enjoy the objects for the sake of maintaining life and giving birth to his progeny. He starts enjoying them for pleasure. Consequently, he deviates from the objectives of his life. Whose fault is it? Is it of the sense organs? What is the fault of these sense organs? They also exist in animals but do not disturb their life - its cycle. The fault is

in the mind. It is the mind which thinks of the objects. Then they become cause of attachments. Desires are born. The person becomes eager to satisfy them, and gradually perishes due to spoiled intellect (*bhrashta buddhi*).

Whichever sense organ the mind follows, the same organ carries away the intellect of the individual; while eating, tongue experiences the taste of the things eaten. The person starts thinking of the taste through his mind. The sense organ of taste (tongue) gets strength from this thinking and demands more satisfaction. He becomes slave of his tongue. He loses his discretion and starts craving for tasty food. By getting the support of the mind, the sense organs become powerful. These strengthened sense organs demand more enjoyment. The person surrenders before their strength and loses his discretion.

An example is given. A boat sails on water. Wherever the boatman wants he guides his boat with the help of oars, but in the face of strong wind, oars become ineffective. It is the wind, which carries the boat along with it. The boat collides somewhere and sinks. The secret of control over the sense organs then is – do not allow your mind to unite with the sense organs. Enjoy the objects but do not think about them. Thinking entraps a person and his mind is corrupted.

Even people with strong will power lose their control over the senses. Our history and *Puranas* are full of such stories. Even *Rishies* and saints, were overpowered by their passions. That is the reason a very strong warning is given.

Therefore, when can we understand that the intellect of a person stabilized? Only when sense organs are fully under his control.

‘*Sarvashah*’ means fully, in totality or from all sides. If there is any weakness anywhere then mind of the person will become restless.

This is the last verse on the control of sense organs. In this verse, it seems, essence of the entire discussion is given. The intellect of only that person is fully stabilised, who has full control over his sense organs.

It is necessary to mention here the fact that there are just two methods for achieving full control. The first one is to control of the sense organs with the strength of mind with wisdom. And the other is to surrender to *parameshwara*. By surrender to *parameshwara*, the Divine consciousness descends in a person and the problem of self-control resolved by itself. Sense organs lose their normal attraction towards their objects. After interest in objects is lost then where is the possibility of a fall? The first method is like that of construction of a house on a simmering volcano. One never knows when the volcano will erupt and will destroy the house. In the second alternative, there is no possibility of failure. *Parameshwara* becomes responsible to guide the aspirant to proceed in right direction.

All tales of downfall are of those persons who believed in the path of self-control, like the ascetics and those who renounced the world for penance. These tales certainly are not of ego-less

devotees who have surrendered to *parameshwara*. These tales only teach us that the path of self-control is full of dangers and is like moving on a razor's edge.

*sa nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami /
yasyam jagarti bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh ||69||*

"What is night for all beings, is waking time for a saint; and what is waking time for all beings is said to be night for a saint." (69)

The difference between ordinary persons and self-disciplined persons has been very clearly stated. A saint remains awake through the night of all beings and sleeps when other beings are awake.

Does a self-disciplined person remain awake in the night after sunset and remains asleep during the day? Is this the meaning of this verse? In western countries, usually people remain awake until late in the night and sometimes until early morning and usually sleep until late in the day. Even in India, some sahibs also do like wise or something short of this. However, they are not self-disciplined. In Tibet, there have been some aspirants who have never known sleep. Be it night or day, they remained seated on their seat. Is it the limit of self-control? This information is from a book on Tibet, by David O' Neil.

This, however, can certainly be said, that frugal and light *sattvic* food considerably reduces requirement of sleep. Even a little sleep is enough. It is only during night that there is calm and quiet. The entire world sleeps. During that time, breathing also pacifies. Therefore, the mind gets easily stabilised. Self-disciplined men (*sanyasi*), therefore, do their *sadhana* during the night. Some get up even at mid-night, when there is still time to sleep for common people. For a *sanyasi* sleep is already over. Then he sits on his seat. Usually the indulgent ones go to bed late in the night and sleep till late in the morning. *Sanyasi* sleeps early and get up very early in the morning. Normally they need little sleep during the day after meals. It is desirable for a person who gets up at mid-night to take some rest during the day. *Sanyasi*, therefore, sleeps during the day. However, this does not mean that he sleeps for the whole day.

But this should not be taken to be the real meaning of the verse. There appears to be a hidden meaning behind this verse.

An indulgent person is always eager for indulging in objects of the senses, for the satisfaction of his mind and for pleasures. For him this is his day. Such people are not interested in places where such enjoyments are not available. That is darkness i.e. night for them. The self-disciplined one has no interest in such pleasures of life. These pleasures are like night for him. Their absence best serves his objective. Since he has inner stability their absence is like a day for him.

Therefore, the night of indulgent ones is a day for the self-disciplined one and his night is day for indulgent persons. What a big contradiction it is. This has another meaning also.

A *sanyasi* cannot be judged by a scale that determines worldly values. He cannot make an effort to mould himself according to the standards of worldly life. If he does so, he will be

debased. His objective is very different from that of the indulgent ones. He does not seek validation of his actions with reference to the activities of others, but he seeks confirmation by the experiences of those following his path and by the possibility of benefits coming to him in due course. Public-criticism or public-recognition has no meaning for him. The only thing important for him is attainment of higher values of life. Instead his firmness, the stability of his mind and his higher devotion are judged by his values of life. Many a times walking on the right path is not always indicative either of the opinion of the majority or of the truth or of the loftiness of the ideal. Only people with depth can deviate from the beaten track. And those alone who have deviated from the beaten track are the ones who have achieved something great in life. Along with this, it is also true that he who moves leaving the beaten path can put himself in deep gorges – ditches, or in wilderness.

In the eyes of the world, a self-disciplined person is insane. A self-disciplined person should always be prepared to accept criticism cheerfully. He should understand why worldly people do not like him and he should still behave with others with affection and sympathy. Some day people may understand his values of life and may follow the right path.

*apuryamanam acalaprathistham
samudramapah pravisanti yadvat /
tadvat kama yam pravisanti sarve
sa santim apnoti na kamakami ||70||*

“Just as water of rivers merges in motionless sea, similarly the one whose desires are merged into him gets the benefit of peace, and not the one who wants fulfillment of his desires.”
(70)

The state of a stable minded person (*sthitpragya*) has been mentioned by giving such a beautiful example, The water of rivers and rivulets always keep falling in the sea but the sea never over flows despite being filled with so much of water. It never crosses its limits. In rainy season, volume of water going into the sea increases manifold, still sea never over flows. Exactly a similar state is that of a stable minded person (*sthitpragya*). Desires keep arising but do not create any turbulence in him -- exactly like rivers merging in the sea.

Is a '*sthitpragya*' person also has desires? In fact all desires vanish when an aspirant reaches the state of perfection though apparently they seem to remain. He eats, he wears clothes, and he discharges his duties towards his family and others. In that process something like desire, seem to pulsate in him. However, he does not get involved in them. They are like a line on the water. They do not influence his inner stable and peaceful state.

The one, who has reached such a state, attains inner peace and tranquility. His calm is innate and stable. There is nothing, which could disturb his calm, because only desires make a person restless.

'*kamakami*' - A calm and quiet person having no wish to satisfy any desire can identify a desire awakening in him. He considers it as seed of unhappiness and ignores it. An indisciplined

(*ayukta*) person is attached to his desires. He considers it as his own desire and its satisfaction as his own satisfaction. The result is that desires make him restless and so he becomes unhappy.

Control of sense organs and rejection of desires are two main methods for attaining peace and stability of mind. If the essence of main characteristics of '*sthitpragya*' are taken into consideration then also we arrive at the same conclusion.

We can also take another step forward from this basic state of '*sthitpragya*'. In fact, that stage can gradually lead us to the state of perfection. This stage is explained in the next verse.

*vihaya kaman yah sarvanpumams carati nisprah /
nirmamo nirahamkarah sa santim adhigacchati //71||*

“A person, who abandons all desires, becomes indifferent (*nisprah*) towards all attachments, and behaves without any feeling of possessiveness (*mamata*) and egoism, achieves peace and tranquility.” (71).

'*prajhati yada kaman*'-- 'when abandons desires'. This phrase was used in the 55th verse while mentioning characteristics of '*sthitpragya*'. Even in the last verse, same thing is said. In absence of desires, the evenness, mentioned in verses 56 and 57, comes automatically i.e. by itself. However, here even abandonment of attachment (possessiveness or mine-ness i.e. *mamata*) and egoism have been advocated. This was not mentioned before. The word '*nisprah*' has the same meaning as '*vigatsprah*' of verse 56.

'*mamata*' is the feeling of possessiveness. This is mine: my husband, my son, my wife, my house, my money, etc. These are all forms of possessiveness – '*mamata*'. We create our own world with this feeling of possessiveness (*mamata*). World is one entity but with this feeling of possessiveness, we carve out a world of our own. That possessiveness becomes a fort, which has iron gates. We imprison ourselves in this fort, throw the key outside and for a long time remain imprisoned inside this fort of 'me' and 'mine' (*mamata*). We do not know that we are imprisoned. We become extremely unhappy when we come out of this fort which was 'mine'. We awaken from the sleep of delusion and find ourselves imprisoned in the walls of the fort erected by us. We are the ones who made that fort. We had imprisoned ourselves within but we cannot now free ourselves from it. We feel so helpless and struggle hard to secure our freedom.

A lady goes to another house after marriage and becomes a wife, mine-ness gets associated with her as one's wife. One becomes proud of her. The wife appears to be most beautiful and also most cultured woman in the world. The husband receives her love and that love also becomes very dear to him. Children are born. They become very abode of possessiveness. They appear lovely because they are 'my' own. This feeling of possessiveness creates interest in life. One experiences happiness like that of in heaven. The life becomes blissful. Then the love for the child receives a blow. The child dies. The child rejects his love. But the one is bound to the child whom he cannot forget and feels miserable. The intellect does not wish to understand the truth of life despite knowing that this is the way of life. It happens. The heart does not have the understanding. Oh! The child was a piece of my heart. He was personification of my hopes. He was the very basis of

my love. 'Oh! Where my son has gone, a part of my soul?' This is all the play of delusive love (*mamata*).

The *Upanishad* says, 'son is not dear for the sake of being a son, he is dear for the sake of the self'. So is true about wife, etc. Everyone is a son of someone. Love is where there is affinity, feeling of oneness, and feeling of possessiveness. That is bondage.

It must have been clear that possessiveness (*mamata*) is a hindrance in getting peace. Tied up with a strong rope of possessiveness (*mamata*), we remain restless in this transient world. We keep swinging between transient happiness and unhappiness.

A wise person gets freedom from his possessiveness(*mamata*) or love for worldly things in his belief that the world is unreal. All this is false. It is illusion. No one is anybody's son, nor is anyone's mother. Every thing is illusion (*maya*). For those having faith in Samkhya, all this is the creation of *prakriti*. However, a devotee gains freedom just by surrendering himself at the feet of *parameshwara*. Devotee says, 'all this is yours'. 'I offer to you, whatever is yours. I want to give it to you, but do not know how to give'. 'I sing saying that every thing is yours'. 'All relations are because of you'. 'Because of you, I love everyone. I serve every one'. 'Your wish is my wish'.

This feeling does not cause any bondage. Life becomes interesting. When *parameshwara* is seen in everything delusive love (*mamata*) disappears.

And then what is it that happens? Every thing becomes *parameshwara*. *Parameshwara* alone is father as well as mother. He is son too.

The entire creation is filled with God (*shyammae*).⁴⁸

jit dekhan tit shyammai hai l
vasudeva sarvamiti l
sabhi vasudeva hain l

(Wherever I see, I see only Shyam. Everyone is Vasudeva)

Here the illusory bonds of earthly love (*mamata*) have completely dissolved. The individual rises above this bondage. What a pure blissful state this is.

But it is not just this. To attain the highest state (*brahami-sthiti*) one must also shed his ego (*nirahankara*). 'Ahankara' is the belief that 'I am the doer'. The feeling of doer-ship is in other words is 'ahankara'.

One may think why we do things when we have to do them. In our current state, it is true, we do *karmas* and identify as doer. However, upon awakening of inner consciousness we do not feel so. Then the individual realises that he is only a witness, a *sakshi*, of all that is happening. He perceives all activities as a play of the mind, the intellect and the sense organs. He observes the entire play without any involvement. This is the real state. The present state, in comparison is the state of ignorance.

⁴⁸ Shyama is another name for the Lord, for Krishna himself; also known as Vasudeva

That pure witnessing consciousness entangles itself in its own web. It unites with the mind, with the intellect and the sense organs. He starts perceiving *karmas* as its own *karmas*, desires and satisfactions as his own desires and satisfactions. He accepts their limitations. 'I experience life and death. I feel joy or sorrow. I perform 'good' or bad deeds.'. *Atman* also starts feeling like this. The *atman* perceives itself as *anatman* (non-self). Consequence of this ignorance is related to the self, known as '*asmita*'. That is egoism (*ahankara*) within the realm of activities. This is the main source of unhappiness.

Who does *karmas*? The answer of the Gita is

***prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah /
ahamkaravimudhatman karta 'ham iti manyate ||3/27||***

"The individual, whose *atmanis* bewildered by his egoism (*ahankara*), believes that 'I do' the actions which are done only by the modes (*gunas*) of *prakriti*".

Activity and movement are attributes of *prakriti*. The *atman* is consciousness, is non-doer. This is the principle of *Samkhya*. The state of '*brahmanirvan*' resides within the Self, the essence of soul (*atmantattva*). It is, therefore, necessary to go beyond ego (*ahankara*) for establishing in the Self (*atmantattva*).

The person so rooted in the Self (*atmantattva*), beyond the modes (*gunas*) of *prakriti*, considers himself a non-doer. He is then beyond the bonds of *prakriti*. This is the '*kaivli-bhav*' or '*kaivalya*' of the yoga school of philosophy.

There is also a state beyond this state. The above mentioned state is the ultimate state of *naishyakarmaya* (a state where *karmas* bear no consequence). However, the other one is the state of the Divine consciousness (*Ishwar-bhava*). In that state a person does everything still he does not do anything.

***karmany akarma yah pasyed akarmani ca karma yah /
sa buddhiman manusyesu sa yuktah krtsnakarmakrt ||4/18||***

"He who sees *akarma* (inaction) in *karma* (action) and *karma* in *akarma*, he is wise amongst men, he is self-controlled one (*yukta*), he is the doer of all his *karmas*".

This is the state where a person does not do anything. After having united with *parameshwara* in this manner, man becomes free from his ego (*ahankar*).

***karan karavan ape nath /
nanak ke kachu nahin hath //***
(O' Lord, you only do and get everything done.
There is nothing in the (my) hands of Nanak)

By uniting with Him, who plays in the *prakriti*, one has the feeling that he is non-doer of his *karmas*. The individual, who is without ego (*ahankara*) and illusory possessiveness (*mamata*), achieves peace. All internal disturbances end.

This is the mature state of '*sthitpragya*', name given to this state. In the next verse, its glory and importance of this state is described.

***esa brahmi sthiti partha nai nam prapya vimuhyati |
sthitva syam antakale pi brahmanirvanamrcchati ||72||***

O' Arjuna! This is '*brahmi-sthiti*' (the divine state). Having attained this state one is not bewildered, one is not deluded. The one, who attains this state, even at the last moment (of his life), can attain to the bliss of *parameshwara* (*brahmanirvan*). (72)

Referring to the state described in the 71st verse, it is said, 'this is '*brahminsthiti*'. In 53rd verse of 18th chapter, it is said '*brahmabhuyayakalpate*' i.e. worthy of becoming one with the Brahman (*Brahman bhav*). In the 54th verse, it is said '*brahmabhutah*' i.e. one who has attained the state of divinity '*brahman bhav*'. In the 53rd verse abandoning of self-consciousness, ego, (*ahankar*) and possessiveness (*mamata*) is advocated. This '*brahmiavastha*' is the same as '*brhama bhav*' i.e. the divine state and that is the consciousness of being a non-doer and just being a witness of all that happens. It is the '*purusha*' of Samkhya. It appears that this state is the attainment of the '*brahmi avastha*'. This is also the '*kaivali bhav*' of Samkhya. This was also stated earlier.

In the light of chapter 18 of the Gita, this does not appear to be the ultimate state. After the 55th verse of that chapter, there is a mention of '*para-bhakti*' (supreme devotion) and then of an entry into the Divine i.e. '*vishate*'. If there is a difference between the two states then what is that difference? We will not discuss this now - at this place.

Brahmi-sthiti is a peaceful state of nature, mind, intellect and sense organs, and is beyond all disturbances. The individual has already become free from desires, from ego consciousness (*ahankara*) and illusory possessiveness (*mamata*) - this is what we know about the subject.

After attaining this state one is free from confusion and delusion. The presence of ignorance or '*avidya*' is synonymous with delusion. 'Am I mind, intellect or a sense organ? Am I the doer or enjoyer?' All these doubts are delusion. Upon attaining this state, the individual does not think in such confused manner for he has attained the state of *brahmansthiti*.

In the state of '*samadhi*', one gets established in the self (the *atmantattva*) or the *Brahman* or has attained '*brahmansthiti*'. During the state of ascendancy, alternatives evidently do confront. But the consciousness in the state of '*samadhi*' dwells deeply inside and all this play looks like a drama going on before the eyes. One is not deceived. This is the condition of the one in a state of perfection. This state of perfection is the state of oneness with the *Brahman* i.e. '*brahmansthiti*'.

Then it is said, '*sthitvasyamantkale api brahmanirvana mrichati*'. Even at the last moment of life, if one is stabilised in this state, he attains '*brahmanirvana*'. What then is the meaning of the word 'even'? Just this that if this state is not attained during one's life and is attained only at the time of death then also one gets this '*brahmanirvana*'. What is this '*brahmanirvana*'? First, we will have to consider '*brahmanirvana*'. '*Nirvana*' is freedom. A

lamp extinguishes. The state of Supreme peace of Lord Budha was called 'nirvana'. That is the objective of the doctrine of the Buddhist School (*Baudh-Sadhana*). 'Brahmanirvana' i.e. nirvana in *Brahman*, is getting absorbed in the Divine Reality (*brahamantattva*) forever and becoming free from all movements, all forms of activity and pain. Absorption of one's consciousness in 'brahman' or in the 'atmantattva' is known as deliverance or *moksha*. This is a state of complete detachment from *prakriti* and of getting absorbed in the *samadhi* consciousness with no possibility of rebirth. The Upanishad also says that such a one is not born again. This is to become 'brahmanleen' i.e. to get completely absorbed in *Brahman* or the Supreme self.

As long as there is a body, the Divine consciousness may sometimes descend in the body of a person. It is said that if the body of a person does not regain consciousness in 40 days then he is believed to have died. Even after attaining the Supreme state i.e. 'kaivalibhav', the body of a wise person (*gyani*) survives for the sake of desolution of the consequences of his past actions, known as 'prarabdha' (destiny), as the wheel of a potter remains in motion after it is set in motion just once. No new tendencies⁴⁹ create in him. Past tendencies destroy in this state. A distinction between a 'jivanmukta' i.e. one liberated while alive, and a 'videhmukta' i.e. the one liberated after death, has been made here.

The state of a devotee (*bhakta*) is different from both the states mentioned above. The state of a devotee will be discussed at some other time.

So, one can attain this state of 'brahmanirvana' even at the last moment of his life by becoming one with *Brahman* i.e. 'brahmansthitha'. If an individual has attained this state by being established in the self i.e. 'atmanbhav' before his death and has achieved control over his consciousness, then there can be no doubt that he will attain liberation through a tuncement with *Brahman* i.e. 'brahmanirvana'. However, if that does not happen and this wisdom (*gyan*) emerges at the last moment or reaches this state by some special efforts then also he will get the desired objective i.e. 'brahmanirvana'.

He will not have to return to this world for perfection of this state. The state of the individual at the time of his death determines his status and his activities after his death. This very subject has also been discussed in verse 5 of chapter 8. 'ant mata so gata' i.e. the state at the time of death determines the state after death. This is a well-known saying that the one, who is in 'brhamasthit' during his last moments of life, is liberated by merging eternally in *Brahman*.

This chapter concludes with this verse and is aptly titled as Samkhya yoga. In this chapter we have discussed the difference between *prakriti* (material world) – *purusa* (the Supreme) as well as the difference between *atman* and *anatman* according to Samkhya philosophy. Linked to that philosophy is the practice (*sadhana*) of self-control. And in conformity with this we also discussed the attainment of liberation (*moksha*) by realising the *Brahman* i.e. 'brahmanirvana' or merging with the Divine (*brahmasthiti*).

⁴⁹ tendency or propensity in the present context refers to the unspent force of actions done in the past. These are also known as impressions or *samskaras* and have to be exhausted.

This is also clear that this Samkhya is not the '*Vedanta*' of Shri Shankracharya. The discussion here is not of '*mayavad*' or of the illusoryness of the world and neither of the inexpressibility of *Brahman*.

There is no doubt that the concepts of self-control and spiritual practice (*sadhana*) are identical. The realisation (*siddhi*) is also similar. It should not at all be surprising that despite the doctrines being different, there is no difference in the form of spiritual realisation (*siddhi*). Doctrines are intellectual expressions. There are many methods for pacifying the mind and the intellect, but their achievement is the same. The awakened consciousness must transcend the fluctuations of the mind.

This chapter of the Gita is based on Upanishads. Many verses of this chapter have been borrowed from Upanishads. If anyone is curious, he can refer to the preface written by Shri Mahadev Desai for the book '*Gita by Gandhi*'. With great effort the two – the Gita and the Upanishads have been coordinated.. This chapter also gives us the doctrine of early Upanishads. Moreover, based on that, the practice (*sadhana*) and realisation (*siddhi*) have been described. So far, devotion (*bhakti*) to *parameshwara* has not been brought in.

How far does this '*brahmi-sthiti*' relate to *karma*? There seems to be an absence of *karma* in this spiritual practice (*sadhana*). This *sadhana* will take us gradually away from the performance of *karmas*. With these problems (to be resolved), we wish to end this chapter

|| SHRI RAM ||

CHAPTER 3

The title of the second chapter is ‘*Samkhya Yoga*’ and that in reality is its main theme. In that chapter, *karmayoga* was just introduced. That chapter mentions the fates of those persons who perform *karmas* in the hope of their fruits; basic principles of *karmayoga*, and the result of its practice. To attain attributes of a ‘*sthitpragya*’ are as much important for the followers of the *Samkhya Yoga* as for the followers of the path of *karmayoga*.

The present chapter gives a detailed description of the fundamentals of *karma*, need for developing devotion for doing *karmas* and the difficulties faced in following the path of *karmayoga*. This chapter is aptly named ‘*karmayoga*’ reflecting its central theme. The accomplishment of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’ will be described a little later.

arjuna uvaca
jyayasi cet karmanas te mata buddhir janardana /
tat kim karmani ghore mam niyojayasi kesava ||1||
vyamisrene ‘va vakyena buddhim mohayasi ‘va me |
tad ekam vada niscitya yena sreya ‘ham apnuyam ||2||

Arjuna said,

O’ Janardana⁵⁰ If, you consider that wisdom is superior to *karma*, then O’ Keshav⁵¹! Why are you asking me to do this savage *karma* (of fighting)? (1)

“I have a feeling that you are bewildering my mind by making confusing statements. Please advise me just one thing decisively by which I may attain to my highest good.” (2).

In verses 49, 50 and 51 of the last chapter, Shri *Bhagwan* had praised reasoned intellect and in verse 49, stated that *karma* is inferior to wisdom. Arjuna did not correctly understand the intention of Shri *Bhagwan*. He got confused. He thought that the *karma* was inferior and still Shri *Bhagwan* was asking him to fight. How strange it was? Did Shri Krishna intentionally lead Arjuna astray? Such a notion seemed implausible, for Shri Krishna was not only Arjuna’s staunch well-wisher but also possessed profound wisdom. Baffled by these conflicting thoughts, Arjuna candidly disclosed his inner turmoil before Shri Krishna, saying:

‘If you really consider wisdom to be superior to *karma* then why are you asking me to fight?’

We understand opinion of others according to our own inherent nature – our *samsakars*. The differences in nature lead to differences in understanding. The one who is giving his opinion means something and the one who listens to it understands differently. This causes many misunderstandings in life. What a beautiful example is this?

⁵⁰ Janardana: this is another name of Lord Krishna

⁵¹ Keshava: this is yet another name fo Lord Krishna

Shri *Bhagwan* had used the word '*buddhi*' for devotion to *karmayoga* i.e. for doing *karmas* without any desire or attachment (*nishkam karma*). Without doing *karma*, that devotion is lame and is meaningless. The word '*karma*' was used (verse 49 of ch 2) for an action done for fulfillment of some purpose. This becomes clear by looking into the analysis of that verse. The objective of Shri *Bhagwan* was simply to prepare Arjuna to decide his *karma* by using his reasoned intellect and to motivate him to do his *karma* without attachment.

In the eyes of Arjuna, war was a savage act. He had already mentioned its frightful character while expressing his mental confusion. It so appears that Arjuna did not understand anything from the second chapter. He was not capable of understanding philosophical discourse. He needed some kind of faith with some strong reason or justification for plunging into the war. And as soon as he got such justification he was prepared to fight. Mere philosophical considerations had no meaning for him.

Arjuna was a simple person and if he did not open his heart before his friend Krishna then how could he have a solution of his problem? A sick person has to disclose his disease before his doctor. A person who seeks refuge must express his agony. A student must unhesitatingly disclose his doubts before his teacher. This is the demand of honesty, of truth. Without it neither anyone can help us nor can we accept any advice.

So Arjuna says: 'what a confusing statement you are making. I have not been able to understand anything. You are only confusing me. Tell me clearly and decisively. Show me the right path, traversing which I will achieve my highest good. '*Shadhi ma twam prapannam*'- I seek your refuge. Command me. Of course, along with it you will have to motivate me to act as per your advice and also to give me necessary strength to act accordingly'.

shri bhagwan uvach
loke 'smin dvividha nistha pura prokta maya 'nagha |
jnanayogena samkhyanam karmayogena yoginam ||3||

Shri *Bhagwan* answered thus:

"O' sinless one! I have already mentioned two kinds of beliefs (*nishtha*). The enlightened ones (*gyanis*) have dedication according to the yoga of wisdom (*gyanyoga*) and men of action (*karmayogi*) according to *karmayoga*". (3)

Dedication is devotion that shows us the way for making progress in our life. Dedication is the path of our spiritual practice (*sadhana*). There are only two paths - the path of wisdom (*gyan*) and the path of devotion to *karma*. Shri *Bhagwan* briefly mentioned both the paths in the second chapter.

What is the path of wisdom (*gyan*)? Wisdom (*gyan*) is reasonable discretion, capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, and the ability to differentiate between *purush* (the consciousness) and *prakriti* (matter). This is the means for those who follow the path of wisdom i.e. *gyanyoga* or *gyanmarg*. By proper discretion, a person can acquire freedom from the bonds of *prakriti* and can firmly establish himself in his own Self (*atmanbhav*). This is the primal, the basic

belief of those who follow *gyanmarg*. In this path, *karma* and worship are secondary. These can be acceptable only to the extent to which they are helpful in taking right decision. From the point of view of *sadhana* of the path of wisdom (*gyanyoga*) *karma* has no utility of its own.

Atman is immortal and the *prakriti* is transient and keeps changing. We are *atman*. We are always free from mutations, from changes. Change is the property of *prakriti*. We are *atman* and are immutable i.e. beyond changes. The mind, intellect, sense organs and body are all modifications nay aberrations of *prakriti* and are *anatman*. We are different. We remain untouched by their properties and their mutations. This is the discrimination-oriented form of the *gyanmarg*. It strengthens through various kinds of practices. Determination alone is important in this path. The difference between determination and experience is so hazy that it becomes difficult to distinguish the two.

What then is the nature of faith or devotion for doing *karmas*? In the path of *karma yoga* devotion to *karma* is the means for purification of internal impurities. *Karma* alone is the means to get over desires, anger, attachments, likes or dislikes, and ego (*ahankara*). The basic belief of the *karmayogiesis* is that the *karma* should be done with full devotion as *sadhana* i.e. all that needs to be done should be done. Right decision, etc. are relevant only to the extent that they are helpful in the performance of *karma* in the said manner, in the spirit of devotion. Right decision, etc. are of secondary importance. *Karma* alone is important in this path and that too with devotion, which Shri *Bhagwan* has called 'buddhi'.

The *karma* done without full devotion is verily a cause of bondage. This was mentioned before.

All that has been said above is that one should have devotion to his *karma* (here *karma* means duty). We do not find its followers these days.

Shri *Bhagwan* has not spoken separately about the faith (*nishtha*) of worship (*bhakti*). In fact, without *karma*, devotion to *parameshwara* (*bhakti*) has no meaning and is devoid of any effect. Mere flight of emotions cannot do internal purification nor can it change one's life. Without an awakening of higher consciousness, without dependence on *parameshwara*, without inspiration and without higher feelings for *Yagyaishwara*,⁵² it is difficult to do *karma* (*work*) in the spirit of sacrifice. It seems doubtful whether one could have bare faith (*nishtha*) in *karma* without having devotion to *parameshwara*. In fact; the two forms of devotion are the same i.e. the devotion to *karma* is verily the same as devotion to *parameshwara*. It is the devotion of devotees of *parameshwara*. By separating the two, both become meaningless.

The path of wisdom (*gyan*) dispenses with *karma*. But, in the path of *karmayoga*, *karma* is important- is central. The path of *karmayoga* is dependent on *karma*. For without *karma* both devotion and worship lose their basis. Therefore, this faith (*nishtha*) is devotion to *karma* or *karmayoga*. It must have been clear that faith for worship (*bhakti*) or for devotion (*buddhi*) are not independent. The difference between the two faiths, namely *gyan-yoga* and *karma yoga*, is clear.

⁵² Yagyaishwara: the lord of the Yagyas

The two faiths (*nishthas*) are indicative of two points of view towards life. The followers of the *gyanmarg* consider worldly life unimportant. In their view, *karma* is of no significance. The worldly relationships and the related responsibilities are not at all important. They are all sports of *prakriti*. If we consider the doctrine of Shankara as representative of this path then these relationships and responsibilities are illusory i.e. *mithya*. 'I am illusory and the world is unreal'. The relationships of the world, love, affections, beauty, service, etc. are all unreal. *Parameshwarais* unreal and so is his devotion. The Real is only the Brahman and that Supreme Reality is beyond the reach of mind and speech. It can only be self-experienced. We are in such an *advaita*, non-dual state, which itself does not exist. Rejection of the whole life in every manner is the quintessence of *sadhana*, spiritual discipline of *gyanmarga* or *gyanayoga*. There is total rejection of worldly life, life of a householder. .

What is devotion (*nishtha*) to *karma*? It is acceptance of life. It is to accept all activities of life as a form of *sadhana*. One has to get them accepted by *parameshwara*, and has to accept them for the sake of *Yagyaiswara*. One has to accept worldly relationships and associated responsibilities, and also one's position in the society. One has to accept his duties towards society as wish and command of *parameshwara* and perform them as a form of his worship. In the same way, one has to accept pleasures and pains as also likes and dislikes of the world. There is affection, love as well as service to Him. The doer does every work as a service to *parameshwara* and receives every thing as His blessing.

As per this faith, this devotion, every thing in the world is a manifestation of *parameshwara*. There is nothing else in this world except Him. Love is also entirely His. He alone gives love and He alone receives it. He is love incarnate. He alone is *karma*. He alone is every movement, the activity infinite. Moreover, it is only His will behind entire play in the universe. He alone is the doer and He alone gets everything done. So nicely It is said: '*karan karavan ape nath*'. '*vasudevah sarvamiti*' i.e. He dwells in everything and every thing dwells in Him. This is the expression of unseparable, deep, incarnate non-dual oneness of the faith sustaining *karma* and devotion in doing *karmas*. Moreover, it is experienceable too. At all times we feel that we dwell in the Divine and He dwells in us. This is the feeling of *dvaita*⁵³ in *advaita* and of *advaita* in *dvaita*. How very sweet, fascinating, serene and composed, and comprehensive is this devotion. This faith discards nothing. Every thing is vibrant with the presence of *Shyam* and *Ram* and there is perfect establishment of the empire of Truth, Beauty and Goodness i.e. *Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundram*

What a stark difference is there between the two faiths? The place of *sadhana* of the one is in the void of a forest and in the other it is normal day-to-day life. One is dependent on the strength of his determination, self-control and abstinence (of the aspirant) and the other is dependent upon the grace of the *parameshwara*. While the *sadhana* of one is escapism i.e. to run away from life to save one's self from passions and struggles of life, the other is to surrender the Self entirely to Him i.e. to dissolve one-self into Him, and to lose one-self for Him and in Him. One not only places his forehead but every cell of his being at His feet forever.

⁵³ dvaita: duality

ShriKrishna says that the final state of realisation of the two faiths is the same. However,after understanding the differences between the two forms of *sadhana*, one should follow the chosen path completely.Moreover,for ensuring rapid progress in *hissadhana* it is necessary that one should not only follow the chosen path but should also think and act according to its requirements. Mixing the two faiths is no faith at all. Our feet will be unsteady. However, taking recourse to a specific faith does not mean that we criticise or reject the other faith. We have to accept validityof the other faith but not for practice by ourselves.

In the field of spiritualism, there is lot of confusion these days. People think according to the faith of *gyanmarg* but behave according to the faith of *karmayoga*. This does not appear to be beneficial. The thought process of *gyanmarg* gives mental freedom by rejecting every thing based on the philosophy of illusionism or *mithyavada*. This is also the Buddhist philosophy. These days this is a very popular philosophy in Hindu society. Conservative Hinduscontinue to have conviction that abdication of worldly life is the path of salvation.. However, the associated *sadhana* of that faith is not easy. Consequently, a kind of pessimism prevails in their hearts. ‘Blessed are those who can renounce their homes; we are cursed ones living in filth’ - is what weighs heavily with them andhas a very bleak and dipressing effect on them. A person does not undertake the *sadhana* for which he is capable and repents for the one that he cannot undertake, for which he is incapable. He consequently wastes precious moments of life and the tears of repentance have no meaning for they do not serve any purpose.

The faith in renunciation (*sanyas*) is neither natural nor easy. The faith in *karma* is natural. In order to explain this, Shri *Bhagwansays*—

*na karmanam anarambhan naiskarmyam puruso 'snute /
na ca samnyasanad eva siddhim samadhigacchati ||4||
na hi kascit ksanam api jatu tisthaty akarmakrt /
karyatehy avasah karma sarvah prakrtijair gunaih ||5||*

"By not doing *karma* a person neither attain to the state of freedom from the consequences ofhis *karma* (*naishyakarmaya*) nor does he attain perfection in yoga (*siddhi*) by mere renunciation (*sanyas*).” (4)

"Certainly no one can ever remain without doing any *karma* even for a moment. Everyone is forcibly made to do *karmas* by the impulses of *prakriti*." (5)

Shri Bhagwan tries to remove the misunderstanding of Arjuna. 'Your understanding that knowledge is superior to *karma* is not correct. I never meant to say that.'

Naishyakarmayais that state where a person becomes free,forever,from the bonds of his *karmas*. It is that state where*karma*does not create any tendency or impression (*samsakara*) in the doer because thereisno doer-ship. This is thestate of perfection or of success in *karmayoga*.

Bymere external renunciation of *karmas* i.e. by not doing them physically, such a state is not achieved. There are two categories of *karmas*. One category is of those *karmas* on which we have full control due to our awakened consciousness. If we want to do a *karma*we do it; if we

do not want to do it then it is not done. The other category of *karmas* is that over which we have no control. They are done even when we do not want to do, such as heartbeats, digestive process, and internal mental activities. The mental activities are thoughts and emotions and they are generally not in control of an ordinary person.

Internal *karmas* are very subtle. Even when they are not seen as done they are done unknowingly and without being desired also. It is impossible to renounce *karmas* of the second category. Besides, not doing *karmas* by exercising control on oneself amounts to putting an effort and that effort is also a kind of *karma*. It will also form impressions. Moreover, as compared to doing willful *karma*, not doing *karma* forcefully causes deeper impression or *samsakara*.

The state of freedom from fulfilling any desires by *karma* (*naishyakarmaya*) is not the result of renunciation of external *karmas*. For this, renunciation of desire is a preparation. Just like preparation of a field for sowing a crop does not end up in producing a crop. A plant comes out only from a seed. Similarly, external renunciation of *karma* is only a preparation for the path of wisdom (*gyanmarg*). Renunciation itself does not produce the effect of disinterestedness in *karma*. Loss of desire for results (*naishyakarmaya*) is the result of awakening of higher inner consciousness beyond ego.

If one can be free from the bonds without doing any *karma*, then why lazy persons and inert existents, which do not make any effort for doing any *karma*, are not liberated? Then stones would have been most successful saints.

To think that absence of activity can result in liberation is a big mistake. At one time, this mistaken notion was very popular. The Upanishadic literature and Pauranic tales praised immensely the spirit of renunciation (*sanyas-dharma*). In addition, at that time it was believed that just by renunciation of *karmas* a person could attain salvation. Since one can never be free from the bonds of family life, a token renunciation was considered as an alternative. Therefore, we find examples of people practicing renunciation by untying their *shikhas* before death as a token of breaking their ties from their families. *Kshuriko'panishad* is a very good example of such literature.

Mere renunciation by untying *shikhas* and renunciation of family ties and duties, necessary for a householder, cannot liberate a person. One does not transform simply by changing his *ashram*⁵⁴ i.e. from *grahsthya* to *sanyasa*, because his latent tendencies or *samsakaras* are not destroyed.

Behind the belief that one can be liberated instantly is ignorance about the knowledge of real wellbeing. It is generally believed that removal of a bond is as easy as breaking a rope. But this work is not easy and cannot be done in a moment. Until one's impressions and one's latent tendencies are not destroyed; as long as passions are not fully controlled; as long as one is not absolutely free from his desires and anger; and, the ego is not fully eliminated, what kind of liberation that would be? Until then, it will at best be a mirage. It is just a transient glimpse of

⁵⁴ ashrama: entire life span of a person is divided in four stages each of twenty five years. These stages are: (i) brahmacharya or student life, (ii) grihasthya or life of a householder. (iii) vanaprastha or retirement from active life, and (iv) sanyasa or renouncement of worldly life.

wisdom (*gyan*), which keeps coming and going. Moreover, without internal purification, thoughts cannot be stable.

How can internal purification remove social bonds and associated debts? Our attachments do not dwell outside us; they dwell in our heart and in our mind. The related objects are only medium for their manifestation. We know that. Just by breaking our association with persons and objects, our inner associations and bonds with them do not instantly come to an end. They become dormant. That alone is possible. This is what we know very well. If just by leaving things one is liberated then all those wearing ochre clothes would have liberated.

By external renunciation, one leaves his house but not his internal attachment. In fact, so long as there is impulse for renunciation, there is a bond. Similarly as long as there is awareness of leaving things, there is a bond.

Only they attain perfection in *gyan yoga* who are free from any feeling of attachment or detachment. For them there is nothing left to leave or to possess.

No one can remain without doing any *karma* even for a moment. Movement is the basic requirement of creation. Universe is always in a state of flux. Even an atom is not free from activity. It is in this form alone that energy manifests itself. Energy is manifest form of *prakriti* and activity is the manifest form, an expression, of energy. Therefore, everything is always vibrant with energy, with activity. Every cell of our body, sense organs, mind and intellect are active all the time. In peaceful state of *prakriti* movement is even and uniform. Like a flowing river seem to be peaceful because its current is not changing its course. The mind appears stable when thought process does not change. That kind of inactivity, total inactivity, does not exist even in death. For there also mind and intellect continue to be active. That kind of inactivity is possible only in *pralaya* i.e. in the state of ultimate dissolution of entire creation or the state of total equilibrium in *prakriti*. In that state, every thing disappears in the womb of an absolute void – a state of absolute inactivity. *Nasdiya-sukta* mentions this state saying-

'tam evasit tamsa mulamagrai' i.e. 'darkness alone has enveloped darkness'.

This means that so long as we are in *prakriti* and have consciousness in our mind and intellect, we will have to do *karmas*. And if *karma* itself is a form of bond then we have to have bonds. Therefore, the only means of achieving liberation could be going beyond the realms of *prakriti*. That state alone has been called the state of '*kaivalya*'. It is the ideal of Samkhya and is also the state of perfect realisation of *gyanyoga*. It is for this reason that external renunciation of *karma* is emphasised in the *gyanmarg*.

What a puzzle? We cannot abandon *karma*. But *Karma* itself creates bond. How is it possible then to be free from bonds by renouncing *karma*? Then the question, whether or not renunciation of *karma* would be beneficial or not, does not arise?

Karma can be renounced only in one way: Our *atman* does no *karma*. It is *nishkarma* i.e. devoid of both activity and aberrations. If we can establish ourselves in our *atman* then we can be

instantly free from the need of doing *karmas* and can also be free from its bonds. This alone is the remedy given by Samkhya for achieving everlasting freedom from bonds.

The renunciation of external *karmas* as a form of *sadhanais* just a means for attaining the said inner state of realisation.

We are forced to do *karmas* by the impulses of *prakriti*. The *Yogadarshan* says, '*chalam cha gunavratam*' i.e. activity is the basic nature of the modes of *prakriti*. Our mind, intellect, etc. are all comprised of the constituents of *prakriti*. Activity is their nature and movement is its innate mode of existence. And so long as mind and intellect exist, *karma* is inevitable.

When we feel that we are not doing anything even then some activity goes on in the mind, etc. This activity is so natural that we are not even aware of it just as those people who live on the banks of a river do not hear the noise of the flowing river. Only when the river gets flooded they hear the noise of the flooding water. Just like that whenever any special activity takes place then only we realise that some activity is taking place – some *karma* is being done.

Secondly, when our consciousness is stabilised beyond *prakriti*, beyond the mind, the intellect and the ego, we feel that we are not doing anything and are in the state of being a witness or a *sakshi* for every thing happening around us. There is then no feeling of being a doer. There surely is a realisation of activity going on in the mind, the intellect, etc. but do not feel that we are doing anything, that we are the doer. In such a state, a person is free from the bonds of his *karma*. This is the ideal of those having faith in doing *karma*. In this state even without renouncing *karmas* there is no bond for the person doing it. For even while doing *karmas* the person remains a non-doer. He is like a lotus flower in water and his *sadhana* is also done accordingly. It does not demand renunciation of *karmas* and the highest state is gained just by doing *karmas* with full devotion. Shri *Bhagwan* is a non-doer even while doing every thing and so becomes his devotee a non-doer even while engaged in activity. Such a devotee realises the Supreme.

It has been said in the 18th chapter of the Gita –

*na tad asti prthivyam va divi devesu va punah |
sattavam prakrtijar muktam yad ebhishyat tribhir gunaih ||18/40||*

That, 'there is no such being on earth or in heaven or even amongst the gods who is free from the three *gunas* (modes) of *prakriti*'.

The meaning of this verse should be understood in the light of whatever has been written above.

Whatever is beyond the mind and the intellect is the truth, the reality. It is the feeling of abiding in the Self (*atmanbhav*). The consciousness working through the mind and the intellect is bound by the laws of three *gunas* of *prakriti*. Mind and the intellect being made of three *gunas*, how they could be free from them. And so when our consciousness works in and through them it behaves according to their innate laws and their limit becomes the limit of the consciousness as well. But this does not mean that the Self (*atman*) cannot go beyond these

gunas. Such a thought would amount to rejection of the entire philosophy of the Gita. Therefore, that will be wrong.

And so for applying this truth in the field of *sadhana*, it has been said thus—

*karmendriyani samyamyā ya aste manasa smaran /
indriyarthan vimudhatman mithyacarah sa ucyate ||6||
yas tv indriyani manasa niyamyā 'rabhate 'rjuna /
karmendriyaiḥ karmayogam asaktah sa visisyate ||7||*

"He, who by restraining his organs of action, thinks by the mind about the objects of senses, is a fool. He is said to be a hypocrite." (6)

"O'Arjuna! He, who controlling his senses by his mind and does *karmas* with his organs of action in the spirit of detachment, attains the special position –he is excellent." (7)

Two pictures have been shown and compared. Thinking that *karmas* are the cause of bondage and enjoyment of pleasures of life are source of unhappiness, a person refrains from both i.e. from doing *karmas* and enjoying pleasures of life. But, neither the desire for doing *karmas* nor the craving for enjoying pleasures of sense-objects is removed from within. The objects of senses can only be enjoyed by earning money and by doing *karmas*. That is what he does not do but he keeps imagining about objects of enjoyment.

So long as a person has desires for sense objects his *rajo-guna* remains predominant and he has such a condition. The less *karma* he does, the more intense is his mental craving. More one refrains from objects of his pleasure, more his mind runs after them i.e. more he keeps thinking about them.

Just by developing indifference for enjoyments, craving for their objects does not end. Passions are like a loaded gun. There can be no peace without destroying this craving to some extent. With a little understanding, intellect can be pacified but the *prana*⁵⁵ does not have any reason as it is totally inert. It is totally devoid of understanding and so its latent tendencies can only be pacified gradually. It is necessary to change its nature completely but that cannot be achieved suddenly.

Just as it is necessary to tire a restless horse before he can be pacified, so it is necessary to gratify sense organs to some extent to eventually pacify them. That is a practical formula for success in life.

Vyasjee has said: '*na jatu kamah kamanamupbhogen shamyati*' i.e. the desire is not pacified by enjoyment. This is true. Peace is not achieved by indulgence in pleasures. Passions of a passionate person increase by indulgence. He, who enjoys with the hope that he will be fully pacified by indulgence in pleasures, is in delusion. Indulgence in pleasures for the sake of reducing force of passions and for eliminating tendencies is helpful in *sadhana*. But absolute peace can be

⁵⁵ prana: the inner craving

achieved only by gaining the grace of the feet of *parameshwara*. Our experiences tell us that while moving forward towards the Supreme, indulgence in enjoyments, which come on the way in normal course, opens the door to Him. Restraint exercised forcibly torments the mind so much that it becomes difficult to move towards the feet of the Supreme. And so by enforcing control one can neither move towards the Supreme nor can have effective restraint. The golden principle is the middle path.

A person exercising self-restraint forcefully has been called a hypocrite. A hypocrite is the one, who acts contrary to what he feels within. His outer behaviour does not convey his inner feelings. He appears to be disciplined in appearance but deep within himself he is undisciplined i.e. unrestrained and more indulgent than others.

Such people deserve pity. They are in a state of delusion and are fools. They do not know the secret of restraint. They, therefore, become more-and-more filthy from inside with every passing day. They lose simplicity and serenity of life. And due to their obstinacy and ignorance they harm their mind as well as intellect.

Sometimes inner conflict descends into sub-consciousness. A person feels that his mind is peaceful but deep within there is a strange feeling of discomfort and restlessness in him. He develops complexes, which inadvertently influence his own behaviour as well as of those with whom he comes in contact. For more information, refer to verse 59 of the second chapter.

Many persons who apparently seem to be 'pious' belong to this category. In fact ordinary people are more pious than they are.

In the 7th verse another picture - opposite to this one - has been shown. That is worth emulating. It is the picture of the aspirant of the path of *karmayoga*.

He who practices *karmayoga* by controlling his sense organs is very praiseworthy. The meaning of *karmayoga* is to discharge duty and execute work in hand (*karma*) with full devotion. This includes enjoying pleasures which are available in normal course. The two can go together. The intellect which accepts that required *karmas* are to be done with devotion also accepts enjoyments becoming available in normal course. The available *karma* is accepted as duty and enjoyments becoming available are accepted as a form of its consequences, its fruit. And as the *karma* is not done in expectation of its result, one develops neither like nor dislike for its consequences, for the fruit of his *karma*. This is the way, balanced and peaceful mind work. What else could be the meaning of the state of evenness towards pleasure and pain? Evenness towards *karma* and its result is the basic requirement of *karmayoga*. And this is the path of accepting life as it is, in its totality.

The person, who has been described in the 6th verse, is not prepared to accept the consequences of his *karma*. He neither accepts *karma* nor its result. He tries to escape from both of them and as a result he becomes miserable.

How does he then practice *karmayoga*? How does he enjoy pleasures of life, which come his way? In both i.e his *karmas* as well as in his pleasures there is control, discipline which is like reining a horse. Disciplining of a horse does not mean that he should never be taken out of the stable. It only means proper control over his activities. A person practicing *karmayoga* does his *karmas* but is not swayed by them. He does not become an indiscriminate doer of his *karmas* (verse 22 of ch. 18) by losing or by being indifferent to his wisdom. The *karmas* do not haunt him like a ghost. He does his *karmas* with full involvement, with full devotion but may also not do them whenever he so wants. For him it is not difficult to forget them. Similarly, while enjoying pleasures he is not lost in them completely. He refrains from immersing himself in pleasures to the point of neglecting his duties and responsibilities of life. He does not become a slave of enjoyments. He can deny them whenever he so wants. Enjoyments do not awaken his lust instead they weaken his passions to finally eliminate them.

How then is this possible? This is possible by exercising proper control over sense organs by mind which works like a rein.

He is not worried to use his organs of action because they alone are means for practicing *karmayoga*.

How does he do his *karmas*? How does he enjoy pleasures? Is it by being attached or detached within? He neither sticks to his *karmas* nor to enjoyments. He is not interested in picking up any thing for himself. Neither does he have any desire for leaving nor for gaining anything. He does his *karmas* because they are to be done as duty. He is devoid of any passion for anything. But he does his *karmas* with full mental involvement, with full commitment, because that alone is the means for him – the means for his spiritual progress.

Such a person is special. He goes far ahead of a person who practices restraint and self control..

It looks as if solution to the problem of Arjuna is hidden in these two pictures. By not fighting in the war Arjuna could have been busy in thoughts of on-going war. The thought of enjoyments, which he could have gained by fighting and winning, would have disturbed him. He was not yet free from his desires. Those were still very powerful and would torment him in future. And so he would have been a hypocrite if he did not fight. He would not be the same within as he would appear from outside.

If he accepted war as his duty like a *karmayogi*⁵⁶ and fought with full devotion then that would be beneficial for him. And the same *karma*, which he considered to be brutish, would be beneficial to him

These two verses so clearly state the great danger of the path of renunciation (*sanyas*). Probably it is because of this danger, scriptures placed the stage of renunciation i.e. *sanyas*, after the stages of a householder (*grahasthya*) and the stage of living in forests *vanaprastha* i.e.

⁵⁶ *karmayogi*: practitioner of *karmayoga* or yoga of disinterested/desireless action

retirement from usual humdrum of life. In the stages of *grahasthya* and *vanaprastha* we can substantially destroy our passions by doing *karmas* and by enjoying their consequences. After these stages, body also does not have adequate energy for the hustle and bustle of life. And so in that stage, abandonment of physical *karma* does not cause any perceptible problem. According to anthropology, it so appears that *sanyaswas* provided only for leaving human body. The prime objective of life seems to be that it should be lived as long as it is possible with full devotion, and commitment.

However, it seems that the alternate philosophy had become very popular and had permeated the entire Hindu society.

In the next verse Shri *Bhagwan* himself gives a message to Arjuna based on above analysis.

*niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyayo hy akarmanah /
sarirayatra 'pi ca te na prasidhyed akarmanah ||8||*

"I say decisively that you do your (assigned) *karma*. Doing of *karma* is always better than not doing. Without doing *karma* you will not be able to even maintain your body." (8)

Arjuna had asked, '*tadekam vad nishchitya shreyo 'ham apnuyam*' (sh. 2). 'Tell me one thing clearly which will be in my interest.' Shri *Bhagwan* answers him saying, '*niyatam kuru karma twavam.*' 'I say decisively that you should do your assigned duty'. It is evident that these words answer the question of Arjuna. Where is the necessity to find a different meaning for the word '*niyat*'? The word conveys the essence of the philosophical thoughts mentioned before. There is a clear direction for Arjuna to act. Shri *Bhagwan* wanted Arjuna to do his duty. This topic was mentioned for removal of his doubt.

And Shri *Bhagwan* further clarified with the words: 'it is better to do *karma* than not doing'. It is better to fight than not to fight. Why is it better, this has just been explained. The two pictures were shown to Arjuna with this purpose. Even after conceptual analysis of *karma* and *akarma* the same conclusion was reached. The path of *karma* alone is easy, natural and is in accordance with nature. And for Arjuna that alone was beneficial.

Inactivity or not doing any thing cannot take a person anywhere. Neither does it have any positive strength of its own nor does it have any negative strength. From the point of view of *sadhana* it is impossibility – at best only a partial possibility. It is a botheration. *Karma*, on the other hand, has positive strength. It can destroy innate tendencies (*samskaras*), remove bonds and also purifies the doer. Of course, proper devotion is needed for doing *karmas*, which one can generate. 'You are wise'. It appears that Shri *Bhagwan* was giving to Arjuna an advice to this effect. How clear and forceful are His words.

Shri *Bhagwan* gives another argument. The same was also said earlier. 'You will not be able to complete your physical journey on earth if you do not do *karmas*'. The meaning of this clearly is: 'you are a warrior. If you do not fight then will you beg for alms? Will you serve as a

slave to someone? Will you live your life becoming dependent on someone? How will you maintain your body?

Arjuna had said earlier:

'sreyo bhoktum bhiksyam api 'ha loka' (2/5)

'it is better to live in this world by begging for alms than to kill elders.' But Shri *Bhagwan* knew Arjuna. They were merely words spoken by Arjuna in the state of his depression and dejection. He could never go to anybody's door with a begging bowl and uttering the words, '*bhiksham dehi bhagwati*'. He was brave to the core and was full of self-respect in every pore of his body. Could Arjuna beg? It was impossible.

The Lord had placed this truth before Arjuna; 'think for yourself'. Will you live on the alms of the Kauravas? Are you prepared for that?' Shri *Bhagwan* arousing his feeling of self-respect in the same manner had earlier said that 'people will say that Arjuna was a coward and so he ran away from the battlefield'.

Even while discussing philosophical concepts Shri *Bhagwan* had neither forgot Arjuna nor He took a flight of imagination. He was determined to convince Arjuna and to bring him on the right path, like a learned teacher and an able administrator.

After this, in the following verses Shri *Bhagwan* starts describing basic concepts of sacrifice (yagya) which is the basis of the practice of *karmayoga*. Without the spirit of sacrifice, devotion to *karma* becomes insipid and lifeless commitment. It ceases to be a feeling vibrant with the spirit of devotion, of worship i.e. *bhakti* to the Divine. So it cannot become a means for being in tune with Shri *Bhagwan*, the *Yagyaishwara*. This topic starts from the 9th verse and concludes with the 16th verse. These 8 verses are very important. Through these verses, one comes to know yagya or sacrifice as a means for practicing *Karma yoga*. Then we become ready to understand the meaning of the word *Yagyaishwara*, the Lord of sacrifices.

***yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra loko 'yam karmabandhanah /
tadartham karma kaunteya muktasangah samacara ||9||***

"All *karmas* done in this world, except the *karmas* done as a sacrifice (yagya), are cause of bonds. Therefore, o' Arjuna! You do *karmas* as a sacrifice (yagya) setting aside all attachments". (9)

The concept of yagya or sacrifice is a very deep one. Ordinarily, the meaning of the word 'yagya' is a form of worship. But the word 'worship' expresses only a part of the meaning of the word 'yagya' and that is of secondary importance.

The word offering (*homme*) expresses full meaning of the word 'yagya'. Fire in a pit is blazed. Deity is invoked. Offerings are made to him. By these offerings deity is nourished and the one who does the yagya is blessed by the deity. In this way they mutually nourish each other. Both, the deity and the individual performing the yagya prosper. The deity fulfills desire of the

person performing yagya. And he in turn gives the deity a share of the boons received from the deity and that share nourishes the deity of the yagya. This process continues.

In the world, all existents are dependent on one another. The different existents appear to be independent of others because of our limited vision, as we cannot go into depth. A person lives in his house independently. He thinks that he earns and lives on his own. He neither owes any thing to others nor do others owe any thing to him. He is neither obliged to any one nor is he dependent on any one. But to think that way is ignorance. Many people had contributed towards the construction of his house in which he lives. Laborers had worked and they had used their implements. Those implements were manufactured in some factory. Many people from many places had worked in that factory for manufacturing those implements. The iron ore was excavated from some place and it was somewhere melted and moulded. That was also done in a factory where many other people had worked. And in this manner we can understand that every cell of our body is intimately connected with the world in one form or the other. One eats the loaf of wheat. Many people contribute for the satisfaction of his hunger. The farmer, who had grown wheat and all those who contributed towards his living, like the artisans of the village, the cloth merchant, the grocer, and his parents and grandparents, are all included in the picture. We are not alone. Our existence itself is the result of the vast process of evolution. We are just a particle of sand in the moving river and a small link in this long unending chain of the world. The one who sees himself separate from the totality i.e. universe, does not actually see any thing.

We are dependent upon others. Others are likewise dependent upon us in some way. Human beings are mutually dependent. Animals are dependent upon human beings and they in turn human beings are dependent on animals. The vegetative world is dependent upon animals and animals upon vegetative world. The vegetative world is dependent on human beings and they are dependent upon the vegetative world. The inter-relationship of dependence is so complex that when a person starts thinking about it he is sure to get confused.

And, what more happens in this process of mutual dependence? It is only through this process of inter-dependence that the entire play of the world goes on. This play cannot evidently continue without this process and without this play balance of the world will disturb.

If labourers stop doing their work then the entire structure of the society will collapse. If a teacher stops teaching or like wise any other section of the society stops doing its work then the society is sure to suffer. The entire social balance will crumble..

Man expects cooperation of animals and he takes milk and manure from them. Insects are absolutely necessary for the entire vegetative world because without them pollination will not be possible. There then will not be any new crop of vegetation. Likewise without the support of birds and animals, human life will not be able to sustain. Similarly without the vegetative life, human life will not be possible and without cooperation of man these in turn will not flourish. Man sows seeds, gives manure and protects plants. Then only they flower and give fruits. Man also keeps and maintains animals and then only they are able to give milk and other animal products.

The entire play of this world is based on this mutual inter-dependence and exchange.

This mutual inter-dependence is necessary for the creation. The mutual exchange of goods and services meets the requirement of inter-dependence is *yagya*, is sacrifice, is pervasive and is *Vishnu*, the sustaining deity of the universe. This inter-dependence applies to all forms of existents from an atom to human beings.

What is the form of this inter-dependence? Sacrifice? Sacrifice of the self! When an individual sacrifices himself for the community, then only community, macrocosm (*samasthi*) flourishes. When society sacrifices then individual life sustains. Society sacrifices for an individual and individual sacrifices for the society then only life of an individual and of society sustains. Both are mutually inter-dependent. This is the secret of *yagya*. This is the law of the universe. The entire play of the universe is dependent upon the sacrifice of one for others and of others for one. The sacrifice for others is the beginning, middle and end of this entire play of the universe.

In the *Purushasukta* there is a beautiful description of this magnificent *yagya*. In the fire of this great *yagya*, the limbs of the Lord, *Purushottama*, are sacrificed one by one. Each one of the limbs gives rise to a new creation. That Supreme Reality thus sacrifices itself. It gives offerings of itself, of its existence in the fire of the *yagya*. It partially loses its absolute *advaita* form in the genitals of *prakriti* and then only *prakriti* develops in itself the ability to create various forms and multitudinous creation.

Yagya is a form of sacrifice and is also a sacrifice of the self. It is also the basic law of creation. It may be done knowingly or unknowingly. As long as consciousness is not fully developed, the sacrifice takes place unknowingly, whether it is under some temptation or under some compulsion. In the inert, the vegetative and the animal forms of life, the sacrifice is to be seen in this form only. Man alone can do sacrifice willingly after carefully thinking about it without any temptation or compulsion. That is known as service and is also a form of selfless sacrifice (*nishkam yagya*). It is a form of worship of Shri *Bhagwan Purushottama*. It purifies a person and unites him with Shri *Bhagwan, Purushottama*. This is the best form of *yagya*, of sacrifice, giving of the self.

In English, *yagya* means sacrifice. In Hindi it means *balidan*

We will now make an attempt to understand the 9th verse.

Shri *Bhagwan* said to Arjuna that the *karma*, which is done for the sake of *yagya*, is not a cause of any bond but all other *karmas* cause bonds in this world.

What is the meaning of *karma* for the sake of *yagya*? Society is a form of *yagya*. Any *karma* done for the society with the purpose to keep it moving is *akarma*, done for the sake of *yagya*, for the sake of sacrifice. How does this *yagya* of society continue? If every individual performs his social duties and continues to discharge his responsibilities then this *yagya* continues smoothly.

When every part of a machine functions properly then only it works smoothly and efficiently. Therefore, discharging of one's duties and responsibilities is truly speaking one's real

karma. When a person discharges his assigned duties and responsibilities keeping in mind that being a part of the society he must do it otherwise the society will not function properly, then he does the said *karma* for the sake of *yagya*. That *karma* will not bind him.

Our motives for doing *karmas* are very important. The same *karma* can be done for gratifying greed. People can and do behead others for the sake of money. A warrior fights in a war as a part of his duty. *Karma* can be done out of fear and can also be done for right reason. The results of the two *karmas* are different for the doer as well as for the society. The society is debased, becomes unhappy and gets corrupted by *karmas* done with wrong motives.

Warrior has a place in the society. He also has a corresponding duty, a responsibility. He should do his work and discharge his responsibilities with the spirit that he is serving the society, and then it will be *yagya*. .

This spirit of *yagya*, of self-giving, is in reality based on *sattva* i.e. truth. As has been mentioned above, every one in the society is mutually connected. Our life is dependent upon that relationship. Just to look for our own interest is to forget the community of which we are a part and to work under temptation or fear is to deviate from this truth. What we are today we are due to the sacrifices done and being done by various sections of the society. Others have cared for our upbringing and due to their contribution our requirements are met even now. They have educated us and have accepted us. If, therefore, today having an opportunity we do not sacrifice ourselves for the community then it surely is nothing but a kind of theft.

The *karmas* done with this specific spirit make us free from bonds. Why? By doing *karmas* in this manner, in the spirit of self-giving, we effectively repay our debts towards the society and the universe with warmth and reciprocity. We sacrifice for the community and the community sacrifices for us. In this manner we do not owe any debt to the society. Whenever we work only for ourselves or for our own selfish interests we become indebted to the society. How can we be free without repaying that debt? To work only for selfish interest is verily a theft, is placing a burden over one's head and amounts to closing one's fist. It is but natural that such *karmas* are cause of one's bonds.

To become a form of *yagya* is a natural, easy and clear method for being free (from any kind of bondage) in this universe, which itself is a form of *yagya*. Expressed in a simple language this means that one should make efforts and work for the benefit, interest and happiness of others ignoring personal happiness, gains or interest. The best way of avoiding pressure in a flowing river is to flow with its current. To violate this law is to create fresh bonds. It amounts to handcuffing and chaining oneself. The law of the Creation is self-less giving and self-sacrifice.

Becoming impatient, someone may say that *karma* itself is a bond and so one should avoid doing it.

So long as we do not accept this law of nature and do not make it a part of our life, *karma* will be a bond. When this law becomes a part of our very life manifesting itself in our behaviour then *karma* does not look like a bond but becomes our very nature.

This is the only way to play in the *prakriti*. The Supreme Lord, *Purushottama*, also becoming Lord of *yagya*, *Yagyaishwara*, while playing the divine sport remains beyond all bonds. While assuming the form of *yagya* and united with the Supreme Lord, we do our *karmas*, we remain free from bonds. This is the decent in *prakriti*, the feeling of non-duality of Self (*advaita-bhav* of *atman*), which is none other than the spirit of self-less desire to serve. Supreme Lord is a form of *yagya* and we are also the same. How then can there be any pain, effort and bond in the expression of our own innate nature? The feeling of sacrifice, the innate nature of self-giving, is the practical form of non-duality (*advaita*). Without it what other meaning *advaita* could have?

Shri *Bhagwan* tells Arjuna that you fight. Fight as if you are doing a *yagya*, a sacrifice. 'you must do your *karma* as 'svadharma' and for discharging your duties towards the society as social service. You will not be bonded.

'Of course, you will have to keep a broad outlook. If you are attached to your *karma* there will surely be a bond. And what does this mean? Being attached, while doing *karma*, is to act for oneself; for one's self-interest and for gratification of one's personal desire. It is wrong to do that.'

How comprehensive is the basic principle of *yagya* or sacrifice, which is the basis of *karmayoga*? How very beautifully this verse presents the high pedestal on which *karmayoga* is placed?

In the 10th verse we will know the importance of *yagya* in the Universe.

***sahayajnah prajah srstva puro 'vaca prajapatih |
anena prasavisyadhvam esa vo 'stv istakamadhuk || (10)***

"In ancient days *Prajapati* (Lord of beings) created *praja* (beings) along with sacrifice (*yagya*). He told (directed) *praja* that: ' you multiply your numbers by performing *yagya* and this (*yagya*) be of fulfilling your desires'. (10)

Prajapati is the creator and lord of beings (*praja*). *Brahama* is called *Prajapati*. *Brahama* created beings, *praja*. This he did through his power of spiritual austerities i.e. *tapobal*. But this process should continue. Then only the process of creation will continue. If *praja* has no ability to procreate then the creation itself will come to an end. And *Brahma* will then have to create again. For the continuance of the process of creation, *yagya* is necessary. The process of creation can continue both by new births and by providing means of livelihood. And so both objectives are achieved by *yagya*. *Brahama* jee, therefore, created *yagya* along with *praja*.

We are introduced to a lofty and a very comprehensive concept of *yagya* in the direction of *Brahama* jee: 'multiply through *yagya*'. Procreation verily is a *yagya*. In Aryan culture procreation is seen from this point of view. Insemination (*garbhadan*) is accepted amongst 16 main religious rituals (ceremonies) to be performed by a person in his life. After the birth of a child, a ceremony of initiation (*jatkarma*) is done. There can be no doubt about the sublimity of that ritual. For attaining the ability to procreate, *Manu* himself practiced austerities. He attained this ability only by practicing spiritual austerities through which he could continue the process of creation.

Modern thinking, the origin of which lies in material perspective of the West, cannot even imagine the auspiciousness of procreation. From the point of view of that culture, procreation is only a product of sexual act. And, from that point of view there is nothing, which is pure, lofty and sublime in life. Every thing reduces to earth. Man himself is a toy made of earth and his future is also earth. It should not be surprising if the believers in that philosophy do not find any thing of consequence in the great yajya of procreation?

The concept that family life is filth is a contribution of Buddhist philosophy. The ancient culture of this land, the ancient seers looked upon family life as something of importance. *To procreate* was considered as an auspicious duty. And through that alone could one attain the world of gods. All other stages of life are dependent upon family life and, therefore, it is the fulcrum of the society. And so, we do not find that in ancient times there was any tendency of running away from family life. All sages and listeners of Upanishads were themselves householders except with a few rare exceptions.

It appears to me that our growing passions (sexual cravings), growing greed and attachments have taught us to look upon family life as something base, of inferior value. We smell rot out side us due to our growing inner impurities. The result of such understanding has been dangerous, not only for some sections of the society but also for the society as a whole. The result of the decline of the institution of family life and of the disrespect shown to this institution results in the decline in social values. It should not be difficult to understand this.

Procreation is a yajya. The institution in which this yajya can be performed is pure and sublime. And so the progeny produced with the intent of performing a yajya can never be a cause of bondage. And it will surely pacify sexual needs of a person. By procreation, a person repays the debt of his ancestors and becomes free from their bonds.

Procreation is a yajya. Both mother and father sacrifice in this yajya. In the act of procreation ovum and semen are sacrificed and energy too is sacrificed. Giving birth to a child and the effort for his upbringing is a long and honourable tale of sacrifices. Through this the society is nourished and nurtured. We also got our physical body only as a result of such a sacrifice. This is not the sacrifice of a mother alone but also includes the sacrifice of the father as well as of other ancestors. The wider universe i.e. the macrocosm, sacrifices for the individual and the individual by his sacrifices nourishes and enriches the totality, macrocosm. This verily is a form of yajya. Progeny is indeed a yajya and so is pure. Without this yajya, the entire play of creation would come to an end. This principle applies equally to all forms of life, from vegetation to human world. In the inert world, only external forces are seen to be active.

And, ' the yajya should be of fulfilling your desires'.

Yajya i.e. sacrifice is the best means for fulfillment of one's desires. By making offerings in the fire of yajya we sacrifice our energies for others and in return we get their cooperation through which our desires are fulfilled. The satisfaction of our passions is not entirely dependent upon us alone. It instead is dependent upon corresponding cooperation of many others. This cooperation can be had only through yajya, through sacrifice.

In the language of present day world, it is said that one has to pay a price for satisfaction of every desire and that price is sacrifice – self-giving – and the same is yagya. Money is required for construction of a house. One has to work for earning money, and the work done for others is surely in the nature of yagya or sacrifice. For the appeasement of hunger wheat is required. But for getting wheat something else will have to be given in exchange. Needless to say, one will have to labour for producing that something else. And that something thing will in turn meet the requirement of somebody else. This also clearly establishes the need of yagya in the form of labour.

When a person tries to fulfill his desire without doing yagya or without paying the price in this manner he commits theft. He wants to derive benefit without making any sacrifice for it. It is against social laws. Therefore, it is intolerable to the society and so the society punishes him. Similarly all such activities, which are not in the form of self-giving, which do not serve the society and, on the contrary, harm others, are punishable from social point of view. Yagya is the basic law of the society.

Our desires can be fulfilled by living in the society and for that the only requirement is yagya or acts of self-giving. At our every step society teaches us the law of self-giving or self-sacrifice. Only a foolish person does not wish to learn that lesson. Due to his selfishness, he himself becomes miserable and also makes others miserable.

For satisfaction of one's self interest also self-giving is necessary. Fulfillment of our desires also demands yagya in the form of our labour. How very simple is the law? By understanding this law both the individual as well as the society can be happy. The result of violating this law is harmful for every one.

This law has no meaning in the worlds of vegetation and animals because they have no desires.

*devan bhavayata 'nena te deva bhavayantu vah /
parasparam bhavayantah sreyaḥ param avapsyatha ||11||*

"You nourish gods through this yagya and gods in turn will nourish you. Thus by nourishing each other you will all attain the supreme good." (11)

Gods are those divine forces, which contribute in creation of this gross world and in its sustenance. Many forces contribute in building bodies. It is then that this unique creation takes place, of course unknowingly, in the womb of a mother. The wonders of both vegetative and animal worlds are due to these unknown divine forces working unknowingly. The wonders of the world lie hidden in the creation of a leaf. One single petal of a flower presents the glimpse of the play of the Infinite. That is possible only due to these divine creative forces.

The modern science brushes aside every thing by calling it as 'nature' or *prakriti*. This is merely a declaration of their limited knowledge or of their ignorance. We know for certain that many forces of the subtle world, which are highly capable and have a comprehensive knowledge

of the gross world operate unseen. Every particle of earth and every cell of a body are the result of their creativity.

Not only that, it is also certain that these divine forces work in harmony to maintain the cycle of the world, to maintain equilibrium of the universe, for proper maturation of *karmas* and for proper working of primary elements like fire, water, air, etc. We do believe that it is not at all easy to correctly understand their activities and their ways. Even amongst the modern scientists who have tried to go into depth have accepted in their own way possibilities of existence of such forces beyond the material universe. [Refer to 'Mysterious Universe' by James Jeans.]

Shri Bhagwan says: 'nourish the divine forces through yagya.' Can they also be nourished? If they can be nourished then how can it be done? This is the question. Yes, they can be nourished. Whoever is in the gross state that is nourished by the gross grain? Whoever is in the vital (*prana*) state that is fed by the vital stuff i.e. *prana* itself? And whoever dwells in the mental (*manomaya*) state is fed by the like stuff i.e. the mental (*manomaya*) principle. The divine forces are subtle and so dwell in the vital (*prana*) and the *manomaya* and so require food of relevant nature i.e. of the vital and the mental kind. It can be given to them through offerings in sacrificial fire.

The food offered in sacrificial fire is apparently burnt. But in reality, only the gross in it is burnt. As the vital (*prana*) is for the human body and so it is for the grain. It has the potential of germinating and growing into a plant because of the presence of this vital element i.e. *prana*. There is life in it. And the gross in it is the basis of its life. Like gross body that gross offering is burnt in the fire. The remaining portion i.e. the vital element becomes free from bond as a result of burning of the gross in fire and is absorbed into the cells of vital sheaths (*koshas*).

For making offerings in sacrificial fire, gods are invoked – their presence is sought. Those who possess a subtle vision know that on being invited gods do come. They consume the subtle portion of the grain offered in the fire. And this nourishes their vital body.

In doing of this *karma*, our feelings of reverence are also awakened. They in turn become food for the cells of *manomaya* sheath of gods invoked. The chanting of *mantras* of the Vedas transmits energy in all directions, which also strengthens the cells of *manomaya* sheath of gods so invoked.

Such offerings in the sacrificial fire, recitation of hymns and chanting of the name of the deity foster the vital and the mental (*manomaya*) cells of the deity. They are strengthened.

Strengthened in this manner, gods in turn foster us. They can do their *karmas* more efficiently. And by fostering them in this manner we make them favourable towards us.

Realising this secret, offerings in sacrificial fire was prescribed as a ritual to be practiced daily by a householder. It appears that there was a time when gods were a lot more receptive to these subtle forces than they are today and that these forces were fairly close to people of those times. Mutual exchange also used to take place between the two – the subtle forces and the men of this world - as it now takes place between one man and another man. But the present age is different. The process of evolution itself has created a wide gulf between the two.

The yagya does not exist only in human and lower worlds but it also exist right upto the world of gods. In the grand yagya of creation, gods also make their offerings as people of this world do.

The sacrifices i.e. yagyas, take the totality i.e. macrocosm, and individuals forward. A person gets gradually purified through these sacrifices i.e. yagyas. He breaches the limits of selfishness and ego and learns to submerge himself inmacrocosm, which is the universe. And the totality likewise progresses i.e. moves forward losing it in the individual. And through these sacrifices i.e. by doing yagyas we come near to the Supreme, to *Yagyaishwara* i.e the Lord of sacrifices. He alone is the one who accepts our offerings of sacrifice.

Sacrifice i.e. yagya is the basic spirit, the governing principle, the mantra, of evolution. The inert world enters the vegetative world only after sacrificing itself after losing its identity completely and in doing so become a part of trees and plants. Trees and plants by losing themselves find a place in animal-body and animals likewise by their sacrifice serving human beings become a part of human body. A human being also gains the divine body in the same manner. And the gods too by performing yagyas in the form of their duties attain to higher planes of existence and crossing the godly form of existence get released from all bonds. Yagya is the path of beneficence. And when performed willingly it takes us forward with good speed.

Human beings nourish gods through yagyas and gods take them forward. Through yagyas, both of them gain their supreme good.

The term 'ultimate or supreme good' should be taken as 'ultimate selflessness.' Yagya can take a person to the ultimate limit of evolution. It can eliminate all bonds. By working in the spirit of yagya a person cutshis bonds of *prakriti*and while living in *prakriti*also livesbeyond that. This is the lesson which a person has to learn from*prakriti*. This alone is calledloosing the self. This is total or absolute release from ego. *Karmayoga* isa ladder that takes one to the final stage. The one who is perfect in yoga of the Gita is a *karmayogi*. How can perfection be achieved without becoming one with the spirit of yagya or sacrifice?

How can we ever imagine abandoning the spirit of sacrifice, of doing yagya? (Verse 3, Ch. 18)

Here the word 'gods' means subtle forces of the Supreme Lord, *Purushottama*. This word has not been used for Shri Bhagwan Himself.

*istanbhogan hi vo deva dasyante yajnabhavitah /
tair dattan apradayai 'bhyo yo bhunkte stena eva sah ||12||*

"The gods nourished by yagyas will certainly fulfill your desires. He, who enjoys their blessings without giving them in return their share is verily a thief." (12)

It is the great spirit of yagya that has been described in this verse. It is usually seen from a negative point of view. Consequences of violating the spirit of yagya has now been mentioned.

Men nourish gods through yagyas. Having been thus nourished and satisfied gods can do their duties more efficiently. Consequently, wealth grows. Livestock increases. Crops give higher yield. All this is the result of their blessings. Men should be grateful to them. Their share from

their blessings should also be given to them. One should give offerings to them in sacrificial fire. Other yagyas should also be performed. This verily is the demand of the spirit of yagya, of sacrifice. One should foster others and others will in turn foster him. But due to selfishness an individual forgets his duty and the spirit of yagya too. He uses all enjoyment for himself. He who does so is certainly a thief. He commits theft by consuming the share of gods. Consequently he harms his own interests. He does not get even the desired pleasures. To such a person, gods can also not give desired pleasures in that manner.

In hills, people go to flourmills for grinding of their grain. The share of the flourmill owner is fixed. It is a charge for the use of flourmill. The owner has put up the flourmill. He maintains it. He gets it repaired and sometimes as and when required he replaces its parts. For all this he takes his share from those who come to use the mill. Through this he also earns his livelihood. If those who come to use the mill for getting their grain grinded do not give his share then the mill will not remain operational for long. And the facility available to users of the mill will come to a close. Similarly, if the share of gods is not given to them then they will not be able to take proper care of us for long.

Governments collect taxes for running various institutions of administration, for maintaining law and order, and for providing facilities of road and rail transport, education, etc. If a person uses these services and does not pay taxes levied by the government then he commits a crime. The same situation be visualized here. This is our debt to gods and this we repay by worshiping them and by making offerings to them in sacrificial fire. This is a means for becoming free from debt we owe to gods. The offering in sacrificial fire was prescribed as a daily ritual and that was, at one time, performed every day in every house.

That practice is no longer in vogue now. It appears that now there are no contacts with gods. This kind of worship of gods has ceased to be prevalent in this era. The boons that were then available are also not available today. In this '*kalikal*', all those rituals seem to have become strange.

Now vision of man goes beyond the gods to the highest i.e. the God of gods. In the present age means other than yagyas are used for repaying the debt of the *Yagyaishwara*. These means will be discussed later. That vision and its related beliefs and practices liberated us from all debts.

*yajnasistasina santo mucyante sarvakilbisaih /
bhunjate te tv agham papa ye pacanty atmankaranat ||13||*

"Saints who eat left over of yagyas get released from all sins. But those who cook only for their own sake, verily eat sin". (13)

According to old traditions, fire was kept live in every house. In the house of a householder fire used to remain live throughout day and night. Stove for cooking food etc. was lit from that fire. That fire was called '*ahvaniya*' (fire kept live all the time). Food was cooked in that fire for making sacrificial offerings. Food was consumed only after making offerings in the sacrificial fire. It was cooked as an offering to gods. Food left after offering to gods was remnant of the yagya. It was consumed as a grace of gods (*prasad*).

Even now, in *Vaishnava* homes food is cooked with considerable purity and cleanliness. Food is first offered to the deity installed in the house, known as Thakurji. Thereafter, that food is consumed as grace (*prasad*) of the deity. That indeed becomes a blessing, *a prasad*. It purifies and is beneficent.

‘He who consumes remnants of yagya is verily a saint’. Offerings given in the sacrificial fire is a form of yagya done for the sake of gods. It is symbolical. But the one who has offered his entire life as an offering in the grand yagya, in the comprehensive yagya of *yagyaishwara* Himself and whose life is filled with the spirit of yagya, for him every thing in life, which comes to him becomes a form of remnant of yagya (*prasad*). And so whatever such a person gets he gets from *yagyaishwara* Himself. He sees everything, which he receives from Him, as proper and nothing but proper.

He perceives himself and all others as nothing but the remnants of yagya (*prasad*). He is noble, a consumer of the remnants of yagya (*prasad*). He is a saint. He who has taken to the path of worship will certainly one day have the glimpse of the God of gods. His yagya will one day be transformed from a partial to a large, a very comprehensive, fuller yagya. The spirit of yagya of such a kind cannot remain partial or incomplete for long. Breaching all barriers, it becomes comprehensive and gives to the aspirant the glimpse of *yagyaishwara*, the Lord of yagyas.

He, who takes out the share of gods before consuming any thing that comes to him is not a thief, as mentioned in the verse above, but is a saint. He is instantly released from all sins. His consumption does not bind him. That gives him freedom from sins.

By consuming left over of yagyas craving for enjoyments comes to end. The growing feeling of devotion and blessings received as a result thereof together help a person in liberating him from the craving for pleasures. The consumer of left over of yagyas is a worthy recipient of the grace of *yagyaishwara*. *Karmas* of such a person do not bind him because his *karmas* are for the sake of yagya. We have already seen above that he is not bound by his *karmas*.

It will not be out of place to quote the first verse of *Ishavasyopanishad* in the present context.

‘ishavasyamidam sarva yatkincha jagatayam jagat’

The meaning of this verse is in consonance with the spirit of the present verses. Consume only the leftover i.e. the remnants of yagya of *yagyaishwara* i.e. the Lord of yagyas. What He has left for you that alone is for you, consume that alone. Do not crave for what is not yours and is for someone else.

Cooking for self is cooking for satisfaction of one’s own cravings. It happens when one becomes subject of desires of his tongue. On one hand it is pampering of lower tendencies and on the other it is breaking the string which connects our life with the feet of *parameshwara*. And it amounts to losing an opportunity of getting nearer to Him.

To cook for self is worship of stomach. It is to cook for the sake of nourishing one’s own body. It certainly cannot become worship. Of course it is a different matter when one starts

perceiving *yagyaishwara* sitting within our stomach accepting our offerings or the auspicious Divine Mother receiving *prasad*. Then food itself becomes a worship of *yagyaishwara*. And such food does not become cause of bondage but becomes a cause of liberation.

The difference between the gross materialistic outlook of these days and the spiritual point of view becomes clear. In one cooking is done for one's own satisfaction and in the other it is as an offering, nay for the consumption of the deity. The materialists might say that this verily amounts to self-deception. One cooks whatever he likes and then the same is offered to the deity. What is great about it? The poor man does not know that feelings are also important. They can change the course of our life. Only by his sentiments an aspirant starts living for *parameshwara*. Gradually his life itself becomes an offering as a result of this minor change in approach.

To cook for self also means to earn for self or to work for one's own pleasures. To earn for self and to utilise the earning for self too is verily living a selfish life. The life lived in the spirit of *yagya* is entirely opposed to it. In that, efforts are made for the worship of the deity installed within oneself or in the house. The position of self is not at all of any consequence. How can a devotee consume any thing without first making an offering to the deity? A householder earns by discharging his duties and responsibilities. The concept that 'I should live lavishly even if it be for four days ' has no place in the life lived in the spirit of *yagya*.

To cook for self and to consume it is nothing but sin. A householder was required to perform five *yagyas*, sacrifices, '*panchmahayagya*', every day. They were known as *devyagya* (sacrifices for gods), *pitrayagya* (sacrifices for ancestors), *rishiyagya* (sacrifices for seers), *atithiyagya* (sacrifices for guests) and *pashuyagya* (sacrifices for animals).. Eating without making offerings to gods, *balivaishavdeva*, was a sin. Belief was that we should give a share, in the form of *yagyas* to those whose grace, bounty, we eat.

In modern times when we look beyond the gods to the God of gods then our feelings also change. The *karma* that was earlier done in the form of prescribed rituals was seen in a wider perspective. At least a part of our earnings (as far as possible ten percent of it) should be set aside to be used for people outside our family for whom we are not directly responsible, like orphans, handicapped, or other needy persons. We should also give donations to social institutions engaged in welfare activities of the society and work with deep commitment for alleviation of social sufferings. We should also serve devotees of *parameshwara*, who have sacrificed their life in His service.

In today's context, social service is an expression of *yagya*. The life in which only our own happiness and our own needs count and hungry children with tattered clothes of our neighbor and poverty around us has no place, is certainly not the life of self-giving, of *yagya*. A life where one's own happiness is preferred over sorrow, poverty and misery of others is not the life of sacrifice. Hearts of such people are not yet ready for the arrival of Divine. The temple is still dark without the sweet serene light of love and compassion.

Present age teaches materialistic approach, awakens cravings for pleasures of life. The rising standards of living of these days blur one's vision and make one's ears deaf. Oh! Misery of

miserable fails to move him. A wealthy person weaves such a web around him that he cannot see wherefrom he can save to help miserable. How very true, I feel today, are the words of Saint Jesus Christ that the doors of God are closed for the rich, for the wealthy? The world has gone blind with its greed for wealth and craving for pleasures of life. Present day life, for this reason, is not the life of self-sacrifice, or yagya. And it is the reason why there is so much of sorrow and suffering every where.

However, this is not the fault of money. Instead, it is the fault of our greed and of our craving for pleasures. That greed needs to be controlled, to be overcome. Do not consider wealth as your ancestral legacy but consider it as a gift of *parameshwara*. Then only you will be able to give it to others. Give, give, and give more. Give as much as you can. This life is meant only for giving to others. It is for removing miseries of others. Today this alone is the purest, the most comprehensive form of yagya.

The meaning of yagya is to sacrifice one's self for the good, for the well-being of others. This is real worship of the Lord, *yagyaishwara*.

No purpose is served by giving ten offerings in sacrificial fire i.e. the *Balivaishvdeva*. Today *Yagyaishwara*, *parameshwara*, is asking us to make an offering of our life itself. Moreover, for that one will have to transform one's entire perspective and behaviour in keeping with the spirit of yagya, of sacrifice. One will have to live and die for the sake of others.

This verily is living embodiment of the spirit of yagya today. This alone is practical principle of service.

The concept of sacrificing for gods (*balivaishvdeva*) connects us with every one, with animals, with birds and even with gods. This small offering given in the right spirit gives us an opportunity to express our gratitude to the entire universe. The human vision does not confine itself to the human beings but covers in its reach the entire creation itself. How lofty were the ideals of seers (*rishies*)? Even for performing *balivaishvdeva* we may make offerings at a larger scale so as to move from the limited to the bigger *balivaishvdeva*. Then alone life will transform into a real yagya. Then alone devotion to *karma* will find its real basis..

***annad bhavanti bhutani parjanya annasambhavah |
yajnad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karmasambhavah ||14||
karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahma 'ksarasambhavam |
tasmad sarvagatam brahma nityam yajne pratisthitam ||15||***

"From food come forth beings, from rain food is grown and from yagya comes rain and yagya is born of *karma*". (14)

"Know that *karma* is born from Brahma. Brahma came from the imperishable. Therefore, the all Pervasive Brahman is ever present in yagya". (15)

In the last verse it was said that he who cooks for himself eats only sin. What is cooked? Food is cooked. And food has a close relationship with yagya. This we learn from verse 14.

Yagya is born from *karma*. Yagya is not simply a feeling. The yagya is possible only when feeling descends in the field of activity in the form of *karma*. Yagya is impossible without doing *karma* i.e. without physical and mental activity. Therefore, yagya is born from *karma*.

Water laden clouds (*perjanya*) are formed by yagyas. Water laden clouds give rain. In other words, yagya causes rain. There has been a very strong belief that when a yagya is performed, the god of rain (*Indradev*) is pleased and gives rain. At the time of droughts, grand yagyas were performed and they are still performed. It is mentioned in the *Brahmnical* literature that gods are under the control of their respective hymns i.e. *mantras*. Therefore, performance of proper yagya according to prescribed rituals could certainly give rain and give other boons through similar forms of yagyas. For getting progeny, '*putraishthi*' yagya was performed. In *puranas* there are many examples of successful performance of yagyas of this kind. There was a whole science of yagyas. This much is certain and experienced that the subtle forces of nature can be influenced by specific hymns (*mantras*). If something is within the control of gods then that thing can surely be gained through *mantras*. There seems to be nothing surprising in this. Now this science seems to have been forgotten. It also appears that gods who used to accept offerings in those days were of different kind. The gods worshiped in the present age are of entirely different category.

It does not appear surprising that performance of yagyas cause rain. Perhaps belief of those persons was based on their experiences in those times.

Grains grow when it rains. Grains do not grow without rain. In those days, production of grains was entirely dependent on rains. Artificial methods of irrigation were negligible if at all they were known. In spite of the growth of so many new techniques, production of food is still dependent on rains.

The beings have life where food is available. It is only by food that gross physical bodies are nourished.

In this way food has a close relationship with yagyas. So the food, which is produced by the grace of yagyas should be cooked for the gods and should be consumed only in the form of *prasad*. That alone is proper otherwise its consumption will amount to an act of theft and an act of sin.

For this reason the tradition of doing work as yagya or sacrifice is carried forward. The Imperishable Brahman resides in yagya. Consequently yaga is a worship of Brahman or *parameshwara*. It is His law. It is a unique means of becoming close to Him.

Karma is born from Brahman. In the present context the word Brahman has been used for Vedas and 'yagya' signifies sacrificial fire. In such yagyas, gods are worshiped through offerings of food. In the verse given above the word, 'yagya' has this meaning. Now the word 'yagya' symbolises a most comprehensive form of sacrifice.

Method for performing yagyas is described in the Vedas. The works known as *Brahmnas*, a part of the Vedas, specifically deal with such rituals. *Kalpasutra* etc. are also part of Vedas and

therein details of yagyas are given. Yajurveda also describe yagyas. Therefore, *karma* related to yagyas is born from the Vedas.

The Vedas are born from the imperishable i.e. the *akshara*. What is this *akshara*? In chapter 15, an answer to this question is given.

*dvav imau purusau loke ksaras ca 'ksara eva ca |
ksarah sarvani bhutani kutastho 'ksara ucyate ||15/16||*

"There are two persons in this world, the perishable(*kshara*) and the imperishable (*akshara*). Perishable (*kshara*) are manifested existences, all manifestations. Imperishable is called *akshara*". (15 of 16)

The immutable eternal Existence (*kutastha*) is the imperishable (*akshara*) Brahman.

Kutastha means something firm or stable at a spot like a pillar. The unchanging, fixed, eternal and free from any mutation is the imperishable or the *akshara Brahman*. The Vedas are also *Brahman* but they are not *akshara Brahman*. The Vedas are also not all-pervading *Brahman*. These two adjectives clarify the difference between the two meanings of the word *Brahman*.

The *akshara Brahman* is Consciousness, which is *purusha* of Samkhya philosophy as against *prakriti*. *Prakriti* is another form of the Supreme Lord, *Purushottama*.

The Vedas are born from *akshara Brahman*. *Brahma jee* received the Vedas from the Conscious Existence. That Supreme Existence alone is the origin of all existences. Therefore, that *akshara Brahman* is the origin of yagyas too. The father dwells in the son and the father of that father i.e. the grand father, dwells in the father of the son. The grand father, therefore, also dwells in the son of his son. The same concept applies here too.

Therefore, all-pervasive *Brahman* is always, everyday, present in all yagyas. The Vedas are from the *Brahman* and yagyas are from the Vedas. Thus, *Brahman* dwells in the Vedas and the Vedas in yagyas. Therefore, *Brahman* dwells in yagyas too.

sarvagata i.e. omnipresent, all pervasive, is the one, which is present everywhere or which exists in everything. Ordinarily, it is all pervasive i.e. that in which everything dwells and which dwells in every thing.

In the second chapter also while describing 'atman', the phrase '*nityah sarvagatah sthanu*' (verse 2/24) was used. In fact, there is no difference between the self-awareness (*atmanbhav*) and imperishable (*akshara*) *Brahman*.

Moreover, after showing the importance of yagyas in this manner, this topic is concluded in the next verse –

*evam pravartitam cakram na 'nuvartayati 'ha yah |
aghayur indriyaramo mogham partha sa jivati ||16||*

"The one, who does not move with the cycle set in motion in this manner, is the one who delights in the pleasures of sense organs. His life is sinful, is lived in vain". (16)

The sacrificial (*yagyamaya*) cycle moves this world. Every one sacrifices for others. All existants in this universe, from an atom to gods, sacrifice their existence for the sake of others. By that sacrifice alone the process of the universe continues. The cycle of yagya-rain-grain-existent, mentioned in the 14th verse, is a very small portion of this grand yagya. *Yagyaishwara*, the God, has set this cycle in motion. He dwells in this cycle in the spirit of, nay in the very form of yagya. Any one who has entered into this cycle should keep the cycle moving by extending his helping hand of co-operation and by pouring in his own offerings in this yagya. By this, alone he will benefit. This is his duty. This is also the law of evolution. It also unites a person with *Yagyaishwara*, the Lord of yagyas.

What happens to those who do not live their lives in the spirit and form of yagya, who do not discharge their duties towards others as well as towards society in which they live, who are not prepared to make any sacrifice what-so-ever, who do not want to move with the current in the spirit of yagya? They are the '*indriyaram*' i.e. who delight in the pleasures of their sense organs, and consider that as their achievement of life and sacrifice their lives for the pleasures of senses. Craving for such enjoyments is the prime motive for living their lives.

They are '*aghayu*' i.e. the sinners. The word '*agha*' means sin. Their life is sinful. Moreover, 'sin' is the cause of their downfall. Under the influence of passions and anger, people commit sins even when they do not want to commit. In whose life, passions are important, how can he have power of discrimination? He surely will tend to commit sins. In such life, there can only be the rule of base tendencies. It is a debased state and is a sign of immorality. There should be no doubt about it. The life without yagya is a sinful life.

In such life we do not make any spiritual progress, nor are able to work for the good of others and do not help the society in its progress. Such life is lived in vain, is futile and is certainly a waste. What is the worth of living such a life? Anyone can think that pleasures are for enjoyment. However, are such pleasures ever stable in life? Does a pleasure not bring pain along with it? Does it not increase craving for more indulgence in such pleasures? Does a person get any lasting benefit out of it? Through these pleasures a person simply wastes his energies, reduces his life and evidently darkens his future. He just accumulates misery for himself and for others. Such a life is not only useless but is also harmful.

How emphatic is the language? The ideal of the present age is simply to enjoy pleasures of senses. The higher values of life are confined to thoughts and preaching. In our practical life, all our activities are for getting more and more pleasures of senses. The higher ideal of yagya, of sacrifice, of self-giving seems to have become obsolete, a remote dream. We keep on dancing like puppets in the hands of base tendencies.

For changing the course of life, its direction need to be changed. With the change in the values of life, its direction keeps adjusting itself. And, changing ideals means changing the scale for measuring values of life and changing the entire outlook towards life.

We are not here for our pleasures or gains. The purpose of life is to devote it in the service of others, as yagya, for which it is. In such life alone, our good and good of the universe lies. That alone means devotion to *karma* and is spiritual discipline (*sadhana*). We have a right for only those pleasures, which we receive as remnants (*prasad*) of yagya. Any effort made for the sake of obtaining pleasures of senses is misuse of one's energy, is a vice and a sin.

Does this law apply to every one? Is there any exception to this law? The following verses give an answer to this question.

*yas tv atmaratir eva syad atmatrptas ca manavah |
atmanny eva ca samtustas asya karyam na vidyate ||17||
nai 'va tasya krtena 'rtho na 'krtene 'ha kascana |
naca 'sya sarvabhutesu kaschid arthavyapasrayah ||18||*

"But for the person who only delights in *atman*, who is content in *atman* and is also satisfied in *atman*, there is no work that needs to be done by him". (17)

"For him there is no reason for doing anything, nor any reason for not doing anything. He does not have any selfish relationship with any physical being". (18)

There is a clear direction for Arjuna in 16th verse. For him, *karma* of fighting is itself a yagya. 'You should certainly do it.' 'Not doing it will amount to wasting your entire life'.

However, this principle of practicing *karmayoga* in life certainly does not apply to every one. A person can also attain a state wherein he transcends the need for doing *karmas*, where he is not required to do anything. These two verses describe that very state.

All the three adjectives are for that one state: '*atmaratih*', '*atmatrptah*', and '*atmanaiyav santushtah*'.

The one who rejoices in his *atman* is called '*atmaratih*'. And, 'rejoices in' means 'takes delight'. The one who dwells in the senses is '*indriyarama*'. Similarly, the one who dwells in *atman* is '*atmaram*' or '*atmarati*'. As long as a person does not find source of bliss within himself, as long as he does not experience himself in the blissful state, he continues to search for it in *prakriti*. He makes efforts to have happiness through the senses, the mind and the intellect. Consequently impulses of *prakriti* bind him. He gets indebted to them and gets unhappiness through them. However, when he gradually becomes aware of his own Self then he understands that he himself is bliss incarnate. When a person experiences such bliss within his own self, he does not have any desire for happiness from outside world. He feels that only a small portion of his own bliss is manifesting in *prakriti*. For him there is no pleasure in enjoying external objects, events or people, as bliss is deep within himself. When a person is self-satisfied he needs no happiness from outside world. This is *atmarati*. This is the exuberance, the delight of one's own existence.

'*Atmatrptah*' is the one who is content with his own Self. He does not require any impulses from *prakriti* for his contentment. There is a very small difference between delight in oneself (*atmarati*) and contentment with oneself (*atmatrpti*). *Rati* is a state of intoxication. It is a blissful state. In contentment there is no expectation from outside world or objects. There cannot be a

state of intoxication without contentment. When there is contentment there can be this state of intoxication. Absence of passions, mental desires, leads to contentment.

'atmanaiyav santushtah' i.e. satisfied with own self. Satisfaction is a state of achievement. So long as there is a feeling of any deficiency, there cannot be satisfaction. As long as there is longing for better experiences and unsubsided yearning, one is not satisfied. When that longing or yearning pacifies then only the state of satisfaction comes to stay. Then wandering ends i.e. becomes a thing of the past. Whatever one wanted to gain he has gained. Whatever he could achieve he has achieved.

All these three adjectives seem to refer to pacification of desires pertaining to the sense organs, the mind and the intellect. The state, which has been described, cannot be attained till the sense organs, the mind and the intellect are not totally satiated. Any feeling of deficiency will indicate that the state of self-satisfaction is not yet reached.

Such a state is one of total freedom. There is no expectation of any kind. *Prakriti* is not needed to serve any purpose. The person gets beyond the bonds of the mind, the intellect and the sense organs.

By doing sacrifices persons become free from the bonds of his *karmas*. The consciousness establishes in the awareness of the self or *atmabhav* beyond ego. The bonds of ignorance removed. Moreover, while living in *prakriti* he lives beyond it. No debt of *prakriti* remains to be paid by him. In such a state, there is no duty. *Karms do not* effect him. Therefore, he is not obliged to do any *karma*. There are duties as long as there is ego, as long as there is a possibility of development through performance of *karmas* as duties. When that requirement is not there then there is no duty to discharge. Such people do not have any selfish interest to serve through their *karmas*. Such people do not have any requirement for their own self as they have no selfish interest. They become a witness of this entire cycle of yagya. The 18th verse clarifies this.

For such persons there is no reason for doing any work. Normally, *karma* affect the doer and form a tendency in him which results in consequences but such a person is in the state of *naishyakarmaya*, where his *karma* does not bring any consequence. Therefore, there is no effect on them of whatever they do. No tendencies formed. Therefore, the consequences of *karmas* also do not bother them. Whatever they do becomes like a line drawn on the surface of water.

Such a person is also not concerned for not doing any thing. Even when a person does not discharge his duties, tendencies are formed. 'Oh! I should have done that work. I have not done that. I will incur sin or will have to face public-criticism.' Such a chain of thoughts arises in anyone so long he has ego and a sense of doership. However, when he goes beyond ego he does not think so. If he does some thing, it is well and good and if he does not do any thing then too it is equally good. Even while doing some thing there is no feeling, that 'I am doing it'. Moreover, when he does something there is no feeling that 'I have done it' or 'I was doing it'. How could there be any joy or regret for him in such a situation? It should not at all be surprising if such a person is beyond the bonds of duty.

There is no duty for a child. He does not understand. He has no awareness of 'need'. However, when he grows a little older, he starts feeling his needs. Then duties are prescribed for him. For a fool or for a lunatic also there is no duty. There is no duty for an animal as well. Similarly, there is no duty for a saint.

Moreover, for such a person both right and wrong become equal. The feeling of virtue or vice ceases in him. He does not feel any thing bad the way we feel it. A strange evenness permeates within him. For that reason he accepts every thing evenly i.e. without making any distinction of good or bad. He is able to embrace both a saint and a dacoit without a difference i.e. with same feelings. For him *parameshwara* is present in every activity of the universe.

This is a state totally beyond selfishness, as one has no purpose to achieve any thing for himself nor is there any personal desire of any kind to fulfil. How can there be any reason for him to use others to serve his interests? It is a child-like state. Such a saint plays in the lap of Divine Mother. He dances to Her tunes. He is not at all worried about his welfare. As a mother worries for her child, so does the benign Divine Mother worries for him. How blissful is such state? In fact, he fully reflects the spirit of yagya because he has no ego, which can create in him a tendency against the spirit to yagya.

However, he is not one with the spirit of yagya. Whatever he is, that is not due to his own will, his own resolve, his own determination. To whom should we give credit for what he is? He is one with *parameshwara, Yagyaishwara*. The will of *parameshwara, Yagyaishwara*, is fulfilled through him.

We do not have any proof to presume that in such a state a person cannot work. Of course, *prakriti* will not give him any motivation to work. He does not have any feeling of want and so where is any need for its fulfillment. However, the Supreme, *parameshwara* surely inspires such a person to work. From worldly point of view, he may be a great person doing great deeds. However, what he is and what he will be is not in his hands. It is in the hands of *parameshwara*. While doing *karmas* his internal condition remains even, as while not doing any *karma*. This is then the unmistakable evidence of the state of evenness. .

In medieval times, there were many saints of very high order. They were not indolent by nature. They were householders and lived a normal life. They were rulers and taught right path to people. Kabir, Nanak and their disciples were saints of this category.

However, Arjuna was a child from the point of view of *sadhana*. For him this state was far away. He could have moved forward by making this state as his goal. He was asked to do his duty, his *svaddharma*. Shri *Bhagwan* was asking him to make an offering of his efforts, of his skills and expertise of fighting as a warrior and, if it became necessary, by offering his very life in the yagya in the form of a war. The next verse says this.

*tasmad asaktah satatam karyam karma samacara /
asakto hy acarana karma param apnoti purusah ||19||*

"Therefore, do the doable *karma* properly without any attachment. A person attains the supreme state by doing *karmas* without any feeling of attachment." (19)

'You are still an aspirant (*sadhak*). You should do your *karma* as a means. You do your *karma* relentlessly with full devotion. The designated work is doable for you. This is your assigned duty. This is your duty (*swadharm*). Today, fighting in this war is your duty; so, you must do it. However, do that only as your duty, casting aside your emotions. Do it as a spiritual exercise (*sadhana*), as an offering to the Divine, as a *yagya*. This higher motive is absolutely necessary.'

It is explained above that the imperishable or the *akshara Brahman* is present in *yagya*. Therefore, by doing *karma* in the form of an offering, one is sure to attain the Supreme Brahman dwelling in *yagya*. The *karma* done without attachment can only be a form of *yagya*. If there is even a tinge of personal attachment in doing *akarma* then that *karma* cannot be a form of a *yagya*. Desire for the fruit of *karma* does not allow it to become a form of *yagya*. Therefore, a *karma* done for any selfish interest cannot be a means for attaining the Supreme *Brahman*.

After such an elaborate discourse of philosophical implications and after having shown the path to Arjuna, Shri *Bhagwan* reaffirms it by giving an illustration. Moreover, for that very purpose He gives an argument from worldly point of view—

*karmanai 'va hi samsiddhim asthita janakadayah /
lokasamgraham eva 'pi sampasyan kartum arhasi ||20||
yad-yad acarati sresthas tad-tad eve 'taro janah /
sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate ||21||*

"Surely Janaka and others had attained perfection by doing their *karmas* and you should also fight with a view to maintain the world". (20)

"Whatever eminent persons do (in a society), the same is copied by others. Whatever standards they set forth the world follows." (21)

Janaka⁵⁷ and others had attained salvation by doing their *karmas*. Janaka was a realised soul. He was a wise person (knower of truth). Seers (*rishies*) of eminence used to come to his assembly. Vyas jee had sent his son Sukhdev jee to Janaka for being educated. There cannot be any doubt that Janaka was a perfectly realised soul. We do not know if he ever had gone to forest leaving behind his worldly duties for the sake of his *sadhana*. He had made his royal duties i.e. governance of the state, as the sole means for his spiritual elevation (*sadhan*). He had attained the supreme state simply by doing his duties. 'You can also do what Janaka could do. Janaka was a warrior (*kshatriya*) and you are also a warrior (*kshatriya*)

Not only Janaka but many other kings were the followers of the path of devotion to duty. We will know about them in the beginning of the fourth chapter.

⁵⁷ Janaka: Janaka was the king of Mithila. He was the father of Sita. He was regarded as a great saint and was respected even by great saints of his times.

After saying this, Shri Bhagwan says that from worldly point of view 'you should fight for the sake of social good. If today a warrior of such a high caliber as you leaves the battlefield considering war as a heinous act, then the very concept of warrior's duty (*kshatra-dharma*) will be sadly harmed'.

'Acts of bravery will disappear from the society. Society will disintegrate. You have a responsibility on your shoulder because today you are an eminent person in the society. You cannot do whatever you want. You will have to keep in mind your followers. Expect them to follow you. You have to keep in mind social ideals, ethics and morals. Sometimes you have to sacrifice your personal interests for the sake of social good. After all, how could you be selfish?'

The problem was very serious. Should for the sake of maintaining social order Arjuna do that very *karma* which he considered to be against his own interests and sinful? The answer of Shri *Bhagwan* definitely appears to be 'yes, it should be done'.

If a person has understood that the norms prescribed for social conduct are for the good of everyone and their observance is desirable then he has to sacrifice himself at the altar of the society. Of course, it is an entirely different matter if one considers the prescribed norms of the society harmful and need to be changed. Then evidently he has to work for establishing new norms for the society. One should live his life in the spirit of *yajna* and that to willingly. He should be prepared to sacrifice his personal interests nay life for the good of others as well as for the society.

Sacrifice of one's gratification, own interests is spirituality in practical form. This is the highest form of sacrifice and in this is the true secret of one's social behavior as a responsible citizen. And no sacrifice is greater than the one done for social good.

The western thinking, which is based on gratification of individuals' likes, starts protesting against the demand of such sacrifice of personal interests. Should we totally trample ourselves? Should we put an end to ourselves, our own individuality? If by making such sacrifice, others benefit then surely we should do that sacrifice willingly and with pleasure. On the contrary if our gratification is harmful to others then that has to be rejected.

Here it must be said that, where social norms and bindings assume the form of social oppression, where they become hurdles or chains in the growth of society then the spiritual behavior demands that an effort be made to change such norms even if it requires sacrifice of one's own life. The objective should always be clear before us. The will to sacrifice should remain constantly alive in us. There should be no impatience. There should be no desire to get every thing done in a hurry.

Shri *Bhagwan* knew that duties meant for warriors (*kshatra-dharma*) are essential for the society. Without high standards of duty for warriors, the society cannot survive. Therefore, in unambiguous words, Arjuna was advised thus.

Sometimes even public-criticism is beneficial. The fear of public criticism is a deterrent. It prevents immature minds from doing undesirable deeds and makes mature seasoned people pure

and fearless. For the people who cannot discriminate between good and bad, the fear of public criticism is the only means to keep them on the right path. They have to live in the society. We also have to keep them in the society. They are our younger brothers. Sometime before, we were also in their state. In future they will also be able to distinguish between good and bad.

There may be some activities which despite being correct and proper may not be doable from social point of view. Observance of social norms is in the interest of the society and so these must be observed. Sacrifice required for observing them is nothing but yagya. That sacrifice purifies a person and elevates him.

A wise and elevated person is fearless. He is also not afraid of public criticism. He does or does not do any *karma* only from the point of view of social good.

In reality, Arjuna was not in such an enlightened state. As long as personal problems are dominant, the entire thinking revolves around personal point of view. Arjuna was deeply distressed. Therefore, he could not even think of public good. He could not even imagine making such a big sacrifice. Normally eyes open when a person is not worried about his personal problems. Selfish interests become unimportant. Then alone one is able to sacrifice for others. This is the limitation of human nature. But what Shri *Bhagwan* said is absolutely right. While being practical, it is a spiritual approach. It is spirituality descending in practical life. It is a lofty ideal of service, a glimpse of spiritual life. This alone is truth..

Common people may call such behavior as false, deceptive or egoistic, and may say that such behavior is for public recognition or appreciation. However, if our motive is to sacrifice something i.e. to work for wider public good then such behaviour is right. And it will be beneficial both for us and for the society.

Usually people have two tendencies. One tendency is to revolt, to resist, to oppose, due to which social bonds appear to be wrong and unnecessary. Besides, there is impatience for destroying every thing. The other is the desire to have public recognition and appreciation. We work fearing public criticism. We conduct according to the society without making any distinction between right and wrong. The behaviour done under the influence of both these motives is never a lofty one. In both our ego deceives us and right understanding for the good of the society does not develop. During the course of spiritual *sadhana*, these tendencies gradually weaken. Only then, one can conduct in the right direction..

Society is the field for our spiritual practice (*sadhana*). It should not be forgotten that it is the field of service. *Parameshwara* resides in it i.e. in the society. Therefore, it is the means of our worship.

What was said in the second half of the 20th verse that has been more clearly stated in the 21st verse.

It is a law of the world, that younger ones follow elders. This behaviour is natural. right from childhood. To copy elders is a common trait. Very few persons have the ability to

discriminate between right and wrong. '*Gatanugatikalokah*'-- to follow others is the rule. Consequently, leaders and people highly placed in the society have a great responsibility. They should not conduct only for themselves but should set examples for others to follow. They should always keep in mind that others will follow them.

Whatever they approve and observe that becomes standard and is followed by others. People in lower rungs of the society copy them.

Shri Rama had expelled Sita jee, a virtuous, faithful and devoted wife to uphold social norms relating to fidelity to husbands. It was not only painful for Sita jee but it was no less painful for Shri Rama. It indeed was a great sacrifice but was the demand of his duty. Shri Rama was '*maryada purushottama*' because he always upheld social norms.

Therefore, he sacrificed Sita jee, who was more dear to him than his own life. She was about to become a mother of his child. For her Shri Ram had killed a mighty warrior like Ravana along with his big army of demons. People call the decision of Shri Ram as a great injustice done to Sita jee. But those who do understand the spirit behind that act call it a big sacrifice for the sake of preserving social norms and lofty ideals behind them.

There is no doubt that in the end spirituality transcends all norms. One has to leave dependence on all religions and values (*dharmas*). In the path of *parameshwara* no rule or value has any independent existence. No religion is higher than *parameshwara*. No one is dearer than *parameshwara*.

All duties have to be accepted as the will of *parameshwara*. When spirituality demands dependence on any social norm, then one should always be prepared to pay the price.. This is my firm belief that one can practice a serene spirituality even within social norms.

All spiritual people had to fight with undesirable base thoughts and practices of their times. They were also tortured for their views. Jesus Christ, Shamastbarej, Guru Teg Bahadur, and Mahatma Gandhi, all come in this category. For the sake of their conviction they had willingly and happily sacrificed their lives.

A noble person never lives his life for himself – for his self-interests. He sacrifices his freedom for the sake of public good. That alone is the path of his wellbeing – of his good. A person who lives his life with this motive and willingly pays the price for the same, his life is highly auspicious and meaningful. .

Shri Bhagwan now gives his own example—

*na me partha 'sti kartavyam trisu lokesu kimcana |
na 'navaptam avaptavyam varta eva ca karmani ||22||
yadi hy aham na varteyam jatu karmany atandritah |
mama vartma 'nurvartante manusyah partha sarvasah ||23||
utsideyur ime loka na kuryam karma ced aham |
samkarasya ca karta syam upahanyam imah prajah ||24||*

"O'Prathaputra (Arjuna)! For Me there is no duty in the three worlds, nor is there anything which is not available to Menoris yet to be obtained by Me, yet I am continuously engaged in work". (22)

"Most certainly, if ever I do not do my *karma*, free from lethargy, then there will be great catastrophe because people follow my path in every manner" (23)

"If ever I do not do My work, these worlds will be ruined and I will be the cause of their destruction, will be responsible for killing of creatures, people". (24)

Shri Krishna has not disclosed his Divinity till now. He was an eminent person of his times. He was respected by the society. He was a ruler of a state. In that strain, he says.

He gives his own example. 'Look at me! I have no binding of any kind. I am beyond all bonds of duty. I dwell in a state free from any requirements. I am *atmarama* i.e. the one who is content within and is fully satisfied. In the three worlds, I do not have any duty or responsibility of any kind. Nor do I have any need for anything for which I should work. Even then I work.'

Men work for fulfilling their physical and mental needs and to discharge their social responsibilities. This is the state of ordinary people. But a liberated person works for some other inspiration or motivation. Shri Bhagwan gives answer in the next verse (verse 23).

'People follow the same path, which I tread. My own acts are treated as evidence and are followed. Subjects follow the king. So whatever a king does, his subjects start copying him. The hairstyle of the king, the design of his clothes and the way he talks all become popular amongst his subjects. Whatever a king likes, that becomes the fashion of the day.

The easiest way to teach public is to set examples. An oral teaching is far less effective than teaching by setting examples. Teachings contrary to one's behaviour can hardly have any effect on others but our conduct can change others' behaviour without the use of any word. Jesus Christ wanted to teach the lesson of humility to his disciples. He started washing feet of his disciples taking a pot of water and a towel in his hands. His conduct was more effective than mere preaching by words.

If Shri Krishna himself does not do his duties, then how can he expect others to do their duties or discharge their responsibilities, *svadharma*? Only by doing assigned duties people in general can benefit. In proportion to the efforts and devotion put in while performing duties people benefit and are able to make progress in their life. They are equally profited spiritually.

In order to teach people the lesson of devotion to duty, Shri Bhagwan always kept him busy doing his work without any lethargy. The purpose of his doing his *karmas* was simply to educate people, to teach them the values of life. It was not for any personal gain of any kind. He had such a status in the society that he should do his work properly or else he should leave his position.

What would have been the result if Shri Bhagwan was not doing his work? This has been stated more clearly in 24th verse.

The people dependent on him would have become miserable. Misery is the result of lethargy in doing one's duties (*svadharma*). If farmers start ignoring farming then there will be less farms produce. People will starve. They will also not be able to meet their requirements of cloth, oil, salt, etc. In this way there will be misery everywhere. If people in lower strata of the society do not do their work then too the society will suffer. They will themselves be unhappy and the society will be miserable. The same will happen if other sections of society do not perform their duties. Society is like a living body. If any of its organs does not function properly then the entire body suffers. That person has a very narrow vision of life who thinks that how does it matter to any one if he does not work? He does not understand the secret of social life. No one is alone in the society. Every one is a vital part of the universe, as the heart, lungs, intestines; liver, etc. are important organs of the body.

If Shri *Bhagwan* does not work then there will be crisis and there will be chaos. The social system will collapse. When someone does not do his duty (*svadharma*) then someone else will have to do his work, but he will not be able to do it properly. His own work (*svadharma*) will also suffer. Consequently, all activities, all functions of the society will get awfully disturbed. All links of the society will get badly disrupted. If a highly placed person sets a wrong example by not doing his work then he becomes responsible for creation of such a state of disorder in the society. So if Shri *Bhagwan* stops working, He will become responsible nay the cause of the ruin of the universe.

Ultimately, all creatures, all existents will be destroyed. This kind of anarchy destroys people in the end. And in no time even life will become impossible to live. If the society is to survive, some kind of an order is necessary.

In this way Shri *Bhagwan* explained that without having any self-interest one should do his *karmas*. If Arjuna did not want victory, let him not. For him pleasures to be gained after victory would be tainted in blood which he did not like. Let him not like them. Despite that he should fight. Because by not fighting in the war he would be setting a wrong example before people and that would have a very harmful effect on the society. Moreover, for those consequences, Arjuna alone would be responsible. Therefore, Arjuna must fight for the sake of public education and for keeping in mind the necessity of doing his own duties (*svadharma*).

This is a higher perspective for doing *karmas*. This is not a personal point of view. This is a comprehensive social-universal perspective. It is the perspective of performing one's own duties and for the benefits arising therefrom. It is not a limited egoistic feeling instead it is a higher feeling for larger good of the society. It does not expect any personal gains or loss. On the other hand it is deeply concerned with larger good and for saving the community from suffering.

It is said that the Hindu culture is predominantly an individual-centric culture. It does not take into consideration social interests. It simply revolves around the welfare of the individual and provides inspiration for the same purpose. There is no doubt that a man is the basic unit of the

society. Moreover, so in his development lies the development of the society. From the spiritual point of view, for an individual social life is the field for his spiritual practice (*sadhana*). However, this is not all. With personal duties, *svadharma*, are linked responsibilities of a person towards society. By doing his own duties (*svadharma*), a person keeps serving the interests of the society. If the concept of sacrifice (*yagya*), as stated above, is properly understood then there is no possibility for any misgiving.

Moreover, how very beautiful is the exposition of the responsibility of those persons, who are leaders of the society and on whom rests the responsibility for maintaining social order and of educating people in general. It is a lofty sermon for self-evolution for the sake of educating people. It was for the sake of public good that Mahatma Buddha had renounced his princely life.

This is, however, certain that this point of view does not impose a responsibility on every one's shoulders considering himself a leader or an administrator of the society. An ordinary person has to discharge his own assigned duties, his *svadharma*. That is enough for him. By that alone social order is maintained.

When everyone tries to become a leader and imposes his views, the society gets disturbed. Leaders of this kind are cause of many troubles in the society. We can imagine the state of a society in which everyone is a leader and none is a follower. It surely will be a chaotic society. The leadership that is imposed and not acceptable by people is dangerous for the individual as well as for the society.

Now, mentions the principles of good behaviour –

*saktah karmany avidvamso yatha kurvanti bharata /
kuryad vidvams tatha 'saktas cikirsur lokasamgraham ||25||
na buddhibhedam janayed ajnanam karmasanginam /
josayet sarvakarmani vidvan yuktah samacaran ||26||*

"O'Arjuna! Manner in which foolish people do *karmas* being attached, wise people do the same *karmas* in a detached manner for the sake of public good". (25)

"Minds of people attached to their *karmas* should not be unsettled. The wise man doing all *karmas* in the spirit of yoga should also make others do *karmas* in the same spirit". (26)

The word 'public order' has been used earlier (verse 20). The meaning of this word is clear. 'Order' means harmony, discipline. 'Public order' means maintenance of discipline in the society.

A wise man works primarily keeping in view public interest and not his selfish interest. He does not think that since he has no desires then why he should work. Why should he involve himself in difficulties? It is the duty of a person, who has come out of the difficulties, to help others. Someone had helped him in coming out of his difficulties. He should help others in the same way. This is the tradition by which the road to progress works.

A teacher has no need to read books of first and second standards. He also knows the alphabets. However, he himself reads these books for teaching others, and reads them repeatedly.

If he thinks that since he has read these books, why should he read them again, then teaching will not be possible. We can imagine the result of such thought.

Once a person is full of the spirit of *yagya*, for him *karma* is not binding. Working for others' interests becomes his nature. He cannot work against this inspiration.

He works for the sake of public teaching. Outwardly he does his *karma* in the same manner as others do, with same effort and same dedication and not as an unwanted work. Otherwise, public education will not be possible. It will become counterproductive.

There is a difference in motivation. People normally do *karmas* while remaining attached to them. They get stuck with the *karma* and also with its result, and so are bounded by it. A wise person does not get attached with his *karmas*.

He does the same *karma* in the same manner but by being detached and for the sake of educating others and maintaining social discipline. Others do not have this motive. For him results of his *karmas* have no meaning, but for others the results alone are the motive behind their *karmas*.

For a teacher knowledge of alphabets has no meaning but for children starting their formal education it is the foundation. When a teacher ignoring the level of his students starts giving lessons of his own level then the result is bound to be harmful. Children will not make any progress and will become miserable. It is expected that students are taught only those lessons which are of their standard and useful for them.

For this reason, there are so many rules of eligibility in scriptures. Only that knowledge is required to be given to a student for which he is capable. For a student of fourth standard, books of fourth standard alone are beneficial and not those of the tenth standard. For a sick person a simple light food is beneficial and not a heavy spicy tasty food.

At a stage in life, it is beneficial to work with a deep sense of attachment. For attachments impel to work and awaken dormant energies. Thinking and working abilities develop. They purify a person by heating him in the furnace of pleasures and pain. Then he gradually begins to understand the meaning of detachment. Without going through these experiences, he cannot rightly understand the meaning of detachment. For his indolence, he will take shelter in detachment, in renunciation. Thus not only his spiritual progress will stop but also seeds of his misery will be sown.

Mind of those persons attached with their *karmas* and of those whose development demands that they work with a deep sense of attachment, should not be confused. We should not preach detachment from *karma* and its consequences to the second category of people. They are still ignorant and will not be able to understand and accept the lesson. Under the influence of such lessons they will stop doing their *karmas*.

There can be a question, 'if they are not given proper guidance, how will they move beyond the present stage'?

Experience alone is the primary means of progress in life. A ripened fruit drops just by a touch. In addition, experiences of life prepare a person for internal awareness. Then only can he fully understand what he is taught from outside. Without preparation of this kind, one does not understand lessons given to him. When a person matures by experiences, he gets required knowledge from outside and he also matures within. It is the duty of a capable teacher to give instructions suitable to the state of his student after proper assessment. A leader has to conduct according to the state of common people. He does not have to do work like a personal teacher.

This means that a leader should not brag words of wisdom. He should himself do all such *karmas*, which he considers worth doing and are in the interest of others. He should do them himself and also make others do them. He should himself do *karmas* in the spirit of *yagya*. He should engage himself in doing *karmas* with full devotion and in the spirit of *yagya*. For doing *karmas*, there is no scope for considering whether a particular *karma* is worth doing or not. He does not have to do *karmas* just for himself, but for setting examples for others.

It may appear how artificial would be the life of a person where he has to work only for the sake of educating others? How frustrating will be such conduct? How much abnormal feeling will it give?

Working for the sake of others is a form of spiritual practice (*sadhana*) and is accepted only as *assadhana*. In this state, ego also exists. In this state, the feeling of duty remains. This *sadhana* is higher than the one of a common person. One has to lose his sense of selfishness. Then only it can take him forward rapidly.

The yoga of surrendering everything at the feet of *parameshwara* follows this state. In that yoga, all responsibilities become responsibilities of *parameshwara*. One has to place oneself – one's responsibilities – at His mercy. The person goes beyond the feeling of duty and non-duty because he surrenders his intellect also at the feet of *parameshwara*. For him there remains only one rule, one norm and just one consideration and that is the inspiration of *parameshwara*, which is none other than His command. Nothing, either duty or any other work, is important for him. All his *karmas* are for public welfare. He has to follow only His command. Moreover, as surrender progresses, inspirations become clear. *Parameshwara* himself becoming a conductor starts operating the person as his instrument.

This is the last, the ultimate solution of the most complex problems of life. Arjuna became peaceful only after having this solution. One has to surrender his intellect, his wisdom at the feet of *parameshwara*. All his problems will then end.

Working for others may appear as a botheration but that is because of not knowing the secret of duty. One, who understands the secret of duty, is not disturbed while doing his duty.

Now we will discuss the secret of duty. This is relevant in the present context

*prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah |
ahamkaravimudhatman karta 'ham iti manyate ||27||*

"All *karmas* are done by natural properties (by the constituents of *prakriti*). A person bewildered by his ego believes, 'I am the doer'. (27)

Who does *karmas*? Does *atman* do it? *Atman* is immutable consciousness. How can there be any activity in it? Activity is mutation; it changes. *Atman* is neutral and all pervasive. It cannot be the doer. Is *prakriti* then the doer? Are its properties, or the *gunas* doer? However, *prakriti* is said to be 'inanimate'. She is blind. Then how it can do any *karma*? Only its proximity to *purusha* makes the *prakriti* capable of doing *karmas*. *Karmas* are done when the consciousness '*purusha*' i.e. the *atman* activates *prakriti*. That consciousness activates *prakriti* which makes the mind, the intellect and the sense organs active and execute its commands.

The Sun is a beautiful example. The Sun itself does nothing. However, by mere rising in the sky, the Sun awakens the entire world of living beings. Leaving their beds, beings engage themselves in their daily chores. Animals and birds start filling the surroundings with noise of all kinds. Snow melts in hills and water rises in rivers. Flowers bloom and vegetation is nourished. All this happens but for all these individual acts, Sun is not responsible. In sunlight, someone does good work and someone slits the throat of someone else.

The Sun remains uninvolved in any of these activities. *Atman* is exactly like the Sun. Just by its proximity, *prakriti* becomes active and does *karmas*. Therefore, *atman* is not responsible for doing of any *karma*.

The constituents, the *gunas* or the modes of *prakriti* do *Karmas*. *Karma* is an activity, a motion. The *gunas* of *prakriti* have different kinds of movements, activity. '*Chalam chagunavritam*' i.e. movement is the nature of constituents, *gunas*. The *yoga* philosophy (*darshan*) also says so. *Atman* is consciousness. It is pure unsullied consciousness. How can it perform any *karma*?

Shri Krishna has said this in verse 20 of chapter 13 also.

*karya karana karttve hetuh praktir ucyate/
purusah sukhaduhkhanam bhoktve hetur ucyate ||13/20||*

'*Prakriti* is said to be the cause of action and also of its doership and *purusha* is said to be the cause of experiences of pleasure, pain, etc. *Prakriti* is feminine and *purusha* is masculine.

We should also read verse 26 of that chapter.

*yavat samjayate kimcit sattvam sthavarajangamam /
ksetraksetrajnasamyogat tad viddhi bharatarsabha ||13/26||*

"All physical existents, whether animate or inanimate, are born out of the union of the field (*ksethra*) and the knower of the field (*kshetranya*). O' Arjuna! You should understand thus."

This means that all existents and all beings are born by the union of *prakriti* and *purusha*. No being or existence, therefore, is either totally inanimate or animate. It is all a game of mixing.

By further understanding the secret of *prakriti* and *purusha*, the present topic will become clear.

In seventh chapter Shri Bhagwan has said --

*bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva ca |
ahamkara iti 'yam me bhinna prakrtir astadha ||7/4||
apare 'yam itas tv anyam prakrtim viddhi me param |
jivabhutam mahabaho yaye 'dam dharyate jagat ||7/ 5||*

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego, these are my eight fold divisions of *prakriti*. This is my lower (*apara*) *prakriti*. Different from this is My higher (*para*) *prakriti*. O' Arjuna! That is the soul by which this world is upheld."

This means that *parameshwara* has two *prakritis* namely *apara* and *para*. *Apara* is known as '*prakriti*'. That alone is the field (*ksetra*) of the 13th chapter. *Para* is the life i.e. 'inanimate (*jeev-bhuta*). It is *Purusha*, the knower of the field (*kshetrgya*). In fact, both are *prakritis* of *parameshwara*, of *Purushottama* Himself. They do not have independent existence. Therefore, they cannot be separated. We with limitation of our mind and intellect consider them as separate realities. In fact, single reality of *parameshwara*, *Purushottama*, alone plays the two roles.

This is then the reason that their separation is beyond imagination. Just as we cannot separate motion and consciousness from any being, so also we cannot separate motion and consciousness from any activity. Seen from human point of view, every activity is a combined result of the two faculties' viz. motion and consciousness. Of course, there are differences of predominance. Keeping this concept in mind it appears that the words 'it is said' have been used in the 20th verse of chapter 13 and not the words 'perfectly like this'. This, in fact, is the truth. This is also the view of the Gita but this point of view will become clear only gradually.

The doctrine of Samkhya distinguishes between the animate and inanimate. *Prakriti* is inert and *purush* is conscious. *Prakriti* is comprised of *gunas* and has activity, and *purush* is pure consciousness devoid of activity. This is the conclusion of that doctrine. It does not consider the existence of any other reality beyond them. Activity, however, takes place only due to association of the two. However, activity is possible in nothing else but *prakriti*. For, that alone is mutable. *Purush*, being pure consciousness, is immutable and so non-doer. It is lame, handicapped and is just an eye. By its presence *prakriti* gets its direction and gets activated to perform *karma*. If there is doership in *Purusha*, it is just that it watches.

Karmayoga follows the doctrine of *Samkhya*. When the *karma* attains the status of '*karma Brahma-pana yoga* (4th chapter) then going beyond the limits of the doctrine of *Samkhya*, it establishes in the *Purushottama yoga* of the Gita. This concept has been developed gradually. In the Gita, Shri *Bhagwan* gives a higher perspective and status by refining ordinary concepts.

The present verse is based on this very principle. In verses 25 and 26, Shri *Bhagwan* asked people to do their *karmas*. In the present verse and the next verse, an effort has been made to explain that doing *karmas* will cause people no harm.

In fact all kinds of *karmas* are done by the constituents, the *gunas*, of *prakriti*. *Karma* is an activity. The *gunas* of *prakriti* are motions of *prakriti* and *karmas* are diverse expressions of those

motions. *Purush* is inanimate consciousness and is merely a witness. He is the spectator of the play of *prakriti*. Forgetting this fact and coming under the influence of egoone identifies himself with the the *gunas* of *prakriti* i.e. mind, intellect and sense organs. One considers himself as mind and feels that 'I am happy or unhappy'. One also has the feelings that 'I am attached or not attached to someone'. In fact all these are aberrations of mind. *Atman* does not have them. In fact how can it have these aberrations, being inanimate? Similarly, *atman* having identified itself with the intellect thinks that it decides and commits mistakes. However, the *atman* neither decides nor commits mistakes. This feeling is entirely due to habit; and is just like the feeling that the spots on a mirror are on the face. Just as earth appears moving, while in fact train moves. The feelings, mentioned above, are similar in nature. The same applies to *atman* in relation to sense organs.

Because of ego, it appears that the *atman* feels. There is a veil of ignorance. There is lack of awareness of the Self (*atmangyan*). Then due to this association ego emerges and creates confusion. The Self (*atmabhav*) under the influence of ego starts considering itself as a doer.

This is *sadhana* of discrimination based on wisdom. This is the path of knowledge (*gyan-marg*). The yoga-vashishtha also insists upon this very concept. On the strength of this very argument, Vashishthajee had asked Shri Rama to take upon himself the responsibility of discharging royal duties. This is the resolve of the followers of this path as they believe that firm adherence of this path leads to ultimate bliss.

The next verse makes the point more clear.

*tattvavit tu mahabaho gunakarmavibhagayoh |
guna gunesu vartanta iti matva na sajjate ||28||*

"O' mighty armed! The knower of the difference between *guna* and *karma*, and that *gunas* play in *gunas* knowing thus is not attached to *karma*." (28)

A foolish person considers him a doer. When he considers him as a doer, he attaches himself to his *karmas* in expectation of results and desire for their fruits. It is difficult for such a person to be free from attachments.

However, the state of the knower of the truth, the reality, i.e. of '*tattvavetta*', is different. What reality he knows? He knows all about the divisions of the constituents, the *gunas*, and their activities. He knows all about their divisions, sub-divisions and the tiniest of sub- divisions. The knower of the truth (*tattvavetta*) is the one who fully understands the nature of *karma*, the properties of *gunas*, their inter-relationships, etc.

What does he know? He knows just that the *gunas* alone deal in *gunas*. He knows that all *karmas* are nothing but mutual inter-play of actions and reactions of *gunas*. These are the movements of *prakriti*, which manifest in the form of *karmas*. The conscious reality, which is *purusha*, is just a spectator.

Human activities are due inherent tendencies or impressions (*samskaras*) and reactions with external situations of life. When we see an object, a desire to obtain it emerges due to our innate

tendency of greed. Our intellect finds a way to fulfill the desire. The sense organs follow the path set by the intellect and attain the object. All these activities are of mind, intellect and sense organs. They are forms of *prakriti*. Therefore, all these activities are merely upheavals in *prakriti* and consciousness is only a witness of these activities.

When opposite forces, internal or external, become strong, then this attitude is defeated. The intellect thinks, 'no, this is not the right action'. When such thought is strong, the desire to obtain the object is suppressed. This thought which is a part of the *prakriti*, is also a result of its activity.

So happens in the outside world. Somewhere temperature rises or atmospheric pressure decreases. Air blows with great speed at some other place. To reduce atmospheric pressure a storm comes. Rain comes. Earthquakes also come. Sun light gives life on earth. Gives life to trees and plants, and they grow.

This entire play is of the *prakriti*. *Purusha* is only a spectator. According to this principle, *purusha* is neither a doer nor an enjoyer.

Happiness and unhappiness are aberrations of mind. The feelings of honour and dishonour are also its aberrations. Sickness and good health are conditions of body, are changes taking place therein. Being one-eyed or having a sharp vision is a condition of body. Dullness or sharpness of mind is an aberration of intellect. All these are nothing but mutations in *prakriti*. They do not influence *purusha* or *atman*. *Purusha* does not become blind or one-eyed by an injury in the eye, or becomes sick by the sickness of the body. Likewise it does not become good by doing good *karmas*, nor it becomes evil by doing evil *karmas*. It does not gain by success and nor does it lose by failure. In every situation, it is only an uninvolved spectator- a *sakshi*.

Why then should one love or hate? Why should one wish for one kind of change and avoid change of another kind? Why should one ask for one kind of *karma* and reject *karma* of another kind? Such behaviour is due to ignorance or due to lack of awareness of the Self. This is the belief of the path of knowledge (*gyan-marg*).

This kind of self-centeredness makes a person indifferent towards *prakriti*, its constituents (*gunas*) and the *karma*. He loses interest in the play of *prakriti*. Therefore, he holds *prakriti* at a distance. The person is not involved in *prakriti*. He isolates himself and firmly establishes in his Self. The success of this path depends upon remaining free from all activities of *prakriti*. This is aloofness of the self (*kaivalibhav*) or '*atmanishtha*' i.e. abiding in the Self, isolated from *prakriti*. This is the result of understanding *prakriti* and *purusha*.

Now gives directions for followers of path of *karma yoga*. Since the *atman* does not do any thing and only *prakriti* does, why then should one have any objection in doing any *karma*? For the one who is a non-doer what difference does it make if *prakriti* does or does not do some thing? That will make no difference in the absence of any attachment. However, attachments will make a difference.

The theory of illusionism (*mayavad*) appears when falsehood is mixed with the principles of Samkhya. The doership and consumerism is false. What is *akarma* and for what purpose is it done? Feet do not remain firm on the ground. There is no scope for arguments, and intellect has no access. The storm of the theory of illusionism sweeps everything away. We do not find its mention in the Gita. This seems to remain within the confines of the old doctrine of Samkhya. To impose the theory of illusionism on the doctrine of the Gita appears to be an act of sacrilege.

***prakrtergunasammudhah sajjante gunakarmasu /
tan akrtsnavido mandan krtsnavin na vicalayet ||29||***

"Being ignorant due to *gunas* of *prakriti* people get attached to *karmas* born of them. Person having full understanding, should not unsettle those who are ignorant and have limited understanding (29)

In the previous verse, it is said that the knower of the difference (*tattvavetta*) between *gunas* and the *karmas* does not get involved. As opposed to him, those who do not know the truth get involved. The first half of the present verse repeats this statement.

'Deluded by the *gunas* of *prakriti*' The word '*moodha*' means ignorant, confused, unconscious. When a person does not have a real awareness of himself and of his situation, he is ignorant, bewildered or confused. The *gunas* of *prakriti* have such effect on a person. That indestructible, immutable conscious Principle forgets itself under the influence of the *gunas* of *prakriti* and forgets himself; who is he? How is he? And what he is doing? He forgets his own self. The play of the *gunas* of *prakriti* continues with force. One loses awareness of his own self. He is so deeply involved in seeing the play that he forgets his own identity.

The activities of ego, mind, intellect and sense organs are the play of the *gunas* of *prakriti*. *Prakriti* manifests itself in the form of its *gunas*. *Gunas* are expressions of activities. Getting involved, nay getting lost in activities, the *atman* identifies itself with them. Therefore, it starts feeling their changes as its own changes. That gives rise to attachments. For some there arises the feeling of love, while for some others of hate and someone feels like getting away from them. Activities bringing pleasure are desired while others are not desired. As a result of association and *habit*, the *atman* begins to consider itself as being drawn into the vortex of *gunas* instead of staying beyond them. Then that results in attachments with *gunas* as well as with *karmas*. One starts feeling, 'I should be able to do this; I should not do this. Oh! Why have I done that?' Sometimes one feels happy and sometimes unhappy. All that actually happens in *prakriti*. The *atman*, which the doctrine of Samkhya calls *purusha*, is totally beyond all these mutations. Attachment is not the property of *atman*. This is the property of *prakriti*. However, this feeling comes because of the imposition of *prakriti* on the Self.

Thoughtful people question this -- why that imperishable, inanimate conscious element gets deluded in this manner? The doctrine of Samkhya, in fact, has no answer to this question. The answer given by the doctrine of Samkhya is: 'we do not know how and why of it but we do know that the *atman* is deluded thus. That is all we know about it. We also do not know the way out'. This question cannot be answered at the intellectual level. Any inquisitiveness about the

principle, which the intellect cannot understand, will lead one towards the realm of imagination and that is futile.

Instead of wasting our time in thinking about such questions, we should make an effort to find a way out for moving forward. When house is on fire, if one starts thinking as to how fire started and does not make any effort to douse it then that is surely foolishness. Similarly if instead of trying to get free from bonds, one is involved in such futile questions, then that will be waste of both time and energy. When right time comes, these questions get automatically resolved.

This is the viewpoint of the doctrine of Samkhya.

How should those who know the truth about the *atman* deal with such questions? Second half of this verse answers this question.

Earlier in the 25th and 26th verses direction is that wise men should do their *karmas* and they should also get others do their *karmas* for the sake of maintaining public order. This is repeated here.

There it was said, 'do not confuse their minds and do not create discord at the intellectual level'. Here it says 'do not unsettle them'.

Ineligible persons are confused with knowledge. They do not understand because they are incapable. Therefore, the said knowledge becomes a means for developing either *tamoguna* or *rajoguna* in them. Moreover, the doctrine of Samkhya can be easily misused.

The doctrine of Samkhya teaches the knowledge of *atman*, the self. But a person cannot understand the same without proper refinement of the mind, intellect and sense organs. To understand the *atman*, the nature of *atman*, it is not enough to have sharp intellect, as it requires purity of intellect and its stability. However, these days belief is that sharpness of mind alone is enough for the purpose. If with the sharpness of mind one can understand the complexities of science, then why can we not understand the complexities of the *Vedanta*? In fact, it is not so. In the Upanishad it is said:

'naisha tarken matirapanaiya'

'This understanding cannot be gained by arguments'. The purity of the intellect is necessary. Science is knowledge of material aspects of life. That can be gained by conducting experiments and also by reading books. The knowledge of science also requires purity but not to the extent to which it is required for the knowledge of the *atman*. The knowledge of *atman* is the knowledge of one's own self. The reality about the self (*atmatattva*) can be realised only when mind, intellect and sense organs are peaceful and free from confusion. Because of disturbance in them, a habit will not go away. One cannot see his real face in a shaking mirror. Even in a dirty mirror, it cannot be seen. *Prakriti* acts like a mirror for the *atman*. As soon as it becomes pure and stable, the *atman* recognises itself as an inanimate non-doer and non-enjoyer, different from *prakriti*, and then there is no confusion, no delusion. Therefore, it is necessary to have pure intellect. The purity of intellect by itself brings in stability. *Rajoguna* alone is the cause of restlessness and

dirty. This was the reason why teachers demanded that their pupil should stay with them and practice celibacy. Only after a pupil became eligible a teacher used to give him highest or supreme knowledge of *atman*. Samkhya depends entirely on eligibility.

However, these days we can purchase this knowledge cheaply from the market in the form of books and can read them. A study of this kind without fulfilling the conditions of eligibility makes one a pseudo *vedantin* (*vacha vedantin*) i.e. a *vedantin* in words only. These are the days of making all works easy. Effort is to produce at large scale. So people of enlightenment are produced on a large scale but they are of very poor quality.

For awareness of the Self (*atmabodh*) not only eligibility is necessary but teachers should also have implicit faith in his Self i.e. an *atmanishtha*. This is the statement of Upanishads. One does not achieve anything without fulfilling second requirement.

In absence of eligibility, knowledge of *atman* is not only harmful but also becomes an alibi for abandonment of one's duties. One becomes indifferent towards life and consequently gets gradually debased. And by losing the power of discrimination between right and wrong, one falls into filth. The pseudo *vedantins* also seem to be a cause of the present state of India. They talk of very lofty ideals but their own conduct is very mean. They talk of *Vedanta* and of its values but their character is highly deplorable. As compared to such followers of Vedanta in India, their foreign counterparts are much better. We see so much dishonesty and selfishness in India. This is indigestion of the Vedanta.

The thought that 'I am a non-doer and am always pure' results in the abandonment of duties with the feeling that 'what do I have to do for I am perfect. Goodness and evil is in the *prakriti* and not in me.' One does start thinking like this but does not make any effort to purify his own Self.

Shri Shankracharya while commenting upon the first aphorism (*sutra*⁵⁸) of '*Brahma sutra*' stated that only that person is eligible for the knowledge of *atman* who has practiced '*sadhan-chatushtyai*⁵⁹'. Without that practice, the knowledge of *atman* would be harmful both for the person as well as for the society. For this reason, this knowledge was kept a secret and given only by a teacher to his disciple.

⁵⁸**Sutra:** Ancient scriptures on philosophy were written in short aphorisms called 'sutra', meaning clues, and were intended as memory aids for long discussions on any topic, which a student learnt from his teacher or Guru. The thoughts were condensed in the form of sutras. Consequently the maximum of thought was compressed into sutras in as few words as possible.

⁵⁹**Sadhan-Chatushtyai:** Literally it means four fold means. According to Shankara, the spiritual requisites for the one entitled to know higher knowledge are:

- (i) Discrimination between permanent and transient.
- (ii) Renunciation of enjoyments of the fruits of action.
- (iii) The six treasures, as they are called, viz. not allowing the mind to externalize and checking the external instruments of sense organs (*sama and dama*), not thinking of things of senses (*uprati*), ideal forbearance (*titiksha*), constant practice to fix mind in God (*samadhana*), and faith (*shradha*).
- (iv) The intense desire to be free (*mumukshutvam*).

'*kritsnavit*'—knower of whole truth. He knows both *prakriti* and *purusha*. The one who knows only *prakriti* knows only a part of the truth. He is '*akritsnavit*'.

One should keep his knowledge of Self(*atmagyan*) to himself. Do not give this knowledge to those who are not eligible and do not unsettle them from the path of their *karma*, because that would harm them. For them *karma* is the path of their progress. That alone purifies. One achieves stability only by doing *karmas*. Besides that, it is only by doing *karmas* one becomes eligible for the knowledge of *atman* in due course of time. If because of our advice someone leaves the path of his progress then we evidently worked against his interest.

Desires help a person to make him progress on the path of his evolution to a certain extent. It is only through *rajoguna* that a person can enter into *sattvaguna*. One cannot directly enter *sattvaguna* from *tamoguna*. When a person of predominantly *tamoguna* nature hears talks of wisdom, he sinks deeper into *tamoguna*. Even a person with predominantly *rajoguna* nature after hearing talks of wisdom loses desire for doing his *karmas* and starts becoming *tamasic*. Only the one who is pure, i.e. *sattvic* can gain from the talks of wisdom. He alone can transcend the realms of *gunas*.

After attaining the knowledge of *atman*, a great responsibility comes on the person. The requirement of eligibility for having that knowledge is necessary for that reason. This knowledge in an ineligible person gets corrupted and so does the person.

That is why it says that the knower of the whole truth should not unsettle those who know it partially and should not unsettle them from the path of their duty. An '*akritsnavit*' is a dull person. One who cannot understand is dull. That is right. His imperfect understanding surely is an evidence of his dullness.

After mentioning the views of the *Samkhya-yoga*, Shri *Bhagwan* gives his own view thus –

*mayi sarvani karmani samnyasya 'dhyatmanacetasa /
nirasir nirmamo bhutva yudhyasva vigatajvarah ||30||*

"Resigning all your *karmas* in Me with dedicated mind and consciousness fixed in the Self, free from desires, egoism, affections and hope, fight free from anxiety." (30)

Shri *Bhagwan* knew Arjuna very well. Arjuna was predominantly an active and emotional person. Wisdom was not predominant in his personality. Devotion to *karma* was the natural path for his progress. Therefore, Shri *Bhagwan* again and again asked him to fight. Direction to Arjuna was -you fight.

A wise man should do *karmas* for the sake of social good. Through his knowledge, he should not confuse others so as they deviate from their path of duty or ignore their duty..

Now Shri *Bhagwan* tells the way to Arjuna: 'you should fight'. *Karma* does not bind a person. Attachment alone is the cause of binding. *Karma* done in the right spirit cuts bonds and unites one with *parameshwara*. This is said very clearly.

"With a dedicated mind (*chitta*) renouncing all your *karmas* in Me." Renouncement is total, complete abandonment, no ownership of any kind. Renouncement is abandoning of every thing. Renunciation means total or complete abandonment. If feeling of ownership continues then renunciation is not complete.

All *karmas* have to be renounced. They have to be surrendered to *Parameshwara*. It is possible to give or gift physical goods to others. How can *karma* be given to any one? Physical goods are given by gross acts and subtle things are given by subtle acts. Fix the mind in the *atman* for surrendering *karma*, *Karma* is aggregation of all activities commencing right from ego to gross body.

For total surrender of *karma* it is necessary to have consciousness beyond ego, otherwise, while gross dimension of the activity in doing a *karma* will be surrendered, the subtle portion of it will remain un-surrendered. It is, therefore, necessary to be free of any motive for doing any *karma* and fix the mind or *chitta* in the consciousness of the Self. By rising above the doership *karma*, *karma* is surrendered to *parameshwara*.

It is necessary to unite with the one to whom something is given. If *karma* is to be offered to *parameshwara* then one will have to be united with Him. To unite with Him it is necessary to establish oneself in the awareness of the Self; one has to go entirely beyond the mind and the intellect. Moreover, for doing this, one has to relax oneself just by keeping alive in oneself the feeling of surrendering *karmas* to *parameshwara*; one has to enter in Him. In this manner, surrender of *karmas* can take place. As we give and receive goods, so the impressions or tendencies, latent in us, are exchanged. Sometimes, latent tendencies of disease have to be borne by the one who treats the patient by giving him his blessings. Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa had to bear the abdominal pain of the wife of Mathura Babu. We can find many such examples, which substantiate the concept of an exchange of suppressed impressions, tendencies or *karmas*.

This renunciation is not possible without getting beyond the mind and the intellect. It cannot be realised simply through an intellectual resolve. A very intense feeling of love for the feet of *parameshwara* alone can elevate a person; and then alone the renouncement of *karmas* in Him is possible. The one, who has started staying in that state, does not need to make any special effort for the renouncement of his *karmas*. His *karmas* are automatically surrendered to *parameshwara* because he is free from ego, he is free from the bonds of *karma*. For him the question of renouncing his *karmas* does not arise.

In fact, surrender of *karmas* is not possible without full and firm faith in *parameshwara* and love for Him. And with that faith surrender of *karmas* gradually becomes natural.

Pointing towards Himself Shri *Bhagwan* has used the word '*mayee*' i.e. 'in Me', revealing His Divine form, *Purushottama rupa*. Previously too in verse 61 of the second chapter such an indication was given by using the word, '*matparah*', meaning 'surrendering to Me'. In the fourth chapter this secret has been fully revealed. For Arjuna this was the only way. Without taking refuge in the feet of Shri *Bhagwan* he could not have peace. And it was for this reason that he was being gradually prepared.

It is necessary to renounce all *karmas*. One must offer to *parameshwara* all *karmas* whatever they are, good or bad from worldly point of view. The renunciation of the one, who offers only good *karmas*, is not complete and so is that of the one who offers only bad *karmas*. For *parameshwara* goodness or badness of any *karma* is not as human beings perceive. *Parameshwara* is not soiled by evil nor purified by virtue. A person can fully unite with Him only by completely surrendering his *karmas* to Him. Surrender has to be total i.e. in all respects. One should not be attached with any part of his *karma*. Result of such surrender of *karmas* would mean absence of any hope or expectation. If there is any hope for victory in war, then how could there be surrender of the *karma* of fighting? Hope binds a person with his *karma*. It was not for Arjuna to think whether there would be victory or defeat in war. If war itself did not belong to him then there was no question of his right over victory or defeat. When the *karma* itself was surrendered to *parameshwara* then why should there be any expectation for its result?

Absence of hope for results completes the surrender. The surrender of a *karma* nearing completion weakens and finally destroys hope. One can learn the process of surrendering gradually. This is also true about attachment. Any attachment with *karma* is indicative of absence of the feeling of surrender. When *karma* is offered to *parameshwara* then why should there be any attachment with it.

Moreover, the entire confusion was due to nothing but attachments. He is my uncle, my brother. For that reason only, Arjuna wanted to leave the battlefield. For that reason only there was confusion. It was necessary to leave that attachment. Every thing is of *parameshwara* and this alone was the truth. This awareness alone gives freedom from attachment. Only by becoming free from attachments, Arjuna could fight.

Does renunciation of *karmas* connote surrender? For in surrender it is necessary to have the feelings of offering something to some one. Renunciation of *karmas* and offering them to *parameshwara* verily is surrender. *Parameshwara* is the receiver of that surrender.

'*Vigatjwar*' free from fever. Fever in the present context refers to mental distress. As physical fever weakens a person physically, so the mental distress weakens a person mentally. But mental distress weakens both the mind and the body. Therefore, Shri *Bhagwan* asked Arjuna to fight leaving aside his distress.

*ye me matam idam nityam anutisthanti manavaḥ |
sraddhāvanto 'nasuyanto mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ ||31||*

"Those people who are full of devotion and are free from cavil and follow this teaching of mine are released from (the bondage) of *karmas*". (31)

Which view to follow? Renounce *karmas* in *parameshwara*. Shri *Bhagwan* has given direction for renunciation of *karmas*. Blessed are those who follow this direction and surrender their *karmas* in *parameshwara*.

Their *karmas* are means for their liberation. *Karmas* are the means for severing bonds and for weakening tendencies and passions of life. Shri *Bhagwan* has clearly stated, 'are released by

karmas'. This is the fundamental, the basic secret of *karmayoga*. *Karmasare* means. That is the message of the Gita to Arjuna. This is devotion to duty, *karmanishtha*.

People say '*rite gyanananna muktih*' i.e. liberation is not possible without knowledge (*gyan*). But here *relesethroughkarmasis* advocated. *Karmas* done with dull devotion and dedication purify a person. More a person is purified more he is aware of the self (*atmagyan*).

The *karma* done with full devotion and dedication is worship. That unites an aspirant with *parameshwara*. He not only becomes eligible for the grace of *parameshwara*. but also attains knowledge of the self through His grace.

In the tenth chapter it says –

*tesam eva 'nukampartham aham ajnanajam tamah /
nasayamy atmanbhavastho jnanadipena bhasvata //10/11//*

“I, out of compassion, destroy their darkness born of ignorance by lighting the lamp of wisdom’.

A devotee does not have to do anything more to have this knowledge or wisdom. Shri *Bhagwan* himself gives it to his devotee. In fact to the extent one is purified by doing his *karmas* without any attachment, in the form of *sadhana* i.e. as *yagya*, to that extent wisdom begins to manifest in him. His bonds are removed and he becomes lighter.

There is no substance in whatever is said to prove the superiority of the path of wisdom i.e. that without wisdom none can be liberated. That is merely a futile flight of imagination. The knowledge by which a person liberates from his bonds is not that of intellect. The path is of awareness of *atman*, emergence of consciousness beyond intellect. It is not possible to gain this wisdom just by arguments. For that, one should be internally pure and should have a strong inner craving. This conflict between wisdom and *karma* seems to be due to one’s immature understanding or ignorance.

Question remains-- what kind of renouncement of *karmas* liberates a person?

'*Nitya-nitya*', surrender of *karmas* is possible only with a feeling. Just by a casual, or occasional upsurge of feelings, an aspirant cannot surrender his *karmas* nor can *parameshwara* accept them. When there is a will to surrender of *karmas* before the start of *karma*, during the course of doing it and even after its completion then only that feeling is effective and is fruitful. Moreover, when one has no doubt in his mind then it is effective.

Since only current *karmas* can be surrendered then how tendencies created by past *karmas* be removed. One can ask this question.

The surrendering of *karmas* unites an aspirant with *parameshwara* and through His grace, one starts having His awareness. The descent of the Divine awareness colours the aspirant in the Divine hue. *Parameshwara* is always free from any impressions of *karma* (*samsakars*). Because of the descent of the Divine awareness, the aspirant also becomes free from the

impressions of his *karmas*. *Parameshwarais* eternally liberated. With His grace His devotee is also liberated. In this manner old bonds of a devotee are removed.

Two things are necessary for worship through *karmas*. An aspirant should have full devotion and faith, and should not have any misgivings. Without such unfaltering devotion for *parameshwara*, an aspirant cannot renounce his *karmas* nor can *parameshwara* accept them. Only supreme faith of this kind can awaken the consciousness beyond the mind and the intellect. Only with such awakened consciousness, one can surrender his *karmas*. Only the one who is beyond *karmas* can renounce his *karmas*.

Finding faults nullifies efforts. To find fault in *parameshwara* destroys our faith, our devotion in Him. The *sadhana* itself becomes meaningless. An aspirant is verily an aspirant. How can he be so capable as to assess *parameshwara* Himself? The present age is an age of arguments and so everyone has the freedom, the liberty, to say whatever he wants to say. However, by misusing this freedom we harm none else but ourselves. Moreover, in the field of spirituality we just cut our very roots by using wrong arguments. Then even if we want to have faith, we cannot have it. One can know *parameshwara* only by gaining His consciousness. Therefore, any criticism before reaching that state is at best is a declaration of foolishness.

If there is doubt in this worship, -the yoga of renunciation of *karmas* – our *sadhanawill* never be successful. The element of doubt indicates absence of our faith. Moreover, the *karma* itself becomes unreal i.e. impotent and will consequentially be ineffective. From whatever we do no benefit will accrue. To have doubts is a negative approach. By nursing doubts, we simply waste our energies. Doubts makes a person skeptical and debases him.

'*te api*' means they also. Not only the followers of the path of wisdom are liberated but the followers of the path of *karma yoga* also get liberated. Verses 27, 28 and 29, discuss the *sadhana* according to the doctrine of Samkhya. These verses refer to those who can discriminate between *prakriti* and *purusha*. That is the path of devotion to wisdom. The verses 30th and 31st are about those who have faith in doing *karmas* i.e. those who do their *karmas* as their *sadhana*, a spiritual practice. They also are liberated. Faith in doing *karmas* as duty removes bonds in the same way, as does the faith in wisdom. Shri *Bhagwan* recommended second path for Arjuna.

*ye tv etad abhyasuyanto na 'nutisthanti me matam |
sarovjanavimudhams tan viddhi nastan acetasah ||32||*

"Those persons who finding fault in my teaching and do not follow it are devoid of wisdom. Know such fools as misguided ones". (32)

'*mat*' is used for a well thought of opinion. In the previous verse also, '*mematam*' i.e. my opinion, was used in this very context. That view refers to the direction of Shri *Bhagwan* for surrendering of *karmas*. The same as was said to Arjuna in the 30th verse.

Those who follow that view are liberated. What happens to those who do not follow that view is the subject of the present verse.

They are misguided. '*tan viddhi nastan achetsah*' i.e. know those fools as misguided. How forceful is this statement. Those who do not follow the path of *karmayoga* i.e. surrendering of *karmas*, are misguided? Is it then that those who follow the path of wisdom are misguided? This is not so. They do not come under this category. This has been discussed before.

'*achetasah*' – unconscious, in whom the inner consciousness has not as yet awakened properly and who have very limited capacity to think.

The word '*nashta*' means 'perished' and used for 'misguided'. Those who have forgotten the path of their progress are verily misguided. They will keep wandering. This happens because of unnecessary arguments. They find fault in a clear path. How their *karmas* can be 'surrendered'? We have already discussed this subject. *Karmas* surrendered in the same manner as goods are given. The doer has simply to rise above any selfish motive behind his *karma*.

Another wrong argument used is 'how can we surrender bad *karmas* to *parameshwara*? *Karmas* have both good and bad aspects. No person can do entirely good *karmas*. All our present *karmas*, irrespective of their nature, have to be surrendered to *parameshwara*. This in turn will give nearness with *parameshwara* and purify the mind. There is nothing good or bad for *parameshwara* as it is for human beings. He is beyond both of them. The nature of *karma* cannot even touch Him. Therefore, the fear in surrendering all *karma* to *parameshwara* is sheer naivety, due to not understanding Him.

After all what has *parameshwara* to do with our *karmas*? Why He be burdened unnecessarily? So, one can think.

No doubt, *parameshwara* has nothing to do with our *karmas*. However, He does accept our feelings, our sentiments. An ordinary kindhearted person accepts gifts given to him with love, even if the gift is useless for him. Then why will *parameshwara* not accept our offerings? He does not accept them for Himself but He accepts them for our sake. He does that for bringing us nearer to Him, for purifying us, to move us forward with a greater speed in the path of our growth. Those, who are great, are selfless. *Parameshwara* is the compassionate one. He does everything for the good of his devotees. The one, who is circumscribed, is petty, is shallow and is dissatisfied; his activities are only for himself. The one, who abides in the Self is content, his activities are for others and not for himself. The attitude seen in a saint, will that not be in a much greater degree in *parameshwara* Himself.

'After all what will happen by surrendering *karmas* to yadav Krishna? He is just an ordinary person. He is just bragging.' Surely, during that period also there were people who thought so. During Shri Krishna's life time very few persons recognised his Divinity. It appears that in those days he was also criticized. In 18th chapter (verse 71) also the word '*ansuyasch*' i.e. 'free from doubts' has been used. The criticism perhaps indicates this.

For those who considered Shri Krishna as an ordinary person, he was surely an ordinary person. But for those who had verily recognised his divinity, he was *Purushottama* incarnate. Without having a proper receptivity we cannot even receive the light of the Sun. Without opening

our mouth we cannot eat food served to us. *Purushottama* does not force anybody. He manifests Himself only to those who have sentiments, feelings, and blesses them with His Grace in a special way.

In my view the gospel of the Gita itself is the proof of supreme Divinity of Shri Krishna. No one else except *Purushottama* could have spoken thus.

Even Arjuna did not recognise the Divinity in Shri Krishna. Shri *Bhagwan* had to tell him specifically and had to show him His cosmic form and then only could Arjuna believe in His divinity and develop devotion. There is nothing strange if an ordinary person does not develop such faith.

Surrendering of one's *karmas* is a form of worship. The surrendering of *karmas* unites us with Shri *Bhagwan*. His consciousness starts coloring us with divinity. We start becoming like Him and our impurities start disappearing gradually. As a result, wisdom also develops gradually; *rajas* and *tamas* start disappearing. This is an easy method for getting free from the bonds of *karma* and thus going beyond *prakriti*.

'*sarvajnanavimudhan*' -- absolutely ignorant of all kinds of wisdom. Such people are foolish and know nothing. They are not in the least conversant with the path of spirituality. That is why they talk incoherently.

An ignorant person is the one who not only does not know but also does not know that he does not know. Moreover, he considers himself a scholar. Those who find fault in Shri *Bhagwan* and in His path are ignorant. If they do not consider themselves as scholars then they will not find fault with Shri *Bhagwan* or His path. They will understand when they are calm and peaceful within. At present, they are ignorant.

It is not easy to believe in devotion to duty. There is nothing strange about it. It requires no special effort. It does not expect the follower of this path to leave or pick up anything specifically. Man is to continue to live and work just as before. Only his sentiments or motives for work are to be changed. Motive for his *karmas* is to be changed and *parameshwara* is to be made focus of his life. Gross mind does not easily accept the importance of this subtle change. That is why there are arguments and counter-arguments.

In this verse, Shri *Bhagwan* has stated in a very forceful language that those who do not understand this concept of devotion to duty (*karma*) are fools and are misguided. Arjuna was also included in this very category. He was also speaking in the same strain that (fighting) would be sinful and would end in anarchy. There is no question of vice or virtue in the path of devotion to *karma*. This path requires a person to do his *karmas* by rising above the human level. By getting involved in such useless arguments, he weaves a web around him and gets entrapped in that web. The easy and simple way out is to rise above this stage. This can be done easily with proper sentiments, motives.

How is the behaviour of a person regulated? This has been discussed in subsequent verses. Who finds the way and who keeps wandering? In addition, how this happens? This has been discussed.

*sadarsam cestate svasyah prakrter jnanavan api /
prakrtim yanti bhutani nigraha kim karisyati ||33||*

"Even a wise man acts in accordance to his nature. Beings follow their own nature. What can repression accomplish?" (33)

What is the fault of those persons who do not believe in this path? Such has become their nature. A foolish person is helpless because of his foolishness and a wise man due to his wisdom.

Our behaviour is just an expression of our personality and nothing else. As is our personality, so is our behaviour. Our mind, intellect, sense organs and the body are constituents of our personality. As they are, so are their potential tendencies or impressions (*samskars*) and nature; and so are their activities. Our *karmas* are according to our personality.

Different strings of an instrument produce different notes. A string gives notes according to its category. Activities of a *rajasic* mind will only be *rajasic*. *Sattvic* mind will go deep.

A wise man cannot keep his wisdom as distinct from himself. It will manifest in all his activities. Likewise, foolishness of a foolish person cannot remain hidden for long. This is indeed a universal law. All beings follow their nature. This principle applies both to mutable and immutable realms. A stone follows the law of gravity. Animals and vegetation also grow according to their nature and react according to their environment. Their behaviour is an expression of their existence. Behavior of an existence discloses its nature.

Beings are animated existences. This is known as 'becoming' in English.

'*nigraha kim karishyati?*' what will restraint do? What will happen by coercion? Nothing will happen. It is useless. Coercion is an effort to change an existent or a *bhuta* with force. As long as outside forces are powerful, activity will remain changed but as soon as the external force withdraws, the original activity will resume. The existents do not change internally by such outside casual propulsions

Then, is there no scope for change? This certainly does not mean that. If the behaviour of a person could have never changed then the scriptures and all teachings of ethics and morality would have been in vain. Behaviour of a person can surely change but that requires change in his inherent nature. If we want to behave like a wise person, then we will have to become wise. If we want to do a lot of physical work, then we will have to gain physical strength.

Nature of a person can change. This is the truth behind all practices (*sadhna*). With firmness, thoughts translate into *karma*. Moreover, by doing the same *karma*, repeatedly, again and again, it becomes habit which transforms nature. In this manner, nature of a person gradually changes.

Change of nature demands time as well as persistent efforts with patience. Those who want to change their inherent nature in no time can never be successful. Generally, people consider the work of changing themselves easy and perhaps for this reason they do not make persistent efforts. For study of English, for learning medicine or engineering one has to work continuously and in a disciplined manner for several years then only one can succeed. However, for changing one's Self, no thought is given or no effort made. It is considered that just by a resolve one can convert himself into gold. Consequently, one fails and gets frustrated.

Changing one's inherent nature is like changing the direction of a vehicle running in full speed. By turning the steering wheel of a vehicle suddenly either the vehicle will turn turtle or the steering wheel will be broken. We can change direction gradually after slowing down the vehicle. The same is required for changing one's life as well.

This is a science and has its rules. One can learn them by making efforts and can practice with patience.

When we do a new work for the first time, we face various difficulties and challenges and we learn by overcoming them. The same work becomes easier when we do it for the second time. If we do it repeatedly, it becomes a habit and a part of our nature.

As we think, so our thinking faculties (*manomaya kosha*) become gradually. By an effort to think clearly, one can develop ability to think clearly.

As are our sentiments so becomes our mental faculties (*manomaya kosha*). By loving others, we develop loving nature and by hating others we become of hateful nature. Through our own efforts, through our own activities we keep building our own personality. *Karmas* are the means of our development and, therefore, are of great importance. In this way, our future is dependent upon our present efforts and *karmas*, and they keep casting our nature in a new mould.

As we wish to become, we should try to generate corresponding feelings, sentiments, within ourselves and try to accumulate them from outside world. The outer influences can also be important for changing our nature but only after development of inner understanding.

In the present context, this much more be remembered that as we move ahead in the course of our evolution, we become flexible to change. As compared to stones, vegetative realm is more progressive, animals are more progressive than vegetation and human beings are more progressive than animals. Even amongst human beings, advanced people progress more rapidly. Their speed to change keeps increasing.

In this verse, the suggestion is for changing one's nature itself. Any kind of coercion will not bring stable changes. Therefore, one should not exercise any form of coercion.

How then can a person change himself?

*indriyasye 'ndriyasya 'rthe ragadvesau vyavasthitau |
taylor na vasam agacchet tau hy asya parpanthinau ||34||*

"Sense organs have specific liking or disliking for their respective objects. A person should not come under their spell. For both of them (likes and dislikes) are his enemies". (34)

How a person deviates from the path of his duty? What is that which makes him deviate from his path? Only likes and dislikes make a person deviate from his path.

It is natural for sense organs to have likes and dislikes for their respective objects. Object of eyes is form. There is attraction for beautiful forms. It gives a pleasure to see a beautiful form. Therefore, there is an attraction towards it, as if a bond is created between eyes and the beautiful form, which brings both closer. This attraction remains in the eyes. In the same way, one does not like to see an ugly form. For an ugly form creates a unique tension. Eyes try to evade ugly objects from their path or range of vision. This is aversion or dislike. As it is with the eyes, so it is with other sense organs. These have their respective likes and dislikes. Where there is accord, there is like and where there is discord, there is dislike.

Sense organs have specific capabilities of both knowledge and *karma*. Eyes have capability of seeing and ears of hearing. What is physically visible are only eye-balls. They are instruments through which capability manifests. These physical organs are useless without the subtle capability.

Our physical life has close relationship with sense organs. We live by taking food only after seeing it through our eyes. Without using hands how can we eat food? Our inherent tendencies also manifest through sense organs. Likes and dislikes associated with sense organs have a close relationship with inherent tendencies. Animals take only that food, which is beneficial for their life. His nose and his tongue tell him whether the food before him is right food for him. For whatever is not proper for his life, an animal runs away from it.

Roots of likes and dislikes of our sense organs lie in our innate animal instincts. In whatever is beneficial for life, there is pleasure in taking that. Whatever is not beneficial for life there is no pleasure. It is because of such feelings of likes and dislikes life continues. This is necessary for the process of development in animal world. The natural instinct for self-preservation is its basis.

A kind of consciousness develops in sense organs, which is responsible for likes and dislikes. We call it the vital or the *pranic* consciousness. That acquires gross existence and has basic personality. Moreover, likes and dislikes are in the nature of this consciousness. Just as man has likes and dislikes so also has this existence. They like some things and dislike some others.

Man develops intuition. Ability to use subconscious tendencies (*samsakars*) and capacity to manipulate them develops. Man starts reflecting. Reflection strengthens subconscious tendencies (*samsakars*). The world of imagination opens. Likes and dislikes become strong. Likes and dislikes of sense organs influence the mind and mind influences them in turn. They gradually lose their basic purpose of preserving life. In this way, the feeling of happiness and unhappiness ceases to be associated with its natural utility. The needs of mind and *prana* become predominant..

The vital (*prana*) tries to lose its earlier inertness by receiving stronger and stronger impulses. Consequently, there arises in the individual a demand for new and powerful experiences every day. Craving for sex and greed for pungent food are indicative of it. Insatiability is also the nature of the vital (*prana*). Therefore, vital again and again demands very powerful experiences of sense organ. Likes and dislikes lose their utility. Sphere of their activity begins to circumscribe by the nature of the vital. Moreover, through imaginary reflections mind makes them strong.

We should use of sense organs for supporting life and for actions-reactions in the physical world, so that we may progress well on the path of our development. *Karmayoga* alone is the direct road for development. However, likes and dislikes so developed in sense organs misguide a person. Likes intensify craving for pleasures. Sense organs demand pleasant experiences and want to run away from unpleasant ones. As this liking for pleasures and disliking for undesirable experiences gets strong, our life starts revolving more and more around sense organs. Mind thinks of such objects and the intellect finds ways to achieve them. The body makes efforts to achieve them. We start living for achieving pleasures of sense organs. The servant becomes the master. This is the misuse of the sense organs. This is the failure of life.

We start living for eating tasty food. Consider life meaningful by listening to melodious songs. Consider life futile without sweet smelling fragrance and beauty. These days, people think that without pleasures of the sense organs life is meaningless. It is like growing as vegetables and rotting without pleasures. This is the view of materialism.

The utility of life is not in sacrificing it for pleasures of the sense organs. It is rather their misuse and amounts to exchanging diamonds for seashells.

Why this upheaval takes place? It is due to sensual likes and dislikes. The likes and dislikes becoming strong take control of the intellect. We also lose our power of discrimination. Pleasures of senses start appearing as supreme objective of life. We forget that sense organs are for our use. Moreover, by doing our duties through them we can progress on the path of our development. They are only means for gaining experiences in life.

Since these likes and dislikes lead to such serious consequences, they have been called our enemies. Enemy harms, so do the likes and dislikes.

While going on road a horse seeing grass on roadside is tempted and stops. Leaving the road, he starts eating grass. His journey comes to a halt. Similar is the condition of a person traversing the journey of life. He loses himself in sense organs. And sense organs in search of their pleasures waste entire life.

Therefore, a warning is given – ‘do not come under their sway’. Safety is in recognizing the enemy. This verse gives their identity. A person recognising his likes and dislikes can discharge his duties (*svadharma*), otherwise on every step, he will lose his way. Only likes and dislikes prevent a person from discharging his duties.

A person thinks, 'let me rest for a while; I have just now taken my food; surely I will reach in time; will all people reach there in time'. He thinks again, 'it is raining and so no one will reach in time; what will I do by reaching in time.'

This temptation-- this desire for pleasures of senses makes a person blind. It makes one lose his discretion of right or wrong and sometimes makes him worst than an animal.

One should make every effort to save from such situations.

*sreyan svadharmo vigunah paradharmat svanusthitat /
svadharme nidhanam sreyah paradharmo bhayavahah ||35||*

"One's own duty devoid of merit is better than the duty of others discharged well. Better is death in observance of *svadharma*. For work of others is fraught with fear". (35)

The entire discussion was essentially to motivate Arjuna to follow his own duty (*svadharma*). Likes and dislikes of senses tend to confuse the intellect of a person and deviate him from his path of *svadharma*. After telling about this, Shri *Bhagwan* once again strongly advocates the fundamental concept in this verse.

In the first half of the verse a comparison has been made: On one side of the scale is one's own *svadharma* devoid of merit and on the other side is a work of merit of some one else. Of the two, which one is better? The *svadharma* even though devoid of merit is surely better. This is the categorical and definite view of Shri *Bhagwan*.

About *svadharma* much has been written above. While deliberating upon basic principles of *karmayoga*, it is necessary to understand the importance of *svadharma* both from personal as well as from social point of view. From personal point of view, *svadharma* is the path of one's evolution and progress. For a student of third standard, study of books prescribed for that class alone is his *svadharma*. Bringing up a child is the duty, *svadharma*, of a mother. That alone helps in the development of motherhood. From personal point of view *svadharma* is that *karma* which takes us forward rapidly on the path of our evolution and which is perfectly appropriate for us. By performing *svadharma* no reaction takes place within us. There is no remorse. It is according to our nature and capabilities.

By understanding the nature of his own personal duty, *svadharma*, a person is not confused. There is no question of committing virtue or vice, nor is there any question of pleasure or pain. These issues are not worth consideration. The only important consideration is its usefulness in the process of evolution. Usefulness alone can determine one's *svadharma*.

The meaning of this is clear that with the change in a person i.e. in his nature, his *svadharma* will also change. These changes keep moulding the doer in new moulds. When a doer changes, then *svadharma* also changes. In the process of evolution, this is natural. From serving class (*shudra-yoni*) to business class (*vaishya-yoni*), then to warrior class (*Kshatriya*) and finally to priestly class (*Brahmin yoni*) -- this sequence proves the point. The old belief was like this.

What is duty, the *dharma*, of others? What is not our *svadharmaisvadharma* of someone else. When we see someone else doing his *karma* and see him happy in doing it and also hear from others praises of his *karma* then we get tempted: We think that 'his work is better and the work we do is no good.' Being tempted we leave our own work. Many a times this happens due to greed for wealth, for honour – for name and fame - and sometimes for fear of trouble in doing own duty. I have seen a doctor working as a contractor leaving his medical practice.

Normally, we cannot do someone else's work properly. We do not have appropriate skill for doing someone else's work. But sometimes the work of others is very easy. We can do that easily and can do it better than the one who is doing it. Should we then do it? We have to work hard and take pains in doing our work. We may do someone else's work easily. Then should we do that? We do feel tempted to do someone else's work. This surely is a temptation. However, by doing it we will not be able to make any progress in the course of our development. For a student of fourth standard, questions of third standard are easy as compared to questions of fourth standard and he can solve them easily. Should he then do that? By doing so, he will not be benefited. By reading those lessons again which he has already read, neither his knowledge will improve in any way nor his ability. For this reason, we should not do a *karma* of others simply because it can be easily done. We have to move forward. By taking things easy a person does not move forward. Man moves forward only after due efforts. *Svadharma* demands it. One should always do his duty, howsoever difficult, arduous and painful that may be. Performance of one's own duty alone takes a person forward. Difficulties make a person strong. That makes him confident and capable. People rise through difficulties.

What is this moving forward? What importance evolution has? In the language of the Gita the supreme objective of life is to gain the Divine consciousness – the Divine state (*bhagvad-bhava*). That is the ultimate limit of development of consciousness. To move towards that supreme consciousness is verily to move forward. Our forward movement alone is the yardstick of the utility of our action. *Astu*

This then is the personal view on the subject of *svadharmas*.

Man is a constituent of the society. Whatever he is, that is as a result of the contribution of the society. Just as in the growth of a seed into a tree the contribution of the seed is limited to its potential of becoming a tree. The rest of the ingredients like water and other nutrients come from earth and the environment. Similar is the case with a man. For the nourishment of the body, for the development of intellect and sense organs and for all other daily activities of life, including food, etc. man is obliged to others. For one loaf of wheat he is obliged to hundreds or thousands of people. Wherefrom seed of wheat came; who ploughed the field; who made the plough; who excavated iron ore; who arranged for the livelihood of miners? All those people involved in those activities contributed to our development and we should be obliged to them. Again the one who eats a loaf of wheat is indebted to all those, who have directly or indirectly, provided means of transport. From this example, it is clear as to how much society has contributed in our life. Moreover, without so much contribution of the society it can be imagined as to what is our

existence on this earth. Society gives to an individual and he in turn gives to the society. The one, who takes from the society but does not give anything in return, is a thief of the society,

There is a system in the society by which this mutual exchange takes place. According to the system every person has to do some work. It is not possible to give similar work to every one. There are differences of capabilities in persons. There are many kinds of works and all of these need execution. Therefore, whatever work assigned to a person that he should do. Then only the society runs smoothly. Just as a big factory runs efficiently when workers do their duty, the assigned work. When a person leaving his own work does the work of someone else then it leads to disorder. Either the person whose work he does becomes idle or he snatches the work of someone else. Who would do the work of a person who leaves his work? Probably that work would remain undone. And society will suffer.

If no one wants to do a difficult work then the wheels of the society cannot move. If the society assigns a work to us, then we should do it. By doing that work alone can we repay our debt to the society. We live on the work done by others and so we should work for them. The entire social order is dependent upon this mutual exchange.

Here, there is no question of virtue or vice. If we have to repay a debt to the society, then it has to be repaid. Moreover, for that, if we have to take trouble then it should be readily taken. People have also taken so much trouble for us. We should also take trouble to serve them and should not bother whether the work assigned to us is proper or not. If for repaying a debt to the society, we have to take trouble now or later, or have to go to hell, we should be prepared. Therefore, the question of vice or virtue in the assigned work does not arise. Consideration of vice or virtue is an extremely selfish point of view. That makes a person derelict about his duties. The present or future happiness or unhappiness should, in no case determine the course of our *karma*. From personal point of view, from the point of view of our own development and from the social point of view, interests of the society alone should be the guiding principle of life. Selfishness takes both the person as well as the society towards disaster.

In the second half of this verse the same thing has been said with greater force.

Death in observance of *svadharma* is better. *Svadharma* is more valuable than life. Even by giving one's life, one should perform his *svadharma*. What for is after all the utility of one's life. From personal point of view, it is in the interest of one's evolution, growth and development. That life is surely worthless, which fails to take us towards *parameshwara*. If by not doing our own duty (*svadharma*) we save our life then the saved life will be futile and worthless. That life will be a useless burden. Moreover, if while observing our *svadharmal* life is to be given then our death will take us straight towards *parameshwara*. Therefore, death is laudable and avoidance of *svadharma* is condemnable.

In addition, 'other's work causes fear'. It is fearful from personal perspective, because by performing someone else's duty one cannot make any progress. He has to abandon his own duty to perform other's duty. Therefore, that becomes a cause of downfall. From social point of view also

performance of someone else's work is fearful because that becomes a cause of social disorder. Therefore, instead of repaying our debt to the society we commit a social crime.

The perspective of vice or virtue is a very narrow and an extremely selfish point of view. From this point of view, important considerations of one's life are happiness and unhappiness. One should obtain them at any cost. However, people forget that, indiscriminate pursuit of pleasures destroys happiness itself. By doing that selfishness and related vice flourish. Therefore, it becomes a cause of unhappiness. Pleasure is not enjoyed because pleasure so gained becomes worthless. Therefore, this view is far from reality, cannot take a person forward and makes him selfish and indolent. There is no place in it for devotion to duty.

The comprehensive view of *karmayoga* is much higher than these petty considerations. That shows the path of enlightenment and progress. That can be beneficial both for the individual and for the society.

The present topic concludes here.

What is the reason for a person's downfall from his path? This is an obvious question in the present context. The remaining verses in this chapter answer this very question.

Arjuna raises the question thus—

arjuna uvacha
atha kena prayukto 'yam papam carati purusah /
anicchann api varsneya balad iva niyojita ||36||

Arjuna said --

"O'Varshneya⁶⁰! What is it that impels a person to commit sin against his will, as if engaged in sin by force? (36)

This is a common problem of a person. He knows what is evil, though wanting to remain away from it cannot remain away. This was what Duryodhan had once said, '*janamaya dharmam na ch me nivritah*' --'I know unrighteousness but am unable to get away from it i.e. can not get away from it'.

During the course evolution there is a stage when one cannot distinguish between right or wrong. That is a state like that of an animal. In that state there is no question of either avoiding or not avoiding evil. After some progress, discretion develops. Man recognises evil, yet his base instincts being strong he is unable to control himself. This is the state of a common man. The question of Arjuna relates to this very state. In this state there is an inner conflict and the man keeps tossing between right and wrong. Gradually the power of discretion becomes strong and base instincts become relatively weaker. Consequently, man starts having better control over his behaviour and there is some relief from helplessness.

Arjuna had asked Shri Krishna. '*atha*' is indicative of change in the topic. 'Now I want to know about this topic.' The word '*prayukta*' used here means impelled or inspired. The word

⁶⁰ Varshneya: this is another name for Shri Krishna

'*purushah*' has been used for a person. It has no reference to the difference between a man and a woman. '*Purusha*' is our conscious-existence and which rules our mind, intellect and sense organs.

Who compels a person to commit sin? He does not want to commit sin, but it seems as if some power compels him to commit it. When there is a storm than man forgets himself. He does not have the ability to discriminate between right or wrong, between doable and non-doable. The forces of passion of lust and anger are like that. The state is of delusion, of foolishness. When storm subsides then the man repents. Then he realises as to what he had done; what a sin he had committed? But then he can do nothing. Whatever was to happen that had already happened.

There is yet another state. Man can see the incoming storm. He does want to escape the storm but is unable to do so. When a storm comes, he knows it is coming, yet finds helpless in controlling himself. Even during that storm, he remains a mute witness and remains uninvolved.

He watches the game of base instincts like someone watches a cinema show. This happens when real withdrawal starts and base tendencies (*samsakars*) start liquidating. During indulgence attitude of being a spectator is impossible. For the individual loses himself in the activities of his base instincts. He himself becomes a form of lust or of anger. At that time he is devoid of the power of discrimination.

'*Baladiv niyojitah*' -- as if somebody compels by force. Impact of passions and anger is like this. Person is under the control of others. To blame him is not to understand his helplessness. Needs to help him so that he can get over his helplessness. When we understand sin, we neither become angry with the sinner nor hate him. He appears miserable, worthy of our pity, our sympathy. He needs treatment just like an ailing patient needs treatment.

Shri *Bhagwan* is addressed '*Varshneya*' because he belonged to the '*vrishni*' family.

In subsequent verses, we will get detailed analysis of passion i.e. of lust and anger.

Sri bhagwan uvach
kama esha krodha esa rajogunasamudbhavah /
mahsano mahapapma viddhy enam iha vairinam //37||

Shri *Bhagwan* says --

"Passion and anger are born of *rajoguna*. These are all devouring, insatiable and great sinners. And so in the present context consider them as enemies". (37)

What is passion? What is anger?

Craving for satisfaction is passion. For the sake satisfaction one looks outwards. That makes a person outward looking. Through his mind, intellect and sense organs man looks for gratification in outside world. Its basic form is passion, wish, desire or craving. Mahatma Buddha used to call it '*tanna-trishna*' (demands of body).

Under its influence, the consciousness of a person moves outwards. When this is strong, the person loses his inner stability. He loses his balance. Its advance form is passion, which man has for woman and woman has for man. This passion drives a person mad and he runs after means

for its gratification. He gets disoriented losing his balance. It is a momentary upsurge, and recognised by its intensity. Normally passions influence us unexpectedly.

'Krodha' is anger. Anger causes internal turmoil. The state of a person in anger is like that of curd during churning. In the state of anger eyes of a person become red, his lips start quivering and his body keeps trembling. He is not within his control. The inner state of a person in anger can be compared to that of a mountain river flowing with full force striking against rocks, which come in its way. If passion is a flooded river then anger is a whirlpool in the river. If passion is a storm then anger is a cyclone. Once the objective of passion achieved, its force subsides for some time but anger makes a person whirl like a cyclone or a whirlpool. Once entrapped, it is difficult for a person to get out of it.

In reality, despite having two forms they have same effect inside. They disorient a person. The inner self churned. Moreover, under their influence man becomes mad and strays from the right path. That is why it has been forcefully said, '*kama aish krodha aish*' i.e. so is passion, so is anger. They are the two forms of the same enemy.

'*rajogunasmudbhavah*' i.e. born from *rajoguna*. *Rajoguna* is activity, is change and is fickleness. Passion and anger are of course intense and violent. They are like violent storm and fierce flood. Once *rajoguna* is pacified they are also pacified.

'*mahashanah*' i.e. glutton, who eats too much. Satisfaction of desires is impossible.

*na jatu kamah kamanamupbhogen shamyati |
havisha krashnavartmev bhuya evabhivardhte //*

'By satisfying, desire is never pacified. Like by pouring purified butter in fire, it blazes all the more intensely. So by satisfying, desires increase all the more.'

This is known as the syndrome of ninety-nine. A hundred comes after ninety-nine. Thereafter person starts thinking of the next hundred and then of the third hundred. In this manner desires of a person are never fulfilled. The more desires are fulfilled more they keep increasing. '*Jyon pratilabh lobh adhikaae*' i.e. with fulfillment greed increases. This is really true. It is to express this truth that it has been said that passions are all devouring and insatiable. They never get satisfied irrespective of how much you satisfy them.

Passion is all devouring and anger is a great sinner, '*mahapapma*'. Anger is a great sinner because it is the root of all sins. Unsatisfied passion transforms into anger then there is a storm within and the mind of the person becomes perverted.

It was said in 2nd chapter also. '*kamat' krodhoh aabhijayate*', anger is born from desire. This is correct. Between the two, there is a difference of stages only. Flowing water when blocked creates disturbance. A raging storm when encounters obstruction causes destruction.

After passion transforms into anger, the person indulges in sinful acts. The same is true about lust. Increased passion leads a person to inner turmoil and takes him to the stage of anger

then he becomes mad. Then he loses his power of discrimination between right and wrong and indulges in sinful acts.

Anger is a great sinner. It is 'great sinner' because it is the root of all evils. If one does not enter a stage of internal turmoil full of anger then he cannot do any wrong.

In the last part of the verse Shri *Bhagwan* says, 'in this respect know thou this as an enemy'. Arjuna had asked, 'what is it which forcibly compels a person to commit sin'. The answer to that question is: 'it is passion, which drives him to commit wrong, it is anger which drives him do wrong; this is the enemy having two forms. Recognise them'.

We know that passion and anger are enemies of a man. It is necessary to know their place in the process of evolution. Then only we will be able to understand them properly and will be able to control them.

In the inanimate world, there is neither passion nor anger. Their vibrations start in the vegetative world. They are perceptible in animals and are strong in human beings.* With their growth, we notice rising level of energy. These vibrations are linked with development of consciousness. They are causes for bringing a person to a certain state of evolution. It is passion, which has given humanity the benefit of present level of success in the field of science. It has invested him with the ability to soar high in the realm of imagination.

Rising passions on one hand increase one's strength and on the other hand increase his selfishness, strengthens one's ego. For this reason, a person commits wrong, oppresses others and uses force against others. Because of his evil deeds, he becomes unhappy and makes the society unhappy. It is necessary to understand the benefits and harms caused by passions. Ego is the basis of passion and binding is also due to ego.

The thread of mine-ness is tied with our ego. When the state of internal conflicts generates, then only a person is prepared to rise above these passions. These passions can take a person from *tamoguna* to *rajoguna*, but for gaining an entry in *sattva* one has to overcome them, go beyond them. What helps in moving from *tamoguna* to *rajoguna* that becomes a hurdle in moving toward *sattvaguna*.

This is described in detail in the following verses.

*dhumena 'vriyate vahnir yatha 'darso malena ca /
yatho 'lbena 'vrto garbhas tatha tene 'dam avrtam ||38||*

"As fire is covered by smoke, mirror by dust and an embryo by membrane so is wisdom covered by passions". (38)

What covers the wisdom? This question has been answered by giving three examples.

* For more information on this subject please refer authors book '*utpadani shakti*'.

'As fire is covered by smoke' so wisdom is covered by passion and anger. Wisdom is a form of fire. It removes darkness of ignorance. That is why it is fire of wisdom (*gyanagni*). Passion and anger are like smoke. Smoke cannot extinguish fire but can certainly defuse intensity of flames for some time. Moreover, when after getting fresh air smoke disappears fire blazes again. Likewise, when wisdom blazes, passion and anger disappear.

Just as dust covers a looking glass so the force of passion and anger covers wisdom of a person. When dust covers a mirror, one cannot see his face clearly. Similarly, when passion and anger rise, a person loses his awareness. 'What am I? Who am I? What is right for me or what is wrong for me?' He does not realise. The dust of passion and anger covers our internal mirror, which is our inner self (*antahkarana*). Under the influence of passions we become blind and forget our self.

In the third example, it says, 'as an embryo is covered by membrane, so is the wisdom is covered by passion and anger'. The embryo remains enclosed in membrane. The membrane bursts when a child is born and the bond of membrane ends with birth. The embryo grows in the womb of mother under the cover of membrane. The membrane starts forming right from the time of conception. As the embryo grows and so does the membrane. One day the foetus becomes able to have independent existence outside membrane. Earlier it used to get nourishment through membrane. Nature breaks that bond. Child comes out of the womb of the mother.

As an embryo is covered within the membrane in the womb of mother, so is the wisdom of an individual is covered by passions and anger. Under this cover of passion and anger wisdom keeps maturing. Some day this wisdom becomes so strong that it emerges by tearing off the membrane.

These three examples clarify the relationship of passion and anger with wisdom. The blazing fire of wisdom can destroy passion and anger. Smoke does not have any independent existence. It comes from fire and covers the fire and then when the fire blazes again it disappears.

The second example tells us how passion and anger become a cause of forgetting our self-awareness. When dust covers a mirror, it loses its ability to reflect our face clearly. Likewise when dust of passion and anger settles wisdom no longer remains wisdom. A person swayed by passion and anger becomes sinful and becomes worse than an animal.

The third example tells us that even while covered by passion and anger, the wisdom continues to grow in the process of evolution. The same, which earlier used to strengthen wisdom becomes a cause of bondage later. In initial stages of evolution, passion and anger are helpful in the development of consciousness. Take it from *tamoguna* to *rajoguna*. The same then becomes an obstacle for it to move to *sattvaguna*. Then the cover bursts. Wisdom gets liberated from bondage. It is only through membrane that the embryo gets its nourishment. This helps the embryo to grow. For a mature embryo membrane becomes bondage. That then is broken. What a beautiful example is this? This is the nature of passion and anger.

When passion-anger hinder development then it is an enemy. Therefore, they have to be overcome. Membrane has to be broken.

Role of passion and anger is further described as under.

*avrtam jnanam etena jnanino nityavairina |
kamarupena kaunteya duspurena 'nalena ca ||39||*

"O'Arjuna! Wisdom of a person is always covered by insatiable fire of passion which is eternal foe of the wise (*gyani*)". (39)

This one enemy has two forms. It appears, as if Shri *Bhagwanis* again and again indicating towards them.

*'ka mesh krodh esh, 'mahashano mahapapma,
Kamrupen kaunteya duspure renalen ca |*

It seems that the adjectives indicate towards their two forms in the same sequence. Both of them are same, this is also clear. We also get a glimpse of their distinct properties.

This is eternal foe of the wise (*gyani*). Who is wise and how is this eternal foe? A wise man is one who has wisdom, who has awareness of self as well as of *prakriti*. Not only this, beyond this, he has awareness of that where the two exist. The one, who through his understanding recognises the Supreme Reality (*paramtattva*), has faith in that Supreme Authority (*paramsatta*) and believes in the Divinity of Shri *Bhagwan*, is a wise man (*gyani*). In the seventh chapter, Shri *Bhagwan* has also included those who recite his name amongst wise men (*gyanis*).

'gyani twatmaiv me matam', ||7/18||

A wise person is My very own soul.

'tesham gyani nityayukta ekbhaktirvishishyate' ||7/17||

Amongst the four, a wise person with single-minded devotion is special. The one who has faith in Shri *Bhagwanis* a wise man. The one who moves on His path with an undivided devotion is a wise man. The present topic makes this concept very clear. The term 'wise man' does not presently refer to a saint who has attained the state of *Brahman-nirvan* instead it refers to an aspirant (*sadhak*). He has yet to attain Shri *Bhagwan*.

For such an aspirant passion and anger are permanent enemy. A permanent enemy never sheds his hostility. His hostility never ends. And there is never a possibility of friendship. Can there be any friendship between darkness and light? That is against the principles of nature. The follower of the path of Shri *Bhagwan* has to throw them out. He cannot afford to give them any space. Saints have said --

'jahan kama tahan ram nahin, jahan ram nahin kama'

(Rama is not there where passion resides; where Rama resides passion cannot exist).

As day and night can never be together so the follower of the path of Shri *Bhagwan* and desires cannot be together.

'*gati*'-- in the progress of a person passion and anger are obstacles. A follower of the path of Shri *Bhagwan* has to rise above them. He has to be free from them. It is not possible for a person to satisfy his desires and at the same time follow the path of Shri *Bhagwan*. As long as the inner-self does not exclusively choose Shri *Bhagwan*, the door of *parameshwar* does not

open. Withdrawal from senses does not start. When innermost self of a person opts for Divine, only then he is called a wiseman (*gyani*).

However, this does not mean that just by doing this much, passion and anger will withdraw their control from the mind, intellect and sense organs. Their control is removed only gradually. As the inner-self opens for the Divine and the energy of the Divine consciousness starts flowing and influencing the entire existence of the mind, intellect, and senses then that Supreme consciousness displaces the forces of passion and anger from their place. Even in the intervening stage, passions do not arise. If we are devoted to the Divine, then the mind craves only for *parameshwara* and so how could there be any place left for any other desire? How could there be a place for passion and anger?

For this reason, these (passion and anger) are called permanent enemies of a wise person. It has been mentioned in the previous verse, how they cover the wisdom of a person.

This enemy is '*kamaroop*.' The one, who can assume any form as it likes, is '*kamaroop*'. We find such examples in ancient wars. Meghnada used to change his form. Shumbh and Nishumbha did the same in their war with Mother Divine (*Durga Devi*). It is difficult to win such enemy. Passion and anger are '*kamaroop*', can come in different disguises. There is no end and no limit to the various forms this combination of passion and anger can assume. Sometimes they also emerge in *sattavika* form.

Once I met a woman who was unhappy because she had no money to give in charity. Passion also comes assuming the form of duty. This also assumes the forms of truth and virtue or goodness. All desires bind a person in every possible manner. In the fire of the love for *parameshwara*, all desires need to be burnt. Is not the craving for *parameshwara* itself a desire? That surely is a desire but that will automatically eliminate when it ceases to have any utility of its own. For once *parameshwara* is realised, where is the importance of a desire to have Him. One need not worry for the removal of this desire. It will go of itself.

Desire takes many forms. They pervade all the three worlds. They have three main expressions, namely, the desire for progeny, for recognition and for wealth. And their divisions and sub-divisions cannot be counted. A person gets deceived. He is unable to recognise all variations. Becoming a slave of his passions, a person runs after desires and thinks, 'I am free from their bonds'. Passion also manifests as sacrifice and renunciation.

'And by this insatiable fire' -- insatiable fire is enemy. '*dushpur*', the one, which is never satisfied. It is like that fire, which asks for more and more fuel. It is like that fire in which whatever is given is burnt. By putting more fuel, fire does not pacify; on the contrary it blazes all the more. It is called, '*mahashanah*' i.e. the one, which is never satiated. Fulfillment of desires in turn creates new desires. On getting a hundred rupees a person begins to desire for a thousand and on getting a thousand he begins to desire for a million. This fire does not extinguish in this manner.

Is it true in respect of anger as well? If anger finds its way then it surly strengthens violent nature of a person. If an angry person abuses someone or beat someone, then he may cool down for some time. However, his nature of being short tempered is bound to strengthen. Its success makes a person subservient to his anger.

One should always be alert from his enemies. Shri Krishna was a warrior and so was Arjuna. Therefore, this entire discussion is in the language of war.

*indriyani mano buddhir asya 'dhisthanam ucyate /
etair vimohayaty esa jnanam avrtya dehinam ||40||*

"Sense organs, mind and intellect are said to be its abode. Covering wisdom through them, deludes the embodied (soul)". (40)

Where is the abode of the enemy? How does it attack? What are its means? Now answers to these questions are given.

The enemy i.e. passion and anger reside in the mind, intellect and sense organs. Amongst them subtlest is passion, which by dwelling in all these and permeating them can carry them with it. Impulses generated in them develop attraction and then activate mind, intellect and sense organs. They start racing towards outside world. Attraction is a prior state of passion. When it becomes strong, it is known as passion. When resisted by the outside world it becomes anger.

Being a part of the Whole we are in fact free of passions (*aptakama*). The Self (*atmasatta*) is, in fact, free of passions (*aptakama*). But that awareness comes to manifest only at a late stage in the course of evolution. Experiences gained through these instruments (the mind, the intellect and the sense organs) are necessary for evolution. Passions, therefore, have their utility. Residing in mind, intellect and sense organs, passions impel for gaining experiences of life.

How does passion reside in sense organs? Sense organs also have a kind of consciousness. Their consciousness is very little developed. Passions dwell in sense organs due to this consciousness. This consciousness also has its likes and dislikes. For fulfillment of these likes, there is always an inspiration. The senses rush for their fulfillment. The tongue does it for the taste of food and eyes do it for beauty. This is the effect of passion.

Passions dwell in mind in the form of desire for pleasure, for happiness. The desire for favourable experiences is natural in mind. Mind is the abode of passions. The desires for honour, for wealth or for a son are all play of passions dwelling in mind. This craving for happiness rocks the mind. On the strength of passions mind roams around the three worlds.

What is the form of passion in intellect? It is an attitude and an effort to keep different and higher than others. Affection and ego are its forms in intellect. We consider our possessions as our own and think that we have a right over them. We make efforts to hold on to that right also. Similarly, we consider our thoughts and mental experiences as our very own. We love them as they appear to us better because they are ours. Becoming a kind of greed they reside in our intellect, impose their authority everywhere.

Passion is craving for enjoyments in sense organs, is desire for happiness in mind and is craving for authority in intellect. This is three-dimensional coverage of passion.

Passion covers wisdom by moving in these three dimensions. When a desire for enjoyment arises, man steals or behaves in inappropriate manner. His power of discrimination is lost. When his craving for indulgence in pleasures becomes very strong, his reason is corrupted. A blinding passion for sex is an example of this state.

A person behaves in the same manner for his desire for happiness. For the sake of his own happiness, he ignores the happiness of others and instead gives them sorrow. He snatches away individuality of others and even dishonours them. A very strong desire for pleasures destroys wisdom of a person.

Similar is the state in regard to thirst, craving for authority. The entire effort of the intellect is for belittling others. This is its misuse. Such a person is devoid of his power of discrimination between right and wrong. Under the influence of his passions, he also forgets his own interest.

All this we see in our day-to-day life. All this is a play of the deceptive passion.

This results in delusion of a person. *vimoh* i.e. intense delusion. Delusion is that state, in which a person becomes unconscious, loses awareness of his own self as well as of his situation. He is helpless in this state. Despite being conscious, he is unconscious. He does not know the path he is to traverse. He deviates from his own self (*atmanbhav*). He perforce identifies him with his mind, intellect, etc. and considers their desires and enjoyments as of his own. In the same way, he feels happy or unhappy. Passion is in the root of this super imposition or false identification. It casts such a veil that one starts identifying himself with it.

Because of that identification and under powerful influences of external forces one quickly becomes conscious. This is the usefulness of passions or desires in the process of evolution. A passionate person becomes active, acquires knowledge of different aspects of life and through his dealings with outside world becomes more capable for experiencing happiness and unhappiness. However, when these experiences are no longer useful for evolution, passions come to an end and withdrawal starts. Influences of passions wane only gradually. The feeling of being a witness becomes innate. Standing at a distance one sees the play of these instruments of perception. Then the delusion gradually starts subsiding. Influences of passions end. The mind, intellect and sense organs also come under the influence of the Divine consciousness. When the Divine consciousness descends in these, then these become entirely free from influences of desire or passion. Then the individual is entirely free from any possibility of delusion. He becomes fearless. This is real victory over passions. Then self-governance establishes.

After describing the nature of passion, Shri *Bhagwan* now directs and tells Arjuna as to what he should do.

*tasmat tvam indriyany adau niyamyā bhāratarsabha |
papmanam prajāhi hy enam jnājavijnānanāsanam ||41||*

"Therefore, O' Arjuna, by controlling your sense organs in the beginning kill this evil, destroyer of knowledge of Self (*gyan*) and knowledge of the matter or *prakriti* (*Vigyan*)". (41)

'Kill this evil' means kill this evil in the form of passion, finish it. Do it in such a way that it does not deceive you again. Only by killing this enemy, you can have peace.

What does this enemy do? It destroys both *gyan* and *vigyan*. *Gyan* – *atmagyan* - awareness of Self (*gyan*). We are *atman*. *Atman* is eternal, immortal, and indestructible. It is a part (*ansha*) of the Supreme Existence. This awareness of the Self or *atman* is known as *gyan*. In fact in the Gita the term '*gyan*' has been used for the knowledge of the Supreme Existence and for the awareness of the supreme consciousness. '*Vigyan*' means knowledge relating to matter i.e. *prakriti*. The term '*vigyan*' includes knowledge of the origin, the sustenance and the final dissolution of the universe. '*Vigyan*' or science deals with those aspects, which are measurable, which specifically relate to time and space and other measurables. In other words, whatever relates to the realm of multiplicity comes under the term '*vigyan*' or science. Whatever relates to the Self (*atman*) and the Lord Supreme (*Paramatman*) comes under the term *gyan*.

Passion destroys both. When the storm of passions rages, one loses his self-awareness and of others too. Neither does he remember *parameshwara* nor his head bows before Him. Not even remembers commands of *parameshwara*. There is no realisation of the situation or of the helplessness of others. One fails to understand the working of nature. Makes wrong assumptions and does wrong actions and reactions. There is lack of equanimity and of composure in him.

It has already been mentioned that both passion and anger are in the nature of sin.

What preparation be made to kill this enemy? The first requirement is to keep the sense organs under control. This means that the sense organs, which normally are subject to passions, are brought under one's control. One has to establish his control replacing the control of passions. Before these passions are finally killed they will have to be driven out of sense organs, which have been their abode. Before killing an enemy, it is necessary that he is driven out of his hiding place. Shri *Bhagwan* says that this work has to be done. 'Drive it out from the fortress of sense organs'.

Sense organs are gross instruments and are basis of passions. Do not permit sense organs to run after desires for indulgence. Recognising impulses of arising passions neutralize them and do not follow them. By doing so, they will become weak. One day they will leave their domain, the sense organs. Strength of discrimination and resolve can alone be helpful in achieving this objective.

Should the mind be controlled first or the sense organs? As compared to the control of mind, control of sense organs is easier. Activities of sense organs can be stopped. One may not take food. Things to which sense organs are tempted, be denied to them. This control is easy. Mind will of course continue to think about these things. It is difficult to stop that thinking. Therefore, a beginning be made from an easier task. How can the one, who cannot control his sense organs, control his mind?

That is why it is said, 'start by restraining sense organs in the beginning'. This is a practical approach. One gets ability of restraining the subtle only by first restraining the gross. Besides, new tendencies do not form once gross is restrained. If we continue to strengthen our tendencies by holding on to enjoyments then how will we be able to have any control over sense organs? And, one day we will become their slaves. Then it will become impossible for us to have any control.

*indriyani parany ahur indriyebhyah param manah /
manasas tu para buddhi yo buddheh parata tu sah ||42||
evam buddheh param buddhva samstabhya 'tmanam atmana /
jahi satrum mahabaho kamarupam durasadam ||43||*

"Sense organs are said to be powerful. Mind is stronger than they. The intellect is stronger than the mind. (But) *atman* is stronger than the intellect". (42)

"Thus, knowing (*atman*) as stronger than intellect, steady the Self, O' Valiant one, kill the enemy in the form of passion, so difficult to conquer". (43)

Shri Krishna has asked to control sense organs first. Why? Because they are powerful. They under the influence of passions take a person to a wrong path. Therefore, without having control over sense organs it is impossible to destroy passions. This is clear by now.

Mind is beyond sense organs and is stronger. It can surely control sense organs. In the 67th verse of the second chapter, Shri *Bhagwan* said so.

Of the various sense organs indulging in gratifications the one with which mind is associated and follows that sense organ kidnaps wisdom of a person. Therefore, mind has the ability to control sense organs. The sense organ whose objects are enjoyed becomes strong and craves for more. That organ does not remain within the control of the person. If, however, during enjoyment of the object, the mind is not associated with the object of enjoyment then the hold of that object weakens. For instance even while enjoying a delicious meal, if the mind is engaged in thinking about something else, then one does not know the taste of the meal and one will not eat more than what he requires. It is only through mind that passions awaken in us and can make sense organs dance to its tunes.

Wisdom is stronger than mind. It is through wisdom that one differentiates. Developed wisdom serves as a reign to the mind. It has the ability to divert the mind. If it is understood that pondering over a particular object is futile or worrisome than the mind can be diverted. Wisdom has this ability and so it is said that wisdom is stronger than the mind.

Sometimes it is seen that despite efforts mind continues to follow its own path. When there is fear or worry then despite efforts mind cannot be concentrated on any work. Then, which is stronger - wisdom or mind? In fact, wisdom has the ability to give a direction to the mind. However, this capability is not yet developed. In the process of evolution, this capability develops in due course. There should be no doubt about this capability of wisdom even if at times it is defeated. Strong mental attachments can be one reason for wisdom not able to control the

mind. The main purpose of wisdom is to exercise control over the activities of mind. Therefore, it has to exercise this control because wisdom is stronger than mind.

There is a beautiful metaphor in *Kathopnishada*.

**atmannam tu rathinam viddhi shariram rathmeva tu |
indriyani hayanahurvishyamsteshu gocharan ||
buddhim tu sarthim vidhi manah pragrahमेव च ||
Katho. 1/3/34**

"Consider *atman* as a traveller, and body as a chariot. Sense organs are horses and objects are paths on which they move. Know wisdom as a chariot and mind the reins." Wisdom is the chariot of this chariot in the form body. The chariot can take the body wherever he wants to take it. However, if the chariot is weak or goes to sleep then the horses will do, what they want to do. There is no doubt about this. As long as the reign of mind is in the hands of its chariot, wisdom, horses will remain under control.

In this way, after describing the relative importance of all of these, Shri *Bhagwan* says about passion, '*yo buddhehpartastu sah*' -- that which is beyond wisdom is passion. There seems to be no doubt that the word '*sah*' has been used for passion, for desire. In the present context, passion is being discussed as enemy. The object is to kill it. That is why its strength is being assessed. The next verse also proves this -- 'knowing thus beyond wisdom. Who is to be 'known'? The one, who is to be killed. The *atman* of course is beyond wisdom. There was, therefore, no need to describe *atman* at this place in this manner.

Abode of passion is the mind, intellect and senses. This was mentioned in verse 40, *supra*. The passion is master. Passion (desire) being stronger casts a veil of delusion over them. This has been stated here more clearly. Passion is even stronger than wisdom. Therefore, it cannot be destroyed by wisdom. It can overpower or defeat wisdom.

When can wisdom be stable? When passions are subdued. Wisdom cannot become stable by subduing passions alone. The Self (*atmansatta*), which is beyond wisdom, can subdue passions and then wisdom can become stable.

Many people have interpreted the word '*sah*' for '*atman*'. However, this interpretation does not fit in the present context. By using this interpretation, the entire verse seems to become purposeless.

The next verse (43rd) gives the technique for killing passion. A position to attack the enemy has to be taken after fully assessing his strength. One should strike only after fortifying one's own position. Then only success is possible. One should start this war only after strengthening his position – strong enough to bear the brunt of enemy's attack. Therefore, it is said, '*samstabhya 'tmanam atmana*' -- 'steadying the Self by the Self'.

Atmasatta is verily our own true existence. The *atman* has to fight this battle on its own strength. There is nothing in *prakriti* which can be considered trustworthy for the Self. Therefore, by taking recourse to any support from *prakriti*, one is likely to get deceived. The mind, the

intellect and the sense organs – each one of them can come under the influence of passions. Therefore, fight with their support is a losing battle. One has to support his own Self. However, how can one support himself? With self-confidence, we can encourage ourselves. This encouragement is a great support. 'We have great strength. In fact, the mind, the intellect and the sense organs are for us and we should have control over them. Our passions are like a dacoit. But our own authority (*atmasatta*) is infinitely stronger than passions; it is a part of Divinity. Passions, on the contrary, are a lower activity of *prakriti* and so can be easily defeated. It is with this thought process one can have strength and confidence in himself'.

The word '*samstabhya*' means to hold firmly. Evidently, the result of challenging passions in this way will result in strong reaction. The enemy is bound to react with full strength. One will have to be well prepared in advance. The enemy will try to exercise his right over the mind, the intellect and the sense organs. Therefore, our planning for defense to meet the challenge should be strong in every respect. Only after achieving success in this big battle, can a person enter the realm of spirituality. Any weakness will have serious consequences.

Here a warning is given about the enemy. '*kamrupamdurasadam*' i.e. the enemy is of deceptive nature and can come in many guises. It will make attempt to deceive you taking different forms. It can come in the form of ego. In the story of delusion of Narad (*Narad-moh*) in '*Balkand*' of Tulsi Ramayana, passion i.e. desire itself assumes the form of ego. Therefore, one should always be fully alert.

That enemy is '*durasadam*' i.e. very difficult to defeat. It has defeated great warriors. Do not be fooled. It will give heavy blows that will have to be endured. Then only victory will be possible.

There is a way for killing it and that is: '*samstabhya tmanam atmana*' to firmly hold oneself by one's own Self. When does this happen? This happens when the person has confidence in himself or when he is *atmanishtha*. The moment one loses his confidence the enemy starts spreading his net. For the one who has full confidence in himself (*atmanbhav*) passion, desire, is dead.

The method is of self-control (*atman-sanyam*). By this method, an effort has to be made for killing desires, passions. In this method there is no dependence on *Parameshwara*. There is instead an effort through self-confidence (*atmanishtha*). The other path is that of 'surrender' i.e. of worship of *parameshwara*. The one, who takes refuge in *Parameshwara*, becomes entirely His. He unites with *Parameshwara*. The flow of His grace colours him in Divine hue. He attains the Divine consciousness. He and his mind, intellect begin dwelling in the Divine. His sense organs also start dwelling in the Divine. Then there remains no room for desires or passions. Such is the way in which *parameshwara* comes to stay in the life of a devotee. The devotee becomes fearless forever. There is no need to steady his own self, or to wage a war with his desires or passions. God fights the battles for him and He is always victorious. Therefore, a devotee can live without vanity. Taking refuge in *Parameshwara* is also a form of yoga. It is the spiritual path, wherein one has to surrender every thing to *Parameshwara*.

In this way, in reply to the question of Arjuna, Shri *Bhagwan* told him the way to escape evil. Until now Arjuna was not even recognising Shri *Bhagwan*. Shri *Bhagwan* had only mentioned in a subdued tone about the renunciation of *karmas* (verse 30). The nature of surrender and the ways of taking refuge in the *Parameshwarawe* will discuss later.

The third chapter ends here. Basic principles and means for practicing *karmayoga*, have been discussed. In the next chapter, an effort will be to raise the level of this discussion.

|| SHRI RAM ||

CHAPTER 4

In the third chapter, discussion was about surrendering of *karmas* to *parameshwara*. Verses 30, 31 and 32 of that chapter deal with that subject. Shri *Bhagwan* had directed Arjuna: 'you fight by surrendering (your) *karmas* to Me'. In the present chapter, this subject is being discussed in greater detail. The title of this chapter is '*karma-brahmarpan-yoga*' i.e. 'the yoga of surrendering *karmas* in Brahman'. In this chapter, we will find answers to questions: how can we offer our *karmas* to *parameshwara*; what kind of the faith is required for that purpose and what is the result of surrendering of *karmas* to *parameshwara*? Discussion of these topics is necessary (for proper understanding). This we will discuss in this chapter ---

Primary verse of this chapter is -

***brahma 'rpanam brahma havir brahmagnau brahamana hutam |
brahmai 'va tena gantavyam brahmakarmasamadhina ||4/24||***

This verse reveals in essence the secret of surrendering of *karmas* to *parameshwara*. This also tells about perfection of this yoga.

First of all, it is necessary to understand that as to whom the *karmas* are to be surrendered. Who is that Brahman who can accept our offerings? How can we reach Him?

The '*purusha*' of the followers of the doctrine of Samkhya is '*sakshi chetah kevalo nirgunashcah*' – 'consciousness is witness, which is indeterminate (*nirguna*) and is identified with divinity (*kaivalya*)'. There is not much difference between the principles of Samkhya and Vedanta. It appears that the old name of Vedanta was Samkhya. The philosophy of Shankara unnecessarily creates differences with the doctrine now called Samkhya.

Samkhya enumerates elements. There are 24 elements -- *prakriti*, supreme *mahat*, etc. and 25th is *purusha*. *Prakriti* is mutable. The *purusha* is immutable, is consciousness, is pure and is non-doer. It is not only immutable, it is also not enjoyer. He is immense.

The indeterminate (*nirguna*-Brahman) of *Advaita-Vedanta* is also non-doer, non-enjoyer and eternally pure consciousness. He is also beyond qualifications. That cannot be qualified or defined.

Advaita-Vedanta calls *prakriti* unreal. According to the doctrine of Shankara, that is *mithya* i.e. false. That *Advaita* is based on the concept of its falsehood. That is the only difference between the two. '*Brahman satyam jagatmithya*' i.e. 'Brahman alone is real and the world is false'. *Prakriti*, the basic cause of the world, is also false and illusory. From philosophical point of view by calling *prakriti* as *mithya* i.e. false, it becomes indescribable and *purusha* becomes the Ultimate. Loosing its masculinity *Purusha* also becomes indescribable. There remains no possibility of multiple existences. How then could there be a duality between '*jeeva*' and Brahman. So just by giving a slight twist Samkhya acquires the form of *advaita* doctrine and creates indescribable *maya* (illusion).

That which is the Brahman, is the indescribable, can neither hear nor speak, nor could one imagine any dynamic energy in Him, and nor could He be conceived to have any power to bless anyone. Neither His worship nor devotion is possible. We cannot even say that He exists. Will that the indeterminate (*nirguna*), the unmanifested (12th chapter), having no attributes, accept our prayers and accept our offerings of *karmas*? What relationship He has with this dynamic world, with the *karmas* and with the doer of *karmas*? He is indeterminate. He is beyond all bindings and limitations. He cannot be our deity of worship. He cannot accept offerings of our *karmas*.

Then what is that power, which accepts offerings of our *karmas*? Who is that which accepts flowers of our worship and makes us happy with His blessings? That Supreme Reality descends amongst human beings becoming a human. That manifest (*saguna*) form, being playful, becomes the deity of our worship. He becomes our near and dear one and our companion throughout births after birth. He becomes our beloved deity and goal. We can love Him and He will also love us. With whatever relationship we accept Him He is ready to accept us with that very relationship. He is the manifest (*saguna*) Brahman and He will accept offerings of our *karmas*. It is necessary to understand this secret.

The believers of *advaita*, calling the world as illusory, say with great authority that your *saguna* is *mithya* i.e. false. He is '*mayavishishtha Brahman*' (an illusory Brahman). *Maya* is of course *mithya*. That is false. Wherever duality is there that is false. This discussion about *parameshwara*, the surrendering of *karmas*, worship and devotion - everything is *mithya* or false. According to them these are notions of ignorants. They just have one belief: '*ahm brahman asmi*' - 'I am Brahman'; that belief alone salvages us.

When a devotee of *saguna* Brahman faces this thought his heart is rocked, his mind is hurt, and the earth under his feet starts slipping and he wonders whether every thing perceived is false (*mithya*)? Is his faith in a deity a flight of imagination? Oh!

Everyone looks at things from his own perspective. Scenery is according to the position from where it is seen. Our perspective becomes the limit of our thinking. Our thoughts, our views, have limits. The real existence is beyond intellect. Intellect can at best know a fraction of that Supreme Existence. It is rather dangerous that scholars forgetting limits of their intellect, project partial truth as whole truth. All doctrines give description of only a fraction of Truth. And by forgetting this fact we try to prove others as wrong and try to prove ourselves correct.

The *maya-advaita* doctrine calls unchangeable as Truth. According to their definition changeable is unreal and false. Just that is their viewpoint. That is the limit of their doctrine.

We will try to keep in mind the viewpoint of the Gita. The Lord *Purushottama* is the deity of the Gita. His worship alone is being discussed. The *karmas* are to be surrendered to Him. We have to take refuge only in Him. He alone deserves our love and devotion.

Who is that *Purushottama*? Chapter 15th tells us that He is beyond both mutable Brahman and immutable Brahman. According to the Gita He alone is the subject expounded by the Vedas. He alone is knowable (*gyeya*) and He alone is knower of the field (*khetrasya*). (Verse 2 of chapter

13) He is all pervasive and He is Vasudeva. He alone has attributes (*saguna*). He alone is without attributes (*nirguna*). He alone is the enjoyer of *gunas*. (Verse 14 of chapter 13)

Shri *Bhagwan*, the exponent of the Gita, is the *Purushottama*. Nothing is beyond Him. He is worshipable deity of devotees (verse 7 of chapter 7). He is also beyond the play of attributes, *gunas*. (Verse 12 of chapter 7)

The Supreme Reality has two *prakritis*: 'para' and 'apara'. 'Para' is the abstract consciousness (*jeeva*) and 'apara' according to the commonly used definition of Samkhya is *prakriti*. (7/5)

According to the Gita, the Supreme Reality is without attributes (*nirguna*) and at the same time has attributes (*saguna*). *Nirguna* is not different from *saguna*. There is no indication that *saguna* is unreal.

That is why Shri *Bhagwan* has said that even the worshipers of indeterminate (*nirguna*) attain Me. (Verse 12 of chapter 4) If determinate (*saguna*) is false then what does the worshipers of determinate (*saguna*) attain?

Then it can be said that the Gita does not support the philosophy of *maya-advaita*. As we refer to Upanishads in support of our doctrine so also we refer to the Gita. In fact the Gita is not a scripture written in support of any doctrine but it is a simple direct statement of higher consciousness. Therefore, whosoever tries to judge the Gita by limited intellect is exposed. His hollowness is revealed.

The Gita proceeds on the basis of wisdom (*gyan*) beyond intellect. How then could *parameshwar* be confined within the boundaries of intellect. It should not be surprising if the boundaries of intellect are shattered.

When we look at this question from the point of view of spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) of the Gita then it becomes clear that the doctrine of *maya* of *advaita-Vedanta* has no place in it. An aspirant (*sadhak*) cannot do his spiritual practice (*sadhana*) of *karmas* in a vacuum; in lonely forest where there is no one to talk, to serve or to love. The success of *sadhana* in isolation would amount to rejection of physical *karmas*. Indolence is the ideal of such a spiritual discipline (*sadhana*). But the Gita preaches that *karma* as a means of *sadhana*. For Arjuna, battlefield was the field of his *sadhana*. Nowhere has it been said that for *siddhi* (a state of spiritual perfection) total abandonment of *karmas* is necessary. On the contrary, it has been said in verse 56 of chapter 18 -

***sarvakarmany api sada kurvano madvyapasrayah /
matprasada avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam //***

"Even while always doing all works, having taken refuge in Me, he attains by My grace the eternal, imperishable state".

The yoga of the Gita is attained by taking refuge in Divinity. By that alone, listner gets peace.Only by taking refuge in Divinity Arjuna found his way.We saythat *purushottama* of the Gita is *maya-vishishtha-Brahman*. This is the irony of wisdom.

Wisdom cannot decisive in these matters. Our forceful arguments can confuseus as well as others.We can abuse our wisdom and misguide ourselves.

We can only say that '*maya-advaita*' is at best a point of view and isvalid in its own way. We have to accept what the Gita teaches us. We consider it as an unwarranted effort to prove or disprove a doctrine just based on arguments. If we properly apply our mind, we canunderstand aviewpoint, as we could understand another view point.

I consideredit necessary to write this much before starting this chapter. For without clearing this basic confusion any discussion on this subject could be redundant. We will discuss the basis of our experiencesat appropriateplace.

shri bhagwan uvaca
imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam /
vivasvan manave praha manur iksvakave 'bravit //1||
evam paramparapraptam imam rajarsayo viduh /
sa kalene 'ha mahata yogo nastah paramtapa //2||

Shri *Bhagwan*said -

“O Arjuna! I told this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan. Vivasvan told it to Manu; and Manu told it to Ikshvaku”. (1)

“Royal sages knew this (yoga) through this tradition. With the passage of time this yoga disappeared from the world”. (2)

In the last chapter, karma yoga was described. Now the history of that yoga is mentioned. Who had started this yoga? How had this spread? What is its state today?

Karma yoga is imperishable. What cannot be destroyed, is called‘imperishable’. *Karmayoga* is the foundationof this Creation. It is by taking recourse to this yoga that there is primal instinct for creation.*Purushottama* himself performs sacrifices (*yagya*) and makes offerings. That is the foundation of this Creation. Gods and sub-gods function in the sprit of sacrifice or exchange.Sacrifice or exchange is basic requirement of this yoga. Then only this universe is created and sustains. *Karmayoga* is the basic principle of creation.

Therefore, this yoga cannot perish. Some times people may forget its importance in lifeand it may become unpopular. It is possible that human beings may forget it. . However, it is impossible that this yoga itself can vanish altogether.Shri *Bhagwan*ssays that he had himself preached this yoga to Vivasvan. Manu had to engage in this creation. It was necessary for him to know, how to perform *karmas* and what kind of devotion was required for performing those *karmas*. Therefore,Shri *Bhagwan*preached this yoga to him.

It is mentioned in Puranas that amongst the sons of Brahma jee, Saunaka, etc. (Narada was one amongst them) refused to carry on the process of creation. They had a dislike for the life of a householder. However, Brahma jee had to proceed with the process of procreation. He, therefore, procreated more children so that the process of creation could continue. We have a nice description of this episode in the Srimad Bhagwad Purana.

This means that the tendency of abandoning *karmas* considering it to be a cause of bondage is not of recent origin; it was prevalent even in ancient times. *Karmayoga* is the secret of doing *karmas* by remaining free from bonds.

‘Vivasvan Manu had told this Yoga to his successor Vaivasvat Manu who gave this yoga to king Ikshvaku. Ikshvaku was the first human king. He gave this yoga to his successors. In this manner, the tradition of this yoga continued. It was by that tradition Janaka etc. had learnt this yoga of *karma* from earlier kings. But that is an old legend. King Janaka was born in *tretayuga*. Perhaps no one knew the value of *karmayoga* in the times of the Mahabharata. That was the time of beginning of *kaliyuga* and of the end of *dvaparayuga*. As result of huge gap of time, the tradition of *karma yoga* had disappeared. Perhaps no one knew about this yoga at that point of time.

It appears that during the time of Shri Bhagwan there was no knower of this yoga. In those days, people either performed *yagyas* for fulfillment of their desires or practiced *gyan-yoga*, life of renunciation and hermitage abandoning duties and responsibilities of householders’.

**tyajyam dosavad ity eke karma prahur manisinah |
yajnadanatapah karma na tyajyam iti ca pare ||18/3||**

‘For salvation, *karma* itself is worth abandoning’, this was one theory. However, even the people in favour of abandonment of *karmas* were of the view that the acts of sacrifice (*yagyas*), charity and penances should not be given up.

There were no believers of the *karmayoga*. *Karma yoga* is the middle path and teaches renunciation even while doing *karmas* and it does not consider *karma* as a bond but considers it as means for salvation..

The concept of four-stages of life indicates towards abandonment of *karma* itself. The basic thought behind that belief was that a person could attain salvation by totally abandoning *karmas* after going to forest (*vanaprastha*). The ‘*grahastha*⁶¹’ stage was preparation for that stage. One is ready for renunciation after destroying tendencies through enjoyments and weakening the hold of senses. From this we can understand that in Vedic culture how deeply rooted was the concept of renunciation.

In Mahabharata there are only two examples of Tuladhara and Jajali who practiced *karma yoga* - the rest of the epic is full of tales of renunciation. Asceticism and renunciation of *karmas*, family, relations and pleasures was popular in those times. The ideology of Lord Buddha was also a glorification of that tradition of renunciation.

⁶¹ *grahastha*: the second stage of life when one leads the life of a householder

We do not find that influence in the *Balmiki Ramayana*. In the Mahabharata, the sermon of the Gita appears as a strange thought, like light in darkness, like lightening in the dark clouds of renouncement.

Shri Bhagwan had rightly said that the practice of yoga (*karmayoga*) had disappeared from human society.

*saeva 'yam maya te 'dya yogah proktah puratanah /
bhakto'si me sakha ce 'ti rahsyam hy etad uttamam ||3||*

“And the same ancient yoga I am telling you today because you are My devotee and My friend. This is supreme secret.” (3)

'The *karmayoga* which I am telling you is not something new'. This is an ancient yoga and was followed by royal sages and they had attained perfection (*siddhi*) only through *karmas*.

This is a supreme secret. What is revealed in confidence is a secret. That one, which is valuable should not be revealed before every body. This secret of *karmayoga* is the key for making life worthwhile. Revealing this secret before those who are not willing to listen and are unworthy of knowing it is like throwing pearls before pigs. This secret is beneficial. (See verse 67 of chapter 18) -

‘Why am I telling you this?’

'You are my devotee and you deserve to know this secret. You need it today. Today you have come to me in distress and in search of a solution for your problem. You have taken refuge in me. It is, therefore, proper to tell you the secret'.

Moreover, 'you are my friend and is also dear to me. This secret is also dear to me' *'ishtamishten yojyet'*. A dear one should meet another dear one. It is proper to gift something valuable to a dear one.

'Today I revealing this yoga to you like a gift of precious stone. Keep this with care and translate it in your life'. Perhaps this is the silent message echoing behind the second half of this verse.

Thereupon, Arjuna asked a question-

*arjuna uvaca
aparam bhavato janma param janma vivasvatah /
katham etad vijaniyam tvam adau proktavan iti ||4||*

Arjuna said -

“You were born later, Vivasvan was born much earlier. How am I to believe that you had spoken of it earlier (this yoga to Vivasvan)”. (4)

Arjuna was startled to hear Shri Bhagwan, Oh' what is this? 'I had told this yoga to Vivasvan'. 'Krishna, who is speaking to me is of my age, may be there is a difference of few months. Ages have passed since the time Vivasman had lived. How then could it be that Krishna had preached this yoga to Vivasman'?

So far, Arjuna considered Shri Krishna only as a normal human being and his friend. Amongst people Krishna was a respected person. He was wise, a leader and a learned person. He was also a relation and a close friend of Arjuna. In their childhood, they had played together. Arjuna had taken refuge in him- '*shadhi mam tvam prapannam*' (verse 7 of chapter 2). Arjuna had gone to him considering him a wise person. Arjuna had no other feeling towards Shri Bhagwan. The two places where Shri Bhagwan had revealed his divinity earlier were insignificant (verse 62 of chapter 2, verse 30-32 of chapter 3). It appears that Arjuna had not paid much attention to those earlier revelations. But he could not ignore the present statement, and so he asked this question.

shri bhgwan uvaca
bahuni me vyatitani janmani tava ch 'rjuna /
tanyaham veda sarvani na tvam vettha paramtapa ||5||

Shri Bhagwan said -

“O, Arjuna! You and I have passed through many lives. O’ brave one! I know them all; (but) you do not know”. (5)

What were those births?

ajo 'pi sannavyayatman bhutanam isvaro'pi san /
prakrtim svamadhithaya sambhavamyatmanmayaya ||6||

“Though (I am) unborn and the Lord of all beings, I, the imperishable, by making My own nature (*prakriti*) as a means take birth through My *maya* (by my own volition).” (6)

It is here we know the secret of Shri Bhagwan’s birth. We also come to know what an incarnation is.

Shri Bhagwan answers the question of Arjuna, ‘I did not preach *karmayoga* to Vivasman in this birth. That I did in some past birth. I remember that. Therefore, I am saying that I had preached.’

‘O, Arjuna! You also had many births. Birth and death alone is *samsara* i.e. the world. I also had many births. The only difference between you and me is that you do not know anything about your past births but I know them. I not only know about my past births but I also know about all your births. I know them all. I know all those births – yours as well as mine.’ Apparently, this is the meaning.

He, who is unborn, is eternal, is unchangeable, how could he take birth? An answer to this question was given in the sixth verse. ‘I do take birth.’ There is nothing to doubt about this. Does the Supreme Entity (*purushottama*) take birth? Is that Reality (*Purushottama*) takes births in a human body and manifests like us amongst us? Does He pass through all those stages through which an ordinary man goes through; dwells in the womb of a mother; delivery takes place, passes through infancy and childhood? Yes, he does. He eats, drinks, sleeps, awakes, and stands, sits, like common people. He has normal human emotions and feelings. He lives life as a normal human being.

In appearance he is exactly like a human being, but He is the Supreme Entity (*purushottama*). What is the evidence of his being the Supreme Entity (*Purushottama*)? How can one know that He is not an ordinary person? These days anyone in human body could claim himself as an incarnation of God. Any one can call someone else as God. The *advaita* – doctrine of Vedanta gives liberty to every one to say ‘*aham brahman'smi*’ i.e. I am the Brahman. Then it does not take much time for anyone to call himself as God. Moreover, the God resides in all beings in different forms.

Everything in the universe is His manifestation. The Supreme dwells in every thing, ‘*Vasudevam sarvam iti*’. Food is God, cow is God, dog is God, guest is God. ‘*shrishti sari shyam mayee*’ (God manifests in the entire Creation). Is everyone then an incarnation? Can everyone call himself an incarnation of the God? Whom we call an incarnation? What is special about him?

Every thing is an expression of *parameshwara*. Only that One Reality manifests in different forms and by different names. That has two dispositions – higher (*para*) and lower (*apara*) (*Verses 4-5 of chapter 7*). All three attributes (*gunas*) are from Him and are His expressions. He is the *jeeva* (embodied soul). He is *satoguna, rajoguna, and tamoguna* and all beings in the entire cosmos are their products. That is the only Reality, which is pervading the entire universe. What is there except Him? Who is He?

Only that person can recognize that divine glow, which has realized his ownself (*atmabhav*), the divine consciousness, which is beyond *prakriti*, of the Supreme Reality and has identified himself with the Divine. He can also recognize the presence of that glowing light in everyone else. He can perceive that the Supreme Being (*purushottama*) dwells in every one. When he recognizes Him in every atom, perceives every atom as His manifestation and perceives every gross element as His manifestation then for him everything is filled with Rama i.e. becomes ‘*Rama-mayee*⁶²’. *Prakriti* and all beings are seen as His manifestations. This is the ultimate reality. This becomes an experience of a realised soul.

But, the one who sees Him at every level, does not see anything special but recognises that Supreme Reality in everything. While seeing a person, he recognises the *Purushottam* in him. In the knowledge and energy of a person, he sees the presence of the Divine, the source of all possibilities.

An incarnation is a special manifestation of the Supreme Reality (*Purushottama*). Only a few persons can recognize that special manifestation. An incarnation discloses His divinity to those on whom He showers His blessings. He discloses His Divinity only to those who are worthy of knowing Him. His normal behaviour is like that of an ordinary person. Not everyone can recognize Him. Arjuna was unable to know with certainty that Shri Krishna was an incarnation. Amongst the contemporaries of Shri Krishna, only a few knew that Narayana was living in the form of a human being. Shri Krishna was not an ordinary person. Whosoever recognised his Divinity, he took refuge in Him, Shri Krishna.

⁶² Rama-maia: filled with Rama – the Supreme, the all-pervading reality.

Only those realises the Divinity for whom the Divinity manifests. The Divinity is the supreme energy, knowledge, and bliss. He is also the supreme love. *Parameshwara* is the cause and source of creation, sustenance, destruction, blessing and grace. These properties are revealed to those to whom Shri Bhagwan expresses His Divine-Form by showering His blessings. Despite his worldly appearance, he performs extra ordinary deeds. Were the childhood activities of shri Krishna like that of an ordinary child? In the life of Shri Bhagwan, we find many of his activities, which wereextra ordinary and divine. However, intelligence cannot imagine every thing. What are the limitations of human or inhuman activities? These are different for different persons. That is why intelligence is never able to recognize and is always confused. When Shri Bhagwan blesses, He not only gives His introduction but also gives an understanding to recognize Him.

The intellect has to accept defeat. After showing His Supreme cosmic form, Shri Bhagwan clearly told Arjuna

*bhaktya tvananyaya shakya ahamevamvidho 'rjuna /
jnatum drastum ca tattvena pravestum ca paramtapa ||11/54||*

“O’Arjuna! Only through exclusive devotion in Me I can be known and seen in this form and then one can unite withMe (only by that devotion).”

The grace of Shri Bhagwan is possible only through exclusive devotion. He can only be recognized byexclusive devotion.

In a *siddha* (spiritually realised person), there is abundance of strong vigour. How an ordinary person can know as to what a *siddha* can do or cannot do? What can be the basis for knowing his powers? Therefore, the intellect fails.

Objections of non-believers about the concept of incarnation, which we used to hear in our childhood during religious discourses, appear to us as proof of their ignorance about Divinity. They do not know what incarnation actually means. They do not understandDivinity, the eternity of Shri Bhagwan.

Incarnation is an experienced truth. One does not have to apply his mind for a proof. Of course, by proper reasoning one can understand that Reality to some extent.

When *Purushottama* manifests in this manner, He is called an incarnation because He descends to human level from alevel beyond comprehension of human mind and intelligence. He descends with His Divine-attributes i.e. divine consciousness in a human body. That is why it is said that He has incarnated.

Incarnation in physical world is indicated by the decendence of that internal divine consciousness right up to gross physical level. The perception of suchdecendencesuggests the possibility of an incarnation in the outside world. What is there insidethat is also in outside world. Whatever is in microcosm that is in macrocosm.

Shri Bhagwan says '*sambhavami*' - 'I appear, I am born'. This is a fact. This has to be accepted as proof by the statement of Shri Bhagwan. Even now the practice of worshipping an incarnation is in vogue because of the feelings devotees have for Him, by the evidence of His devotees who had his blessings and if our intelligence assists us in accepting Shri Bhagwan as an incarnation by his deeds. He, Shri Krishna, is the one who delivered the sermon of the Gita. His statement itself is sufficient evidence of His Divinity. Without Divinity, an ordinary person could not have done all that He did in his life time. Every verse of the Gita has his unique imprint.

Now the question remains as to how He is born.

Is it like the birth of an ordinary child? An ordinary person, in due course of time after death, impelled by his past *karmas*, entering the womb of some mother appears in this world acquiring a human body. Requirement of fruits of his past *karmas* causes his re-birth in this world. Bonds of his *karmas* and need for his evolution forcibly bring him back in the mortal world. Shri Bhagwan is always beyond the bonds of *karmas*. Why does He return in this world?

'*sambhavami atmanmayaya*' - 'I takes birth by My own *maya*, volition'. So says Shri Bhagwan.

Maya is the ability of delimiting, which can create many entities from a single entity, having boundaries created by bonds of past deeds. It is because of this *maya* that we are unable to see that Supreme Reality. Our ignorance and our doubts are only because of *maya*. *Maya* conceals the God from our eyes. *Maya* is the one who shows the varied cosmic play hiding the Divinity under cover of her gown. *Maya* is the power of the Divine and is not separate from Him. He Himself is a form of *maya* and is known as *mayarup*. The name of one of His divine powers is *maya*. The magic of that Magician is *maya*.

He is *anant* (infinite) and His powers are infinite (*anant*). This *maya* is due to the intellect, power and activity of the Lord (Paramaishwara) (*Shwetashavtaroprishad* 6,8). This is one expression of *Mahaishawari* (the Supreme Goddess). Shri Bhagwan calls this as *duratyaya* (difficult to get over, indomitable). (Verse 14 of chapter 7)

This means that Shri Bhagwan manifests himself by taking recourse to his playful energy i.e. *maya*. He, who can create so many cosmos, can also manifest Himself. What is so surprising about it? We innocent children try to recognize Him and His infinite capabilities with our limited intelligence. Shri Bhagwan may do something and may not do anything. This is the best evidence of our intellectual vanity. It is also a beautiful example of intellectual licentiousness. And said -

'*prakritimsvam adhishtaya*' - by taking recourse to My own nature (*prakriti*). By making that as a base, He manifests in *prakriti* alone. He manifests through attributes (*gunas*) of *prakriti*. Makes the mind, the intellect and the sense organs as basis and that is body. The body is only a means for His activities.

There is no doubt that lower nature (*apara prakriti*) is used as a basis. But, does He take the assistance of embodied higher nature (*para prakriti*) also? Does He descend in any specific embodied soul and by hiding His identity behind that soul plays His divine role (*leela*) through that? This can be possible. This is not improbable. If occasion demands Shri Bhagwan may

do required playful divine activity by using any person who has completely surrendered himself at His feet. There is nothing illogical about it. The life of Mahaprabhu⁶³ appears to me to be an excellent example supporting this view. Nimai pundit gradually disappeared and Mahaprabhu manifested. The personality which finally developed was entirely different and divine.

But, there are many other possibilities. This is a field of imagination. There is no end to it. We cannot say that it will always happen like this. Shri Bhagwan has many ways as He has no limitation. Yes, this is possible by making *Prakriti as His abode (adhithana)*.

The second part of the verse, ‘do incarnate, am born’, expresses this view.

ajo 'pi san avyayatman bhutanamishuro 'pi san /

'I am eternal; I am immortal and am beyond mutations. Despite being immutable, I take birth. Even while taking birth and doing all activities, I remain immutable'. One can comprehend this attribute only after gaining higher consciousness. 'Despite being unborn, I take birth'. Shri Bhagwan is beyond bonds of birth and death, beyond bonds of *karmas* and beyond any need for development. Even while acquiring a body He remains beyond bonds of *karmas*. The unborn remains unborn. Despite being the Lord of all embodied He takes birth. He is the creator of all embodied. He is the Master of all existents and governs them too. He is Master of everything yet after taking birth in *prakriti* submits entirely to the attributes of nature (*prakriti*). Shri Bhagwan in a human body suffers every duality like hunger-thirst, heat-cold, illness-death, etc. Shri Bhagwan, in the life of an incarnation makes himself a commoner. That Lord of the cosmos limits Himself in a small foetus. That Lord of the three worlds plays in the lap of a mother. That Lord of the entire Creation cries for milk, crawls, swings in cradle and does all other activities that an ordinary infant does. What a surprise! Mother Yashoda, Devaki and Kaushalya were fascinated. Nanda was fascinated. Vasudeva was fascinated. This concept of incarnation and the play of the Lord in an incarnation are so very fascinating and verily a great surprise.

Therefore, Shri Bhagwan himself has mentioned about this difficulty at many places in the Gita (*Verse 24 of chapter 7, Verse 24 of chapter 9*).

Shri Bhagwan mentions the purpose of his incarnation thus –

*yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata /
abhyutthanam adharmasya tada 'tmanam srjamy aham ||7||
paritranaya sadhunam vinasya ca duskrtam /
dharmasamsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge || (8)*

“Whenever there is decline of righteousness (*dharm*) (and) rise of unrighteousness (*adharm*), O’ Arjuna, I myself take birth.” (7)

“For the protection of virtuous people, for the destruction of wicked and for proper establishment of righteousness (*dharm*), I take birth in every era.” (8)

⁶³ Mahaprabhu: Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa

Both these verses say the same thing. What is stated in the seventh verse that becomes clear in the eighth verse.

‘When righteousness (*dharma*) decays’ - *dharma* means that behaviour which makes a man a human being and progresses on the path of his development. Ethical and moral conduct is righteous conduct. Truth, self-reliance, tolerance, compassion, service, sacrifice, honesty – which are divine virtues – are expressions of *dharma*. In the first three verses of chapter 16 divine qualities have been mentioned.

*abhayam satvasamshudhirjanyogavyavasthita /
danam damas ca yajnas ca svadhyas tapa arjavam ||16/1||
ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah santir apaisunam /
daya bhutesv aloluptvam mardavam hrir acapalam ||16/2||
tejah ksama dhrtih saucam akrodho na'timanita /
bhavanti sampadam daivimabhijatasya bharata ||16/3||*

Here it is enough for us to understand the nature of righteousness (*dharma*). When there is decline of these virtues in the behaviour of people in general, it should be understood that righteousness (*dharma*) has declined.

verse – As opposed to this, signs of unrighteousness (*adharma*) are mentioned in the following

*dambho darpo 'abhiimanas ca krodhah parusyam eva ca /
ajnanam ca 'bhijatasya partha sampadam asurim ||16/4||*

When there is rise of arrogance, etc. in individual – behaviour, then understand that unrighteousness (*adharma*) has arisen.

Social order is dependent upon observance of righteousness (*dharma*), moral and ethical behavior by people. Welfare of the world is dependent on observance of righteousness (*dharma*). That is not dependent upon sharpness of intellect. We can deceive ourselves, we can deceive our brothers with our cunningness but we cannot deceive regulatory forces of the Creator. Whatever we do that comes back to us as a ripened fruit – as hails from above or volcanos from earth. Where can a person hide himself? He will not find shelter anywhere. He cannot escape from the consequences of his misdeeds.

The world is the field for development. Usefulness of this field is just that those who come here move ahead by acquiring necessary experiences. If vile behaviour dominates the world then there is imbalance because of disturbance in social order. For whose education and for whose use this order created ceases to be useful for them. Therefore, this requires correction.

Why does Shri Bhagwan allow this to happen? Someone may ask. Shri Bhagwan has given freedom of action to all human beings because such freedom is necessary for their progress. Freedom of action means freedom of action for doing both virtuous as well as evil acts. Depending upon the state of evolution, lower or higher tendencies become strong and gradually overpower other tendencies. Till the middle of *Kaliyuga*, lower tendencies gradually strengthen because consciousness operates at physical level. Man continues to move downwards and from the middle of *Kaliyuga* consciousness starts moving upwards. A gradual ascent starts. A real

abstinence starts. Higher tendencies when strengthened over power lower tendencies. Such is the law of evolution. This needs to be taken care repeatedly in era after era.

In every era people of identical states of evolution requiring similar kind of experiences do not live. Experiences required by virtuous people for their evolution are different than those required by evil people. Therefore, to make the world useful and harmonious Divine intervention is required.

Now He explains in detail the earlier statement: ‘as a result of the rise of unrighteousness (*adharmā*), virtuous people suffer. People of evil disposition becoming stronger make life of good people miserable. I take birth to protect virtuous people and to punish the evil ones.’ We should not forget that punishment to evil doers is according to their *karmas*. Some evil persons deserve punishment from Shri Bhagwan appearing as an incarnation.

Objective of an incarnation is to establish righteousness (*dharma*), progress of goodness and the protection of virtuous people. It looks as if the incarnation takes control of the vehicle going downhill so that by further fall it is not completely smashed. For some time downhill fall is checked but due to the demands of the cyclic of eras it starts sliding again. Shri Bhagwan appears again as an incarnation to restore the balance..

“*yuge – yuge*” - era after era. This does not mean that Shri Bhagwan takes birth in every era or takes birth only once in an era. He manifests from time-to-time as and when required.

We can see another great objective of incarnation in the process of evolution of species. When we look at the sequence of various incarnations, *matsya*, *kachchapa*, *varah*, *narasimha* etc. it appears that Shri Bhagwan himself started new chapters in the sequence of creation. The process of evolution of the species was exactly in sequence of those incarnations. First came the water-borne creatures like fish, etc., and then came the creatures living both in water as well as on earth. Thereafter, life started growing on earth independently of water, and animals like *varah*, etc. appeared. *Narasimha* was a composite form of half man and half beast. The description of incarnations in the chapters of the *Shrimadbhagwad* also confirms this view.

It needs to be understood that Shri Bhagwan does not incarnate only in human form as He incarnates in lower forms of life as well. There is no question of *dharma – adharmā* in these incarnations. It appears that incarnations in forms other than human beings take place for induction of new forms of life in new spheres. This is another concept which needs to be understood.

However, here the discussion is about incarnations in human form. Incarnation in human form is for restoration of righteousness (*dharma*). It is felt that an incarnation not only restores righteousness (*dharma*) but also gives a push to developing human consciousness. The entire world glows in the light of that Supreme Consciousness. The sequence of changing eras seems to stop transformation during His divine existence. It is said that so long as Shri Krishna, the Lord, was alive *Kaliyuga* could not spread its influence and this is not in the least surprising.

An incarnation of Shri Bhagwan is an expression of His compassion. Impelled by compassion He accepts limitations of human life and descends on earth to protect virtuous people and to take the process of evolution forward. At this place He only wanted to tell Arjuna that His purpose of incarnation was just to protect virtuous people and to destroy the evil ones. He was present in the battlefield only for that purpose. Arjuna also had to take refuge in Him in that spirit. Perhaps everything else was only incidental.

It is mentioned above that the reality of incarnation can only be experienced. Though an incarnation takes place at a particular time in history, it also becomes eternal or perennial truth. Though He disappears from the physical world yet the manifest personality of the incarnation continues to exist in a subtle form. Incarnation becomes a deity. He and His everyday activities can be perceived. The activities, which he performed in the gross, remain imprinted in the subtle like a film, which anybody could see whenever he wants to see. Moreover, that personality which becomes deity remains active and performs his activities in subtlety. Such is the experience of the devotees following the path of worshiping incarnations. Vrindavan, even today, is a place of daily activities of the Lord, Shri Krishna.

Today, these things are not mere figments of imagination but appear to be substantial truth and are understandable.

Shri Tulsī Ramayam discusses the concept of incarnation in detail. It is appropriate to reproduce lines from Shri Tulsī Ramayan dealing with incarnation, along with 'yuge – yuge'. In Uttarkand, Kak-Bhusandi says:

*jab jab ram manuj tan dharhin | bhakt hetu lila bahu karhin ||
tab tab avadhpuri mein jaun | balcharit viloki harshaun ||
janm mahotsav dekhaun jae | Varsh panch tenh rahun lobhai ||
ishta dev mama balak rama | sobha vapush koti sat kama ||*

(Whenever Rama, the Lord, takes human form and he does his activities for the sake of his devotees I go to Avadhpuri to see the celebrations of his birth and to enjoy those celebrations for five years. My deity of worship is baby Rama who is more beautiful than thousands of gods of beauty. – Free translation)

In addition, to describe his confusion, he further says –

**andkos prati prati nij rupa | dekhaun jinas anek anupa ||
awadhpuri pati buvan nyari | sarju bhinna bhinna nar nari ||
dasrath kausalya sunu tata | vividha rupa bhartadik bhrata ||
prati brahmand ram avtara | dekhaun bal vinod apara ||
bhinna bhinna mein dekha sabu, ati vichitra hari jan |
agnit bhuvan phiraiu, prabhu rama na dekhaun aan ||**

(Different universes have different forms and I see a variety of each one of these therein. There is a specific palace in Avadhpuri near river Sarju where variety of men and women live. Dasrath and Kaushilya are parents. Bharat, etc. are brothers. Whenever Rama incarnates in any universe, I go and enjoy his activities childhood. - Free translation)

We cannot give much importance to the confusion of Kak-Bhusandi as described in Tulsi Ramayan. That was the *maya* (illusion) of *Pabhu*. Intellect has no access there. The first reference does say that Rama incarnates again and again. He takes birth only in Avadh-puri and only as Shri Rama. The personal deity of Kak-Bhusandi jee is Shri Rama. Perhaps this only conveys that the cycle of eras is a play repeated again and again in which incarnation has a part. In that play other characters change but the character of incarnation is permanent. Same activities are repeated with some variation and Kak-Bhusandi sees them.

Moreover, said, '*ramacharit satkoti apara*'.

What happens after the birth of an incarnation, that is stated in the next verse.

*janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvatah /
tyaktva deham punarjanma nai'ti mameti so'rjuna* ||9||

“O’Arjuna! He who knows thus the essence of My divine births and *karmas*, in its true nature, he is not born again after leaving this body, (but) he attains to Me”. (9)

‘He attains to Me’. Does he go to any special world? Does he start living in a place where divine Leela takes place every day? It is believed that worshipers of Lord Krishna go to ‘*Golok*’ and worshipers of Shri Rama go to ‘*Saket*’. In chapter 12, Shri *Bhagwan* has mentioned about those who worship the unmanifest saying: ‘they attain to Me only’. About His abode, Shri *Bhagwan* says -

yam prapya na nivertante taddham paramam mam ||8/21||

‘Never returns (to this mortal world) after reaching My ultimate abode.’

Golok and *Saket* are eternal abodes. In that abode, *parameshwara* is ever present in his *sagunaroop* (manifested form) and dwells with His devotees. Moreover, Shri *Bhagwan* speaks of their entry in His abode and in Him.

nivasisyasi mayayeva ata urdhvam na saamshayah ||12/8||
gyatum drashtum cha tattvena praveshtum cha paramtap ||11/54||

This abode is eternal and imperishable. (18/ 56, 62)

After seeing all this, we can say that attainment of Shri *Bhagwan* is not always attainment of the same state. The state we attain is according to our belief or faith. Those who ask for an entry in Shri *Bhagwan* get an entry and those who ask for merger merge in Him. Those who pray to live with Him with body gain that state. Besides, there are many ways in which Shri *Bhagwan* can gratify His devotees and they are beyond one's comprehension and even to think of them is not desirable. The attainment of Shri *Bhagwan* is to have complete purification of the inner-self, to have complete removal of impurities forever, and to establish in higher consciousness i.e. to go beyond the limits of evolution on earth. Thereafter, there is no question of returning to earth. Moreover, for reaching that state absence of ego is essential. In that state, bonds of *karmas* do not exist.

It is futile to think what is higher or what is lower. Higher state and lower state are only external variations. Despite being same state inside, there are variations outside. That state cannot be measured on the scale of the limited intellect. Our present state is determined by our thoughts and by the form of our worship. Attainment of Shri *Bhagwan* is only attainment of Divinity -- just that and nothing else. There is nothing higher or lower in that.

There are many ways to attain Him. For the attainment of Shri *Bhagwan*, incarnation also opens a way. That way is being described here.

“Whoever knows the divine birth of Shri *Bhagwan*, in its true essence, he alone attains Him”.

In the present context ‘*ajo pi san__etc*’. (verses 5 – 7) means ‘In this manner’

His birth was not worldly but was divine and deeds of Shri *Bhagwan* were also divine. His deeds were not like of an ordinary person.

He, who knows this secret in its true nature, is liberated from the bonds of birth. What is this ‘knowing’ of His true nature? Only this question remains for consideration.

Hearing and understanding appears intellectual awareness. That awareness develops trust, develops sentiments, awakens faith and takes a form of devotion. Then one gets the grace of Shri *Bhagwan*. That gives us experiences and awareness. Then the knowledge does not remain merely intellectual but becomes an experience. That has the stamp of authenticity. Then misplaced arguments of the entire world cannot shake a person's faith. Shri *Bhagwan* is recognised by entering into Him. He has to be experienced through an awakening of Him within. Life and actions of an incarnation do not remain limited to merely hearing and thinking about Him. They become perceptible feelings and He is known by those feelings

Shri *Bhagwan* was not telling Arjuna about his present birth but was making a general statement..

In this manner incarnations open a path for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Listening, contemplating and singing songs of His divine life and His activities become a *sadhana* for the realisation of His true divinity. It becomes a path for his devotion. By singing songs of the activities of Shri *Bhagwan*, by reciting His names and his character, many people attain Him after leaving the body. (Refer verses 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the tenth chapter.)

Now gives proof of the efficacy of this path –

*vitaraḡabhayaḡrodha manmaya mam upasritha /
bahavo jnanatapasa puta madbhavamagatah ||10||*

“Delivered from passions, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by austerity of wisdom, many have attained to My state of being.” (10)

“madbhavamagatah” - ‘have attained to My state of being, or have attained the Divine state, have become one with Me, have been absorbed in Me, have become like Me, have attained the state of an incarnation of Shri *Bhagwan*’. This is the attainment of Divinity, which was discussed above.

Who? **‘bahavo jnantapasa putah’**- Many people purified by wisdom(*gyan*). What wisdom (*gyan*)? Answer is in the last verse. It is conceptual knowledge of Shri *Bhagwan*’s divine birth and his activities. This wisdom (*gyan*) is referred here. This verse describes the effect of this wisdom (*gyan*).

This is the wisdom gained through austerities. A person matures and becomes pure through austerities. Gold purifies by heating, which burns its dross. A person gets rid of inner toxins by the heat of fever. Austerity purifies. Impurities are burnt. Knowledge of God’s divine birth and his activities also do that. That is why activities of the God are holy. Man purifies by repeated discussion about them.

What we think we become. Whomsoever we think with love, his consciousness starts dwelling in us. We are coloured in his hue. This is subtle result of a good company. By praising attributes of devotees of Shri *Bhagwan*, a person purifies and starts filling up with devotion. Singing about the attributes of Shri *Bhagwan* and of His activities is of course a form of His worship. *Yogadarshan* says, **‘vitaraga –vishayam va chittam’** devotion with detachment is a means for attaining *samadhi*. If by thinking with detachment one’s agitations and other impurities are removed then why will they not be removed by meditating on the life and activities of Shri *Bhagwan*? In addition, the secret of His life and activities cannot be known only by intelligence or wisdom. His life and activities have to be sung, have to be meditated upon, feelings and devotion towards Shri *Bhagwan* have to be developed then only His Grace descends. Only then, one is able to know -

“soi janai jehi deu janai” --- Manas

“yamevaish vrinute ten labhya” - Upanishad

“Only he can know Him whom He accepts.”

Therefore, this wisdom (*gyan*) is pure and purifies and unites a devotee with Divinity. What happens in a devotee before this unity? What should be the state before awareness?

‘mam upashritah’ - ‘by becoming dependent on Me’. ‘By being near to Me people become dependent on Me’. More we meditate upon the life and activities of Shri *Bhagwan* more dependent on Him we become. He alone becomes our support and basis of our life. He is perceived as our own, our supreme well-wisher and our most precious companion.

Therefore, the devotee gradually starts leaving everything on Him and becomes dependent on Him.

‘manmaya’- like Me – those in whom nothing except Divinity is left; those, who have become totally empty; those in whom only Divinity dwells. They are so absorbed in His nature that

they cannot think of any thing else. What to say of passions, of attachments, etc. even their ego vanishes.

Those who have become like this i.e. fully absorbed in His nature, become '*vitaraḡabhayaḡrodhaḡ*' i.e. free from attachments, fear and anger, and attain Him. They are so much filled with Divinity within that no place is left for any attachment. After His protection and having Him as an eternal companion how can one have fear? Every thing happens according to His wishes and one starts dancing to His tunes '*Hukum andar sab koi*'. Even anger disappears. Wherever vision goes, only Divinity is seen. On whom one can be angry? He mellows so much that harsh feelings, like anger, do not arise in him. When the ego vanishes, then who can be hurt and who will be hit? When the snake (of ego) is dead then who will bite. There is no possibility of anger left in him.

Such becomes the state of the follower of the path of worship and devotion. He attains Divinity. Many had deliberated in this manner and had merged in the feet of the Divine.

In this path of *sadhana*, meditation on the activities of Shri *Bhagwan* and listening and singing of songs of His glory are required. The rest happens gradually by His grace. One reaches that state by regular practice. Biographies of devotees and the history of Vaishnava saints are evidence. Even the words of Shri *Bhagwan* are evidence. (Chapter 9)

*api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananyabhak /
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah ||9/30||
ksipram bhavati dharmatman sasvacchantim nigacchati /
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranaasyati ||9/31||*

I have already written about the tenth chapter. (verses 10 & 11).

**ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathai 'va bhajamy aham |
mama vartma 'nuvartante manasyah partha sarvasah ||11||**

“O’ Arjuna! In whatever manner one approaches me I accept him in that very manner. Men in all ways follow my path.” (11)

The later part of this verse we read in the last chapter (verse 23). But here the meaning is different due to difference in context.

People take refuge in Shri *Bhagwan* with their own feelings and emotions. Our values and our internal demands collectively decide as to how we can be near to Shri *Bhagwan*. And with what kind of feelings, we will be able to advance towards Him? For someone servitude is easy and he views Shri *Bhagwan* as his master. By placing himself entirely in His service, he feels happy. Someone looks at Him as his father. It is easy for him to love with that emotion. For someone else maternal feelings are easy and dear. Yet someone else by seeing Him as a child can easily surrender himself to Him with motherly fondness and affection, and for him motherly affection is an easy way of his surrender, an easy method of service and a magnificent source of love. For some sweetness of the beloved has great attraction. The history of devotees are examples of different emotions with which they worshiped Shri *Bhagwan*.

Whatever is convenient for one that is the way for Him? But without feelings, without firmness of feelings, it is rather impossible to have love. That peaceful state appears to be only for peaceful people and is difficult for common people. Men can easily move forward with human resolves. That compassionateplayful *prabhucan* become any thing,a master, a servant or any other relationship, for the sake of His devotee, depending upon feelings.He bears on His shoulders the responsibility for the beneficence of His devotee (*yogakshema*) and for that He even touched the feet of Duryodhana.

He also descends becoming the auspicious Mother Divine. He makes the seeker happy by taking him in His blissful and graceful lap and purifies him by His sublime touch and showers nectar by becomingMother Divine. He also becomes a child. In the courtyard of mother Yashoda, that infinite Brahman crawled.

That omniscient suckled by becoming an infant. He played in the lap of mother. By His simplicity, by His innocence, by His love, flows a strong current of fondness in the mother. He played in the lap of mother Kaushilya. By becoming Krishna He accepted the sublime and intense love of Radhika. He became beloved of Sufi saints. Whatsoever we want Him to be He is ready to become that for us but we will have to surrender ourselves to Him. We will have to be ready to give our entire Self to Him. Only this is required for uniting with thatplayful Lord Divine (*purushottama*).

Despite being One, He takes one form for one person and another for someone else and is yet complete for everyone. There is no deficiency anywhere. Everywhere He is real. In His response, there is no artificiality. Nothing is deceitful. His unique ability is so very astonishing. He is the Supreme Being (*purushottama*) equipped with omnipotent energy, wisdom and love and He does all this play. He is that manifest *sachchidananda*⁶⁴ – the TruthIncarnate and He does all His play. He is infinite Brahman. Our astonishment speaks of our limited abilities of perception. Even to call him infinite is as good as limiting Him.

‘jaki ke rahi bhavana jaisi, prabhu murati tinh dekhi tesi’
(People see *parameshwarain* a form according to their feelings.)

And then in the Ayodhya Kanda⁶⁵, when the citizen of Ayodhya went to Chitrakuta to meet Shri Rama, what was the *lila* that Shri Rama did -

jo jehi bhanya raha abhilashi / tehi-tehi ke tasi-tasi ruchi rakhi ||
sanuj mili pal mein sab kahun / Kinha duri dukha darun dahu ||
yeh baribat ram kai nahin / jimi ghat koti ek ravi chahin ||

(He fulfilled the desires of everyone according to their wishes. In a moment He along with his younger brother met everyone and removed their distress. This was not something unique of Shri Rama for thousands of pots flourish under the shade of one Sun.)

It is no wonder to understand *prabhu* as the Supreme Being. Once He is realised, reverence arises, head bows and even the heart bows in His auspicious feet.

⁶⁴ Sachichidanand: Existence, Consciousness, Bliss

⁶⁵ Ayodhya Kanda: A chapter in Ramcharit Manas

Shri *Bhagwan* says: everyone follows my path. Every one comes to Me by whatever path he takes. The worshipers of the unmanifested (*nirguna*) come by their way and worshipers of the manifest (*sagunopasak*) come by their way. Worshipers of a single deity, worshipers of multiple deities and the worshipers of the Universal form, (9, 15); all of them come to Me only. All of them follow My paths and I alone have created those paths.

‘They tread their path with My inspiration’ this is the hidden meaning of this statement. Those, who perform sacrifices (*yagya*), recite My name, chant My name etc. with desire i.e. do efforts (*karmas*) for fulfillment of desires also tread My path.

Those who worship other gods also follow My path. They do not know Me properly and therefore, cannot achieve full benefit. (Verse 24 of chapter 9)

All paths are His paths. He alone is the creator of all paths. On whatever path one moves with devotion, he moves towards Him. Some are footpaths and some are wide roads fit for motor vehicles. Some are winding roads, some are through the forests and some are moving up and down but all paths lead to Him.

Not only this! *Sattavic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic* - all feelings are due to Him. Even the *karmas* are done according to His inspiration. He is the Lord of the entire cosmos. All efforts lead to Him in one-way or the other. Refer to chapter ‘*shubhashubh*’ in authors book “*Adhyatma Vikas*”.

*kanksantah karmanam siddhim yajanta iha devatah /
ksipram hi manuse loke siddhir bhavanti karmaja //12||*

“Those who wish fulfillment of their desires through worship of (other) gods are mean, because in this world desires are easily fulfilled by performance of specific *karmas*.” (12)

Why do people worship various gods ignoring Brahman (*Sachchidananda*), who is so compassionate and possesses infinite powers? This is a matter of surprise. This is the path of worship. This is a path for attaining the Divine. It has higher objective for which a price has to be paid. One has to sell himself to Him in order to gain Him. One has to lose one’s own self. ‘*sis die te hari milen, to bhi sasta jaan*’ i.e. even if by giving one’s head one can attain Hari consider Him cheap. All desires to be sacrificed first.

How many are there who have such higher feelings? May be one out of thousands aspires for Hari. We only want fulfillment of our desires and that too instantly. Without total surrender, there cannot be any response from *prabhu*. And for becoming His a great price has to be paid. It is the path for the brave; others ignoring Him take refuge in lesser gods.

Lesser gods are pleased by performance of activities like religious rites, rituals, fasting, worshiping and sacrifices, etc. and they fulfill desires. We take vows to propitiate gods. As if we bribe gods with our offerings, like ‘I will make a specific offering or a sacrifice after a specific desire is fulfilled’.

The lesser gods play such games. In human-world, desired objectives can be achieved through such practices. One can even attain super natural powers by worshipping lesser gods.

The difference between the worship of these gods and the worship of *Prabhu*, Supreme Entity, becomes clear. In the one, the objective is fulfillment of specific desires and in the other, the objective is to attain *Prabhu* Himself. In one price is performance of specified rituals in the prescribed manner and in the other price is total surrender and undivided devotion. One is motivated by fulfillment of desires and the other requires renunciation of desires. One has purpose and the other is full of love.

The form of the one who is the Lord of *yagyas* (Yagyaishwar), the Supreme Self (*Purushottam*), in whose feet we have to offer our *karmas*, is now being discussed. He incarnates. He enacts his play. He accepts us in every manner in which we offer ourselves to Him. He also accepts our gifts. He also happily accepts offerings of our *karmas*. Shri *Bhagwan* himself gives his own introduction thus.

*caturvarnayam maya srstam gunakarmavibhagasah /
tasya kartaram api mam viddhy akartaram avyayam ||13||*

“I created the four fold (social) order according to the nature of people and their ability to do *karmas*. Know Me, the creator of that order, as imperishable non-doer.” (13)

The birth of Shri *Bhagwan* is divine. His skills of doing *karmas* are also divine. Here He gives an introduction of His skills in doing *karmas*.

Shri *Bhagwan* himself created the four-fold order. Even by creating that order He himself remains non-doer.

This arrangement was the basis of regulating society. It was with the threads of this arrangement that the social fabric was woven. So great was the order. Everyone had prescribed duties. This was the arrangement for keeping the vehicle of society moving. Any disturbance in that arrangement could create confusion resulting in social turmoil.

How was that created? It was according to the ability of individuals and requirement of different *karma*, People with abilities for a specific work were placed in one group (*Varna*). People with different capabilities were placed in different groups (*varna*).

Shri *Bhagwan* tells Arjuna, ‘I do such a great work; still I remain a non-doer. I do not have any duty so *karmas* do not bind Me. I continue to remain the unchangeable, pure consciousness, despite doing *karmas*.’

The echo of this statement is that ‘you are afraid of fighting’. ‘You think that you will become a sinner. Look at me! Follow me! I will tell you the way. By following that way you will also not be bound by your *karmas*.’

Sociologists give diverse interpretations for ‘*guna-karmavibhagshah*’ i.e. the division of work according to *guna* and *karmas*. Some consider *varna*-order (four-fold social order) by birth

and some by *karmas*. But I consider it improper to raise any controversy about this sentence of the Gita. Despite being a scripture of a particular time the Gita is beyond time. Its objective was not to prescribe any social order. The reference was only for the guidance of Arjuna. By forgetting that objective we miss its relevance. What the Gita gives and will always give us, is precious and that is its essence. Divinity is hidden in that.

This verse is for revealing His divine *karmas* for the guidance of Arjuna.

This and the next verse bring about conditions appropriate for surrendering of *karmas* to the Divine (*Brahmarpana*). Our deity, the Supreme Brahman, himself does *karmas* without being bound by them. By worshiping Him we could also become like Him. Further, He is the deity of our worship. He accepts our offerings. Only this much of devotion is required for offering *karmas*.

Hence, it says –

***na mam karmani limpanti na me karmaphale sprha /
iti mam yo 'bhijanati karmabhi nasa badhyate ||14||***

“*Karmas* do not contaminate Me; nor do I have yearning for their fruits. He who knows Me thus in reality is not bound by his *karmas*.” (14)

He who knows My divine birth and *karmas* is liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Knower of the non-doer ship of Shri *Bhagwan* becomes free from the bonds of *karmas*. It is the result of this realisation.

However, is it enough to bear this concept in mind? This will not be enough. This realisation has to be substantive. It has to be a realisation beyond intelligence and not shaken by arguments. This realization will never shake. The realisation becomes a conviction of life.

It is only by meditating over divine activities of Shri *Bhagwan*, thinking, listening and speaking about His activities of creation, sustenance and dissolution this secret is revealed.

Lessons from a knower of truth (*Guru*) can firm up this realisation. But, only when this realisation becomes unshakable it is fruitful.

Shri *Bhagwan* should become our *Ishta* i.e. goal of our devotion. It seems understandable that a deep meditation on the qualities of a deity can infuse those qualities in us. As the deity becomes a part of life, His qualities gradually start manifesting in His devotee. Shri *Bhagwan* is not bound by His *karmas* so His devotee. If even this quality starts manifesting in a devotee, what is surprising about it?

When the qualities, which we recognise in Shri *Bhagwan*, become a part of our thinking then those qualities start manifesting in us. When a devotee is faced with feelings of compassion of Shri *Bhagwan* he himself is filled with compassion. When he recognises love in Shri *Bhagwan* he is filled with love. In the same manner by recognising the non-doer-ship of his deity, devotee becomes a non-doer. He goes beyond the bonds of his *karmas*.

Based on this truth Shri *Bhagwan* directs Arjuna ---

*evam jnatva krtam karma purvair api mumuksubhih /
kuru karmai 'va tasmāt tvam purvaih purvatram krtam ||15||*

“Knowing thus, seekers of salvation (*moksha*) perform their *karmas*. Therefore, you should also do *karmas* as were done by people in earlier times.” (15)

Today, Shri *Bhagwan* was not telling Arjuna something unusual. The path of *karma yoga* is an old one. In olden times seekers of salvation (*moksha*) did their *karmas*. They knew the secret that Shri *Bhagwan* could remain non-doer even while doing *karmas*. Because of this realization, they were not afraid of doing *karmas* and were not bounded by them.

‘So O’ Arjuna you should also do your *karma*. Know it with certainty that no harm will be caused to you by doing your *karma*.’ *‘mahajano yen gatah sa panthah’*. ‘You should follow the path of *karmayoga*, which was followed by your ancestors. They were the followers of this path of *karmayoga*. They benefited. You will also be benefited.’

‘mumuksha—desirous of salvation (*moksha*). He, who desires freedom from the bonds of *prakriti*. Bond of *karma* is the bonds of *prakriti*. He, who is free from the bonds of *karmas*, is also *‘mumuksha’*. Without being free from the bonds of *karmas*, how can there be freedom from the bonds of *prakriti*?

Names of Janak, etc. have already been mentioned. They were earlier followers of the path of *karmayoga*. Their example is given to Arjuna.

Shri *Bhagwan* reverts to the core message of the Gita and again advises Arjuna: ‘you fight, you do your *karma*’.

How can a person remain a non-doer by doing *karma*? This is a problem. Answer to this question is the key of the secret of *‘akarma*⁶⁶. The answer has been given in verses 16 to 23. This is the most elaborate exposition of *‘naishyakarmya’* given in the Gita.

*kim karma kim akarme 'ti kavayo 'py atra mohitah /
tat te karma pravaksyami yaj janatva moksyase 'subhat ||16||
karmano hy api boddhavyam boddhavyam ca vikarmanah /
akarmanas ca boddhavyam gahana karmano gatih ||17||*

“What is *karma*? What is *akarma*? As to this, even wise people are confused. Therefore, I will tell you (the secret of) *karma*. By knowing which you will be free from inauspicious consequences.” (16)

“One should know what *karma* is and should also know *‘vikarma’* and *‘akarma’*. The ways of *karma* are difficult to understand.” (17)

Shri *Bhagwan* is preparing ground for forthcoming exposition of *‘naishyakarmaya’*.

⁶⁶ *akarma*: a *karma* done without any motive or desire for its fruits, or a desireless *karma*

‘It is no surprise that you are bewildered. It is very difficult to differentiate between *karma* and *akarma*. Even great scholars get confused and sometimes take *karma* as *akarma* and *akarma* as *karma*.’

‘Since you do not know this secret, you are running away from fighting.’

‘I will myself describe the secret of *karma-akarma*. I will also tell you the basis for differentiating between them. If you understand this, you will be free from inauspicious consequences. You will be free from the fear of committing sin, which you feel you will commit by fighting. Then you will be able to fight by being detached.’

And the 17th verse gives a brief introduction of the depth of this subject.

Karma, vikarma and *akarma* –three kinds of *karmas* mentioned here. *Vikarma* is an evil deed, which should not be done. By doing those deeds one is debased. There is a clear direction of scriptures (*shastras*) that they should never be done.

The meaning of the word ‘*gati*’ is ‘process’ i.e. how it is done, why it is done, and what is its final result? To know the process of the course of *karma* is to know it in its entirety.

‘*gahna karmano gatih*’ the process of *karma* is mysterious. Here the word ‘*karma*’ has its normal meaning. It includes all the three kinds of *karmas* viz. *karma, vikarma* and *akarma*.

The process of *karma* is very complicated. The chain of *karmas* continues from birth after birth. Threads of *karmas* of one birth entangle with threads of *karmas* of later births. Where it starts and where it will end, it is difficult even for saints to understand. Crossing the boundaries of birth and death, *karma* influences a person in a strange manner, sometimes coming from the front and sometimes from the rear. The imprint of *karma* becomes an impulse for future *karmas* and consequently once a lie is spoken it becomes easier to speak another lie. Once a theft is committed, that becomes an inspiration for committing another theft. A *karma* leaves an imprint in mind and influences future *karmas*. This is true both about good as well as bad *karmas*.

Secondly, *karma* brings consequences. As a seed sown germinates in appropriate weather and in due course of time bears flowers and fruits, similarly the seed sown by a *karma* bears fruit in due course of time. *Karma* is a vibration in *prakriti*. For restoring equilibrium, *prakriti* appropriately reacts to *akarma*. That reaction comes in the form of consequence. Pebbles thrown in a pond cause a dent on water surface and to restore balance water moves to fill that dent. That process becomes a wave. This is also the process of *karma*. The process of a *karma* starting from us comes back to us in the form of its consequence, irrespective of the time it may take to reach us. Then only, we can have inner harmony. What is received from outside is usually called fruit or result. But the tendency or *samskara*, as mentioned above, is created within us and that tendency is in fact more important. That forms our destiny. Enjoyments do not make our life; they are like dying embers.

Karmas bind people with each other. Mutual exchanges do take place. We are tied with others with ropes of likes and dislikes. *Karmas*, which we do according to our likes and dislikes, strengthen these ropes. We have to repay our mutual debts. In addition, because of our likes and dislikes we come near each other in life after life. Suddenly, these likes and dislikes come on surface and old accounts reopen. Moreover, without our knowledge, mutual exchange start taking place.

Karma and *karmaphal*⁶⁷ are essential requirements of our progress. *Karmaphal*, though it is a consequence of our *karma*, works like a great teacher. What is the effect of an evil deed that we can know after experiencing it? Consequences of our deeds we cannot know otherwise. So are the lessons of kindness and compassion learnt. Lessons of proper behaviour learnt likewise. There is no other effective way of learning them better. These experiences keep developing our consciousness. These bonds of *karmas* are for awakening us and for liberating us.

We should also know that at many levels *karmas* are done. *Karma* (work) is a process. Our body, *prana*, the mind and the intellect do *karmas*. *Karmas* create tendencies or *samskaras* at every level as per its nature. Removal of tendencies at various levels is a serious problem.

So long as a person does not clear all accounts of his past *karmas*, does not repay all his debts, his inner tendencies will persist. Until such time these inner tendencies persist, their consequent bonds will also persist. Therefore, for salvation (*moksha*) total removal of tendencies (*samskara*) is necessary. Knowing this secret, many saints quickly repay their debts by acquiring bodies in quick succession. 'Shivsamhita', a book on yoga, describes this possibility. One can consume enjoyments and passions even at subtle level. For removal of these inner tendencies, enjoyment in gross is not necessary.

Normally, we need to know only this much about *Karma*.

What is *akarma*? Absence of action or not doing any action is not '*akarma*'. Total absence of action is impossible (verse 5, chapter 3). *Akarma* could therefore mean something else which makes a *karmaan* '*akarma*'.

Values or *samskara* make a person, give him a distinct personality – a hue distinctly his own. *Samskaras* bind a person with other persons and objects in the external world and are cause of various events in life, which one has to face. While enjoying, a person is full of passion for enjoyments and while doing *karma* he is full of passion for doing *karmas*. Passion is a deep-rooted desire within. Desire is an earlier form. *Akarma* is that *karma* which does not leave an imprint in the doer despite being *akarma*. That *karma* is *akarma*, which does not bind, does not create passion and does not create an inner tendency. That *karma* does look like *karma* and *iskarma* in name but does not have attributes of *karma*. That is the form of *akarma*.

Vikarma is of different nature. It is an evil *karma* and is a cause of sorrow for the doer, for others and/or for both. It is harmful for society and is a cause for its degradation.

⁶⁷*karmaphal*: fruits of karma or consequences of karma

Distinction between *karma* and *akarma* is very deep and one cannot know it by superficial observation. Difference is dependent upon the motive of the doer. If the doer is free from his likes, dislikes, and does his *karma* with devotion than the *karma* is *akarma* but when done by some one else with likes or dislikes it will be *karma*. The one, who has attained the state of 'naishyakarmaya', does *karma* skillfully and efficiently. Viewers can think that 'the doer is attached to his *karma*'. However, they are mistaken. On the contrary, where there is casualness in doing *karma*, doer certainly has his likes or dislikes behind doing that *karma*. Besides indifference, lack of devotion to duty is indicative of *tamoguna* and not of detachment. The confusion is due to *tamoguna*. Great scholars get confused.

Only on attaining the state of disinterestedness in fruits of *karma* (*naishyakarmaya*) i.e. on acquiring the ability of doing *karma* in the spirit of 'akarma' a person knows this secret, otherwise *akarma* appears impossible.

Secret of *akarma* is the secret of success of *karmayoga*. Total devotion is secret of its practice.

In fact, knowing *vikarma* is also not as easy as is believed. Red book of law often deceive a person. The cognition of goodness or badness of *karma* is not possible without knowing the motive and the situation of the doer. In different situations, same *karma* becomes *vikarma* or *sukarma*⁶⁸. To behead an enemy in battlefield is *svadharma* i.e. duty (*sukarma*) but killing anybody for the sake of greed or for hatred is *vikarma*. Slapping somebody with love is not *vikarma* but with hatred is *vikarma*. To embrace a woman with motherly feelings is not *vikarma* and is an innate normal *karma* and kissing her, touching her, etc. is equally blameless. However, the same *karma* with sexual intent becomes blame worthy and becomes *vikarma*.

Difference in age is also decisive in deciding the nature of *karma*. What is not blame worthy for a child is not necessarily so for a grown up? The *karma*, which is blameless for an illiterate person, can be blameworthy for an educated person and can be *vikarma*.

As difference between *karma* – *akarma* is difficult to understand so it is between *karma* – *vikarma*. Those taking decision without understanding the nature of a *karma* may do injustice to others. It is incorrect to decide without full knowledge of facts. That is why criticism of an action is usually undesirable in all situations. *Karmas* are only reflections of tendencies (*samskaras*) and experiences.

Knowing the secret of devotion to *karma* preached in the Gita makes one's outlook so liberal that for him worldly morality becomes meaningless. The so-called codes of social ethics and morality look like rules for undeveloped primitive people, and so also social ethics. Perceptions become relative.

The action that can take a person forward on the path of his evolution is doable and which is a hindrance is non-doable. Refer the book 'Adhyatma Vikas' on this subject.

⁶⁸*sukarma*: a good or virtuous action.

The next verse discusses the secret of *akarma* from different perspectives. The state of 'naishtakarmaya' can be properly appreciated by understanding that perspective.

*karmany akarma yah pasyed akarmani ca karma yah /
sa buddhiman manusyesu sa yuktah krtanakarmakrt ||18||*

“He who sees *akarmain karma* and *karma* in *akarma*, he is wise amongst men, he is a yogi. He is doer of all *karmas*.” (18)

Who is a wise person? That person is wise, who can see *akarma* in what is apparently *karma* and can understand that a person while doing *karma* can be free from many motives and can also be free from its bonds.

Where there is no doer-ship and only witnessing, there is no *karma*. Such *karma* does not lead to creation of tendencies. That is *akarma*. That is *karma* only in appearance.

One who has developed such a deep understanding, he is a wise person. That, however, is not enough. It is also necessary to know the later half of this secret.

Where there is no physical activity, where a person is idle and is not doing anything, his eyes closed, and ears blocked, if someone can perceive performance of *karma* there, he alone really perceives. How is *karma* there? In that state also, mind can be active. Mind of a person keeps wandering all over under the influence of tendencies accumulated in the past and travels all over the world. Kills someone, takes something from someone and gives something to someone. This means that only. He knows the secret of *akarma* who understands that the absence of physical *karma* is not *akarma* because even when one does not do any *karma* physically he can still have ego and that could be a cause of his *karma*. Thinking that 'I do not do any *karma*', is also *karma*. Behind that also ego exists. That creates the tendency of renunciation and is a cause of bondage.

The one who has understood the two secrets alone is a wise person. The above analysis of *karma-akarma* will make the concept clear.

How can one know this secret without even having a glimpse of internal state of non-doer-ship? One cannot understand this secret without awakening of innate feeling of being just a witness. All this can easily happen by being close to the feet of Shri *Bhagwan*, by the support of His name and by the surrender of one's whole being in His lotus feet. This is the device, the way preached in the Gita.

Such a person is wise and intelligent. One is knowledge and the other is wisdom. Knowledge is just an introduction of internal and external world. Wisdom is the ability to discriminate, which manifests in the form of skill in doing a work. Wisdom is the ability to understand. That is not dependent on knowledge. Even illiterate persons can be wise and literates can be fools.

He is intelligent because he has attained proficiency in doing his work. He has acquired freedom from the bonds of his *karma* by knowing its secret.

And he is united; united with his *karma* is a yogi. He alone is united, who has found the path, has known the path and follows the path. He is united with Shri *Bhagwan*. If there is any shortcoming that is of time. The word 'yuktah' (united) is used in the Gita again and again and has same meaning every where.

And such a person is 'kritsnakarmakrit', doer of entire *karma*. He is doer of everything. Only Shri *Bhagwan* is doer of everything. 'karan karvan ape nath' (you alone are the doer of everything O! God and you alone get it done too. The 61st verse of chapter 18 says -

***isvarah sarvabhutanam hrddese 'rjuna tisthati /
bhramayan sarvabhutani yantrarudhani mayaya //***

“O’ Arjuna! The Supreme Being (*Ishwar*) dwelling in the hearts of all beings, causes them to run around by His power (*maya*) as if they are mounted on a machine.” (61 of 18)

Therefore, *Purushottama*, the Supreme Being, gets all *karmas* done. How then can a person be doer of anything?

In fact this secret of *karma-akarma* is known only by attaining oneness with the Supreme Being. The title of this chapter '*karma-brahmarpana yoga*' refers to the attainment of the Supreme Being *Purushottama, Brahman*, by offerings of *karmas*. On awakening of the awareness of being a witness (*sakshi-bhav*) through the offerings of *karmas*, one perceives His presence everywhere as being responsible for all activities. He is perceived as the doer and as having every thing done. The consciousness of such an individual merges in Him. Only that Reality alone appears as the doer. That Reality is the doer of everything and is the One getting things done by beings. An individual is not different from that Supreme Reality. And when an individual realizes this that He is everything then he also realizes that the individual is only a reflection of Supreme Reality.

Then the seeker perceives this secret in the entire Universe. The Supreme Being (*Purushottama*) does not do anything but everything happens because of Him. There is also no other doer except Him. He Himself despite being free from doer ship of all activities is Supreme and substrata of all activities and all activities happen in Him. The non-doer dwells in *karma*. Brahman is in the cosmos and cosmos is in Brahman. The secret revealed. The seeker perceives himself in him and Him in himself. (Verse 29 of chapter 6)

Shri *Bhagwan* says that, 'the knower of this secret is the doer of everything. He unites with Me, he attains oneness with Me.' This is the intent of this statement.

This verse presents a grand picture of the state of success of our spiritual endeavours (*sadhana*). The other picture is:

***yasya sarve samarambhah kamasamkalpavarjitah /
janagnidagdhakarmanam tamahuh panditam budhah ||19||***

“Who’s all undertakings are free from desires, whose *karmas* have been burnt by the fire of wisdom, wise call him a sage (a man of wisdom).” (19).

'*Samarambhah*' means proper beginning. Work of special responsibility and of importance needs to be started with due care and planning. The daily chores like eating, drinking, and sitting; rising, etc. are not called works properly started. They are part of our daily life and are done as a matter of habit. Undertaking is the one for which proper thinking and planning is necessary.

What is '*kam-samkalpa*' (resolve to do a work)? '*Samkalpa*' is mental determination or resolve for doing a work. 'I will do this', 'I will not do that' - this is called '*samkalpa*'. For an ordinary person it is natural to use strength of determination before commencement of any major work.

Inspiration for such resolve (*samkalpa*) normally comes from desire; the same 'desire' which was mentioned in the last chapter (*verse 37 of chapter 3*). Desire for gaining something inspires a person to do *karma*. 'By doing this work I will gain this, will get such happiness, and will have such satisfaction'.

Therefore, '*samkalpa*' based on desire to gain something is '*karma-samkalpa*'[¶] (resolve related to desire).

So, he, whose *karmas* are not inspired by desires, whose *karmas* have been burnt by the fire of wisdom '*janagnidagdhakarmanah*' is a sage (a man of wisdom). What then is that wisdom which can burn *karma*? What is this burning of *karmas*?

A roasted seed does not germinate. A roasted seed is dead – is without any potency to thrive. All that was there before roasting is lost after the seed is roasted. The power to germinate is destroyed. It only has the shape of a seed. The same happens to *karma*. Apparently, such *karma* does not bear consequences. That becomes like a burnt rope. That *karma* cannot be the cause of bondage, of a *samskara*, of a tendency or of passion.

What kind of wisdom is required for burning *karmas*? The conceptual knowledge of *karma-akarma*, discussed in the previous verse, alone can be that wisdom. For, that is not for a personal point of view instead it is for a larger interest. It is not only awareness of *parameshwara* but it is wisdom attained by entering into the consciousness of the Supreme Being. The deity, *yogaishwara*, the Supreme Being, alone is the form of that secret. He himself is a form of wisdom. After, one gains wisdom, his *karmas* burn. Doer ship ends. Only the Supreme Being remains as the doer. Therefore, every possibility of any bondage also eliminates. Since this is the effect of wisdom, it called, 'fire'. Fire burns. Wisdom burns *karmas*. This is a similarity between the two.

[¶]The other meaning could be "free from samkalpa and desire". Is it possible to do *karma* without *samkalpa*? It is doubtful that such an undertaking is possible. May be the *samkalpa* is not so firm like a line etched on stone and it may be like a line drawn on the surface of water, but still it is necessary. Therefore, the meaning 'free from *samkalpa* based on desire' seems appropriate.

Such a person is called '*pundit*' i.e. the enlightened one, by wise people. *Pundit* means the one who has '*punda*'. *Punda* is a very deep, incisive and highly decisive intelligence. The one, who has such intelligence, is a *pundit*. About that *pundit* it says -

pothi padh-padh jag muya pundit bhaya na koi l
dhai akshar prem ke padhe so pundit hoi ll
(People spend their life in reading scriptures but do not become wise.
But, the one who learnt two words of love becomes wise)

Who call him *Pundit*? Those, who are wise,. If a fool calls someone a *pundit*, then that is meaningless. The testimony of a fool is no proof. But if one, who himself is wise (verse 18) calls someone a *pundit* then he is really a *pundit*.

There appears to be no difference between the word '*pundit*' used in the present verse and the word 'wise' used in previous verse.

This means that if a person does work without desires and wisdom has dawned in him then he is free from bonds of his *karmas*. This knowledge was eye-opening for Arjuna. He could undertake the act of fighting and could still remain free from bondage.

Shri *Bhagwanno* tells the method of remaining free from the bonds while doing *karmas*. The next four verses give a description of practical aspects of '*naishyakarmaya*'.

tyaktva karmaphalasangam nityatrpto nirasrayah /
karmany abhipravrtto 'pi nai'va kimcit karoti sah ||20||

“He, who abandoning attachment with fruits of his *karmas*, being ever content, and having no dependence, does not do anything even while engaged in doing *karmas*.” (20).

This means that he does not do anything even while doing work. His *karma* in truth is not *karma* but is *akarma*. He remains free from bonds.

Moreover, while he can be free from bonds by doing *karmas* in a normal manner but can he be free from bonds if he gets fully involved in doing *karmas*? Howsoever involved one may be in doing his *karmas*, he can still remain free from the bonds of his *karmas*. For that, performance of little *karma* or more *karma* is not important.

However, when this happens? When he does *karma* in this manner?

Our devotion and our motives decide between *karma-akarma*. The external form of *karma* is not important. That is why it says -

‘He should be ever content and independent and should do *karma* without attachment to its fruits.’

‘*nityatrpta*’ - who is ever content, who does not feel any deficiency or want of any kind and has no craving for anything. As long as there is craving for something, it influences us perceptibly or imperceptibly. That craving becomes a mute inspiration compelling us to do *karmas*. Our unsatisfied desires influence our behavior. We are not able to recognise our desires because of

our own reasons. Many unsatisfied desires remain dormant in the form of passions in our sub-consciousness. However, they keep directing our *karmas* from behind the curtain.

An aspirant engaged in *sadhana* has to become free from these dormant desires also. How one can become free from them if they are not perceptible? The descending divine consciousness digs out our dormant and unconscious mind and weakens all our desires through its sublime flow. With the flow of divine consciousness even the mind and *prana* get satiated.

When this happens, the person becomes content and ‘*nirashrayah*’— i.e. free from any kind of dependence. What then is that independence? In the Gita, it says thus:

***anasritah karmaphalam karyam karma karoti yah /
sa samnyasi ca yogi ca na niragnir na ca ‘kriyah* ||6/1||**

A person free from desire for the fruits of his *karmas* is said to be independent. However, Shri *Bhagwan* also says, ‘leaving attachment with the fruits of *karma*’. He will become independent by leaving all attachments.

“*nirashrayah*”— free from dependence. In life we are dependent upon both internal as well as external factors. We knit fabrics of our hope in the womb of future. And with its support we become dependent on the mirage of expectations. Fruit of *karma* is one of them.

A person with faith is dependent only on Shri *Bhagwan*. He is not dependent on his intelligence or on his thoughts. Taking resort to them also sets limit of his surrender. That creates a wall between him and Shri *Bhagwan*, which is subtle and impregnable.

Moreover, by being free of his motives and thoughts how should he do his *karmas*? He should do his *karmas* without any attachment with fruits. He should leave attachment with his *karma* and to its fruit. Attachment to fruits is multi-dimensional. Mere desire for the gratitude of others is also a kind of attachment. The desire for praise is another form of attachment. Attachment to *karma* can be in the form of satisfaction gained in doing the work itself. That can impel a person to do the *karma*. There is uneasiness within without that *karma*. That alone is sure indication of the presence of attachment. Absence of attachment itself can be a cause of worry.

Only an aspirant can do *karmas* by being fully detached. His *karmas* are *sakarmas*. However, this is not easy. How could Arjuna become like that in a moment. This direction was to awaken in him devotion and to show him the way. *Karma* is not always a bond. It can also be *sadhana*.

If we follow the path, which will be mentioned subsequently, and follow ‘*karma-brahmarpana-yoga*’ i.e. the Yoga in which all *karmas* are offered to Shri *Bhagwan* then gradually we can develop such inner state. We will become ever content. Shri *Bhagwan* will become our shelter. Renunciation of attachments to the fruits of *karma* will become our natural disposition. We will liberate from the bonds of *karma*. Our *karmas* will become *akarmas*. This is the third picture of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’, which we see.

***nirasir yatacittatmana tyaktasarvaparigraha /
shariram kevalam karma kuruvan na ‘pnoti kilbisam* ||21||**

“He who is devoid of hope, who has controlled his mind and *atman*, who has given up all desires while doing *karmas* by his body, does not incur sin”. (21).

‘Not incurring sin’ is to be free from sin, is to escape from sin. A total escape from sin also means being free from virtue. By being beyond sin is also being beyond virtue. It is impossible that a person does not commit any sin and does only virtuous *karmas*.

Normally our *karmas* are mixture of both evil and virtue. Some *karmas* can be full of evil. Only yogis can do only virtuous *karmas* and no evil *karma*. ‘*shuklam kevalam yoginam*’ so is said in ‘*yogadarshan*’. Because untainted virtue is possible by absolute purity (*sattva*) and an exceptional yogi can only do such acts.

Therefore, so long as a person has doership, he is subject to both evil and virtue. He can save himself only when there is no feeling of doership but then his *karmas* are neither evil nor virtuous. Both evil and virtuous *karmas* are causes of bondage. Both are chains. Only difference is that one is of iron and the other is of gold.

The statement, ‘does not incur sin’ means, he remains free from influences of his *karmas*; is free from bonds of his *karmas*. His *karmas* are verily *akarma*. The statement described in earlier three verses, has been described here also.

What is the meaning of the statement ‘while doing *karmas* only by body’? Does it mean that by doing *karmas* physically no bonds are created but there will be bonds by doing *karmas* mentally? This cannot be the inference. It is difficult to stop mental *karmas*. They continue to take place. If mental *karmas* create bonds, then how could there be freedom from bonds of *karmas*? In fact, Arjuna was disturbed only for doing physical *karmas*. Fighting is a physical act. Its results are at physical plane. Arjuna was disturbed only about them. Shri *Bhagwan* indicates only towards them. ‘There will be no bond by doing *karmas* physically’. In Arjuna’s mind, there was not even a thought of mental *karma*. That was unthinkable for Arjuna. Thinking of a common person is like that of Arjuna. We do not consider it wrong to think bad about anybody but we do consider it bad to slap somebody. We do not recognise impropriety in criticising others but do consider it wrong to pick somebody’s pocket.

On attaining the state of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’ a person becomes free from the bonds of *karma*. Not only mental *karmas* do not bind him but physical *karmas* also cannot bind him. This is true, otherwise, ‘*naishyakarmaya*’ will be meaningless.

Perhaps the suggestion behind the second half of the verse is ‘you are afraid of fighting. You consider fighting as sinful. Fight, you will not commit sin by fighting. Rama had fought. I also fight. The kings in the past, who were *karmayogis*, also used to go to the battlefield.’

What is the method of doing *karmas* for remaining free from sin?

‘*nirashih*’ – means without any hope or expectation. For a common person, hope alone is life: ‘*asha nam nibandnam jeevlakshya*’ – (hope alone binds a person to the mortal world). A

person lives only on hopes. Poor man lives in the hope of wealth, a sick person in the hope of recovery from illness and a person on the verge of death in the hope of heaven. Hope never leaves a person. While committing sins one lives in the hope of gaining happiness.

One has to abandon this hope and has to give up desire for fruits of his *karma*. One should not do *karma* in the hope for results. ‘You should not fight because you will win’. ‘*nirashih*’ does not mean despair. The term ‘*nirashih*’ does not convey the opposite of hope, which is despair. The despair is the opposite of hope like sun and shadow, night and day. ‘*nirashih*’ means devoid of both hope and despair. When victory and defeat become equal, when success and failure become immaterial, when a person is ‘*nirashih*’ then he is indifferent to the results of his *karmas*. The state free from any conflict is suggested. Elsewhere also, such a usage is found in the Gita - ‘*advaishta*’ (verse 13 of chapter 12)

Moreover, he has to become ‘*yatchittatman*’ i.e. having control over ‘*Chitta*’ and ‘*atman*’. The mind, the intellect and the ego constitute ‘*Chitta*’. Will have to rise above their activities, will have to remain above their influences and will not have to follow them. Use them by becoming their master. *Atman*, the Self, means total existence including organs and body. *Atman* is total Self. How can one control *Atman*, which is not mind and intellect? *Atman* is supervisor and is controller. Upanishad mentions – ‘*evam me sharir atman*’ this is my *atman* related to my body.

So long as a person does not have control over his *karmas*, gross as well as subtle, it is impossible for him to attain the state of *akarma*. For that state, an awakening of consciousness beyond ego is necessary. When that awakens, control of organs etc. becomes easy. Therefore, an aspirant has to be always alert. He also has to identify corrupting tendencies. Moreover, he has to become ‘*tyaktasarpaparigraha*’ (free of his possessions). He has to give up all possessions (*parigraha*). Possessions are things we consider as our own. Even honour and insult are possessions, when we consider them as our own. Possession is also of pride of something done or something not done. The entire sphere of ‘mineness’ is an extension of the word possession.

Nothing is our own. One has to become lonely, isolated from everyone and everything. This is ‘*kevalibhava*’ of Samkhya. So long as the inner-self does not leave the habit of accepting, craving for possession persists. There is discrimination in possession, which means likes and dislikes. Consequently, there is expectation for result of *karmas*. Renunciation of possessions strikes the very root. When there will be no requirement of possessions there will be no expectation for results.

A person empty from within is beyond both evil and virtue. Even while doing *karmas* he remains a non-doer.

This is another picture of realisation of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’. It is also a way of *sadhana*.

***yadrcchalabhasamtusto dvandvatito vimatsarah /
samah siddhav asiddhau ca krtva ‘pi na nibadhyate ||22||***

“One who is content with whatever comes to him normally, is beyond the dualities (of pleasure and pain), is free from envy, remains even in success and failure, he even by doing (*karma*) is not bounded.” (22)

‘He is not bound even while doing *karma*’, or ‘*karma* can not be a cause of his bondage’. This is the same state as described above.

Who is not bound? Answer to this question is now given.

‘Who is content with whatever comes to him normally, who is prepared to accept every thing, which comes in his life.’ In life there is happiness as well as unhappiness; gain as well as loss; honour as well as insult; illness as well as good health. There is union as well as separation. Sometimes everything is available and sometimes nothing is available. Be satisfied and accept every situation. There should be no agitation inside. Why ‘this has happened’, there should be no such agitation. This is recognition of acceptance. A devotee accepts everything with deep gratitude as a blessing and as a grace of *Parameshwara*. Meera drank a cup full of poison. For that she was neither unhappy with Shri *Bhagwan* nor with Rana, who had sent her the cup of poison. ‘Meera drank poison considering that as nectar’.

A devotee has no demand of his own and his inner-self has no hunger. He therefore, remains content.

The evidence of contentment is absence of uneasiness, of anxiety. Result of contentment is supreme happiness. Absence of effort is not an evidence of contentment. That certainly does not indicate satisfaction. That indicates lethargy. Permanent contentment is in the state of absolute purity, of ‘*sattva*’. Lethargy is due to ‘*tamoguna*’. In between is a state of dissatisfaction in mind and lethargy in body.

What is the inspiration for doing *karmas*? It is the will to do duty (*svadharma*). In fact, it will be more appropriate to say that it is one’s ‘innate nature’.

And, such a person is beyond conflicts or dualities i.e. ‘*dwandatit*’. One should be beyond conflicts i.e. ‘*dwanda*’ (dualities). Happiness-unhappiness, gain-loss, etc. are dualities. What is the meaning of being beyond them? Should not know them? Become insensitive like a stone and become inert? No, he does know them but is not influenced by them. Does not get disturbed like an ordinary person. One should not react. One should be firm like a rock, which is unmoved by the impact of waves. One should swallow every thing like ocean.

Being beyond dualities (*dwandatit*) is inner equanimity. This is not a matter of practice alone. Physical practice can make a person insensitive to heat and cold to some extent. Skin becomes thick. ‘*Dwandatit*’ is primarily a property of mind. Mind should become so stable that it is never disturbed. This does not happen by practice. This happens by the descent of supreme consciousness of the Divine within us. What is achieved by practice is lost with time. That alone is stable which happens by changing the nature of mind. The mind is then tied with a pole and does not vacillate. That really happens only by the grace of that benevolent *Parameshwara*.

And, he should be ‘*vimatsarah*’ (free of envy). ‘*matsar*’ is envy, which is called ‘*keena*’ in Urdu and ‘*dah*’ in Hindi. The discomfort or the deep burning within, one feels on seeing something good happening to others indicate this. How does one feel after hearing praise of others? If one feels bad then there is surely something dark inside. How does one feel by seeing the progress of others? If one does not feel happy then there is something wrong. Where is the

root of this jealousy? It is in enlarged ego. One considers himself as the more important than others and wants to retain that importance. By seeing the rise of others, his ego is hurt.

That envy also impels us to do *karma*. It encourages us in a most subtle way for looking at the faults of others and by thinking evil for others. We start criticising others through speech. The envy was responsible for making Kauravas invite Pandavas to gamble by hatching a conspiracy and then to humiliate them. How very compelling was the force of envy in motivating Kauravas to do that *karma* which led to the Mahabharata war.

And, he remains even in success and failure. Even means equanimous. He is neither happy in success nor miserable in failure.

Are success and failure not duality? Why they be discussed separately? Duality includes these also. Evenness is the proof of being beyond them (*dwandatit*). He who cannot remain even, not beyond the duality of success and failure, he is somewhere in the middle. He is in marsh.

This is said to emphasise the importance of equanimous mind. Success or failure in war was important for Arjuna. The desire for victory over Kauravas brought him to the battlefield. Perhaps, the fear of defeat was imperceptibly causing him distress.

This is another aspect of the success of *akarma*. One does his *karmas* but is not bound by them. Of course, this is an indication of *sadhana*.

***gatasangasya muktasya jnanavasthitacetsah |
yajnya 'caratah karma samagram praviliyate ||23||***

“He who is free from attachments, who is liberated, whose consciousness is firmly stabilised in wisdom (gyan), who does (his *karmas*) as a sacrifice (*yagya*), all his *karmas* vanish completely.” (23)

This is the last verse in the present context. It beautifully describes the perfect state of a yogi. His *sadhanas* matured. Now nothing is left for him to be done. He is free from the bonds of his *karmas*.

‘Karma samagram praviliyate’ - ‘all his *karmas* vanish completely’. ‘*Samagram*’ – completely – in totality – without residue. There is a difference between the states of perfection and the state of *sadhana*. One does not achieve the state of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’ soon after taking first step. Our *karmas* do not become *akarma* instantly. Our *karmas* done with devotion gradually make us pure and clean. Attachments diminish. Likes and dislikes weaken. Hope and despair get depleted. Envy ends. Intellect becomes pure. Control over sense organs start developing. Ego also becomes weak. By devoting to *karma* we receive the grace of the Divine.

All this happens very slowly by doing *karmas* free from desires. As these changes take place, tendencies formed by earlier *karmas* become weak. After all, devotion does take time to develop. As we become pure, our devotion becomes strong. Moreover, our *sadhana* becomes intense.

An aspirant so progressing in his *sadhana* attains success in due course of time. None of his *karmas* then create tendency. Once *karma* is done, it is over. Like a line drawn on the surface

of water does not exist, so becomes his *karma*. He submerges in fathomless depth of *prakriti*. There does not remain any relationship with *karmas*. He does not have even the ego of having done the *karma*. He is only a witness of his *karmas* being done.

It can also be mentioned here that before such a state is reached tendencies created by past *karmas* are also destroyed. This state does not fully manifest in its full bloom before one becomes empty of past tendencies. Sometimes, past tendencies do come to surface.

He is 'gatsang'. He does not have even a fraction of attachment. We are free from bonds of *karmas* in proportion to our freedom from attachments to their fruits. Attachments and tendencies are closely related to each other. Loss of tendencies weakens attachments, or both of them are lost simultaneously, because the force destroying them is beyond them. Awakened pure consciousness does this work. Aspirant remains uninvolved. Nothing touches him. Whatever he touches or catches, he does it in such a way that no imprint or scent of it is left in him. He can really belong to everyone. And everyone could belong to him because he does not own anyone.

He is liberated, he is free. External freedom is no freedom. Bonds are always within us. So long as internal bonds exist, no one can become free. If one is free from one's home then the forest will bind him and thereafter country will bind him. Aspirations bind him. Hope binds him. Fame and ignominy binds him. One's interest binds him. Interest of others' binds him. Past would bind him and future too would bind. These are all subtle bonds and are not visible. However, if liberated from within then nothing can bind him. If liberated from lust then a woman cannot bind a man and similarly a man cannot bind a woman. If liberated from greed then gold cannot bind, property cannot bind and loss or gain cannot bind. If liberated from honour then the world cannot bind. If liberated from vanity *karmas* cannot bind, attachments do not bind and aspirations do not bind.

It is not easy to be free from within. For that it is like offering one's head. One has to become totally empty. That requires total self-surrender of one's being. Once he gains such freedom he does not require anyone to tell him that he is free. Once these bonds are loosened, one can breathe freely and can have peace and bliss.

Nevertheless, we consider our chains as our ornaments and consider them as means for worldly happiness. Who are we without them? Where is our personality and individuality? What is the interest in life without them? Modern outlook towards life knows only this much, thinks only this much and makes others think this much. This is their ignorance, limits of their experiences and is also flight of their imagination.

To be free, to be free while alive, is becoming free from within. That alone is an innate freedom and that alone is total liberation from attachments. That alone is the highest form of serenity and equanimity. What is the inspiration of doing *karmas* for such a person? '**Yagyayacartah**' – to do *karmas* as a sacrifice (yagya). *Hiskarmas* are for yagya i.e. for sacrifice. We discussed this subject in the third chapter. He performs *karmas* as sacrifice (yagya). In the universe and for an individual sacrifice is the buzzword. Yagya or sacrifice is that on which the entire play of the universe is dependent. He gives offerings of his *karmas* in that yagya as that is natural for him. Needs of of the

outside world are his inspiration for doing *karmas*. When we are free from vanity and ego, which limit us, unsullied vibrations of the universe enter in us and door of awareness, which was earlier closed, opens. For us our life becomes life for the universe and then the energy of the universe flows in us too. That flow of energy saturates us. The energy of the universe takes us on the path of our evolution. Such a realised person even being a man does not remain a man. He despite being an individual becomes universal. He despite being a human being verily becomes a Divine Being (*narayana*). He despite being a man becomes the Supreme Being (*purushottama*).

That inspiration of the universe is the resolve of Narayana himself. Now it fully manifests in the individual. After freedom from vanity, the obstacle, Narayana dwelling in such a person as a form of sacrifice does all his *karmas*.

When the chain, which used to bind, is not there then with what can the *karma* bind us? With the removal of that chain, *karmayogi* is really liberated.

Verses 18 to 23 give us full description of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’. We will come to know what that success is. We will get to know more about this *sadhanalater*.

Shri *Bhagwan* explained the secret of *karma-akarma*. Arjuna was given complete knowledge as to how Shri *Bhagwan* remains non-doer even while doing all *karmas*. That *yagyaishwar* is a non-doer. His worship can make a person non-doer.

The next verse gives basic method for the worship of that *yagyaishwar*. Our devotion to *karma* acquires the form of ‘*karma-brahmarpana yoga*’ i.e. the yoga of surrendering all *karmas* to *Brahman*. With a touch of *brahmarpana*, feeling of detachment to *karmas* strengthens.

***brahma ‘rpanam brahma havir brahmagnau brahamana hutam |
brahmai ‘va tena gantavyam brahmakarmasamadhina ||24||***

“Brahman offered Brahman as oblations in fire a form of Brahman. He (*sadhak*) will realise Brahman by oblations of his *karmas*, a form of Brahman.” (24)

What happens to such a liberated perfect yogi? ‘*brahmai ‘va tena gantavyam*’ – ‘he realises Brahman’. It was said in the last verse, ‘*karma samagram praviliyate*’ – ‘his entire *karma* vanishes’. However, that is a negative description. What happens to him after *karma* vanishes? The present verse is an answer to this question.

Realization of Brahman is attainment of divinity. This subject has been spoken in 12th chapter. This subject was mentioned in ninth verse of third chapter and in 9th verse of this chapter. ‘*mameti*’ – attains Me. The word ‘Brahman’ is usually used in Upanishads for the Supreme Reality (*Purushottama*). So is also used in the Brahma sutras. ‘*janmadyasyayata*’ – Brahman is one from whom this universe is born, in whom it dwells and in whom it dissolves.

So, a realised person practicing *karmayoga* attains Divinity. What becomes the state a person doing his *karmas* for *yagya*? For such a person every thing becomes divine. For

him '*vasudeva sarvam iti*' i.e. Brahman is everywhere. Every moment of his life is an experience of '*sarva khalvidam brahman*' i.e. the entire cosmos is Brahman. He thus attains Brahman. What else could be the destiny of one who has established in Brahman while alive? For him there is only one way and that is the way of Divinity.

'brahma havi' whatever he offers in that yagya that is Brahman for him. In his perception, the grand yagya for which he does his *karmas* is Brahman and the oblations he offers in that yagya are also Brahman. His *karmas* are his oblations. Therefore, he perceives his *karmas* as a form of Brahman.

'brahmagnau' –fire is Brahman. The burning fire, which accepts oblations by becoming mouth of gods, is also a form of Brahman. For that person, the means for performing *karmas* also become Brahman.

Moreover, who accepts offerings sitting in fire? For whom he performs yagya? Yagya is performed only for Brahman. He is *Yagyaishwar*, the Lord of sacrifices, as He alone is the presiding deity of a yagya. He alone accepts offerings.

And, who makes offerings? He is also Brahman. '*brahmana hutam*' i.e. offerings made by Brahman. He also perceives himself as a form of Divine. When every thing is a form of Brahman then he himself is in a state of oneness with Him. '**brahmakarmasamadhina**' –*karmas* as oblation to the Brahmana. What is this yagya? That is a *samadhi*. In *Samadhi*, there is no disturbance in mind (*chittavritti*). This *karma* arrests disturbances in mind (*chittavritti*). Brahman alone is contemplated, if He can be called an object of contemplation. Whatever is seen, felt and experienced within, appears as Brahman Himself. He makes efforts for internal as well as external tranquility by devoting and by peacefully concentrating on his *karmas*. That internal tranquility is dependent upon external tranquility. If the external environment is not quiet then concentration is difficult. However, this *samadhi* is strange. This *samadhi* is not merely one of concentration but is one of devotion to *karma*. This does not require practice of concentration by closing eyes but requires performance of *karmas* with devotion. *Karma* alone is its posture of sitting (*asana*), is its practice of breathing in and breathing out (*pranayama*) and retention of breath; concentration of mind (*dharna*); and meditation (*dhyana*). That (*karma*) itself finally transforms into *samadhi* i.e. super consciousness. That is how it is *samadhi* of *karma*. The person remains in *samadhi* while doing *karmas*.

Amongst different kinds of *samadhi*, which *samadhi* is best? Only *nirvikalpa* (free of vacillations) *samadhi* is the best. Undulations of mind (*chitta*) subside in a person stabilised in his Self (*atmaswarup*). Feeling of absence of any thing is also lost. Such inner state is desirable. If while doing his *karmas* one can abide in Brahman then that state is a state of *samadhi*. If undulations (*vrittis*) assume the form of Brahman then that too becomes a form of *samadhi*. The undulations do not make a difference in the state of Brahman-consciousness. The saints of medieval period loved this state of *samadhi*. Kabir sahib called it innate (*sahaj*) *samadhi*, the one for which there is no need for any special effort. He sings-

sadhho sahaj samadhi bhali |
guru pratap ja din se jagi ,din din adhik chali ||
jahan jahan dolun so parikrama,jo kuch karon so seva |

*jab sovon tab karon dandavat,pujon aur na deva //
kahon so nam suno so simran,khaun piun so puja /
girah ujad ek sam lekhn,bhav mitave duja //
ankh na mundon kan na rundhon,tanik kashta nahin dharon /
khule nayan pahchano hansi hansis,sunder rup niharon //*

(Saints, innate samadhi is better. From the day it awakened by the grace of the Guru, it is becoming better and better. Wherever I go that is circumambulation of the deity and whatever I do is His service. When I sleep that is my prostration as I do not worship any other god. I perceive home as well as barren land equally and my feelings do not change. I neither close my eyes, nor block ears, nor suffer any trouble. I recognise Him with my open eyes and behold His beautiful form. – Free translation)

The innatesamadhi is only the *samadhi* of doing (selfless) *karmas*. This should never be given up. There can never be any escape from doing*karmas*. It is for such a state it has been said

*lali mere lal ki, jit dekhun tit lal /
lali dekhan main chali, main bhi ho gai lal //*

(Wherever I see, I see the radiance of my Lord.

When I went to see His radiance I also became radiant)

Every thing becomes Brahman.

This *samadhi* of doing *karmas* with devotion is *brahman-karma samadhi*. *Karma* alone is *Brahmna*. This has been said to impress upon us that *karma* itself is Brahman and is also the means -- *samadhi* in doing *karma* as a form of Brahman' or '*samadhi* through *karma* as a form of Brahman' – in both expressions the meaning is the same.

This is the highest objective of *karmayoga*. A *karmayogi* by becoming a *karma-brahmarpana-yogi* attains this ideal. The Gita preaches this to Arjuna. It is for this reason that Shri *Bhagwan* promised to Arjuna at many places that, 'you will surely attain Me, you will dwell in Me'. A person could attain the eternal, immutable state even while doing *karmas* (verse 56 of chapter 18). It is for this reason that no importance has been given to total renunciation of *karmaper-se* in this lofty gospel of the Gita. This is a declaration of the success of devotion to *karmas*, devotion to duty. *Karmas* can be the means for attaining the Divine and we can attain Him while living our normal life and performing our *karmas*. We can also understand that how this can be possible.

This *samadhi* is in no way inferior to the *samadhi* of Vedant known as the state of absorption in Brahman (*Brahmalayavastha*); the state of *samadhi* devoid of undulations or vrittis i.e. *nirvikalpa samadhi* of Samkhya; the state of inertness (*jad-samadhi*) of *Hatyoga*; or the state of void i.e. *sunnyavastha* of Nadyoga. To me it appears superior to them. There is no dependence on external means and there is no possibility of a fall. This is an innate *samadhi* and the one who attains it is eternally blessed. For him, his beloved is never separated from him.

*pritam ko patina likhun je koi hoi videsh /
tan main man main nain main, vako kahan sandesh //*

(May send messages to the lover if he is in a different land

But what message to him who dwells in my body, in my mind and in my eyes.)

And in this *samadhi* there is no tussle, no inertness, and no indolence. A person becomes Brahman even while remaining a human being. The mortal world while remaining as world becomes Brahman. There is nothing to escape from and there is no illusion. One could live in the world with serenity, evenness as every thing becomes Brahman and nothing else. What a multidimensional unique and divine state is this of Brahman awareness? This success of devotion to *karma* is a golden crown. This is the supreme reward and that is why it is not easy to achieve.

***bahunam janmanam ante jnanvan mam prapadyate /
vasudevah sarvam iti sa mahatman sudurlabhah ||7/19||***

“At the end of many lives, a man of wisdom worships Me, realising that the Supreme Being is all that matters. Such a soul is very rare to find.”

And, for this invaluable gain living for many lives are worth the effort. *Akarmayogi* does his *karmas* as sacrifices, yagyas. But yagyas are of many kinds. Other yagyas have been mentioned to indicate that *karmayogais* superior to all of them. The yagya of *karma yoga* is possible simply by performing normal *karmas*.

This yagya is performed only through *karmas*. The *karmas* done for the sake of sacrifice unite the aspirant with *Yagyaishwar*. Therefore, Arjuna should also do his *karma*. The *karmas* be done as a sacrifice. This is the intent of subsequent verses (25-32).

What has been mentioned above, is *Brahmayagya*. A successful *karmayogi* does this yagya. An aspirant with a higher perspective does his *karmas* as a sacrifice, as yagya i.e. for the benefit of others

Now other kinds of yagyas are described.

***devam eva 'pare yajnam yoginah paryupasate /
brahmagnav apare yajnam yajnenai 'vo prjuhvati ||25||***

“Some yogis perform yagyas for the worship of (lesser) gods and some other yogis perform yagyas in the fire of Brahman (*Brahmagni*) by yagya itself.” (25)

‘*devayagya*’—a yagya which has a presiding deity. *Yagya* performed for pleasing specific gods are called ‘*devayagya*’. ‘The gods give us boons of all kinds and by performing yagyas their share is given. We nourish them through yagyas.’ Shri *Bhagwan* referred them in the third chapter (verses 11, 12 & 13).

Devayagyas is included in various daily activities prescribed for householders. They were prescribed as duty for a householder. Only after making offerings to gods, a householder was supposed to eat this food as remanent of offerings as *prasad*.

And some other yogis performed yagyas through yagyas, and for such yagyas instead of ordinary fire, they used fire of Brahman (*Brahmagni*). The word ‘Brahman’ also means the *Vedas*. *Brahmagni* was meant for study of scriptures. *Vedas* and other scriptures were considered as a form of Brahmana. Therefore, meaning of this statement is ‘by yagya of study’, which is possible

only by the fire in the form of the Vedas. Some people recite glories of the Supreme Reality (*Parameshwara*). The study of the Vedas became yagya for them.

Any *karma* can become yagya. The spirit of yagya exists within us -- in our feelings. When we do our *karmasin* the spirit of sacrifice then that *karma* becomes yagya. Study of scriptures is also a yagya.

If study of scriptures is for the sake of achieving some result then it does not remain a yagya. It then becomes a deal. This is true of *devayagyas* too. If those yagyas are done for fulfillment of desires then they do not remain yagyas despite being yagyas. They merely become offerings in the fire. They do not become means of *karmayoga*. They cannot bring a person close to Divinity.

‘*Upjuhvati*’ – gives offerings in fire.

*srotradini ‘ndriyany anye samyamagnisu juhvati |
sabdadin visayan anya indriyagnisu juhvati ||26||*

“Some others (*yogis*) sacrifice sense organs of hearing, etc. in the fire of self-restraint and some others sacrifice objects such as sound, etc. in the fire of sense organs”. (26)

This verse makes it clear as to how our entire life becomes yagya by our devotion. If we are able to develop right attitude then even our routine activities like eating, drinking, seeing, hearing, sitting, rising, etc. can become a yagya.

Sacrifice of sense organs such as ears, etc. in the fire of self-restraint. Self-restraint is sacrificial fire. A yagya is performed by making oblations in sacrificial fire. By offering oblations of sense organs in this fire (of restraint), yagya is performed. For yagya there should also be a presiding deity. It is only to Him that oblations are offered. He is Brahman. The same *Purushottama* is our Lord Vasudeva. By inviting Him we offer oblations of our sense organs in the fire of restraint. In other words, we restrain our sense organs for the sake of the Divine. This is a practical form of yoga where *karmas* are offered to Brahman (*karma-brahmarpana-yoga*). Restraint of sense organs is also a yagya provided it is for the Divine and is an offering to Him. When we practice restraint for some other purpose then it is not a yagya. Then it cannot become a means of yoga. The restraint means the use of sense organs with restraint.

And *karma-brahmarpan-yogis* perform other activities in a different spirit. The pleasures they enjoy, they sacrifice in the fire of respective sense organ. While seeing with eyes, sacrifice the form seen by the eyes in the sacrificial fire of eyes; sacrifice the music heard by the ears; and surrender the taste while eating in the sacrificial fire of the tongue. Like this they offer as oblations respective objects while using sense organs and perform *yagyas* for the Lord of these senses. This is also *sadhana* of *karma-brahmarpana-yoga*. The words ‘restrain’ and ‘sense organs’ have been used in plural to indicate their multiplicity. There are many sense organs and so are restraints for each sense organ.

*sarvani ‘ndriyakarmani pranaakarmani ca ‘pare |
atmansamyamayogagnau juhvati jnanadipite ||27||*

“And some other persons (yogis) sacrifice activities of all organs and functions of *prana* (vital energy) into the fire of self-control kindled by wisdom (*gyan*)”. (27)

This was yet another form of yagya prevalent in those days. Some sacrificed by kindling fire of self-control (*atma-sanyam-yoga*) through knowledge. The title of sixth chapter of the Gita is *atman-samyam-yoga*. In that chapter, control of the mind, the intellect, the sense organs and *prana* has been discussed. Objective of that yoga is to acquire total control over one-self. That control is considered as sacrificial fire.

How that fire kindled? It is kindled by wisdom (*gyan*). The ordinary fire is kindled by fuel but for this fire fuel of wisdom is required. One can move on the path of restraint only through proper prudence.

What are the oblations these yogis offer in that fire of wisdom? They offer all activities of their sense organs and the functions of vital (*prana*) as oblations i.e. they make an effort to control themselves.

Activities of sense organs are well known. What are the functions of the vital (*prana*)? *Prana* sustains the body. *Prana* helps in blood circulation and in activates of all limbs of the body like heart, lungs, liver, and other organs of the body. *Prana* is mainly of five kinds. The yogis regulate their functions. They also try to make an effort to have control over their functions.

Such control is possible by regulating and controlling diet and behaviour, and by the practice of concentrating mind at one point. Our mental energies centered by this practice of concentration can acquire control over the functions of *prana*.

Here also effort is to offer everything to the Divine, otherwise this *karma* will not be a yagya. The sixth chapter of the Gita is a description of this yagya. After one has understood this lofty form of yagya, he can understand how the Gita coordinates all viewpoints. That which is a means for the path of ascent, in which individual efforts are predominant and every thing is offered to Brahman, becomes verily worship of the Supreme. That too then becomes *karmayoga*. What a wonderful touchstone such devotion is. Whatever is touched by it that becomes means for attaining the Supreme, becomes a yagya and becomes a form of *karmayoga*. This is the magic of *brahmarpana*.

***dravyajnas tapoyajnayogayajnas tatha 'pare |
svadhyayajnanayajnas ca yatayah samsitavratah ||28||***

“And there are people practicing other kind of fasts (*vrata*) – they sacrifice their material possessions (*dravya-yagya*), fasting or austerities (*tapo-yagya*), spiritual exercises (*yoga-yagya*), *yagya* of self-study or *gyan-yagya*”. (28)

There are persons doing other kind of sacrifices (*yagyas*). Some persons take vows and abide by them. That is the way of their sacrifice. ‘I will daily do this much of a particular work and will do it in this manner. If I do not do it I will atone. Will not take food, will not speak, etc. to atone for the lapse.’

Such people also do sacrifices of many kinds.

‘*dravyayagya*’ is the one in which wealth or material possessions are sacrificed. That can be a daily sacrifice by way of charity or serving some one with money. This is sacrifice of material

wealth i.e. *dravya yagya*. '*Tapo-yagya*' is practicing austerities. *Tapo-yagya* is a form of denial through austerities. To suffer some kind of discomfort is a part of austerities, without that there can be no austerity. It can be a vow to eat less, not to eat some kind of food, to avoid some things in food, to eat only once a day, etc.

In the same way, somewear very few clothes to cover body; take frequent baths; or stand in water for a long time. We should not forget that Shri *Bhagwan* has called it wrong to inflict unnecessary physical sufferings (verses 5 & 6 of chapter 17). However, where object is not to inflict physical sufferings and where austerity is practiced as an offering to the God then that austerity is not forbidden. It is a form of *yagya*, a form of sacrifice.

What is a *yoga-yagya*? Sacrifice through *yoga* is *yoga-yagya*. Perhaps it refers to sacrifices through meditation, etc. Import of *yoga-yagya* cannot be *karmayoga*.

Yagya of self-study is the study of the Vedas (it could be study of scriptures). In olden days daily recitation of Vedas was prescribed for higher castes. In some families Vedas were recited every day and also memorised. It is for this reason that even now we can find people who can recite the Vedas flawlessly. Self-study done with right feelings is also a form of *yagya*.

In 25th verse, self-study was mentioned. Then, why is this being mentioned again? This has been mentioned again because the discussion is about those who do self-study by taking a vow to do so. Recitation of verses from scriptures becomes a form of *yagya*. That effort to understand basics of spirituality from scriptures is *gyan-yagya*. Both *gyan* and *vigyan* are included in this *yagya*. And this *karma* also if offered to the Divine becomes a *yagya*. This also takes a person towards *yagyaishwara*.

*apane juhvati pranam pranae 'panam tatha 'pare |
pranaapanagati ruddhava pranayamaparayanah ||29||*

“And some other persons sacrifice their *prana* (vital breath) in *apana* (intestinal breath) and *apana* in *prana*. (In this manner) they are engaged in *pranayama* by controlling movement of *prana* and *apana*”. (29)

Pranayama is also a *yagya*. Those who practice *pranayama* also perform *yagya*. How is that exercise a *yagya*? That is being told now.

Pranayama is control of *prana* i.e. control of breathing. These people regulate movements of both *prana* and *apana*. They do not allow *prana* to come out and *apana* to go in and remain without breathing for some time.

How that happens? That happens by sacrificing outgoing breath in incoming breath and vice-versa. When the breath tries to come out they do not allow it to come out by using *apana* and when it tries to go in they do not allow it go in by using *prana*. They hold breath where it is.

It should be remembered that *prana* is not air alone. It is that subtle force through which air comes out from within and takes *apana* down. Therefore, breath goes in only due to this.

This effort is also a form of *yagya*, if it is an offering to *parameshwara*.

*apare niyataharah pranam pranaesu juhvati |
sarve 'py ete yajnavido yajnakapitakalmasah ||30||*

“And some others sacrifice *prana* in *prana* by taking limited food. All of them (mentioned above) are knowers of yagya. Their sins are destroyed through yagya”. (30)

After mentioning yet another kind of yagya, this enumeration of yagyas is brought to an end. Some people exercise restraint in food. They take limited quantity of food of specific kind. They eat little of the right kind, eat it the way it should be taken and that too at a fixed time. In this manner by practicing control over intake of food they acquire control over *prana*. By taking limited and regulated food, the variability of *prana* is controlled. A person also acquires control over his physical activities. Sense organs are also gradually controlled. Food has a close relationship with self-control.

By practicing restraint in this manner, they sacrifice *prana* as an oblation in *prana*.

This is also a form of yagya.

And in the last it is said that all those, who have been mentioned above, are knowers of yagya. Knowing the secret of yagya is verily to know the yagya. Then what is the secret of yagya? *Yagya* cannot be performed without a deity. Just pouring of purified butter in fire does not become a yagya. Only that is a yagya where the deity is propitiated and offerings are made to him. This kind of a sacrifice unites us with the deity. His consciousness starts flowing in us. This happens as if the two electrical wires are connected and the current starts flowing. That deity starts dwelling in us. Therefore, there is no yagya, a sacrifice, without offering *karmas* to the Divine. When *karma* is offered to the Divine, then that becomes a means for uniting us with the presiding deity of the yagya i.e. *yagyaishwar*. Any *karma* right from seeing and hearing to laying down one's life for some one becomes a form of yagya if offered to the Divine. This is the basic aphorism of this chapter. By understanding this aphorism one knows the essentials of this chapter.

It should be understood that, the various activities, which have been mentioned as forms of yagya, are only metaphors and are merely to demonstrate the potentiality of *karmas* to become yagyas. Fire and offerings are the only essential external means for yagya and have therefore, been visualised in all *karmas* so that it could be easily understood that each *karma* can also be a yagya. This visualisation is not important if we can understand that *karma* itself becomes a form of yagya when it is offered to Brahman. The only thing to be learnt is that all activities of our life are yagyas if we perform them with full devotion and surrender them at the feet of the Divine with full faith like flowers and other offerings.

Then what is the grand form of yagya? That, what is written above. This *brahmanarpana* is a form of yagya. All those *karmas* are yagya, which involve sacrifice for a higher objective and by which the person is elevated and purified. When that sacrifice is for gods, then that makes a person like a god. That also elevates a person. A sacrifice done for self-purification is also a yagya. The only criterion for *karma* becoming a yagya is the spirit of sacrifice resulting in purity and sublimity. That is an effective means of evolution.

There is no doubt that higher the objective and nobler the sentiments behind our sacrifice the more elevating that sacrifice would be. Sacrifices are of many kinds and of many categories. Only that thing could be sacrificed which we consider to be our own, which is available to us, or

which could be available to us in future. The sacrifice could be of any thing, gross or subtle; it could be of the present or of some expected gratification in future.

Therefore, it has been said, '*yajnaksapitakalmasah*' through yagyas sins are destroyed. '*kalmasa*' means impurities i.e. sin or evil tendencies. This is the test of yagya. It destroys our sins. It purifies us and cleanses us.

There are also such *karmas* through which we make offerings in a sacrificial fire for acquiring some special powers, worldly gains, for the removal of some specific forms of misery or for taking revenge on someone. Can *karmas*, performed with a specific purpose, be termed as yagyas? By using the criterion mentioned above, such *karmas* are not yagyas. *Karma* can be yagya only if it can elevate an individual, reduce his passions, anger, greed, infatuation, etc. in intensity. Otherwise, how could any *karma* be yagya?

In the beginning of Vinay-Patrika Tulsidas jee prays to all gods but he prays them only for love in the feet of Shri Raghunath jee. Those prayers were worship of Brahman through various gods. In this manner any *karma* could become a worship of Brahman. The objective or motive behind a *karmas* is the sole criteria.

Why did Shri *Bhagwan* gave such a long discourse of yagyas to Arjuna? He wanted to convince Arjuna that even ordinary activities of life can assume a form of worship, can become a form of yagya and can also become means for attaining the Divine. Then observance of one's duty i.e. *svadharma* could certainly become a means for attaining the Divine. Moreover, special activities done for self-purification can be helpful in bringing a person near to *parameshwara*. The observance of one's duty (*svadharma*) will certainly be more helpful.

We can now understand why Shri *Bhagwan* said:

yajnadantapahkarma na tyajyam karyam eva tat || 18/5 ||

One should not abandon yagya, charity and penance. One must do them.. The yagya is a means of *karmayoga*—yagya being all pervasive.

What is the fate of those who perform yagyas?

***yajnasistamrtabhujo yanti brahma sanatanam /
na'yam loko 'sty ayajnyasya kuto'nyah kurusattama ||31||***

“O'Arjuna! Those who eat remnants of yagya(*prasad*) as nectar attain to the eternal Brahman. Even this world is not for him who does not perform yagya, how then can he have the other (world)?”

In the last chapter, it was said that, ‘the saints, who eat remnants of yagya become free from all sins.’ (Verse 13) Here it says that they attain the eternal Brahman. There the context was performance of yagyas for gods but here the discussion is of yagyas per-se. A life in which there is a place for yagya is a fruitful life. The yagyas performed through special external rituals could be yagyas only in form. However, the *karmas* performed with higher sentiments and offered to Brahman with intense devotion makes one's whole life a form of yagya. When the deity of our yagya is Brahman then only He is attained through yagya. The word Brahman has been used for '*Purushottama*'. The Vedas are also called Brahman.

We should also remember –

aham hi sarvayajnanam bhokta ca prabhureva ca ||9/24||

(I alone is the enjoyer and the Lord of all yagyas)

The yagya may be of any category but if it is a yagya, it involves sacrifice, then the Divine is the receiver of that yagya. He alone is the consumer of that yagya. At some place He is the presiding deity of the yagya having become our chosen deity according to our sentiments. At some other place He becomes an idol of our love and yet at some other place He becomes the consumer of austerities, '*bhoktaram yajnatapsam*'.(5/ 29)

There should surely be a place for yagya in life. Rather, the life itself should become a yagya. As soon as the life becomes a yagya, one attains *yagyaishwar* – the Lord of yagyas.

This world is not for him who does not perform yagya. One cannot have peace without doing yagya. Happiness does not depend upon what one gets from outside. If happiness was dependent upon external achievements then everyone could have been happy. Higher the material gains, higher would have been one's happiness. But we find rich people unhappy and poor happy. Happiness depends upon what we are able to do for others. There is no peace in a selfish life. How can he have real peace who has not learnt to give, who has not learnt to love, or who has not developed an attitude of sympathy and compassion for others? How could he have bliss in life who does not know to accept others or who does not know to sacrifice himself for others? Only by accepting others and doing sacrifice for them, their love and affection can be gained. In whose life sacrifice has a place, only he can have happiness. If we find happiness in the life of someone who does not sacrifice for others then his happiness can only be of inhuman nature and will not last for long. Moreover, his selfishness would itself become a source of his misery.

The will and effort to make others happy alone is the maxim of worldly happiness. This means active selflessness – which is called service and is called sacrifice. It is also yagya.

But we have seen people unhappy who do sacrifice for others and we find them repenting, 'oh, I did so much; no one has done any thing for me; how selfish is the world; I have been cheated; had I known that I would not have behaved like a fool'. Such feelings are the measure of his sacrifice. A sacrifice requiring reciprocity is contaminated as it expects a return. The sacrifice, which expects even gratitude in return, is also not without fault. A yagya is that sacrifice which is not touched even by an iota of any desire – gross or subtle. The unhappiness we get as a result of our *karmas* is because of our hesitation to sacrifice or because of our desire. It is not the fault of sacrifice or yagya.

A sacrifice free from any taint of desire is very difficult. Difficult it is but by knowing the technique one can move on, one can make efforts. The unhappiness, which we experience shows us the filth of our feelings and tells us the way for purifying our sacrifice. We should respect that as a guide. We should accept that and move forward on the path.

A life devoted to yagya is the path of happiness in the world. To think of happiness in a life full of selfishness is a folly. In such a selfish life one can neither eat peacefully nor sleep peacefully. That is a miserable life.

He who does not have peace in this world, how can he have peace in the other world? The basis of the other world is the *karmas* and feelings of this life. If we sow thorns then we will reap

thorns. If we sow flowers, we will reap flowers. He, who is not selfless here, how can he have a higher and blissful life in the other world? He who does not perform yagya, who does not give any thing in charity and who lives only for himself what would he get in future? He becomes bankrupt here itself. What is there for him to carry with him to the other world?

We create an impregnable wall between this world and the other world and that is our ignorance. Only the flow of this life goes to the other world. Our only difficulty is that we are unable to see the other side beyond this life. However, those who are on the other side can see us and they do see us.

‘Arjuna you should also perform yagya. That would make both this world and other world better. Do not think of running away from the battlefield becoming selfish.’

*evam bahuvidha yajna vitata brahmano mukhe /
karmajan viddhi tan sarvan evam jnatva vimoksyase ||32||*

“Vedas prescribe yagyas of many kinds. Those are all accomplished by doing *karmas*. Knowing that, you will be liberated.” (32)

Various forms of yagyas are mentioned in the Vedas. Yajurveda describes only yagyas. Shri Bhagwan says that the yagyas, which He has mentioned and other yagyas as mentioned in the Vedas are accomplished only by doing *karmas*.

Arjuna had learnt to accept the authority of the Vedas. Therefore, Shri Bhagwan referred to the Vedas. ‘I do not say on my own. They have the authority of the Vedas. Vedas do prescribe yagyas.’

And, yagyas can be performed only by doing *karmas*. Without doing *karmas* no yagya is possible. It is necessary to do *karmas* for performing yagyas. For this reason also the view that *karmas* need not be done is untenable.

‘If you have understood that *karma* should be done and doing *karma* is essential for yagya then you will be free from bonds.’

‘Firstly, you will be free from the so-called sin which is the cause of your distress. Then you will be free from the thought that by doing *karma* of fighting in the war you will be committing sin and will have bonds. Then you will be doing the *karma* of fighting, which is prescribed in the Vedas. That will be your yagya. That will be your *sadhana*. In due course of time you will be free from the bonds of *karma*. You will also be free from the cycle of birth and death.’

The topic of yagya comes to an end here. We have seen that by the touch of the touchstone of *brahmarpan* the *karma* itself has been transformed into a yagya and Shri Bhagwan has revealed the secret of making our entire life full of yagya. Once this feeling develops even fighting becomes a yagya. Success of life is to make life full of yagya. A selfish life, a life without emotions, is rejection of life and is wastage.

Later in this chapter, we will find discussion about wisdom (*gyan*). The statement that *gyan-yagya* is best amongst the yagyas takes us to a new topic. We will come to know as to what this *gyan-yagya* really means and why it is said to be the best? Is this *gyan-yagya* not in conflict with *karma*? We will also know this. It is surprising that some people have unnecessarily stretched the meaning of words used in the Gita.

Why has *gyan-yagya* been discussed in the context of *karma-brahmarpan-yoga*? *Brahmarpan-karma* is a yagya. That is dependent upon motive and *gyan-yagya* is dependent upon wisdom (*gyan*). Our wisdom (*gyan*) determines our motives and our motive determine the quality of our yagya.

Secondly, where does this yagya of surrendering *karmas* to Brahman (*brahmarpan-karma yoga*) take us ultimately? It takes us to the attainment of Brahman. Is it any external attainment? No, this attainment is in the form of knowledge (*gyan*).

***sreyan dravyamayad yajnaj jnanayajnah paramtapa /
sarvam karma 'khilam partha jnane parisamapyate ||33||***

“O’ Brave! The yagya of wisdom (*gyan-yagya*) is superior to the one done by the sacrifice of material possessions (*dravya-yagya*). O’ Arjuna! All *karmas*, without exception, culminate in wisdom (*gyan*)”. (33)

The *dravya-yagya* is a yagyadone with material means. That cannot be done without material means. The yagya of making offerings in the sacrificial fire are performed with fuel, purified butter, etc. They are yagyas requiring *dravya* i.e. material means.

The *gyan-yagya* is that yagya in which nothing needs to be done externally. One’s life continues as usual. Just by changing a little inner feelings or inner resolves, normal activities of life transform into a yagya. There is no dependence on anything external in that yagya. This yagya does not require any time and is performed without spending any money. It is such a strange form of yagya, where only wisdom (*gyan*) is important and right understanding is the sole means of this yagya.

The *gyan-yagya* is superior to *dravya-yagya*. Why is it superior? Firstly, it is easier to perform and secondly, it is more effective. It is easier to perform but in what way it is more effective? After all, *karma* is only a means of internal awakening of an individual. In this yagya, *karma* is done for attainment of Brahman and that is only a cognitive process. External yagya is for awakening of inner feelings of devotion. After inner feelings awakened, all *karmas* become a form of yagya. Then what is the requirement of an external yagya? As long as we are not able to experience the presence of Divine without an idol, we need a support and we need to make offering to Him. When He starts dwelling in the body, mind and eyes then what message needs to be sent to Him (*vako kahan sandesh*)?

In this manner, performance of yagya takes us from gross to a subtle level. In this *sadhana* feelings of devotion are alone important. Without feelings, *brahmarpan* is meaningless. The higher and stronger are the feelings, the nearer we are to the Divine. On awakening of feelings, even ordinary *karmas* become carrier of our feelings. Therefore, there remains no necessity for doing ritualistic *karmas*. They gradually become redundant and so are of no consequence. Just as on awakening of real worship with love, ritualistic worship becomes unnecessary and purposeless, so also ritualistic *karmas* become meaningless. These sublime feelings are nothing but wisdom (*gyan*) awakened in heart. When *gyan* flows in the heart then feelings are awakened. Feelings awakened through *karma* develops wisdom also. External *karmas* gradually awaken feelings. Faith matures. *Karmas* done with devotion purify the inner-self. The lamp of wisdom (*gyan*) is lighted in this manner. Support for doing *karmas* free of attachment is no

longer required. Even eating-drinking becomes *brahman-yagya* and also becomes *brahmarpan yoga*.

In this manner, the follower of this path becoming free from the requirement of doing ritualistic *karmas* enters a life filled with *yagya*. In due course of time the lamp of wisdom (*gyan*) is lighted. That basic aphorism '*brahmarpan brahman havih*' i.e. the act of offering is Brahman and the oblation is Brahman becomes real for him.

And once that awareness is gained, *karma* does not remain *karma* but becomes *akarma*. Aspirant does not remain a doer but becomes a non-doer. On the awakening of *gyan*, there is no doer-ship of *karma*. That is the culmination of *karma*, its final destination. It is impossible to bring to an end the requirement of doing external *karmas*. Shri Bhagwan Himself has said so from his blessed mouth (verse 5 of chapter 3). We have written earlier that there is no question of giving up *karma* in the gross form. In this *yoga* there is no place for giving up *karma*. Without doing *karmas* how can the wisdom (*gyan*) be gained?

***tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya /
upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattvadarsinah ||34||***

“You learn that wisdom (*gyan*) by humble reverence, by inquiry and by service. The men of wisdom who have seen the truth will tell you about this wisdom (*gyan*)”. (34)

Is this wisdom (*gyan*), which Shri Bhagwan is mentioning, different or is it the same, which *karma-brahmarpan-yogi* gains on perfection?

***yajjnatva na punar moham evam yasyasi pandava /
yena bhutany asesena drakasyasy atmany atho mayi ||35||***

“O’Pandava! After having wisdom you will not get into delusion again. For by this wisdom (*gyan*) you will see all beings, in their entirety within your own self and in Me.” (35)

Success of the *yoga* of surrendering *karmas* to Brahman i.e. *karma-brahmarpan-yoga*, makes every thing filled with Brahman. One experiences the entire universe as Brahman (*sarva khalvidam Brahman*). It is by this wisdom (*gyan*) that a person sees all beings within himself and also in the Divine. We will again get a description of this wisdom in sixth chapter.

***sarvabhutastham atmannam sarvabhutani ca ‘tmani |
iksate yogayuktatman sarvatra samadarsanah ||6/29||***

This wisdom (*gyan*) is the philosophy of evenness. A *yogi* who sees evenly is supreme, is a highest *yogi*.

A *yogi* united in identity with all pervading infinite consciousness sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.

For he who sees Brahman, for whom everything is filled with Brahman, is Brahman, an equanimous one. There is no doubt about this. For whom everything has become Brahman, he does see evenly. There is no possibility of any unevenness in him.

And this has been mentioned in the 35th verse above. Will see all beings in the Self and in Me’. How will he see like this? By seeing the Self in the Divine, all beings will be seen in Him.

Everything will be seen in the Divine i.e. all that will be filled with Brahman. ‘You will see yourself and also all of them in Me.’

This wisdom is the same. The wisdom gained by a yogi of *karma-brahmarpan* and the wisdom discussed here are not different. That is awakened consciousness beyond the intellect and one’s ego. This wisdom is not intellectual. This wisdom is a philosophy, is an experience and is attainment of the Divine. In this regard Shri Bhagwan Himself says later in this very chapter (38) that having become perfect in yoga, the person himself gains this wisdom in due course of time. Therefore, this wisdom is not a special one. It is the same as the understanding of a perfect *karmayogi* (24).

All *karmas* culminate in wisdom. On attainment of perfection in the form of wisdom the doer-ship comes to an end. The *karma* does not remain *karma* but becomes *akarma*.

Then what is the direction to Arjuna for gaining this wisdom? Could Arjuna attain this wisdom merely by listening to the discourse? Is there any place for this wisdom (*gyan*) in the practice (*sadhana*) of *karma-brahmarpan-yoga*? It seems to have only this much importance that it is the objective of an aspirant. When the objective is properly known then a person does not lose his direction. He has the confidence that he is moving in the right direction. The knowledge, attained through intellect, is only a means. That is devotion. We hear about Shri Bhagwan and think about Him. A feeling arises. Then devotion is developed. One could devote oneself at the feet of the Divine. By listening about this wisdom and by contemplating in this manner a faith for surrendering *karmas* to the Divine develops. This removes ignorance, which used to create confusion and the person can firmly progress on the path of this yoga. This alone is the utility of this wisdom. This was mentioned in the 35th verse as well.

When is this confusion removed? Gain of this wisdom removes the confusion. The confusion arising out of various differences one sees in beings, the basic multiplicity one experiences in life, birth and death, which look important, are removed. ‘You will see all beings in the *atman*. You will not be able to feel yourself different from anyone else, as if, all of them dwell in you. None is out of you. Then, life and death, meeting and separation, loss and gain, etc. will become meaningless. And you will start seeing all of them and yourself too in Me i.e. in Shri Bhagwan’. All this will then become nothing but Divine.

‘Then only I and I alone will remain. Only I will be your life and death. I alone will become your pleasure and pain, and loss and gain.’ How could then there be any scope for this kind of confusion? The delusion, which is the basis of this confusion and which is the mother of stupidity, is removed in the state when the light of wisdom is kindled.

***voh jo parda tha beech main ab na raha
na raha parde main ab voh parda nashin //***

‘The veil which was in between the two has been removed and He who was behind the veil has appeared. This is the self-evident *advaita* of the Gita. In order to prove it no argument is necessary. It is undoubtedly true, for it is the statement of Shri Bhagwan himself. *Karma* itself is success of yoga. This is based on experience.

Intellect can understand this truth. After this truth is understood, confusion in mind is removed, though this cure may be temporary. It can become permanent only when the inner self acquires that wisdom.

There is little difference between seeing in the Self and seeing in the Divine. Through the blossoming of the Self-awareness (*atmabhav*) the person starts feeling that the Divine is present in every thing and then he does not feel anyone different from his own self. Thereafter another feeling comes. The Divine Existence beyond the Self is experienced. In that the Self and the entire universe merges. Only the Divine remains. This is supreme *advaita*, the *advaita* of love. This comes by intense worship.

The individual merges in that *advaita*. His individuality merges with the existence of the Divine and he becomes His form. This *advait* does not erase everything and without erasing it gives such a wonderful feeling of oneness that other does not exist, other cannot exist. That is a divine state. Just as He is not the doer while doing *karma* so the individual does not remain his own self and while not being own self remains in himself.

It is the wisdom by which delusion is destroyed. It appears that the Gita does not take the help of *maya* to prove this point.

How then this wisdom is achieved. Shri Bhagwan tells the way (verse 34). An enlightened one (*tatvadarshigyani*) will preach this to you. A *gyani* is the one who has *gyan* i.e. who has wisdom; who has heard, who has contemplated, who has understood and who has assimilated it. The *gyani* mentioned in the seventh chapter of the Gita is a *sadhak*, a practitioner. Such a *gyani* is an aspirant (*sadhak*). He realises Divine after *sadhana* of many lives - by practicing *karmayoga* with devotion (verse 19 of chapter 7). He does not have the capability of preaching others.

Only the one who is enlightened (*tatvadarshigyani*) can be a teacher. (*tatva darshan*) 'Seeing the truth' means being face-to-face with truth. When we ourselves experience truth, when wisdom does not remain confined to intellect and becomes an experience of our inner Self, when it is not simply knowledge based on arguments and there is an awakening of higher consciousness beyond the intellect then it is known as realisation of the truth or seeing the truth. Only such people are called '*sakshatkrit-dharma*' i.e. the one who has seen reality. He, who has attained perfection, is a seer of truth i.e. the one, who has been fully awakened by his *sadhana*.

Seeing the truth (*tatva darshan*) is perfection of *sadhana*. It is the ripened fruit of the tree of *sadhana*. This is not a temporary gain. Once gained it is never lost. It is that awakened state, which in due course, completely envelops the aspirant. The other i.e. the ego-based consciousness disappears. This is a very high stage in the process of evolution.

Agyani, who has seen the truth, will preach.

How one can get lessons from him? There are three ways: '*pranaipat*' (humility), '*pariprasna*' (seeking clarification) and (*seva*) service. '*Pranaipat*' is complete surrender of vanity, to prostrate at the feet of someone. What is expressed thus: 'I have come to you, I have taken your refuge or I am in your shelter.' Submissiveness is its much diluted form. '*Pranaipat*' is

such a polite insistence that it moves the heart of a *Guru*⁶⁹ and he accepts one as his disciple. Without such an acceptance, no one can gain anything.

This was an old practice. One had to pray for acceptance. Even today, one has to do so. So long as a person does not learn to be humble, he cannot learn any thing. By the feeling that 'teacher is our employee; we have employed the teacher' - nothing can be gained in the field of spirituality. If one could get this wisdom just by reading of books, then Shri Bhagwan would not have made such a high demand from disciples. Bookish knowledge confuses the mind. By stretching arguments beyond limit one cannot concentrate on any thing. Secondly, knowledge gained through books by self-study remains at best an intellectual puppet. That Vedanta is just at the plane of speech, which instead of becoming a devotion of life remains an intellectual conviction. Once the seed of awareness beyond intellect is sown in him, one develops devotion and gets the way for *sadhna*. Then only some day the tree of *sadhana* could bear fruits.

If bookish knowledge had been enough then there would not have been any need for teaching by an enlightened *Guru*. Shri Bhagwan is giving us direction for learning from that *gyani* who has seen the truth.

Therefore, humility is necessary – total elimination of vanity at the feet of the *Guru*. Our vanity is an enemy of our receptivity. 'I know and understand more than he. I have comprehensive experience. I have very wide knowledge.' Yes, he (the *Guru*) knows more about spiritual matters. A teacher (guru) has to be accepted without any reservation. That is possible only by humility. External humility is no humility. Often that kind of humility is a drama. That humility is tainted with arrogance of humility. Only experienced people know what inner humility is.

Without humility, acceptance is not real and the disciple misunderstands that he is accepted.

Why humility is so important? Because, what we want is not a thing within the domain of intellect. One cannot gain that wisdom from any one except from the one who has it. That wisdom cannot be patented. Without humility door for higher inner potentialities cannot open. This is a gift at a subtle plane and is not perceptible. Humility develops in us the ability to receive wisdom. That prepares the ground in which a sapling could be planted.

The second requirement is – *pariprasna*. '*prasna*' means a question and *pariprasna* is a question seeking clarification. One should not nurse any doubts. Whatever arguments or doubts come to the mind, they should be got clarified. When we consider ourselves better, we are afraid of asking questions for the fear that people may consider us a fool. 'My importance will end'. One who thinks so is not yet humble. Some people do not ask counter questions either due to hesitation or due to fear. One should overcome his hesitation and fear. It does not help without overcoming hesitation and fear. One does not gain anything without having his doubts removed.

This does not mean that one can argue unnecessary. Behind *pariprasna*, there should be a desire to understand and not to engage in arguments. Without a modest curiosity, a person wastes his time as well as of others. One should also be satisfied to know what is necessary for him because not everything can be learnt in one stroke. Spiritual practice (*sadhana*) itself blooms with understanding.

⁶⁹ Guru: literally means a teacher but in the present context he is a spiritual teacher and a preceptor or a spiritual guide.

Third is service. In olden days for learning something, it was necessary to live in the hermitage of the teacher and to serve him. Teacher used to preach only after he was satisfied that the student was ready for learning. This proximity gave an opportunity to the teacher to assess the capabilities of his disciple in order to shape his life in an entirely new mould. Moreover, due to the proximity with his *Guru*, the disciple gradually purified and became ready to learn the lessons given to him. His inner self also surrendered in humility, in deep reverence. Then teaching could bear fruits quickly. After he became ready to do his *sadhana* independently he was allowed to leave the house of his teacher.

There is no doubt that it was a method of very high standard. This was a easy method of sacred company (*sat sang*). *Sat sang* is not by speech alone. In this method, important was nearness and receptability. In the name of service, disciple could have prolonged company with his teacher, *sat sang*.

Wisdom is changing of outlook towards life. Wisdom changes life both within and outside.

We have to say this much more that the wisdom of the Gita is not bare *advaitain* which there is no scope for devotion. Wisdom of the Gita does not subscribe to the tradition of indescribability or negation of life. That is a live awareness of Brahman, of the Lord *Purushottama*, and of the awareness of the determinate (*saguna*) and of the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman and that becomes a basis of worship and *karma*. Offering of all activities to the Divine (*karma-brahmarpan-yoga*) is the basis of this yoga. Worshipers of incarnations can also have this awareness. (10/9-11)

Subsequent verses describe the glory and grandness of this wisdom gained after so much of effort. It is indeed invaluable.

***api ced asi papebhyah sarvebhyah papakrttamah /
sarvam jnaja plavenai 'va vrjinam samtari syasse ||36||***

“Even if you are most sinful amongst all sinners you will be salvaged of all sins by the boat of wisdom (*gyan*)”. (36)

Wisdom is a sturdy boat to cross the river of sin. Even greatest of great sins can be got over by wisdom.

Arjuna had perceived fighting as a sinful act. Shri *Bhagwan* counselled him in many ways. He tried in many ways to develop devotion in Arjuna. He had shown Arjuna the path of devotion to duty (*svadharma*) and mentioned to him the yoga of surrendering of *karmas* to the Brahman (*karma-brahmarpan-yoga*). Now he tells him, ‘go and serve any knower of truth and gain wisdom from him, for by that wisdom you would be able to overcome this fear of sin’. It was certainly not the intention of Shri *Bhagwan* that Arjuna should go to the house of a *Guru* and serve him for gaining wisdom. Shri *Bhagwan* himself was the *Guru* of all *Gurus* and was capable too. All that he said was to impress upon Arjuna the importance of wisdom and to impress the importance of spiritual practice (*sadhana*) to gain understanding, which Shri *Bhagwan* has been discussing all along. Again, He brings back Arjuna to the same point and asks him to seek refuge in the yoga of *karma*. Wisdom destroys sins - even the greatest of sins cannot stand before the light of wisdom.

***yathai 'dhamasi samiddho 'gnir bhasmast kurute 'rjuna |
jnagnih sarvakarmani bhasmasat kurute tatha ||37||***

”O’ Arjuna! Just as blazing fire burns wood into ashes so the fire of wisdom burns all *karmas* into ashes”. (37)

In this verse, an example is given to explain. Just as fire burns wood into ash so also the fire of wisdom burns *karmas* into ash. In the previous verse, He said, ‘you will overcome all sins’. Here says, ‘burns all *karmas*’. All ‘*karmas*’ include sins as well as virtues.

So, how does wisdom burn *karmas*? We know that there can never be an absence of *karma* per-se. Therefore, by giving up *karmas* freedom cannot be gained. The other alternative is to convert them into *akarmas*. Wisdom converts *karmas* into *akarmas*. Neither duty survives nor do *karmas* bind. No tendency is created. Only *karma* is seen being done. As a roasted seed does not germinate, so the *karmas* of a wise man do not bear fruit.

How knowledge converts *karma* into *akarma*?

By seeing every thing pervaded by the Brahman, ego is removed. In the absence of ego there cannot be doer-ship. In the absence of doer-ship, *karmas* of a person become *akarmas*.

This is *sadhana*. While making efforts to gain this wisdom a person can do *karmas*. He can also do *karma* by keeping the feeling of surrender. As the inner source of wisdom starts developing, his *karmas* start becoming *akarmas* and no new tendencies form, even old tendencies start vanishing and are finally destroyed. In this manner, the aspirant becomes free from the consequences of his *karmas*.

He crosses the river of sin. His *karmas* are burnt. He becomes free from bonds.

Maturity of the *karma-brahmarpan-yoga* is the basis of this *sadhana*. One does this *sadhan* by following the method mentioned in verses 34 and 35. It requires that *karmas* be done by being wise. This is the subject of next chapter. That is *karma-sanyas yoga*.

How is *karma yoga* changes its form? Shri *Bhagwan* keeps opening unique treasure of *sadhana* before Arjuna.

*na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate |
tat svayam yogasamsiddhah kalena tmani vindati ||38||*

“There is nothing more pure than wisdom (*gyan*) in this world. A person perfected in yoga gains by himself this wisdom (*gyan*) in due course of time”. (38)

Second half of this verse is in praise of this wisdom. In this verse wisdom has been called purest. There is nothing purer than wisdom. The awareness of the Divine is of course purest. What could be purer than the wisdom by which the Divine is known? After knowing the Divine a person becomes pure forever and becomes free from any possibility of committing any sin? What could be purer than this?

Wisdom is purer than *karma*. Without it, *karma* is a cause of bondage. In other words without deep sublime devotion, *karmas* lead to bonds. But when *karmas* are done with devotion then they lead to wisdom.

Devotion? The wisdom and devotion are the same. A wise person is a great devotee too. Wisdom with feelings of surrender becomes devotion. *Premadvaita* of devotion is nothing but

wisdom. It has already been mentioned that intellectual knowledge is not enough. The wisdom is authentic only when consciousness beyond the intellect is developed in us.

Shri *Bhagwan* says –

*tesam jnani nityayukta ekabhaktir visisyate /
priyo hi jnanino 'tyartham aham sa ca mama priyah ||7/17//
udarah sarva evai 'te jnani tv atmani 'va me matam |
asthitah sa hi yuktatman mam eva 'nuttamam gatim ||7/18//*

"All of them are dear to Me. (But) the one who abides in Me with his single minded devotion is my soul, is the best. I am certainly most dear to him and he is dear to Me". (Verse 17 of chapter 7)

"Noble indeed are all of them, but I hold the man of wisdom (gyani) as My own *atman* because he is one with Me on the highest plane and has taken My refuge believing Me as his best option". (Verse 18 of chapter 7)

Therefore, wisdom is devotion. A man of wisdom is none else but a devotee. Who does not know Divine, what kind of a devotee he is? Devotion is not blind as it has divine eyes. It can see across the darkness of confusion and ignorance. That is unflinching devotion beyond doubt. Its basis is lessons given by experienced saints.

What an understanding Shri *Bhagwan* gives. Knowledge about Brahman is verily devotion. Once Divine is known, it will not be possible for anyone not to surrender to Him. The Divine becomes so dear to us that it will not be possible to live without Him.

Wisdom is devotion and devotion is wisdom. What a unique synthesis it is? What a transcendental view this is? What a liberal philosophy this is? How one can gain His knowledge? Are the teachings of a seer of truth enough? The preaching of a seer of truth is the beginning of *sadhana*. It is only helpful in finding the way. One gains this wisdom after he is perfect in yoga. It is the same yoga – *karmayoga* or *karma-brahmarpan-yoga*, that is discussed.

Just by taking the road to Nainital a man does not reach Nainital. So also just by taking lessons from a seer of truth, one does not become a seer of truth. It is just like taking the road.

From this, it becomes clear that this knowledge is not just intellectual but is a stable inner state in which higher consciousness is developed. Because of this wisdom all beings are seen in the self and in the Divine, and then everything is seen pervaded with Brahman and our outlook becomes even on its own. *Karmayoga* is a means for this wisdom. By continuous practice, one attains a state of perfect realisation. Emergence of this wisdom and final realisation of *sadhana* are simultaneous.

The present verse does not appear to subscribe to the theory that *karmayoga* is a mere preparation and thereafter one will have to take to *sanyas*⁷⁰. The present verse does not support that view. *Karmayoga* in itself is a complete technique. No special effort is separately required for gaining this wisdom.

Moreover, wisdom is gained within self. This wisdom is not external, nor is it something placed within by wisdom. This is not a resolve. This is inner consciousness verily an experience.

⁷⁰ *sanyas*: renunciation of worldly life

'*kalen*'—in due course of time. This wisdom cannot be gained instantly like a game of magic. This is total transformation of inside as well as of outside. It is a necessary condition to be reached in the process of evolution.

Verses 27 and 28 of chapter 6 confirm this view. One becomes even and perceptive by association and nearness with Brahman.

When this wisdom develops inside? When a person gains it? What is his inner state at that time?

*sraddhavaml labhate jnanam tatparah samyatendriyah /
jnanam labdhva param santim acirena 'dhigacchati* ||39||

“The person, who is intent, a devotee and has control over his sense organs, gains this wisdom. After having gained this wisdom without any delay he attains supreme peace”. (39)

In the 34th verse, humble reverence (*pranaipat*) was mentioned as a method for receiving lessons from a Guru. However, one gains wisdom when devotion develops. Devotion is not an intellectual belief. That is a sincere and deep emotion of love and respect developed for someone. That is not just a feeling but is much more stable, strong and deep. The one towards whom we have feelings of devotion starts dwelling in us. We get united with him. One's inner purity strengthens devotion. Possibility of having devotion is indicative of the state of trust. That is a great creative strength.

Devotion for whom? Devotion is for the Divine, for whom else. Devotion towards wisdom surely has no meaning. Does wisdom speak? Does it accept our love? Is the awareness of the Divine not a form of wisdom? After devotion in the Divine is developed then this wisdom is realised. The divine consciousness gained. Realisation of the Divine is the attainment of wisdom.

Only unflinching devotion is the method of realizing Him. Devotion indicates his presence.

'*tatpar*'— He who has become the primary goal of life. One lives for Him, for the Divine, for Brahman, for attaining Brahman, and for attaining wisdom.

This wisdom is not cheap. Its price is the sacrifice of whole life. There should remain no place in life for any thing else – either for an object, an individual, or for any other gratification. Only the Divine should be the goal. All activities of life, whether in gross or in subtle should be for Him alone. This is single-mindedness. Without such devotion no gain is possible. Eyes cannot open.

Does '*tatpar*' means determination to gain wisdom or the Divine? We do not find any difference between the two. However, the second meaning seems to be more appropriate. The first meaning maybe that the *sadhana* is more important or the inclination is only for doing *sadhana* or *yoga-parah*. Being *prabhuparah* means 'Divine is important'. Then one can gain this wisdom automatically. An aspirant gains much more.

And, the third characteristic is – *samyatendriyah*: i.e. he who has control over his senses.. By control over sense organs devotion and single-mindedness develops. Devotion alone does not prove control over sense organs or control over prana. Devotion and single-mindedness restrain the mind and intellect and transform them too, but turbulent *prana* can still disturb sense

organs. *Prana* is pacified gradually by continuous *sadhana* and by the grace of the Divine. Then there is peace and harmony within – a stable peace prevails within us. And in that stable peace the Sun of wisdom rises. As peace influences consciousness, wisdom grows. In the beginning, wisdom appears for sometime and then it disappears, because the inner state of consciousness is not stable. Gradually a higher consciousness descends in the mind and the intellect. Then one gains the wisdom -Supreme forever and has incessant awareness of the Divine. One always and everywhere perceives Him. The person becomes free of all confusions.

And, when this wisdom-Supreme is gained, can peace be far away? The wisdom-Supreme brings peace along with it. Peace comes with it like a maid, like shadow.

What is this peace? It is supreme peace where there is never a possibility of any disturbance or confusion. Any possibility of turmoil or of rise of tumultuous emotions ends. Ego and problems arising therefrom eliminated. Ego causes turmoil within us.

Causes of turmoil are within. Our likes, dislikes, desires, passions, anger, etc. and ego, are causes of turmoil, inner restlessness. External situations are only means to ignite them. External situations can never cause mental turmoil. Once situations do not cause any disturbance or turmoil, then our reaction to them changes. When inner-self is peaceful and quiet, how there can be any unrest outside? If any situation can create disturbance within us then inner peace is not stable and wisdom not gained. It has not yet been realised and the feeling of realisation is deceptive. What being felt is not complete, is still incomplete. This is the touchstone by which, the seeker can easily test his state. This test never fails.

On gaining wisdom-Supreme, attachment to objects end and so the feeling of any deficiency ends and then there are no inner demands.

That is such a peaceful state in which there is no demand, as there cannot be any demand. In it there are no limits. The person himself becomes a pillar of peace and radiates peace everywhere.

The world craves for peace and searches for it. When everything is transient in the world outside how could there be peace therein? The road to peace is within. One will have to transform his life into perennial *sadhana*. One will have to make Him the supreme objective of life and will have to worship the Divine through his life. One day the divine gate of supreme peace will open. There is no peace anywhere except in the feet of the Divine.

And what happens to him who strays from the path of *sadhana*?

**ajnas ca 'sraddadhanas ca samsayatman vinasyati |
na 'yam loko 'sti na paro na sukham samsayatmannah ||40||**

“A person who is ignorant, has no faith and is of doubtful nature, perishes. For such a person there is neither this world, nor the world beyond, nor any happiness.” (40)

'*Samsayatman*': he, who has doubts i.e. one who is of doubtful nature; who doubts about every thing?

Intellect is such a cobweb that once a person caught in it, it is difficult for him to come out, as the intellect remains active all the time. Yes, the intellect of some people remains active even

in sleep and also in dreams. Such intellect is a problem. Even when a person does not want to think he cannot stop doing so. It happens when the consciousness beyond intellect has not as yet developed and when our own existence becomes subservient to intellectual consciousness.

Such a person claims to be a rationalist in every matter. He gradually becomes dependent upon his intelligence and gives it undue importance. He does not know any thing beyond his intelligence and remains dependent on it for his whole life. For him his intelligence soon becomes an obsession. The web of arguments and counter arguments is woven and unwoven day in and day out. This sport continues. Intelligence, which we kept as a house maid, settles herself as the lady of the house leaving no space for us in the house.

What a pitiable situation it is. We cannot imagine the situation without experience. Its ultimate result leads to an asylum or to nervous breakdown. One is always afraid of enemies or of death. He destroys himself, his own life. This is misuse of intellect and this is the result of that misuse. It is a terrifying portrayal of destruction brought about by being of doubtful nature.

Then should we have no doubts at all? Should we not think at all? After all the God has given us the intellect and it should certainly be used.

Yes, it should be used but properly. If, however, result of its use leads to downfall then the use is surely improper or incorrect. We should think for reaching a conclusion and to translate that conclusion into action. Thinking just for the sake of thinking is a misuse of the intellect. By constant thinking one loses direction.. He even forgets the purpose of his thinking. Forgets the purpose for which he was thinking. Also, forgets the purpose of life for which decision was to be taken. Where thinking does not have practical utility then there is danger. It is a first step toward lunacy. Philosophy having no relevance to life is dangerous. It has no leg to stand. Therefore, it is endless. Our practical life should be the manure for our thoughts and thoughts for our practical life. Then only our intellectual ability is rightfully used; then only we can be free from unnecessary doubts. For our *sadhana* we should think only as much as is required. Think, when it is required.

When we limit our thinking in this manner, then we are able to take decisions and can have conviction. Then there will be no doubts of any kind.

Unnecessary thinking is waste of energy, time and peace.

Moreover, everything cannot be known by intellect. Intellect has its limits. It can know certain things and cannot know others. Howsoever sharp and intelligent one may be, even his intellect will not have access to certain areas and is sure to be of no use in some specific areas. Howsoever fast a horse may run but he cannot fly in air. He needs earth under his feet to move. Just like that understanding of the Divine is beyond intellect and mind. Arguments have no place in this sphere. Therefore, those who decide, one way or the other, based on arguments, remain undecided in spiritual matters - sometimes they are theists and sometimes atheists, riding on two horses. They are one during night and another during day. This process may continue for their whole life. Where arguments have no place, how a decision is taken? The one who has no legs, how can he stand? Those who cannot think and accept any means for knowledge beyond intellect are helpless. Moreover, their scientific temper tells them that they should not accept anything

without adequate evidence and that evidence should also be perceptible. They say, 'we will accept if you can show us your God.' Such unfortunate ones are pitiable. We can only pray to the God to give them some sense. We should not argue with them because that will only aggravate their problem – their disease. May be some misfortune may remove their ignorance.

For matters, which are not the subject of intellect, there is no option but to accept views of those who have understanding about it. However, there can be problem in following every knowledgeable person because different people have different views. One will have to select a path and then follow the knower of that path. Without this minimum trust one cannot do *hissadhana*.

Doubts nullify everything whatsoever we do. They close the door for the grace of the Divine. You will have to learn to stop thinking for being free from doubts. You will have to firmly ignore all unwarranted thoughts. For a modern educated person it is difficult to get over his doubts. This is a high cliff.

He is certainly a fool, who is ignorant and thinks that he is very knowledgeable. Not knowing is not something to be afraid of. One should not be afraid of one's ignorance. But he who does not know, and neither does he know that he does not know anything, that unfortunate person is sitting in a room with all doors closed. He is just resting his head on a wall to push it. He thinks he is moving. Disposition to doubt is in league with foolishness. He who bows his head before somebody, his doubts can be removed. But the one who does not do so, his doubts persist; he continues to have doubts.

The one who thinks that he is wise, what can he learn? The disposition full of doubts indicates lack of receptivity. A person of such nature has no faith. His thoughts are not stable. Then how any depth and firmness in his sentiments could be possible? How then can there be any depth and stability in his feelings. There cannot be reverence without firmness and depth in one's feelings. How can there be love for the feet of God? How can there be intense devotion? How can he gain anything?

Being devoid of faith and being doubtful is misfortune. For such a person doors of higher possibilities of life remain closed. For him life is dull and devoid of interest in anything. If one believes in pleasures of life then by enjoying them he can have transitory happiness for sometime. But what can one achieve who is always in doubt about every thing? He wastes his entire life thinking whether he should or should not enjoy life. He has doubts about people too, whether they are truthful or not. As a result of his doubts, he is unable to behave properly with others. He cannot open his heart before anyone for he has no friend. He has doubts about his wife, about his son, about his food, drinks, etc. There is no end to this chain. This is a disease, which spreads to all fields of his life. He does not trust anything or any one.

Therefore, for such a person there is no happiness in the world. No field opens for his energies to use. He does not find any body worthy of his love in the entire world. He finds evil everywhere. He perceives only vanity and suffering everywhere, perceives problems. He has doubts in every work. Therefore, he is not able to engage himself in any work. He, who cannot give any thing in his life to others, to the society, can never live peacefully. If no field opens up

for the release of his energies, he will always be restless. In his entire life he will not be able to move an inch.

Doubtfulness is a serious disease. It is like tuberculosis which eats a person from within.

What will be the future of the one who has wasted his life like this? It will be dark, bleak. After death, only our good deeds, like love, service and sacrifices, become the cause of higher attainments. As is our faith, so is the after-world we attain.

He who has no faith, all his deeds go waste.

*asradhaya hutam dattam tapas taptam krtam ca yat /
asad ity ucyate partha na ca tat pretya no iha ||17/28||*

Offering, charity or gifts given without love or reverence; penance and *karma* done without faith are called '*asat*' (unreal), and are not fruitful either here or after death." Only by doing good deeds with faith one has satisfaction and has peace. That gives a kind of happiness. Whatever good *karma* one might do, it will not give him happiness if done without faith. He will remain as dry as he is. Therefore, lack of faith makes life devoid of any pleasure or enthusiasm. The other world is also spoiled automatically.

There is nothing in this world by having doubts and the other world will also be bleak. A doubting person can never have any happiness in life.

Ordinary pleasures are results of our reactions towards life. He, who can happily accept various situations in life, as gifts of God, can alone be happy even in difficulties of life. He, who is afraid of unhappiness, even without any cause for unhappiness, feels scared and remains unhappy without any reason.

Secondly, happiness is dependent upon what we can give to others and what we can do for others or how we behave in our life with others. He, who can work with devotion, gets pleasure in doing that work. He, who can love others, gets pleasure out of that love. He, who can serve others, finds pleasure in doing service.

Thirdly, the scale of our happiness-unhappiness is our desires. The extent to which we get happiness-unhappiness depends upon how much we demand and how much we get in return. For one who desires a sum of one lakh rupees, for him gain of ten thousand rupees will be a cause of unhappiness. He will be unhappy for the loss of rupees 90,000. But he, who desires only a thousand rupees, gets ten thousand rupees, he will be very happy. A wise person can always find a reason for being happy.

However, the problem of a person of suspicious nature is that he does not become happy nor does he become unhappy. He is not also beyond the state of happiness and unhappiness. He remains in a state of frightful vacuum – a void; loneliness seems to consume his life. His condition is like that of a person suffocating in a closed room. Such a state is also reached either due to a severe shock received in life or in a state of rocking disappointment and then the person loses his confidence. He becomes skeptical even about higher values of life.

How could there be spiritual *sadhana* in suspiciousness? A state of overwhelming suspiciousness is always pitiable. Such a person is an object of pity.

What was the state of Arjuna? He had lost direction of his life. He was '*dharmasamudhcheta*' (2/ 7). The main cause of his distress was that he had lost faith in his '*kshatriya-dharma*', which once had an important place in his glorious life as a valiant warrior.

It will not be improper to refer here to verse 66 of second chapter:

na ca 'bhavayatah santir asantasya kutah sukham |
(How the one having no peace of mind can have satisfaction?)

What conclusion Shri *Bhagwan* reaches while concluding this topic?

yogasamnyastakarmanam jnanasamchinnasamsayam |
atmanvantam na karmani nibadhnanti dhanamjaya ||41||

“He who has renounced all his *karmas* through yoga, whose doubts have been removed through wisdom (*gyan*), (and) who has become aware of himself (*atmavan*), O' Arjuna, *karmas* do not bind him.” (41)

After all this discussion, Shri *Bhagwan* comes to the same conclusion that *karmas* by themselves do not bind. He says, 'O' Arjuna, *karmas* do not necessarily bind. *Karma* can be done even without any bondage i.e. any binding effect. Therefore, you do your *karma*. Of course, you should know the correct method of doing *karmas*. Then there will be no bondage.'

He again describes the state of '*naishyakarmaya*' from the point of view of yoga and wisdom. Whom *karmas* do not bind?

'*yogasamnyastakarmanam*'-- who renounces his *karmas* through yoga. Yoga? *Karmayoga* – *karma-brahmarpan-yoga*. This is an easy way of renouncing *karmas*. The *karmas* are given to the Divine, are offered to Him. They become divine. '*Yoga samnyasta karmana*' means the one who has surrendered all his *karma* to the Divine through the practice of yoga – *sadhana*. All his *karmas* automatically offered to the Divine, his life itself is offered to Him, and his *sadhana* is successful.

Initially efforts are to be made. Feelings are to be developed again and again. The Lord of *yagyas*, *Yagyaishwar*, invoked in every moment of life and *karma* offered to Him, at His feet with feelings. In due course of time, that process becomes natural. *Yagyaishwar* starts accepting offering of our *karmas* and starts dwelling in us. *Karma* is done as an offering to Him. The *karma* is done and renounced. This is the mature state of *sadhana* and in this state *karma* becomes *akarma*.

And says: '*jnanasamchinnasamsayam*' – whose doubts have been removed by wisdom. Wisdom removes doubts, just as light removes darkness. In the absence of proper realisation, doubts do persist. When by the grace of someone in whom a person has faith doubts can be removed. As long as a *karma* is not done with understanding the person can always look back.

But when the realisation of the Divine is practiced in life then there are no doubts. As if doubts are buried. They are over forever. With regular *sadhana*, wisdom is finally victorious. The means of gaining wisdom have already been mentioned above – *pranaiyat*, etc.

Only the knower of truth is beyond any possibility of doubt. The awareness before the realisation of truth is based only on trust, faith in the Guru or on the words of Shri *Bhagwan*. They can always destabilise, if strongly hit. But the wisdom gained by experience is so firm that it cannot be shaken by any argument or by any blow, howsoever, powerful it may be. As hunger is removed by taking food, so are doubts removed by having the realisation of the Divine. And in that state alone a person is fully free from the bonds of *karma*.

***bhidyate hridayagranthi chidyante sarvasamshayah I
chidyante chasya karmani tasmin drashte paravare II***
(mundkopenishad 2-2-8)

“The knots of heart are loosened. After having the vision of Brahman, the Supreme Being (*Parbrahman Paramaishwara*) all doubts are removed and all *karmas* destroyed”.

This is stated in the Upanishad.

The feeling of the Supreme God (*Paramaishwara*) is itself wisdom and by that awareness removal of all doubts is possible. Roots of suspiciousness (*avidya*) beyond ego -- ignorance is in the root of multiplicity, is the cause of doubts. Ignorance is removed by the realization of Divinity. Consequently, any possibility of doubts is also removed. Everything becomes full of Brahman. How then can there be doubts and where will they be?

The third characteristic is ‘*atmanvantam*’. *Karmas* do not bind *atmavan*. The word ‘*atmavan*’ was used in 45th verse of 2nd chapter. There Shri *Bhagwan* directed Arjuna to go beyond the three qualities and be ‘*nirdwanda*’⁷¹, ‘*nityasatvastha*’⁷², and ‘*niryogakshema*’⁷³ to become ‘*atmavan*’. We do not find that these words have been used elsewhere in the Gita.

Atmavan – possessor of the self - master of the Self. Only he who has full confidence in himself can be the master of his Self. And, what is this Self or *atman*? Does the word ‘*atman*’ indicate the consciousness beyond mind and intellect? No, it is not. For that direction is, ‘you become *atmavan*’. ‘*Atman*’ or Self is that existence on which the supreme consciousness and our own consciousness should have lordship. ‘*Atman*’ or Self is a combination of all elements of *prakriti*, from body to ego i.e. body, prana, organs, mind, intellect, and ego. All these elements are from the lower i.e. *aparaprakriti* of the Divine.

Then, are we not *atmavan*? In the normal state, answer is no. Just as a cub of lion grown with a flock of sheep is not aware of his own intrinsic nature and behaves like a sheep. Our state is much worse than of that cub. We dance to the tunes of the mind, intellect and sense organs. We lose ourselves to the demands of our body. We do not know that entire *prakriti* is for us and we are not for it. We consider ourselves as its slave, but in fact *prakriti* should be our slave.

⁷¹ nirdwanda: free from the dualities i.e. the pair of opposites, like pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness, etc.

⁷² nityasatvastha: firmly fixed in purity, established in Supreme reality

⁷³ niryogakshema: absolutely unconcerned about the fulfillment of wants and preservation of what has already been possessed

This Self is a means for gaining experiences of life at various levels. These experiences are necessary for awakening of our latent possibilities. They are necessary for our evolution. Just as a carpenter has his tools for doing his work, so we have this Self for our evolution. Just as a carpenter has to service his tools from time to time so that he can use them for his work, so also we have to service our Self for attaining our objectives. But we forget, we make this Self a means for attaining happiness for ourselves instead of using this Self as a means for experiences. Because of this misuse we lose lordship. We become its slave, slave of our sense organs

That person who is lord of his Self, who is capable of making a good use of it, whose *prakriti* behaves as per his volitions, is 'atmavan'. He is owner of his Self and its lord too. He is confident.

The one, who has these three characteristics remains free from the bonds of his *karmas* even while doing *karmas*.

It is clear that *there will be bonds* if there are doubts, if there is no control over one's Self or if the *karmas* are not renounced. Therefore, in the end Shri *Bhagwan* directs Arjuna thus-

***tasmad ajnanasambhutam hrstham jananasina 'tmanh |
chittvai 'nam samsayam yogam atistho 'ttistha bharata ||42||***

“Therefore, cutting your doubts with the sword of wisdom, born of ignorance and residing in your heart, stand up and take recourse to yoga. O’ Arjuna!” (42)

As was mentioned earlier, at the root of Arjuna's distress was his doubt that he would be incurring sin by acting according to his duty as a *kshatriya* and he and others would be harmed. That was the nature of his doubt. He had fought many wars before. He had defeated and killed many warriors. But, that day he was having doubt whether war was a virtue or an evil? Whether or not was it worth fighting?

Shri *Bhagwan* says ignorance is the cause of doubts. Shri *Bhagwan* says: ‘you do not know the secret of *karmas*. Do not understand its form as *yagya*. You have doubts because you do not know Me, the deity of the *yagya*. This doubt makes you fearful. This will spoil your this world as well as the other world. That will deprive you of your happiness as well as strength.’

‘This doubt is very deep. It has taken abode in your heart’. As long as a doubt is confined to intellect, it does not become a cause of distress but only causes mental disturbance. However, when it sinks deep and influences the heart then the entire body gets listless and limbs paralysed. Heart is the center of body. When that starts sinking then every limb starts sinking. That was the state of Arjuna. He was not able to keep standing. ‘This disease of doubt is in your heart’. In order to deal with enemy one has to find out where the enemy is located.

What is the method for its removal? Use the sword of wisdom. Wisdom itself is a sword. It may be possible to fight by borrowing someone else's sword, but that is not possible for removal of doubts. ‘If my wisdom could have served your purpose then there was no necessity for me forgiving such a long discourse, and your listening to it. Arjuna, you will have to use your own sword.’

‘This is the wisdom, which was discussed above. All this is filled with Divine. Everything dwells in Him. I am also verily His form. *Karma* is His worship’.

‘With this sword of wisdom kill the enemy of doubt and practice this yoga.’

‘After casting off your doubts develop confidence and with that confidence do your *karmas*. The act of fighting is your *kshatriya dharma* and is a *yagya* for you. This is your means for realising the Divine. This is the best way for your good. Only by doing this you will be totally free from the bonds of *karmas*.’

‘Remove your doubts, get up and get ready. Abandon petty weakness of your heart. You are brave and you must fight like a brave person.’

The *karma-brahmarpan-yoga* ends here. We notice how clearly Shri Bhagwan has explained the nature of Brahman (Brahman-tattva). That *Brahman-Purushottama* in spite of being the doer of everything – all *karmas* - remains a non-doer. His worship makes a person like Him. The secret of *akarma* is also revealed. *Karmas* done in the spirit of sacrifice (*yagya*) are means of worshipping the Divine. They fill a person with Divine consciousness.

Then Shri Krishna described different kind of *yagyas*, described nature of wisdom and described why *gyan yagya* is best. And after having taken a big detour, Shri *Bhagwan* again advised Arjuna ‘to remove doubts by your wisdom and practice yoga by surrendering *karmas* to the Divine’. ‘Develop confidence, for fighting itself will be beneficent for you.’

The dexterity with which Shri *Bhagwan* revealed the secret of *karma-brahmarpan* is amazing. The same *karmayoga* now looks so grand, comprehensive, easy and natural in this new form. How simple is the means and even without much effort it is so very beneficent.

In the next chapter the same *karmayoga*, which is yoga of surrendering actions to the Brahman i.e. *karma-brahmarpan yoga* in this chapter, will appear as the yoga of renunciation of actions i.e. *karma-sanyas yoga*. What a wonderful play of Shri *Bhagwan* played by this amazing transformation affected by His magical touch?

|| SHRI RAM ||

CHAPTER 5

The *karmayoga* of the third chapter becomes '*karma-brahmarpan yoga*'⁷⁴ in the fourth chapter. *Karma-brahmarpan yoga* is also '*karma-sanyas yoga*'. Slight change in perspective reveals its '*karma-sanyas*'⁷⁵ form. In this chapter the secret of renouncing *karmas* without externally abandoning them has been revealed. It is for this reason that this chapter has been titled '*karma-sanyas-yoga*'. In this chapter we will also come to know how a yogi transforms gradually by becoming skilled in this yoga.

This chapter begins with a question of Arjuna.

arjuna uvacha
samnyasam karmanam krsna punar yogam ca samsasi /
yac chreya etayor ekam tan me bruhi suniscitam //1||

Arjuna said –

“O’ Krishna You first speak of renunciation of *karmas* and then speak of yoga. Tell me definitely which one of the two is better”. (1)

In the beginning of the third chapter also Arjuna had asked a similar question. The doubt, he had expressed in the beginning of the third chapter had not yet been completely cleared. Consequently, there has been a scope for such a question.

The relationship of *Sanyas* and of *karma yoga* is indeed very deep. Usually, external renunciation is considered as *Sanyas*, but external renunciation does not really lead to *sanyas*. *Sanyas* is possible only by having an inner detachment with *karma* i.e. '*naishyakarmaya*'. This can be attained by engaging in *karma* and by becoming a 'non-doer' while performing *karma*. It is certainly difficult to understand that how a 'doer' of *karma* can become a 'non-doer'.

The question of Arjuna relates to this secret. In this chapter while giving a reply to this question, Shri *Bhagwan* reveals to Arjuna the secret of '*karma-sanyas*'. He also harmonizes *sanyas* and *karma yoga* and completes the description of the form of *karma yoga*.

shri bhagwan uvach
samnyasah karmayogas ca nihsreyasakarav ubhau /
tayos tu karmasamnyasat karmayogo visisyate //2||

Shri *Bhagwan*says –

“Both *sanyas* and *karma yoga* are beneficent. Of the two, *karma yoga* is superior to *karma-sanyas* (renunciation of *karmas*)”. (2)

*Sanyas*⁷⁶ is a path of external renunciation of *karmas*. This has been discussed before. *Sanyas* is renouncement of all duties and responsibilities, which a person is required to discharge as a householder and as a member of the society. But why one renounces them? Is it for the good

⁷⁴ *karma-brahmarpana yoga*: the yoga of surrendering of actions to Brahman

⁷⁵ *karma-sanyas*: the renunciation of action

⁷⁶ *Sanyas*: renouncement of all worldly activities i.e. renouncement of family and social life

of self, for gaining wisdom or for salvation? Other name for sanyas is wisdom or *gyan*. This *gyan* is *anatman* i.e. not related to the Self or *atman*. For being established in *atmatattva*⁷⁷ i.e. to identify with the Self, it is necessary to renounce all that which is not related to the Self. This is the basic concept of the path of renunciation (*sanyas*).

‘A person can engage in self-meditation by renouncing *karmas*, allowing for free contemplation. By being free from his worldly duties and responsibilities, he can fully devote himself to spiritual practice. Therefore, *karmas* pertaining to worldly obligations need to be renounced. A person creates bonds by doing *karmas* for gratification of worldly desires. Besides, for discharging worldly responsibilities money is required, home is needed and also dealings with other people are necessary. And for having resources, one has to have desires. It will be necessary to think about them and to work for their attainment. Work will in turn create further bonds, which are sure to get strong. Follower of the path of renunciation (*sanyas*) thinks so.

For Arjuna, *sanyas* meant abandoning of war and taking refuge in a jungle, leaving behind worldly life, to live on alms. Fighting is the duty of a warrior. For Arjuna abandonment of that duty was *sanyas*. Shri *Bhagwan* had discussed about *sanyas* but had not mentioned about the external form of renouncement. The word ‘*sanyas*’ was considered as a synonym of ‘*gyan-marg*’. That was the reason for confusion.

Because of the disappearance of the practice of ‘*karma yoga*’ people had forgotten the subtle secret of ‘*naishyakarmaya*’. It appears that *sanyas* itself was considered as ‘*naishyakarmaya*’.

Arjuna asks which of the two paths is better: paths of *sanyas* or *karma yoga*. Shri *Bhagwan* gives a clear answer, ‘both are beneficent but *karma yoga* is better than *sanyas*’.

During the times of Mahabharata it was considered necessary to renounce external *karmas* for following the path of wisdom (*gyan marg*). the samkhya philosophy advocated that path for salvation. Is in that path, *karma yoga* had no place for contemplation on *atman-anatman*? We will find an answer to this question later.

‘*Nihsreyasakaro*’ – the one who does not take credit for the work he does. Greatest credit one may take is to take no credit. No other credit is considered greater than this in life. ‘*Nihsreya*’ means, no credit, ‘after achieving which nothing else is left to be achieved’. This is known as ‘*paramartha*’ – for the sake of others. Highest achievement of life, therefore, is ‘*nihsreya*’.

Followers of the path of renunciation (*sanyas*) and also of the path of *karma yoga* are liberated; both get salvation or ‘*moksha*’. In the 12th chapter also, same has been said, ‘*te prapnuvanti mamev*’, i.e. they attain Me.

‘But amongst the two, the path of *karma yoga* is special’. Being engaged in *karmas* (*karma yoga*) is better than renouncing *karmas*, the path of renunciation (*sanyas*). This has also been mentioned in the 12th chapter and there the difficulties of the path of renunciation have also been mentioned.

⁷⁷ *atmatattva*: the *atman*, the soul, the self, the spirit

Why *karma yoga* is better? Is it because it is easy or there is some other reason for it being better? We will find answer in the next verse.

*jneyah sa nityasamnyasi yo na dvesti na kanksati /
nirdvando hi mahabaho sukham bandhat pramucyate //3||*

“He who neither likes nor hates should be known as one with eternal spirit of renunciation, a saint (permanent *sanyasi*). O’Brave! Certainly he being free from conflicts is easily released from his bonds”. (3)

This verse describes the state of a *karma yogi*. A *karma yogi* does his *karmas* without any expectation or aversion. *Karmas* can be done without any expectation. Expectation is a desire. That causes bonds. An ordinary person is motivated by expectations to do *karmas*. Arjuna was fighting in expectation of gaining kingdom. Desire is in the nature of *rajoguna*. That motivates a person. That also binds him. Desire is a mature form of attachment. ‘*Sangat samjayatekamah*’ i.e. attachment gives rise to desire. *Karma* by itself does not bind a person but the desire (likes) behind *karma* binds. Therefore, it is said, ‘one who does not have likes’.

And, ‘who does not hate’. In *karmas*, like fighting, feeling of hate is natural. Arjuna was full of hatred for Duryodhana. How could Arjuna forget the way Duryodhana had harassed Pandavas? Pandavas having found no other alternative but war, in sheer desperation, prepared for war. In that situation, describing the state of a *karma yogi*, Shri *Bhagwan* says, ‘who does not have hatred’. Simultaneously, he is motivating Arjuna to fight. It is clear that the *karma* like fighting could also be done without any feeling of hatred. Shri *Bhagwan* himself was an example. He was a relation of Arjuna and also of Duryodhana. On the one side he himself was present and on the other side was his army. If he had dislike or hatred for any one of them then why had he helped them at all? Moreover, if it was not at all possible to fight without hatred then why was he asking Arjuna to fight?

The meaning of the phrase ‘one who does not have hatred’ could be ‘one who is indifferent to the fruits of his actions’. In other words, he can also accept defeat. There should neither be desire for victory nor aversion for defeat i.e. one should remain even both in victory and in defeat.

Both situations should be acceptable to a *karma yogi*. The state of complete evenness includes both. There should be evenness both towards people and also towards results of *karma*. In fact both are inter-related. A *karma yogi* gradually becomes free from any possibility of aversion. He, having a higher perspective, accepts all situations and all people.

The one, who has attained this state, free from attachment and aversion, know him as an eternal saint.

Sanyas of the one, who renounces now and then or who renounces some things and does not renounce other things, is casual. The one, who has mentally renounced everything, whose nature is not to possess anything and who has left everything for all times, is an eternal saint, a *sanyasi*. *Sanyas* is for him who possesses something or who could possess something. What he would renounce who does not possess anything? He who is free from desires and aversions is an eternal *sanyasi*, a saint.

What is the state of a person who is free from desires and aversions? Desires and aversions is a pair. Desire can be seen as a fully developed or matured form of liking or preference. A person free from likes and dislikes does not possess anything and evidently, therefore, he does not leave anything. It is immaterial for him whether something comes to him or does not come to him. It is also immaterial if he is able to do some *karma* or is not able to do any *karma*. For him it does not matter whether the result of any *karma* is favorable to him or is not favorable to him. A person free from likes and dislikes does not react. He does not have an inner urge to either change himself or the world outside. He accepts everything. He is '*samah sarveshu bhuteshu*' – even towards all situations and all beings.

That one who is even in this manner is Divine. He gives place for everyone and keeps no place for Himself. He, therefore, pervades everything and everything dwells in Him. He neither binds anyone nor is bound to anyone. Neither does he demand anything from anyone nor he owes anything to anyone.

Therefore, it is said, '*sukham bandhat pramuchayate*' – 'easily becomes free from all bonds'. This is the law of nature, *prakriti*, 'he who binds gets bounded also'. The one, who places any kind of demand on nature, *prakriti*, he also receives demands in turn. Desire itself is a demand. Aversion is a negative demand. It is a demand for moving away from something. It has the same result which desire has. We get bounded with a person or to a situation we do not like.

Bonds are removed by doing *karmas* free from likes and dislikes. The tendencies or pre-formed impressions are easily destroyed. These tendencies were formed only due to likes and dislikes. Tendencies become strong by doing *karmas* with likes or dislikes. The means for destroying tendencies is exactly the opposite i.e. by doing *karmas* free from likes or dislikes. The force of *karmas* done without likes and dislikes digs out and removes latent tendencies and makes the person free of bonds.. By doing *karmas* in this manner, tendencies based on likes and dislikes are removed. Gradually the possibility of having likes and dislikes is also removed when higher consciousness is awakened by such practice (*sadhana*).

Why was it said, '*sukham* i.e. happily'? The entire process of life continues as usual but in the process, one also transforms. When and how, tendencies of the followers of the *gyan-marg* will disappear. They attempt to develop within themselves higher wisdom or consciousness (*gyan*) by ignoring latent inner tendencies and making them ineffective. When that consciousness develops, tendencies gradually weaken in strength. However, when the storm of latent tendencies becomes intense then even higher consciousness disappears. And when that consciousness awakens again then it attacks latent tendencies in order to overpower them. This process continues till such time as the consciousness of wisdom (*gyan*) fully destroys these tendencies and higher consciousness becomes firm and stable. Till then undoubtedly possibility of delusion continues. Many times the possibility of getting confused remains dormant. Many stories of fall confirm this possibility. In this path tendencies are usually removed at a subtle level. One does not get the help of the force of his *karmas*. And on account of external renouncement, one does not get the benefit of removing tendencies at physical plane.

A person having no conflicts is called '*nirdwanda*'. He remains unaffected by the influences of pair of dualities. He remains even. Emergence of likes and dislikes is natural in the

state of unevenness. Loss-gain, honour-insult, success-failure, etc. are pairs of dualities. They have mutually opposite effects, caused by external factors. The state of 'nirdwanda' means free from conflicts and is indicative of mental evenness i.e. both of the intellect as well as of emotions. Hot and cold do affect a body. A *karma yogi* becomes indifferent (even) towards dualities. After the consciousness of evenness descends fully in a body, breathing also becomes even and it appears as if it is possible to remain even in hot and cold. How could there be freedom from the influences of nature without such descent of the consciousness of evenness?

Karma yogi in this way can be said to be an ever *sanyasi*. Even while doing *karmas* he is a better than a *sanyasi*. For him there is no question of renouncing any worldly duties i.e. of taking *sanyas* because he is free from all likes and dislikes and he has already renounced the doer ship of his *karmas*.

***samkhyayogau prthag balah pravadanti na panditah /
ekam apy asthitah samyagubhayorvindate phalam ||4||***

“Samkhya and yoga are different; so fools say and not the wise. He who truly practices any one path, gains the benefit of both”. (4)

Why Samkhya and the yoga are are not different? By following any one of the two paths with full devotion, one gains benefits of both. What is the benefit of the path of Samkhya and what is the benefit of the path of *karma yoga*, path of devotion to duty? The path of Samkhya is the path of discrimination (*viveka*) between *atman* and *anatman*. Because of discrimination between *atman-anatman* person develops faith in the Self or develops self-confidence i.e. *atman-nishtha*. He gains wisdom (*gyan*). By gaining wisdom, latent tendencies also fade. He develops evenness towards everyone. The burning of these tendencies signifies that the individual not only becomes free from likes and dislikes for future but also bonds of his past likes and dislikes removed. Then only total evenness is possible. This is the state of a successful control. In this state, there is no possibility of mental aberrations or intellectual conflicts. This state is beyond ego. This state is called: '*Brahmanishtha*⁷⁸', attainment of *Brahmanbhav*⁷⁹ and is also called '*Brahman-nirvana*⁸⁰'.

In *karma yoga*, *karmas* are means. *Karma* done (duty performed) with full devotion is in itself a worship of *parameshwara*. It is highly effective. It gradually unites the seeker with the Divine, purifies him and makes him free from likes and dislikes and he gradually gets the grace of *parameshwara*. As latent tendencies weakened, divine consciousness descends. In this manner by becoming pure by the continued practice of doing *karmas* without attachment and becoming free from new tendencies and latent tendencies, the seeker establishes him at the feet of *parameshwara*. A reversal to the earlier state is no longer possible. Now he always treads on stable ground. By the grace of *parameshwara*, he achieves success; he continues to be pure and gradually attains the state of Divine consciousness.

In the two paths of *gyan-marg* and *karma yoga*, the difference is only of means. According to the path of Samkhya i.e. *gyan-marg*, tendencies are destroyed on attainment of wisdom or knowledge (*gyan*). As one develops inner stability, his tendencies gradually weaken. In the path of

⁷⁸ Brahmanishtha: total and undivided devotion to God

⁷⁹ Brahmanbhav: the state of Brahman awareness

⁸⁰ Brahman-nirvana: liberation in Brahman

karma i.e. *karma yoga*, tendencies are weakened by the Grace of *parameshwara* and gradually Divine consciousness begins to manifest.

Complete abolition of latent tendencies is certain in both paths. Whatever path one follows, success (*siddhi*) is possible only after total removal of the ego. Evenness will surely come. The bonds of *prakriti* will also sever. The Self (*atma-tattva*) will also be experienced. There will also be freedom from the cycle of birth and death. All this happens in both paths. People do their *sadhana* only with this objective.

Those people, who do not know the internal changes that take place in followers of two paths and also the internal state they attain on being successful in their spiritual practice (*sadhana*), say that the paths of Samkhya and that of *Karma yoga* are different. On having attained perfection in their spiritual practice (*sadhana*) followers of both paths, attain an identical internal state. What is that state? It has already been stated above. The word, '*balah*' has been used, for those people who say that the paths of Samkhya and yoga are different. They are not different. Why are they not different? 'By properly stabilizing in any one of the two paths, benefits of both are gained'.

When the results of the two paths are the same, then only followers of both the paths can gain the same result. What is that result? That result is the attainment of the abode of *Purushottama*. In the fourth verse of chapter 12th, Shri *Bhagwan* has said about worshipers of *nirguna*⁸¹ –

'te prapnuvanti mamev'

'They attain Me'. Me? *Purushottama*, the God – the one attained by the worshiper of the determinate Supreme Being (*sagunopasak*). The divine consciousness, attained by the follower of one path, is also attained by the follower of the other path. Therefore, any conflict between the followers of the two paths and the tendency to call each other inferior is unnecessary.

The Supreme Being, the *Purushottama*, is infinite. He is with attributes (*saguna*) as well as without attributes (*nirguna*). The one, who looks at a mountain from the north, sees the mountain and so also does the one who looks at it from the south. He who looks at a man from the front sees him as a man and so also the one who look at him from the back. So it could be said about the Supreme Being, the *Purushottama*, that He is endowed with infinite possibilities of manifestation. The one with attributes (*saguna*) is also without attributes (*nirguna*). One may follow any of the two paths, whichever appeals to him. In the 12th chapter this subject is elaborated.

'*Samyagasthitah*' – firmly established. When a person is firm in any one of the two paths then only will he be able to achieve the objective, otherwise he will not achieve anything. To be firm on a path is in itself a great achievement of *Sadhana*. Without it, one achieves nothing irrespective of the path followed. Those who do not follow any path have enough leisure to criticize. The one, who is firm on his path, will have no time to waste his energies. In the end, both paths converge and take us to the same destination. Only the one, who moves, reaches the destination. Then any opposition comes to an end. But the one who does not move at all but only talks will not reach anywhere nor will his confusion be removed.

⁸¹ Nirguna: the indeterminate i.e. that state of *parameshwara* which is free from all qualities and properties

At one time *gyan-marg* was very popular. The path of *karmas* had virtually disappeared. Shri *Bhagwan* had given new life to it. Arjuna had a similar confusion in his mind. It appears that for removing his confusion Shri *Bhagwan* had to give such an explicit discourse.

To establish its superiority, the followers of *gyan-marg* call worship; rituals, *karma*, etc. as child's play. 'That is only a first step'. Such criticism is due to their ignorance about the secret of the path of *karma yoga*. It is reflective of their ignorance.

Faith is our eye (which shows us the path). By nursing doubts about faith, all efforts made by a person go waste, just as no forward movement is possible without a direction. One has to make a choice for himself – only that path which one likes and is possible for him to follow can be one's faith. When we follow a faith, which is against our nature or our situation, we do not move forward but instead, that becomes a hindrance in our evolution. Then instead of doing we only talk. '*Aasthitah*' means 'firm free from doubts'. For making rapid progress in *sadhana*, it is necessary to have faith in one's chosen path. One can make progress by limiting one's reading, listening and speaking to the tenants of his chosen faith. It is foolishness to impose useless impressions on the intellect. One gains something and moves ahead only by firmly following one's chosen path.

'ek hi saadhe sab sadhe, sab sadhe sab jaye'

(By following one you achieve everything but by following many you lose everything – free translation)

Every path has its limitations. This will be explained later.

***yat samkhyaih prapyate sthanam tad yogair api gamayate /
ekam samkhyam ca yogam ca yah pasyati sa pasyati //5||***

“The state obtained by the followers of Samkhya is also reached by the practitioners of *karma yoga*. He who sees that Samkhya and (*karma*) yoga as one, he alone sees (correctly).” (5)

The statement made in the previous verse has been further clarified and has been expressed more forcefully in this verse.

Successful people of both paths attain similar internal states. The follower of the *gyan-marg* on attaining perfection is also free from bonds of his *karmas*. He can do *karma* without involving himself in it. If he cannot do that his *sadhana* is still incomplete and he has not yet attained perfection. Similarly, a *karma yogi* having attained perfection could also be peaceful. It may not be necessary for him to do *karmas*. He abides in the feet of *parameshwar* becoming His instrument. *Parameshwar* can use him at any time in any manner He requires. He does not gain anything by doing *karmas* nor does he lose anything by not doing *karmas*. That is the state of his evenness. If he has not attained such a state then he is not yet successful in his *sadhana*.

A perfect *Giyani* (follower of *gyan-marg*) can be active in doing *karmas* and a follower of the path of *karma yoga* can remain without doing any *karma*. After attaining the state of perfection, it makes no difference whether or not he does *karmas*. For a *karma yogi*, the requirement of doing *karmas* ends once he attains the state of perfection.

Samkhya describes the final stage as Self-attainment(*atman-labh*); Self-realization (*atman-sakshatkar*), merging in Brahman(*Brahmanleen*), attainment of liberation(*nirvana*), etc. *Karma yoga* calls that '*naishyakarmaya*' or '*akarma*'. Both are similar and both states are beyond ego. And in that state, self-realization (*atman-bodh*) is automatic. A *karma yogi* is not required to do prolonged meditation by closing his eyes, as his impurities are removed while he does *karmas*.

In both paths, the same Supreme Reality (*purushottama-tattva*) is attained. Of course, there are differences in experiences of the two paths but there is no difference in substance.

One who knows this secret alone knows the oneness of the two paths. One who does not know the secret looks at them differently. Therefore, the one who knows correctly, he alone sees correctly.

Even while seeing, many times one does not perceive. By only seeing the reality is not correctly understood. Only that seeing is meaningful by which one can realize the truth. Therefore it is said, '*yah pashyati sa pashyati*'. The one who sees oneness he alone sees, others are simply blind. It appears that in old times the path of Samkhya was very popular. For ultimate salvation, the renouncement of physical *karma* was considered essential.

Upanishads also give the same description as mentioned above. The divine speech also proves this. Shri *Bhagwan* was trying to restore *karma yoga* to its rightful place by removing ignorance prevailing about (the necessity for the performance of duty) *karmas* at that time. For that he takes recourse to the reality. He does not try to establish the superiority of *karma yoga* by denouncing the other path because that is wrong. Truth is just to be revealed and that is what he did.

For Arjuna having devotion to *karma (duty)* was natural but he did not know the secret. Therefore, not knowing the utility and importance of doing *karma* as duty he wanted to run away from it. He knew the inferior aspect of *karma* i.e. it is a cause of bondage and is a cause of sin and misery.

This fifth chapter tells us how *karmas* can be renounced even while doing them. It is just an elaboration of what was said before. How one can know the secret of renunciation without knowing the state of perfection? Without internal renunciation, one does not benefit. That happens in both paths. This should not be forgotten.

***samnyasas tu mahabaho dukham aptum ayogatah /
yogayukto munir brahma nacirena dhigacchati ||6||***

“O’valiant one! Sanyas (renunciation) is also difficult to attain without yoga. An ascetic who is earnest in (*karma*) yoga soon attains *Brahman*”. (6)

'It is difficult to renounce (sanyas) without yoga'. Yoga? Yoga is *karma yoga* or devotion to duty. The required work performed with devotion. What is renunciation (*sanyas*)? Sanyas means renunciation, discarding, and leaving. What is abandoned? The practice (*sadhana*) of doing *karmas* with devotion and with the spirit of renunciation is nothing but *sanyas*. *Sanyas* does mean renunciation a complete and well-done renunciation of *karma*. What is to renounce? Everything, that binds us, has to be renounced. Then only one attains a state free of bonds. How can one attain

the inner state free from bonds without *karma yoga*? Is there any other simple method to achieve that state?

The path of being free from bonds passes only through bonds themselves. A person becomes free from impurities only gradually. Only by doing *karmas*, one can slowly acquire freedom from doing *karmas*. This is a natural course of evolution. *Karmas* done with full devotion can completely erase even past tendencies.

Sanyas is no joke. It is not something, which one can achieve by magic mantras. It demands total inner transformation. The mind, the intellect and the life force (prana) have to be free from impurities and attachments. Then only can a person remain detached and take to real *sanyas*. Can he achieve this by imposing a certain state by adopting artificial means for a certain period? Purification of base nature is a process. After purification of base nature one achieves *sanyas* automatically. Seeker has to keep on following the path. He reaches the goal in due course. He faces no problem in doing so. This is the path of *karma*. Do your *karmas* with devotion and you will be purified.

Is there any other method besides this? Yes! That is the method of *sanyas* through wisdom (gyan) and wisdom through discrimination (*Viveka*). What is this method? How could one discriminate without purification of lower tendencies? How would intellect have stability? The second path is one of difficult practice (*sadhana*) of restraint, of penance, of crushing lower tendencies through determination and of burning all *karmas* by lighting the flame of wisdom. Shri Tulsidas has beautifully described the difficulties of this path in the '*gyandeepak*' section of *Uttarkanda*.

An aspirant moves on the path of wisdom on unstable ground because the successful practice of restraint is not possible without having a glimpse of the Supreme and until then, it is only a preparation. One tends to lose control, lose discrimination and also tends to lose wisdom and then the same lower tendencies of the world create a disturbance within. Therefore, it is a very difficult method, has dangers, and uncertainties and is not at all an easy natural method from the point of view of evolution. Yet, it is not impossible.

Therefore, it says, '*dukhamaptumayogatah*' -- it is difficult to attain *sanyas* without yoga. The *gyan-marg* is said to be 'the sharp edge of a knife'.

Karmas done as duty remove attachments. The *karmas* done for the Divine do not allow anything else to survive except *parameshwara*. Everything gets renounced in *parameshwara*. The aspirant (*yogi*) becomes inseparable from *parameshwara*. Gradually *karma yoga* itself becomes one of inseparable oneness with *parameshwara*. Then what remains to renounce? The aspirant surrenders himself at the feet of *parameshwara* by becoming flowers of worship.

Now Shri Bhagwan tells the effects of this yoga. '*Brahman, na cirena dhigacchati*' i.e. attains *Brahman* without delay. The aspirant following the path of *karma yoga* soon attains *Brahman*. Do not think that it is a long path because it does not require strange practices; it does not involve external penances and renunciation. It does not require much intellectual exercise and does not demand us to be a scholar of spiritual literature. It is a simple, easy and natural path. *Yogaishwara* Shri Krishna was a proof of it. He was speaking with his own experience. He

was saying this on the basis of full knowledge of the process of evolution. One can also understand this.

The strength of *karma* is much stronger than the force of emotions and thoughts. Having special strength emotions or thoughts are transformed into *karmas*. Our *karmas* relate to others. *Karmas*, therefore, generate a greater force as compared to emotions and thoughts and so have far-reaching effect.

*yogayukto visuddhatman vijitatman jitendriyah /
sarvabhutatmanbhutatman kuruvann api na lipyate //7//*

“The person, who is engaged in the practice of yoga, is pure in *atman*, has fully conquered his self, has subdued his sense organs, whose *atman* has become one with the *atman* of all beings, is not tainted by *karmas* even while doing them”. (7)

The following verses explain the practice (*sadhana*) and success of *karma yoga*. After all, what is the attainment of a divine state? Moreover, how does a *karma yogi* achieve it?

The success (*siddhi*) of *karma yoga* is, ‘*kurvannapi na lipyate*’ ‘while doing *karmas* does not get involved’. This state is a state of total detachment i.e. ‘*naishyakarmaya*’. *Yogaishwara* Krishna himself was such a *karma yogi*. *Parameshwara* himself is such a *karma yogi*, for He remains free from bonds of *karma* despite having created the entire universe.

In fact, without having attained this state, how can a person be free from the bonds of *prakriti*? In the absence of this ability, whenever a person will do any *karma* he will get bound by it and nobody can live without doing any *karma*. Only he, who has attained the state of total detachment or ‘*naishyakarmaya*’ is liberated while he is still doing his *karmas*. *Yoga* of the Gita proceeds by keeping this possibility as an ideal. In the 18th chapter too the same thing has been mentioned.

*sarvakarmany api sada kurvano madvyapasrayah /
matprasada avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam // 18/56 //*

“Even while doing all *karmas* he attains by My grace, My eternal and permanent abode having taken refuge in Me.”

This is supreme renunciation (*sanyas*) in which renunciation of *karmas* takes place. *Karma* is seen being done from outside but the doer is not involved. *Karma* is surely done externally. As has been mentioned earlier, an external renouncement of *karmas* can only be partial. The important thing is to remain uninvolved and that is possible only through *karma yoga*.

The remaining three parts of the verse answer the question: 'When does it happen'? One cannot detach from his *karmas* merely by a mental resolve. To remain unattached to *karma* is possible only after internal transformation of the doer. So what changes make a doer a non-doe? The required changes are now mentioned

‘*yogayukta*’ – engaged in yoga with full devotion. Just as an ox is yoked. The seeker engages him in the practice (*sadhana*) of *karma yoga* by using all his energies. A person becomes *yogayukta* only by pursuing a single objective without wasting energies in useless pursuits.

'*vishudhatman*'— whose *atman* has become absolutely pure, *Vishudha* means absolutely pure. Our base tendencies like passion, anger, greed, infatuation, etc. make us impure. He is of pure self, '*vishudhatma*,' whose lower tendencies have been purified. The word '*atman*' has been used for one's very own self. The *atmatattva*, which is beyond mind and intellect, is always pure. The question of its purification does not arise.

'*vijitatman*'—the one who has properly conquered his own self. The term '*atman*' is for one's very own self. How that can be won which is an unknown element and that itself wins everything? All that is known as 'self' over which *atmatattva* has control and which is a means for its expression from gross to the subtle. This machine created by *prakriti* is known as one's own self.

What is the meaning of victory over the self? It means control over the mind and the intellect by the Supreme presiding consciousness i.e. *atmatattva*. As it is, sense organs are included in the 'self' but they have been separately mentioned, '*jitendriyah*'.

'*Vijitatman*' means having full control over the mind and emotional faculties. We are usually swayed by happiness and unhappiness. We are agitated. The impulses of likes and dislikes influence our minds. We are unable to remain peaceful though we wish to be so. We are unable to have control over our mind. It could be said that one has conquered his mind if his mind remains undisturbed despite the presence of disparities, which usually disturb mental peace.

Similarly, there should be control over the intellect. Likes and dislikes influence the intellect. Waves of happiness and unhappiness disturb the intellect. Greed and liking, corrupt one's reason. As long as such a state exists, the state of total detachment towards *karmas* i.e. *naishyakarmaya* is impossible. Till then, there will be bonds by doing *karmas*.

The fourth characteristic is '*jitendriya*' i.e. the one who has conquered his sense organs. The sense organs are attracted towards their respective objects and corrupt the mind and the intellect. Being gross, the sense organs are very powerful. By associating with gross objects, these organs gain tremendous strength. In fact, when objects tempt organs they influence the mind and the intellect.

We reach the same conclusion as we reached while analyzing attributes of '*sthitpragya*'. The intellect can be stable by acquiring control over sense organs and the mind. Then only *karma yoga* is possible and the person can engage in yoga or be a *yogayukta*.

By doing *sadhana* in this manner and by doing *karmas* with devotion, the inner self of a person is purified. Truth is revealed in the pure inner self. As soon as the ego is transcended, one starts seeing himself in all others. After overcoming the ego, one is established in the Self (*Atmatattva*). As a result of attaining that state, the wall of separation demolishes. The *Atmatattva* is present in everyone. The individual starts feeling his *atman* as that of others.

'*Sarvabhutatmabhutatman*'-. The one, whose *atman* has become one with the *atman* of all beings. This has also been mentioned elsewhere.

*atmanni sarvabhutani sarvabhuteshu catmannam /
ikshate yogayuktatman sarvatra samdarshanah ||6/29||*

‘Sees all beings in himself and his own self in all beings’ This is the meaning.

After such a state is reached as a result of internal purification, then only the state, expressed as '*kurvann api na lipyate*' i.e. 'not being involved while doing *karma*,' is reached.

This state of perfection of *karma yoga* cannot be attained all of a sudden. It requires sustained practice (*sadhana*). *Sadhana* depends upon devotion and dedication. Therefore, Shri *Bhagwan* now speaks about the practice (*sadhana*) required to attain that state.

nai'va kimcit karomi 'ti yukto manyeta tattvavit |
pasyan srvan sprsan jighrann asnan gacchan svapan svasan ||8||
pralapan visrjan grhnann unmisan nimisann api |
indriyani 'ndriyarthesu vartanta itidharayan ||9||

“The one who knows the Truth and is firm in yoga should believe that ‘I do nothing’ – even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, dreaming, breathing, speaking, crying, renouncing, accepting, and even while opening and closing the eyes. He should believe that the sense organs alone are engaged in their objects. (8-9)

A person firm in yoga and a knower of the truth should hold this belief and think accordingly. This is for the purpose of *Sadhana*. In the state of spiritual realization there is nothing to believe or to accept. This is a state of constant feeling of Divinity. Therefore, the follower of this path should have this belief. The belief should be constant. A stable disposition in mind is belief. What should be that belief? '*nai 'va kimchit karomi 'ti*' – 'I do nothing. I am the Self (*atmasatta*)'. The *atmasatta* is beyond the mind and the intellect. This is the viewpoint of Samkhya. *Purusha* is non-doer. *Prakriti* has activity and movement. The direction is to hold this belief and perspective.

Sense organs are engaged in their respective objects. Objects of sense organs are beauty, sound, taste, etc. Beauty is the object for eyes, the music for ears, the taste for the tongue, etc. etc. Eyes are engaged in their objects while seeing. Sense organs are a part of *prakriti*. Form is also *prakriti*. Therefore, it is a play of *prakriti* in *prakriti*. This is also the engagement of *gunas* in *gunas*.

The Self (*atmatattva*) is different from *prakriti*. It is free from action and reaction. The *atman* (*atmasatta*) is only a witness of the entire play of life, of the universe. With the development of this outlook, a person becomes free from the feeling of doer-ship. This is the firm view of Samkhya-yoga.

The fundamental principle of *karma yoga*, discussed in the second and third chapters, is rooted in the principles of Samkhya. In the fourth chapter, this perspective was elaborated. '*Karma-brahmarpana-yoga*', in which direction is to surrender in the feet of the Divine, is based on *Purushottama* yoga, which is a novel doctrine of the Gita. In this chapter Shri *Bhagwan* has asked for *sadhana* according to the principles of *Samkhya*. Simultaneously, it is said to be '*sadhana*' with a higher perspective. Refer to verse 10 below. It is not that Shri *Bhagwan* is bound by any specific philosophy.

How can one practice ‘witnessing disposition (*sakshi-bhava*)’? For such disposition activities of all sense organs seeing, hearing, touching etc. are included. Even while sleeping, one should maintain an attitude of witnessing, and maintain the belief of being a non-doer. During sleep, one often forgets but the seeker will have to be careful even while sleeping. Sleeping is an activity of the body. The *atman* never sleeps. Only the body ceases to be active. This is the sport of *prakriti*. Even while breathing one should believe that it is only the movement of the vital (*prana*). The *atman* is only a witness. ‘I do not breathe only the *prana* is moving’.

One should not forget even while weeping. Maintain the feeling of being a witness. In pain, a person does forget and his entire wisdom disappears. The feeling of being a witness also disappears. Therefore, ‘wisdom’ is included here. Even while crying seeker should not forget that *atman* does not weep. The *atman* experiences neither pain nor pleasure. It is the mind, which experiences and that is *prakriti*.

One should not forget this while renouncing, or accepting anything. One, who thinks that he is renouncing something is involved in the act of renouncement. For him, this act becomes a bond. He imposes the property of *prakriti* and binds himself. One, who while accepting becomes the receiver, also comes within the grip of the *prakriti*. The acts of accepting and renouncing are the acts of the *prakriti*. The *atman* does not accept anything nor does it renounce anything. Once this secret is understood then there is nothing to be accepted and nothing to be renounced. The question of renouncing itself becomes redundant. Violence-nonviolence, profit-loss, like-dislike, etc. are all in the *prakriti*. What then be accepted or rejected? While listening to Yoga-Vashishtha on this subject, when Shri Rama was thinking of renouncing the worldly life, Shri Vashishtha Jee said, ‘renouncement of what? You are a non-doer. What can you renounce? What is there to be renounced?’

From this, it becomes clear that in practice the doctrine of Samkhya takes us to the same place where the yoga of devotion to *karma* takes us. We have to remain where we are. We will have to accept every situation. Outer renunciation is meaningless.

Now Shri Bhagwan tells us, how to practice in life the discrimination between doer-ship and non-doer ship. ‘*Unmisan nimisann api*’ -- ‘Even while opening and closing the eyes do not forget that you do nothing and only *prakriti* does.’

This spiritual practice (*sadhana*) of becoming a witness is rooted in discrimination based on Samkhya. The followers of the doctrine of Samkhya could have the benefit of total detachment from *karmas* i.e. *naishyakarmaya* by practising (*sadhana*) in this manner.

***brahmany adhaya karmani sangam tyaktva karoti yah /
lipyate na sa papena padmapatram iva ‘mbhasa ||10||***

“A person, who does his *karmas*, having given up attachments and placing his *karmas* in Brahman, commits no sin, just as water does not wet a lotus leaf,.” (10)

In the path of knowledge (*gyan*), there is no question of surrendering *karmas* because there is no doer-ship of *karmas*. Then, how could there be a question of surrendering of *karmas*? Since the Supreme Existence is in itself inactive, how could there be acceptance of surrender?

However, the Brahman of a devotee is the Lord (*Purushottama*) Himself. While doing everything He is a non-doer. He is *parameshwara* who dwells in everyone's heart and regulates everything. He is a friend of everyone and is the Supreme benefactor. He is *Yogaishwara* and *Lok-Maheshwara*. Such a Brahman could surely accept our offerings. He responds to our calls and He blesses us too. Such a *Parameshwara* could be worshipped and can be made a personal deity. Such Divinity was preaching the Gita to Arjuna and was also slowly revealing His Divinity to Arjuna.

‘By properly surrendering *karmas* to *parameshwara*’ – what does this surrendering of *karmas* to *parameshwara* imply? In that surrender, there is not even an iota of attachment with the consequences of *karma*. All *karmas* are done as service to Him and for His pleasure and while doing in that manner there is neither any desire for happiness nor any expectation. *Karmas* are offered to *parameshwara* by so doing.

One has to perform *karmas* without any attachment, as attachment causes bonds. It binds the person with *karmas*, with the cause of *karmas* and with its consequences. The more we are free from attachments, more we are free from bonds of the *prakriti*. We should remember that *karmas* do not bind us, only attachments with consequences do. Therefore, the doer of *karmas* without attachment remains free from bonds.

An easy means of becoming detached is to surrender *karmas* to *parameshwara*. One is attached to something when he considers it as his own. If one considers that he did his *karmas* for *parameshwara*, then they cannot be his. How could then there be an attachment? A devotee follows this straight path.

A person who does *karmas* in this manner never commits sin and so sin never taints him. Does virtue taint him? Neither virtue nor sin taints him. No tendency, no disposition by doing anything is formed. Then why only sin referred here? Arjuna had mentioned that he would be committing sin by fighting in the war. He was afraid of committing sin. Therefore, Shri *Bhagwan* said 'There will come no sin to you'. 'You will not be committing a sin if you fight as I tell you'. 'Do not fight for your own sake but fight considering it as My work'. 'Fight believing that you are just obeying My command'. 'It is not for you to bother about victory or defeat'. 'If you develop such an attitude you will remain free from the bonds of this action.'

For remaining untainted, an example is given. Leaf of a lotus flower remains in water yet never gets wet. Water drops on the lotus leaf and slide down without wetting it. Such is the condition of the one who does his *karmas* for *parameshwara*.

Those, who do *karmas* for *parameshwara* are not motivated by attachments. ‘This *karma* should be done by me alone and that *karma* should not be done by me’, such a belief is rooted in attachment. The work, as assigned, should be considered as His directive. ‘I am socially highly placed, so He would direct me to do some special work or give me some specific important work’, such thoughts are due to swollen ego. All *karmas* in their entirety need to be offered to *parameshwara*. He accepts all *karmas*. Special *karmas* are not required for surrender.

This is a unique doctrine of the yoga of the Gita. This alone is the state of perfect detachment from doing *karma* i.e. ‘*naishyakarmaya*’ of *karma* yoga. A person can remain

uninvolved in his *karma* even while doing it. This has been mentioned before. The seeker attains this state gradually by doing *karmas*.

*kayena manasa buddhya kevalair indrirair api /
yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyaktva 'tmasuddhaye ||11||*

“Yogis do *karmas* by body, mind, and intellect and also by organs but by being free from attachments and only for self-purification”. (11)

‘yogis do *karmas*’. These *yogis* are followers of the path of yoga, i.e. those who pursue the path of *karma yoga*. This word was used for one who has achieved perfection but here it has been used for a seeker.

A worldly person, in whom there is no awareness of the path, who is full of desires for worldly happiness, does *karmas* for gaining worldly pleasures. Usually, he works under the influence of his desires. He feels that he is independent but in reality, it is not so. His baser tendencies force him to do his *karmas* for the sake of worldly pleasures. The state of a *yogi* is different. He does not do his *karmas* for gaining worldly pleasures. He does *karmas* with a higher purpose. He does his *karmas* as a form of prayer, as a form of *sadhana*. As someone recites the name of *parameshwara* or does penance for purifying himself, so he does his *karmas* as a worship of *parameshwara*. This is the basic difference in perspective. Whoever does *karma* for pleasure, for him the result of that *karma* is most important. He, who looks for pleasure in *karma* or in doing *karma*, will consider them better or worse only from that point of view. He will rush to do those *karmas*, which give him happiness but will avoid those, which are not likely to give him happiness. However, the person, who does *karmas* as a prayer (*sadhana*) for purifying himself, has to consider whether by doing a *karma* will he be purified or contaminated. From his point of view, that *karma* will be preferable which will be purifying irrespective of it being abominable from worldly point of view.

Works such as bathing a dirty man, cleaning excreta, sweeping, etc. are considered to be abominable works from worldly point of view but it is not so from the point of view of spiritual exercise (*sadhana*).

Does it depend upon the external form of *karma*? That by doing any particular work, one will be purified or contaminated? It certainly is not dependent upon the external form of *karma*. By doing service to others, a person could strengthen his ego, could take pride in doing the said service, or could even remove his pride. By helping others we can get blinded with vanity or can unite with *parameshwara*. The effect of *karma* depends upon our attitude, our motive. Therefore, the direction of Shri *Bhagwan* is for doing *karmas* assigned to us – the *karma* which is our duty (*svadharma*). This was discussed before in sufficient detail.

The nature of *karma* is dependent upon the motive behind doing that *karma*. An aspirant of the path of *karma yoga* can do *karmas* only for one purpose and that is for his self-purification.

Self-purification is the purification of lower tendencies. They are in us in the form of passion, anger, greed, infatuation, etc. It is necessary that in the course of evolution, we transform or remove these emotions. The divine nature ought to be strong. The energy working in the lower

nature should get transformed into divine nature. *Karmas* with the right attitude can easily accomplish this task.

How a *karma* be done? Free from attachments. A *yogi* does *karmas* being free from all kinds of attachments. He also tries to detach himself from the attachment developed with *karma* itself.

Does a *yogi* do *karmas* only with his mind? No, he does it with full dedication. Moreover, that is his prayer (*sadhana*). He does *karma* at all levels. He uses his entire being in this *yagya*. He does *karmas* with his body, mind, and intellect and with his sense organs. He does *karmas* with his whole being.

The *karma* of fighting is a physical act. Usually, physical *karma* also helps in self-purification. Consequently, *yogis* do accept to do physical *karmas*. 'You should also accept this act of fighting in this spirit. You can do it'. It seems as if Shri *Bhagwan* is directing Arjuna in this manner.

There could have been a thought in the mind of Arjuna that self-purification was possible through mental acts only. However, it is not so. Aberrations of thoughts are primarily in the mind and intellect. Even in the performance of physical *karmas*, sense organs, the mind and the intellect are also involved. The impurities express themselves through the body and the sense organs. Therefore, their purification is also necessary for this spiritual effort i.e. *yagya*.

Moreover, physical acts do create strong tendencies i.e. *samskara* and so physical acts can also be much more helpful in destroying latent tendencies. The extent physical *karma* bind, to the same extent they can also un-bind. From the point of view of *Sadhana*, physical *karma* is very important. Of course, the motive behind doing *karma* should always be correct.

Usually, those who opt for the spiritual path lose interest in doing physical *karma*. They are more inclined towards meditating or reciting the name of *parameshwara* in an isolated corner, and live an idle life in solitude doing nothing. However, for self-purification, physical work done with full devotion is as much necessary as the recitation of the name of *parameshwara*, etc. Sometimes physical *karma* is more effective than other acts.

Karma is a very effective means of self-purification. Refer to verses 45-46 of chapter 18.

***yuktah karmaphalam tyaktva santim apnoti naisthikim /
ayuktah kamakarena phale saktto nibadhyate //12||***

“A devoted person (*yukta*) attains peace well founded instead of fruits of *karma*. But, *ayukta* gets bounded for being attached with the fruit of *karma* due to desires”. (12)

Yukta means the one united or devoted to *karma yoga* i.e. engaged in the practice of *karma yoga*; devoted to the path of yoga. He, who follows the path of *karma yoga*, does his *karmas* in the manner mentioned above. By this *sadhana*, he forsakes the fruits of his *karmas* and becomes free from their results or fruits. As a result, thereof, he achieves durable peace ‘*tyagacsantiranantram*’ – he becomes peaceful after this renunciation. So long as we keep holding something within us, that becomes a source of restlessness and a cause of our unhappiness. We keep swinging between hope and despair. Even an iota of attachment upsets our peace within.

The peace attained in this manner is well founded. It remains stable virtually permanently. The aspirant attains the benefit of peace eternal.

As against this, what happens to him who does not do *karmas* as a *sadhana*?

He is bound. '*Nibandhyate*' – is firmly bounded. '*kamakaren*' – gets bounded due to desires, due to passions, or due to attachments to fruits of *karma*. Why does one have an attachment to the fruits of *karma*? There is a craving for getting the fruits of *karma*. There is an urge, a craving for obtaining worldly things. When an act is done, the possibility of getting its fruit looms large before us. Attachment manifests instantly. There is a desire to have the fruits of *karma*. In addition, with such an attachment to fruits, one gets deeply involved in the world. One is never satisfied as his desires keep increasing. The result is binding in the *prakriti*. Desires drag a person in the *prakriti*.

Attachment to the fruit of *karma* is an expression of craving. Craving is the mother of bonds. It makes a person helpless.

*sarvakarmani manasa samnyasya 'ste sukham vasi |
navadvare pure dehi nai 'va kurvan na karayan ||13||*

“A self-controlled person who has mentally renounced all his *karmas* and having moved beyond doing of *karmas* or getting any *karma* done by others dwells in peace in the city of nine gates (body)”. (13)

The discussion that started with the ninth verse concludes in this verse. How can one renounce *karmas* mentally? Moreover, what will be its result? This is the subject of ongoing discussion. Now Shri Bhagwan says, '*manasa samnyasya*' – renouncing by the mind. An inner renunciation is a true form of renunciation. There is no need for external renunciation of *karmas*, which is also not possible. This renunciation takes place by proper mental disposition. Mind alone is the means of this renunciation. With proper mental attitude, renouncement takes place. By the mind, *karmas* are offered to *parameshwara*. The device for 'surrender (*adhan*) of *karma* in *parameshwara*, which was mentioned in the 9th verse, is explained here. This work is done by the mind and does not require any external effort or absence of such an effort.

Therefore, Shri Bhagwan further says, '*nai 'va kurvan na karavan*', 'neither does nor gets done'. Getting it done is another form of doing. 'Getting it done' is also *karma* and one who gets it done is equally responsible as by doing the *karma* himself. The one, who reaches the stage of mental renunciation, is free from the responsibility of doing or of having the *karma* done by others. He does or gets it done is an act only from a worldly point of view but internally he neither does nor gets it done. He remains uninvolved. Therefore, he remains free from bonds.

Shri Bhagwan was asking Arjuna to fight and so Shri Bhagwan was getting that *karma* of fighting done by him. However, despite that Shri Bhagwan remains free from the bonds of *karma*. As if, he was referring to himself saying, 'Arjuna you could also be like me'. Renouncement of all *karmas* is necessary.

The one, who is prepared to renounce only good *karmas* to *parameshwara*, is not free from the bonds of *karmas* and the one, who offers only the evil ones, is also not free from the bonds of

karmas. Both good and bad *karmas* create bonds. *Karma* itself is a bond. Therefore, *karma* itself needs to be renounced. From the point of view of advanced *sadhana*, only such renouncement can prepare a person for self-surrender. Only by surrendering oneself, can one get over his ego. The feeling that 'good or bad, whatever I am, I am entirely yours' is the highest, most exalted form of devotion.

The adjective '*Vashi*' has been used for spiritual aspirants (*sadhak*). The one having control over his own self is called '*Vashi*'. The one, who has control over his mind, intellect and sense organs is '*Vashi*' i.e. the one having self-restraint. For the success of surrender, self-control is essential. How can a person surrender all his *karmas* whose mind is fickle, whose thinking is unstable and whose sense organs drag him to a wrong path? The meaning of surrender of all *karmas* is that one is prepared to sacrifice all his desires. For the surrender of all *karmas*, a commitment for surrender is necessary. This is possible only in a stable mind and a placid heart. Therefore, success in the path of devotion also demands self-control.

There is a difference between the two paths. In the path of devotion, love for *parameshwara* itself helps in developing self-control. When a woman becomes a mother, her love for the child develops in her restraint and control of her desires. Without that motherly love, is it possible for a mother to remain alert even while in sleep every night, to sleep on a wet bed, to clean the urine and excreta of her child and also to exercise restraint over her food? It is exactly like this that a devotee develops restraint over himself because of his love for *parameshwara*. The mind of a devotee is changed entirely. Even his sense organs begin to follow the path of *parameshwara* and his thoughts become firmly established in *parameshwara*.

'*navadvare pure dehi*' i.e. 'the body a city of nine doors' has been used for such a self-restrained devotee'. The word '*dehi*' is used for embodied. As someone lives in a fortress so the person having acquired control over his own self lives in peace in the fortress of his body. There is fearlessness in a fortress. There is no fear of an attack by an enemy. Similarly, a person well restrained has no fear of passion, anger, etc. Therefore, he lives in peace.

This is a beautiful example of a successful devotee. His body itself becomes a fortress for him. As a fortress has gates, so a body has openings. The master of the fortress has full control over the gates. Whenever he wants he can open and close gates. Similarly, a person in control over himself can close openings of the body from external contacts.

A person free from duties and becoming a master of his self can live peacefully in his body. Neither his body nor his *karmas* are a burden for him. A feeling of burden is indicative of attachment and ignorance. It is proof of bonds. It is a latent tendency for running after objects and is due to past bonds.

What is the relationship of *parameshwara* with this law of fruits of *karmas*? Is it His creation, which rotates the cycle of fruits of *karma*? In reply to this Shri *Bhagwan* says

***na kartrtvam na karmani lokasya srjati prabhuh |
na karmaphalasamyogam svabhavas tu pravartate ||14||***

"*Prabhu* has not created doer ship, or *karmas* or their results. It is the individual nature (*svabhav*) that works". (14)

*na 'datte kasyacit papam na cai 'va sukrtam vibhuh |
ajnanena 'vrtam jnanam tena muhyanyi jnatavah ||15||*

"The all-pervading *parameshwara* does not receive sins or virtues of anyone. Wisdom (*gyan*) is enveloped by ignorance. Therefore, men get bewildered". (15)

Only by reading them together, the two verses can be understood correctly. *Parameshwara* neither does anything nor takes anything. Since people do not know this reality, they think that He does things or He takes or gives things. This is the meaning of the two verses.

Then who does? Who receives? In reply, it says – it is the individual nature (*svabhav*) that inspires and works. All this happens due to one's own nature. In this context, '*shwetashvatara Upanishad*' comes to mind. There also it is said so.

What is the meaning of '*svabhav*'? In the eighth chapter of the Gita, it is said that '*svabhav*' is individual nature, '*swabhavo 'dhyatmamuchyate*'. In the context of the *atman* -- the feeling of divinity relating to the *atman*, the soul (*atma tattva*), is known as spirituality. The Infinite Existence (*annantsatta*), in the form of *atman*, becoming the lord of the body, is individual nature, *svabhav*. The duty and the unity of *karma* with its fruit are due to the manifested disposition of divinity in the *Self*. The entire sport is due to the manifestation of divinity in the individual. This is the working of individual nature. It should not be difficult to understand.

There is a negative statement also: *Parameshwara* does not create a duty, etc. All of them are due to individual nature. Without having been created by Him who creates them? In reality whatever happens in the world that happens by His doing. He alone dwelling within makes everyone dance to His tunes by making them His instruments. The entire creation is from Him; all allocations of duty are by Him. Then why was it said that He does not create them.

His creation is not like ours. That is His innate creation free from ego and without any resolve, like the radiance of the Sun. His purpose is not to trouble us by making any rules. People often question why *parameshwara* has created such a world order, such rules, by which people are bound, suffer and unhappy. Why not He created such a world where everyone could enjoy bliss and nothing but bliss? Is the Creator not responsible for all this misery? So people think. The final responsibility is of course of *parameshwara* and of none else. Who else it could be? Despite being responsible for everything, He is free from it. He has not created the universe with any specific purpose. The manifested universe is His normal expression. Just as Sun cannot be blamed for its radiance, fire cannot be blamed for heat, so *parameshwara* cannot be held responsible for this Creation.

Since it is an innate expression, it does not involve any duty. Even while working He is a non-doer. It is for this reason that it is said, 'He does not create'. All this is natural. Everything happens because of Him. He does not have to do anything by making an effort.

Even if the meaning of the word '*svabhav*,' is not taken as individual nature, it should not be difficult to understand the meaning of this verse. '*Svabhav*' refers to innate or spontaneous disposition. In other words, it refers to innate, spontaneous expression free from any specific motive or internal inspiration.

The fifteenth verse also deals with this problem. Shri *Bhagwan* does not take anybody's sins or virtues. Shri *Bhagwan* accepts gifts offered to Him with feelings of devotion. This we know from the statement made in the ninth chapter. 'Surrender *karmas* in Me and also offer the mind and the intellect in Me'. Such directions Shri *Bhagwan* has given repeatedly before, and now He says He does not accept either sin or virtue. For, if He accepts *karmas* then He will have to accept their results too. Otherwise, the *karma-sanyas* (renunciation of *karma*) will become meaningless. The binding of fruits indeed is a serious bond.

What could then be the meaning of this statement? This has only one meaning. The giver gives and becomes free from the bonds of his *karmas* by doing so. Moreover, the one who receives does not receive it i.e. does not come within the bonds of *karma*. For the giver, He has taken but from His point of view He has not taken. The *karma* is finished before it reaches Him. The darkness ends before it reaches the Sun. It happens like that here too. Even while receiving *karmas* He does not receive them. Everything already belongs to Him, from whom then will He take? By giving, a person lessens his own burden. Nevertheless, the burden was already on the shoulders of *parameshwara*. The same view is given again subsequently.

Ignorance has enveloped wisdom. Therefore, there is attraction. How long duty, etc. are. Until such time there is no realization of the Existence which does and gets everything done. Until then only *karmas* and their fruits exist. Once there is realization of divinity then nothing else exists independently. Then there is no duty, *karmas* and associated consequences and He alone becomes everything.

In the same manner, surrender ends in '*param-adwaita*'. When He alone is perceived as the giver as well as the receiver then there is nothing to give or to receive. Neither sin survives nor virtue.

When we understand that everything - sin as well as a virtue - belongs to Him and nothing is 'mine' then what we give? When doer does not exist then who commits sin or who commits virtue? The entire *sadhana* and all feelings associated with it have a meaning until such time one's eyes are not fully open. When one's eyes are open then the entire *sadhana* becomes a child's play. As one gradually moves from ignorance to wisdom and as the higher consciousness descends, the requirement of *sadhana* ends. Then nothing is left to do or give. That is a unique state.

Shriguru Arjundev jee says in Sukhamani –

**jab puran na karta prabhu soi | tab jam ki tras kahau kis hoi ||
 jab avigat agochar prabhu eka | tab chitragupta kisu puchatu lekha ||
 jab nath niranjan agochar agadhe | tab kaun chute kaun bandhan bandhe ||
 aapan aap aap hi acharja | nanak aapan rup aaphi uparja ||**

Do the two verses not substantiate the doctrine of illusion(*mayavada*)? It may be so for those who believe in that doctrine. However, from the perspective of the Gita, the statements of Shri *Bhagwan* and the *sadhana* as described do not seem to conform to that doctrine. In fact, they only tell us, how can be the success by surrendering *karmas* achieved? In what a strange way Shri *Bhagwan* of the Gita, *Yogaishwara*, remains untouched even while accepting the surrender of *karmas*.

A successful *yogi* should reach this state. His *karmas* should turn into ash before reaching Him. If we feel bound by accepting *karmas* of others then there is still some deficiency within us. In that acceptance, there could be some unknown purpose or confusion of ego. A devotee of *parameshwara* should become as able for accepting *karmas* of others by remaining untouched as Shri *Bhagwan* is.

In the 14th verse, the word *Prabhu* is used. This word signifies the one who is master, whose authority prevails and who dwells both inside and outside of us. He is the Master (*Prabhu*). He is the Creator even though He creates nothing. That seems to be the import of this usage.

In the 15th verse the use of the word '*Vibhuh*' is also not without purpose. '*Vibhuh*' means 'pervasive'. If the one, who is a receiver of offerings, is dwelling in the offering then where is the question of acceptance or non-acceptance? There can be acceptance of things when the receiver is distinct and is outside the offering but when he is dwelling in the offering itself then the offering is already accepted. How can then there be a transaction again of a thing already accepted? What is already of *parameshwara*, how can one give it to Him?

'*Lokasya*' means, of the people. Normal meaning is unity with the fruits of *karma* i.e. relationship of *karma* with its fruit. *Parameshwara* has not ruled that a particular *karma* will give a particular result. A seed of wheat germinates only as a plant of wheat and water always flows downwards. So the *karma* also gives its innate result. This is the working of nature.

His laws do not care for persons or for time and space. It is a natural play of the *prakriti* for evolution, which goes on. The *prakriti* just moves on its designated natural path. Not all this is because of the Supreme, the *Purushottama*. His higher (*Para*) and lower (*Apara*) *prakriti* play the entire game. He Himself remains beyond both of them and their respective modes. It is the transcendent, all-pervasiveness of the Supreme, the *Purushottama*, and indicated by the use of the word '*Prabhu*' and '*Vibhu*' in this verse.

The fact of experiencing the state of perfection should not result in discontinuing our *sadhana*. If we do not accept the limit of our present knowledge and presence of infirmities, and do not make efforts to move beyond them, we will never be able to achieve the state of perfection. *Sadhana* demands that one should move forward from his present state. That is possible only by doing *sadhana* in conformity with the present state. It would be foolish to ignore *Sadhana* by taking shelter behind the intellectual belief that *parameshwara* does every thing. We should not ignore our *sadhana* deliberately. However, we may not do it under compulsion of certain circumstances.

Now Shri *Bhagwan* tells the nature of knowledge or wisdom (*gyan*) gained by renunciation (*sanyas*) and what happens by that.

***jnanena tu tad ajnanam yesam nasitam atmannah /
tesam adityavaj jnanam prakasayati tat param ||16||***

“Whose ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of *atman*, their knowledge, wisdom, lights up the Supreme Reality (*Paramtattava*) like the Sun”? (16)

According to the previous verse, ignorance is lack of knowledge and wisdom (*gyan*), and leads to delusion. However, this is a temporary state. In the course of evolution, one gradually

gains wisdom (*gyan*), his understanding improves and his ignorance removed. What is ignorance? It is inadequate knowledge and immature understanding. He, who can see the full picture, a picture from all angles, can properly understand the real nature and value of things. By knowing the universe properly, it is possible to know the correct location.

In the process of evolution, a much higher and more comprehensive consciousness, which can go deep, gradually develops and one has better understanding. Then the ignorance, the cause of delusion, gradually removed. As the higher consciousness pervades the mind, the intellect, etc. a time comes when one starts realizing the existence of the un-manifested Supreme Being in every atom, in every existence and he looks at *parameshwara* beyond the *prakriti* through the *prakriti*. He sees *Parameshwara* in everyone's heart. Everything starts glowing by His presence and everything seen as His sport played by Him alone.

Wisdom destroys ignorance. With the dawn of wisdom, ignorance is by itself removed. No other effort is required for its removal.

Where does ignorance reside? Limited efforts made at lower levels of consciousness, are known as ignorance. This happens only in a state where higher consciousness is not yet developed. This state is the state of ignorance. There is no doubt that *atman* is the essence of wisdom. In the course of evolution as one makes progress, hidden wisdoms gradually revealed. A plant is within a seed and manifests when seed gets right conditions. The same is true regarding *Atman*. Therefore, '*atmanah*' –one's own Self -- can be used both for wisdom and ignorance - ignorance of *atman* or wisdom of *atman*. This can be used for anyone, wisdom or ignorance. The meaning '*ignorance of atman*' or '*by whose wisdom wisdom that ignorance of atman*' seems to be correct.

What is the result of that wisdom? The wisdom, '*tatpar*', i.e. instantly, illuminates the Supreme Being(*paramtattava*) i.e. *Purushottama*, like the Sun. The Supreme Being is instantly experienced in gaining this wisdom. As mentioned in verses 14th and 15th when we are free from the bonds of *karmas* by knowing this secret then there is light and the Supreme Being (*paramtattava*) is experienced. We enter into divine consciousness - the consciousness, which is infinite and blissful.

Are the awareness and entry into divine consciousness different? The awareness is an earlier stage, the stage of inner purification. The later stage is divinization. That is the only difference between the two. The earlier stage is one of removal of impurities and the latter one is of getting coloured in divinity i.e. getting one with it. It is the inevitable result of the realization of *parameshwara*. In fact, the later stage is of maturity, a culmination of the earlier stage. No special effort is required for attaining the later stage: as a ripe fruit falls from the tree on its own, so awakening of the divine consciousness is the result of realization.

By moving on the path, one gains knowledge and wisdom (*gyan*). '*tatsvayam yogsamsidhakalenatmanni vindati*', the normal result of this knowledge and wisdom (*gyan*) is a realization of *Purushottama*. Wisdom (*gyan*) is awareness of *atman*. This wisdom is gained in the process of spiritual evolution. It should be remembered, that it is not intellectual knowledge.

How does it illuminate? '*adityavat* – like the Sun. When Sun rises, everything gets illuminated in sunlight, everything becomes visible in light and nothing remains in dark. Similarly,

parameshwara manifests. The light of wisdom (*gyan*) is like sunshine and is not like that of an earthen lamp.

Only they realize *parameshwara* in who gains divine wisdom (*gyan*). Others cannot perceive by their knowledge. This is an experience. This is limited to the person concerned. That is why it is said, '*tesham gyanam*' – 'his knowledge (*gyan*)'.

'*tatparam*' – immediately. The entity which immediately illuminates everything is *Purushottama* – the Supreme Being Himself.

Can any other existence illuminate the Supreme existence? Can it not be like seeing a book in the light of a lamp or seeing the world in the light of the Sun? No, it is not like that. His light illuminates everything. Then what is the meaning of the statement that wisdom (*gyan*) illuminates Him? This wisdom is not separate from Him. Divine wisdom is a precursor of His illuminated or revealed form. Divine wisdom is that consciousness in which the presence of *atman* is experienced. Thereafter, His light, the divine consciousness, illuminates.

A devotee wants *parameshwara*. The wisdom he gains without wishing for it. What happens to those who gain that divine wisdom?

***tadbuddhayas tadatmannas tannisthas tatparayanah /
gacchanty apunaravrttim jnananirdhutakalmasah ||17||***

“Those, whose sins have been washed away by wisdom, whose intellect is devoted to *parameshwara*, whose *atman* dwells in Him, who have firm faith in Him and who are completely devoted to Him become free from the cycle of birth and death”. (17)

What is the result of that Supreme effulgence, that vision of *parameshwara*, that experience of the divine consciousness? The intellect of a devotee starts abiding in the Divine. The divine consciousness pervades the intellect. The remembrance of *parameshwara* becomes a perennial feature. It becomes the background of all intellectual activities. Other dispositions and tendencies keep emerging and vanishing but that consciousness persists. If this does not happen as a natural effect of the awakened consciousness then one must know that the divine consciousness is not yet fully developed. He is not yet mature in his *sadhana*. It is only in the mature state that one has His serene remembrance constantly - without the least effort. In that state only wisdom develops.

Not only this, the person reaches the state of oneness, '*tadatmaya*' with *parameshwara*. His inner self abides in Him and starts living in Him. Consequently, there is never a feeling of being separate from *parameshwara*. There is a constant feeling, all the time, day and night, of having united with Him forever. Moreover, this is a peaceful regular feeling. This is not a subject matter of speech as it can only be experienced. We dwell in Him and He dwells in us. Then one feels; 'I am you and you are me'.

'*tannishtha*' – Have faith, trust, belief, and confidence in Him. That which becomes a way of life is faith. We love Him, we seek Him, we live for Him and we do *karmas* for Him. He becomes the sole purpose of life – the life breath of existence and all activities revolve around Him. No space remains for anything else. All relations, all expectations, all duties and all

responsibilities submerge in Him. Such madness is natural after *parameshwara*, *sanwara*,⁸² is seen. This is the uniqueness of the faith Gopies had in Shri Krishna. He becomes the sole objective of life.

‘tatparayanah’—devoted to Him. Having found the supreme abode, what other shelter will one look for? The word ‘*ayan*’ means abode. *Parameshwara* becomes permanent abode. There is no abode better than His abode. He is perceived as ultimate abode better than all other abodes. For us, He becomes the Giver of givers. He becomes guidance of the guide, the mercy of the merciful and hands of slaves. There is no other place except in Him.

‘jaun kahan taji charan tihare’
(Where should I go leaving your feet?)

The heart of a devotee starts saying so.

When one has the protection of the Supreme Father(*Parampita*) then why should he worry? Being carefree is a proof of having gained His protection. Total dependence on Him and total surrender to Him refers to being carefree in respect of all matters relating to both worldly and other worldly matters. Those, who have taken refuge in Him and are still worried about their own future as well as of others, have not yet realized this concept of refuge in Him. A devotee roams carefree all over the world by having taken refuge in Him i.e. by his ‘*tatparayanta*’.

Finally, it is said, **‘jnananirdhutkalmash’**.

‘*Kalmash*’ – is taint, is evil. The divine wisdom properly cleanses all evils. Not even an iota of evil tendency survives. A devotee becomes as pure as an infant child. The divine wisdom destroys all latent tendencies. Even virtue is not without a taint. It too is a blot. A saint becomes as transparent as glass. The divine wisdom makes him transparent and that leads him to the realization of *parameshwara*.

Is it possible to realize the existence of *parameshwara* without becoming pure? Is it possible to have an entry in His abode? Before losing oneself in Him it will be necessary to place entire bundle of all tendencies at His feet. One can merge in Him only after becoming fully naked. We should not conceal anything and should be untainted. All that can happen by divine wisdom.

When He calls, He also gives us wisdom. Wisdom is not gained from any other source. Only after purifying He accepts us within His fold.

What is the destiny of such saints? They do not come back here. They move on a path that is free from the cycle of birth and death. They do not leave this world for coming back - like ordinary people.

There is no doubt that after having a glimpse of *parameshwara* one becomes free from the cycle of birth and death.

How very clearly status of saints is described. It is His grace, which takes us to such heights, which could transform us in this way, dye us in His colour. He gives us a glimpse and binds us to Himself. Though His glimpse may disappear; His assurance will continue and the

⁸² *sanwara*: an adjective used for the Lord

craving to see Him again will persist. When lower tendencies are still strong, *sadhak* does his *sadhana* and yearns for Him. After one is purified by his *sadhana* his eyes open. Then the field of spiritual wisdom (*gyan*) as well as of the knowledge of matter (*Vigyan*) open for him. A devotee once again gets a glimpse of *parameshwara*. He again gets His support and gets peace, stability and bliss afresh. He progresses on the path of surrender. Gradually his realization becomes permanent. While moving forward experiences of past realization remembered. This is the process of our path of *sadhana*.

*vidyavinayasampanne brahmane gavi hastini /
suni cai 'va svapake ca panditah samadarsinah ||18||*

“A sage (*pundit*) sees with an equal eye learned, humble Brahmin, cow, elephant, dog or even an outcaste”. (18)

Who is this sage (*pundit*)? The one discussed above. He is pure and free from worldly bonds. This statement is for such a sage.

‘*Pundit*’ - who has deep understanding (*Punda*). One does not become a sage, a wise person (*pundit*), by having more information. One becomes a sage (*pundit*) by his capability to understand. Even unlettered people become such sages. Most of the saints of mideaval period did not have the benefit of bookish knowledge. Shri Ramakrishna Paramhanmsa was virtually illiterate. Some saints considered bookish knowledge as a hindrance in the path of sprituality. There is no doubt that this view is correct to the extent that bookish knowledge enlarges one’s ego and confuses the mind. However, it does not have identical effect on everyone.

Saints have even vision. The word 'even' means equal. For them no one is high or low, all are equal. For them no one deserves special respect or disrespect. Being established in *parameshwara* does he not see qualities of men or objects? Does he lose his ability to discriminate? An even vision does not mean perceptual blindness. That is seeing a picture in its totality. Seeing means: *parameshwara* alone plays in various forms and everyone abides in Him; everyone is from Him and is moving towards Him. When we recognize Him in every form, in every hue and in the merits and demerits of every activity then even while seeing everything we remain even towards everyone. Then the merits and demerits of beings and non-beings are perceived as His innumerable expressions. We recognize only Him and deal with Him. There is evenness within. We start accepting everyone with an attitude of equanimity. Then no scope remains for likes and dislikes or for any conflict. As long as a person has his likes and dislikes, he does not recognize that equanimity hidden equally within everyone and at the same time is playful. These likes and dislikes create conflicts and conceal evenness from our eyes.

That Supreme Reality (*paramtattava*) is even. He is equally present in everyone like space and air. It is even and does not occupy any space. That is why everyone is in Him and by that, He does not diminish. He does not place any demand on anyone and, therefore, does not create any unevenness, only the awareness of evenness of the Supreme Reality (*paramtattava*) can bestow the vision of evenness on us. Only by recognizing Him and by an awakening of that Supreme Reality, or the Supreme Being, can a person be even towards everyone.

This equanimity is not intellectual. An intellectual evenness is a negation of reality and is negation of life. Disharmony is the underlying principle of creation. The creation is due to disturbances in the equilibrium of qualities (*gunas*) because equilibrium of qualities (*gunas*) is dissolution (*pralaya*). There is no harmony in the *prakriti*. Even two grains of wheat are not identical. Therefore, sameness or being identical is not possible in the physical world. Beyond this disharmony is the evenness, harmony of spirituality. The one, who is the cause of each one of us, is even. He is absolutely even. He is always in the sight of a saint. The unevenness in behavior is left far behind as it becomes secondary and insignificant. The question whether one is a Brahmin⁸³ or an outcast becomes immaterial. One is left with a feeling that everyone is a manifestation of *parameshwara* irrespective of his form or caste. '*Vasudevah sarvamiti*' i.e. everyone is Vasudeva – once this feeling comes then what is the difference between a Brahmin and a *chandal*⁸⁴? Only *parameshwara* is seen in everyone. This evenness comes only at a super-human level.

How will such a saint behave with people? He behaves with evenness and serenity. A saint is '*sarva bhuthite ratah*' i.e. engaged in doing good for all beings. That is the yardstick of his conduct, his behaviour. His external behaviour is not the basis of his equanimity. Its basis is his awakened consciousness of evenness. Therefore, his evenness cannot be judged intellectually. Whatever is in the interest of someone he will deal with him accordingly. His conduct depends upon the merit of the occasion. Sometimes he will give respect, sometimes he will love but sometimes he will also ignore. He will call someone very close to him and will keep someone else at a distance.

Those, who judge the behaviour of a saint through the yardstick of intellectual equanimity, do not know what spirituality is and do not understand the secret of this equanimity. Just as the Even Entity i.e. *Purushottama* manifests through such great diversity, a saint can express his even vision even in his contrasting behaviour. Behaviour appropriate for a situation alone is beneficent, vital, is in the spirit of service and is unique. This is the touchstone. Evenness of a saint does not disappear, his likes and dislikes do not emerge, and his passion-anger do not surface during his entire behaviour. If any of these things happen then he has not yet attained the position of a saint.

Now explains evenness relevant to animals. A saint is even towards a cow, an elephant and a dog. A cow is sacred and worshipped like a mother. Elephant is a useful animal but there is nothing sacred or non-sacred about him. A dog is impure. For a saint, all three of them are the same, are equal. A saint sees *parameshwara* equally in all three of them. He can salute *parameshwara* in all of them. He can also love all three. When we do not have any self-interest to serve, then only others become equal to us. A desire to serve worldly or extra-worldly self-interest is also a cause of unevenness.

Moreover, how will he behave? Will he give all three of them similar food in equal quantity? No, he will not do so. Giving similar food in equal quantity to all of them would amount to rejection of *parameshwara* sitting inside them. Naturally, their needs are different and are according to their size. Evenness means to meet their needs according to their requirement. Food,

⁸³ Brahmin: the highest caste of the caste order

⁸⁴ Chandal: belonging to the lowest caste

place and affection given to a cow are as per her requirements; an elephant is given according to his requirements and to a dog as is appropriate for him.

This means that a saint is even within but is practical in the outside world. He is not a fool. He understands people and animals much more than others do. Then only he can work in the interest of others and his authority prevails without exception. The adjective 'equipped with learning and humility' relates to a Brahmin. To convey differences, which exist between a Brahmin and an outcaste, one of the lowest castes, from the worldly point of view, external inequalities have been emphasised.

***ihai 'va tair jītah sargo yesam samye sthitam manah |
nirdosam hi samam brahma tasmad brahmani te sthitah //19||***

“Those, whose minds are firm in evenness, have won over birth and death here (in this world) itself. Brahman is certainly flawless and even. Therefore, they are established in Brahman”.
(19)

For those who have attained an internal evenness it is said, 'have won over birth and death here (in this world) itself' – 'here itself'. They are liberated; their bonds removed even though they are living in a body on this earth or while dwelling in this world. Those, who still have some tendencies left, experience freedom from bonds only after leaving their body. However, those, whose tendencies are removed are liberated while they are still alive.

As mentioned before, without becoming free from likes and dislikes one cannot attain perfect evenness. How could there be total freedom from likes and dislikes without complete removal of tendencies (*samskaras*). The person free from bonds and thoroughly cleansed alone gains the benefit of this evenness. ‘*Vasudevah sarvamiti*’ is the expression of his evenness. For him only it is said, ‘he attains Me after *sadhana* of many lives’.

This evenness is much superior to the one of ‘*sthitpragya*’, which is intellectual. That evenness rests on self-control and this evenness rests on the feeling of equality. That has tension and the danger of a downfall. In this, there is inner serenity and fearlessness. That is the path of renunciation but this is real life liberation. This is verily a complete living in *parameshwara*.

Brahman, the Supreme Reality, who is *Purushottama*, is flawless and even. He is flawless and without impurities. The flaws are likes, dislikes, passion, anger, greed, attachment, delusion, vanity, etc. There is unevenness because of them. They make the inner self-uneven. That unevenness reflects in behavior in the outside world, which also becomes uneven. Someone becomes pleasant and someone unpleasant. Someone becomes superior and someone else inferior. *Parameshwara* is free from these flaws and so is even. Only in absence of these flaws, evenness is possible. Brahman is even.

'samo 'hm sarvabhuteshu na me dwesho 'asti na me priyah' (9/29)

I am neutral to all beings. No one is worth My love and no one deserves My dislike; or, love or hate is not for anyone. In other words, likes and dislikes are not for anyone

If *parameshwara* discriminate then He is not *parameshwara* and is a devil. He comes down to the human level. Since He is neutral, He belongs to everyone and everyone belongs to Him. Since He is neutral, He is the source, the beginning of everyone and the substratum of everyone. Since He is neutral, He has place for everyone. It is; therefore, justified to call *parameshwara* as even or neutral.

Since *parameshwara* is even, he who has attained the consciousness of evenness dwells in that evenness and so dwells in *parameshwara*. He dwells only in Him. He is liberated in his life. How could there be any bond for him? By dwelling in *parameshwara*, there remains no possibility of any bonds.

Now an introduction of such a saint is given.

*na prahrsyet priyam prapya no 'dvijet prapya ca 'priyam |
sthirabuddhir asammudho brahavid brahmani sthitah ||20||*

A person established in Brahman does not rejoice after gaining something liked and is not agitated on gaining something disliked. His intellect is firm and is never bewildered". (20)

'*brahmanvit*'-- the one who is like Brahman. He has intellectual awareness through hearing about Him and contemplation. '*Brahmanvit*' is the one who become like *parameshwara* and has faith and devotion for Him. In the language of the Gita, we would call him a wise person (*gyani*) or a man of wisdom (*gyanvan*) (refer to verses 16 of chapter 7). An aspirant (*sadhak*) becomes like him and attains *parameshwara* after many births (verse 19 of chapter 7).

'*Brahmani sthitah*' – the one established in *parameshwara* – that person who has attained Him abides in Him. For him, possibility of any separation from *parameshwara* ends. A perfectly realized saint, who is liberated in his life, as has been mentioned above, stays in '*Brahman*'. What is the special purpose of saying, 'he is '*Brahmanvit*'? Is it possible to stay in Brahman without being a '*Brahmanvit*? It seems that the word '*Brahmanvit*' has been used to further clarify '*Brahmansthiti*'.

The intellect of such a person is stable. He is also '*sthitpragya*'. His intellectual unsteadiness has ended. Then only he has correct awareness of reality. He is not disturbed by external vicissitudes and by undulations in the *prakriti*. The stability of the mind finds its innate expression in a person who has realized *parameshwara*, irrespective of the fact whether or not he has done sustained *sadhana* for the attainment of that inner stability.

Such a person is not bewildered. He is free from confusion. Ignorance or delusion cannot even touch him. Abiding in *parameshwara* and ignorance cannot stay together; as darkness cannot reside in the Sun. Why Raja Janak, etc. have been called bewildered?⁸⁵ For whatever reason they were bewildered but it is certain that once a person starts residing in *parameshwara* he is not bewildered.

brahman sthitah i.e. dwelling in Brahman – this state is not attained all of a sudden. The Divine consciousness becomes stable gradually. In initial stages, latent tendencies continue for

⁸⁵ That was not bewilderment of Raja Janak, etc. That was their supreme love in the feet of Prabhu. That was the uniqueness of Prabhu and was not their shortcoming.

some time and for their removal, it is desirable and necessary from the point of view of evolution that the Divine consciousness withdraws for some time. Impurities and tendencies destroy gradually and then the undisturbed empire of the Divine consciousness establishes. Then the person attains a state free from delusion and is never bewildered.

What is the inner condition of such a saint? He does not rejoice in attaining pleasant or likeable things or experiences. Pleasant experiences do not create an upsurge of joy like a tide within; they instead disappear in his evenness like minor waves. They also do not affect his inner harmony. And by an unpleasant experience he is not perturbed, worried or agitated. He does not become uncomfortable. He keeps his cool and retains his control over himself without any special effort. What is important from worldly point of view does not seem to be so from his point of view. As for him, he only sees the pictures of creation and destruction painted by the Divine Artist on the infinite canvass of time. He is just a witness of this great grand sport of the Lord of *Yagya* (*Yogaishwara*).

This means that the internal harmony of a saint remains or continues undisturbed. Neither his mind is disturbed, nor his heart tormented, nor his eyes veiled by delusion. He retains his inner and external evenness and harmony, and he continues to be in full control of himself. The next verse gives a further description of such a saint.

***bahyasparsesv asaktatman vindaty atmanni yat sukham /
sa brahmayogayuktatman sukham aksayam asnute //21||***

“The person having no attachment with external contacts (objects) finds happiness in *atman*. The saint, whose *atman* is united with *Brahmana* through *yoga*, enjoys inexhaustible bliss”.
(21)

In this verse the happiness of such a person, who has attained *parameshwara*, the Divinity, has been described. What is the nature of his happiness? His happiness has been explained by giving an example. His happiness is unending, never decays and never ends.

The bliss gained by a person, who has attained the state of evenness, never diminishes. It remains the same throughout day and night. It makes no difference whether his eyes are open or closed. The passing days, months and years do not make any difference. He is always full of bliss but that bliss does not intoxicate. In pleasures, which intoxicate, there is influence of *tamas* and *rajas*. The pleasures of life do not remain the same and are like intoxication of wine, which declines after some time. The happiness, which intoxicates, is ‘pleasure’ and not ‘bliss’. The bliss, gained by the attainment of *parameshwara*, is subtle, equanimous and permanent. It is the consciousness of equanimity. This bliss is not a transient experience. It is a state of consciousness and so there is no question of its decay.

Ignorant persons crave for intoxication and happiness, which are transitory and should disappear for the sake of evolution.

‘*brahmanyogayuktatman*’ has been used for that saint, whose *atman* has united with the Supreme, the Brahman, by *yoga*, through the renunciation of *karmas*; for those people, who have united with the Supreme through their *sadhana* of surrender of their *karmas* in *parameshwara*.

One can attain *parameshwara* only through sustained *sadhana*. *Parameshwara* can be realized only through total dissolution of one's being in Him. Once united with *parameshwara* it is not possible for a person to forget Him.

What kind of happiness is this? The happiness found in the Self is not dependent upon external experiences or contacts with objects. Therefore, for that, one has to leave one's desire for external experiences. As long as a person is attached to external pleasures his consciousness will not be able to dwell within and will not be able to stabilize in the Self. Therefore, he will not be able to achieve the Super-conscious state or *Samadhi*. Moreover, he will not be able to get the bliss related to the Super-conscious state or *Samadhi*.

The bliss that other yogis experience in '*nirvikalavavastha*' (a state devoid of volitions) or by going into the state of super consciousness (*samadhi*) is easily achievable by saints practicing *karma yoga*. He does not have to even close his eyes and restrain his breath. The store of unending bliss will always be available to him. Only by withdrawal of consciousness from external pleasures the experience of *Samadhi* is possible. *Samadhi* is holding of entire consciousness at the same level or at the same centre. For attaining the state of *Samadhi*, it is necessary to withdraw consciousness from all other levels and all other centers.

Now says about the pleasures gained through contacts—

*ye hi samsparsaja bhoga dukhayonaya eva te |
adyantavantah kaunteya na tesu ramate budhah ||22||*

“Pleasures gained through contacts of the senses are a source of unhappiness. They have a beginning and an end. O' Arjuna! A wise person does not indulge in them”. (22)

As stated above, one establishes in *atman* by becoming detached from external contacts. Now reveals the truth of the said statement.

Pleasures and pains are due to contacts of *prakriti*. Favourable contacts give rise to happiness and unfavourable ones give rise to unhappiness. Sense organs meet objects of *prakriti*. If the contact is pleasant one feels happy otherwise unhappy. If we use sense organs for pleasure and want intense happiness then the contact with *prakriti* need to be deep. This is 'deep contact' (*sansparsha*). For full enjoyments *sansparsha* is necessary.

Happiness is not in contacts but is in pleasantness of the contacts. It depends on how we accept contacts. The same contact may give pleasure sometimes and at other times it may be painful. This is not to be forgotten.

Such pleasures are a cause of suffering. The result of such pleasures is suffering. We use sense organs as means for gaining happiness from *prakriti*. This is their misuse. Moreover, for such pleasures one has to pay a price in the form of physical suffering. We use our tongue for enjoying taste of delicious food and then we have to suffer stomach trouble. The use of sense organs for pleasures is a violation of the laws of nature but people succumb to temptations. Pleasures obtained from *prakriti* are short lived. Pleasures alongwith satisfaction create craving for their repetition and ultimately result in dissatisfaction. The more the pleasure, stronger is the craving. Craving leads to passion for obtaining the desired pleasure. Because of his passions and

cravings, a person becomes obsessed and does everything for satisfaction, which leads him to beastliness. Pleasures and satisfaction one gets after acquiring the desired object (ive) disappear during the process of enjoyment itself. Pleasures or satisfaction does not last long and leave a feeling of emptiness or of having nothing in life and then the person weeps over his fate. The chain of unhappiness becomes longer and longer. In this manner, pleasures become a cause of our unhappiness.

Pleasures have a beginning and an end. Pleasures come but in no time disappear. Their life ends between the two ends of coming and going. Transience is their basic character. On becoming permanent every pleasure ceases to be a pleasure. The pleasantness of the pleasure ends. It becomes a routine experience and after some time becomes stale.

Despite this fact why do people run after physical pleasures? They have a very narrow vision. They do not learn from experiences. They only look forward to getting desired pleasures and run after them becoming crazy. They get physical pleasure but in no time it ceases to be a pleasure. They then seek some new pleasure and run after that as before. The vision of an ordinary person is limited to current pleasures just as the vision of an insect is limited to a small area. He only knows the pleasure of running after. He enjoys the heat of hectic activity required for gaining desired pleasures and, therefore, remains engrossed in such pursuits. After many such experiences when one encounters failure, when he hits a wall, then he gets dejected and reflects. Then he looks behind and a little ahead. He also looks within. Then he realizes that his pursuit for gaining pleasures was futile and was a wild goose chase. Then he becomes wise. This is the next stage in the process of evolution i.e. the stage after indulgence.

A wise person knows the transient nature of pleasures. He knows the secret of such pleasures. He also knows about the bonds that these pleasures create. He also understands the barriers they place in the process of awakening of divine consciousness. He knows that craving for pleasures is of the mind and the *prana*. It is necessary to get beyond them for getting control over the Self and for an awakening of the Divine consciousness. Therefore, he does not take pleasure in the enjoyment of the senses and does not engage himself in their pursuit.

How a person caught in the whirlpool of pleasures? He is not caught by eating a dish; he is caught by taking pleasure in eating and by forgetting himself in the taste of the dish. The more a person enjoys the taste more the taste possesses him.

However, the one, who has drunk the taste of the Lord of tastes (*Rasraj*) is not caught even while he is enjoying the tastes of worldly enjoyments. He remains indifferent to them and so he becomes '*rasik vairagi*'. That verily is the state of a saint.

***saknoti 'hai 'va yah sodhum prak sariravimoksanat |
kamakrodhodbhavam vegam sa yuktah sa sukhi narah //23||***

"He, who can endure the force of desires and anger before leaving the body, is liberated and is a happy person". (23)

There should certainly be no attachment to external pleasures but that alone is not enough. One must be also free from internal agitations and mental aberrations. Then only a person can have equanimity and peace.

Passion and anger are powerful internal aberrations and they do internal churning. They make a person mad; disturb his mental equilibrium; make him blind and lead him to commit evil deeds. At the end of the third chapter Shri *Bhagwan* called passion and anger as enemies of a person.

An ordinary person cannot endure the forces of passions and anger and he bows before them. He becomes their slave and commits evil deeds. Gradually when he gets blows from the outside world he becomes thoughtful and develops discrimination, and then he repents. Despite that his discrimination disappears at a time needed. The forces of passion and anger sweep him away. In the second stage also passion and anger have sufficient force but the person has the realization that what he is doing is wrong yet he does evil deeds as if someone is forcing him to do them. One knowingly does evil deeds.

That is a very painful state and one feels helpless. However, from the point of view of evolution, it is the stage of cleansing of impurities. Gradually one develops an internal awareness which gradually develops and changes his life. Then the intensity of the forces of passion and anger become weak. At that stage one develops internal strength and when latent tendencies surface he is able to ignore them because the inner self has developed discrimination and has become ready for rejecting the forces of latent tendencies. As long as the inner self permits, a tendency could continue to influence the behaviour of a person. When this inner-self starts rejecting such tendencies with firmness, discrimination and with confidence then they start becoming weak. This is also true for passion and anger.

Thereafter, in the process of evolution, the next stage is of gaining control over the forces of passion and anger. Passions and anger do surface but along with them a more powerful force of discrimination emerges to reject them. The individual emerges victorious. The divine nature becomes strong. Demons are defeated.

This is the state, which has been described in this verse. A person, who can endure forces of passion and anger, is liberated and happy. Then he is firmly on the path of his *sadhana*, like a yoked ox. Now the *sadhana* has an important place in his life. He has started living his life for attaining the objective of his life.

One experiences happiness only after attaining this state. When a person first experiences internal peace and finds that he has gotten over desires and anger then he feels inner poise and tranquility and gets an unusual happiness. This is the happiness of divine playfulness. People often remain busy in the madness of the world and when they do not have anything to do then they become uncomfortable. They try to find out something to do. They do find something they can do. However, there is a pleasure in getting away from worldly madness and only the fortunate ones have that pleasure. Present discussion is about that pleasure. A person experiences true peace in proportion to the removal of his mental aberrations,

There is a state beyond this state, where there is no passion and no anger. That happens only after having a realization of the Supreme Reality and that is possible only after removal of all latent tendencies (*samskaras*) and by total renunciation of attachment with *karmas*.

If an individual while living has become capable of enduring forces of passion and anger then he has found the path and can have the taste of bliss.

The state of a perfect yogi is being mentioned again in the next verse,

***yo 'ntahsukho 'ntararamas tatha 'ntarjyotir eva yah |
sa yogi brahmanirvanam brahmabhuto 'digacchati ||24||***

“A yogi, who attains inner happiness, who rejoices within and who gets light from within, abides in Brahman (*Brahmanirvan*) by achieving a state of oneness with Brahman (*Brahmanbhava*)”. (24)

What happens in the state of bliss mentioned above? The bliss gained by enduring the forces of passion and anger is internal. That is inner happiness and does not need an external stimulus for happiness. Experience of internal happiness becomes innate. This is possible only when the divine consciousness becomes perennial. Then the individual is satiated, deeply filled with this internal happiness and becomes indifferent to external contacts.

‘*antararamah*’ means the one who rejoices within. People rejoice in objects of sense organs. He, however, rejoices within his inner self (*atmanbhav*) and dives deep into that happiness. He does not have to look outside for his happiness. He is ‘*antararamah*’, who has found an inexhaustible source of his happiness within his own Self.

And, ‘*antarjyotih*’ is the one who is enlightened from within himself, who has a treasure of wisdom within. He does not have to depend upon his mind, intellect and sense organs for knowing something. He is not dependent upon anyone for guidance except himself. He is the individual whose awakened inner self has started lighting up his path. Such a person is, ‘*antarjyotih*’ (*self-illuminated*).

Moreover, what is the difference between ‘*antahsukah*’ and ‘*antarjyotih*’? Happiness is peace, poise, and tranquillity, calm, restful, blissful, satiated, and satisfied. ‘*Jyotih*’ is indicative of wisdom.

Such a person gradually becomes divine, *brahmabhut*. Those who develop Divine consciousness (*Brahmanbhava*) are divine, *brahmabhut*. After breaching the limits of human consciousness, he abides in the divine state i.e. the *Brahmanbhava*. What happens after this? Such a person is liberated, *Brahmanirvan*, merges in the Supreme or in his own being i.e. the *atman*.

At the end of the second chapter the state of ‘*Brahmanirvan*’ was mentioned as culmination of the state of ‘*sthitpragya*’. To become a divine being is verily the attainment of the Divine state. ‘*Brahmanirvan*’ is merging in the *atman* and abiding in the Self (*atmanishtha*). Are the stages of ‘*Brahmanirvan*’ and merging with the Divine, discussed at the end of the 18th chapter (verse 55), the same? For merging with the divine, total devotion is essential. Moreover, ‘*Brahmanirvan*’ appears to be a state of the merger of the aspirant into the indeterminate (*nirguna*), or the Brahman. This is a state of absorption in the *atman* and thereafter an entry in the Divine takes place. Compare the next verse with the fourth verse of the 12th chapter.

***labhante brahmanirvanam rsayah ksinakalmasah |
chinnadvaidha yatatmannah sarvabhuthite ratah ||25||***

“*Rishies* free of sins, free of doubts, with a disciplined mind and engaged in the good of all beings attain *Brahmanirvan*”. (25)

Those doing their *sadhana* in this manner, attain *Brahmanirvan*. What is their internal and external state? When do they become suitable for liberation (*nirvana*)? We find answers to these questions in this verse. In the present and the following verses, description of the saint given in the previous verse is being supplemented. These verses describe the state of that saint who is ready for *nirvana*.

‘*rsayah*⁸⁶’ –*rishies*. Rishies are conversant with subtle elements, and are gifted with divine vision.

When they become ‘*kshinkalmash*’ i.e. free of sins? They become ‘*kshinkalmash*’ after all evil tendencies (*samskaras*) are destroyed and merged in the Divine. One can have an entry into the Divine only after repaying debts taken from *prakriti* and from others rooted in likes and dislikes, otherwise, they will remain a cause of bondage. Not only destiny has to be lived but accumulations of the past also have to be exhausted. How is it possible to achieve this in one life? This question can be asked. Past tendencies can be exhausted even at subtle level. As a seeker (*sadhak*) moves forward on the path his progress gains speed. His tendencies are exhausted faster both at gross and subtle levels according to their merit. In this manner, the work of many lives is accomplished in one life. We ourselves will have to accomplish this work. Along with accomplishing this work, many more important lessons, we learn. If someone else repays our debts then we do not learn these lessons. That is not to our benefit; rather we are harmed. Pleasures and pains are necessary concomitants of life. They will come even during the removal of tendencies. They are always temporary. Why should we bother about them? It is not possible to progress without them.

When one becomes pure, free of all tendencies and is as transparent as glass then only he merges in the Indeterminate, the formless (*nirguna*). One could merge in the Indeterminate, the Formless, only by becoming free of all attributes, the *gunas*, (*nirguna*).

The second adjective is ‘*chinnadvaidha*’ i.e. free of doubts, confusion or conflicts. Firmness of mind and internal enlightenment – the awakened higher consciousness, which can give a definite, candid assessment of the situation – makes a person free of doubts. Doubts are because of ignorance and the veil cast on it by lower tendencies, or impressions. That happens due to powerful forces of these tendencies.

Therefore, along with becoming free from evil dispositions, a seeker (*sadhak*) becomes free from all doubts, gains peace and strength. In such a state, the wisdom of the person is firm and he succeeds in his resolves. Only wisdom can make a person free from all doubts. Moreover, it is only on this basis; one can have sincere devotion and dedication. The worry about honour or dishonour will end. Confusion about duty and non-duty will also end. The consideration of virtue and vice will also end. Feeling free from worries a person can move forward in life. He can see his path clearly and sees the beneficent hand of *parameshwara* behind all events in his life.

‘*yatatman*’ – whose self is under control. This subject was discussed before. Complete control over one's body, the mind, the intellect and the sense organs is necessary. The pseudo-Vedantin, who live undisciplined life believing in the concept of illusionism (*mithyavada*) verily

⁸⁶ *Rsayah*: the term has been used for Rishies, the seer of Mantras. He is a seer who has inner light or vision.

deceive themselves. Without achieving full control over oneself no one can have conviction of mind and intellect. He will simply remain a toy of lower tendencies. For such a person merger in Brahman is just impossible. This is an essential requirement of the path of wisdom i.e. the *gyan-marg*.

Finally, he has to be engaged in the good of all beings, '*sarvabhuthite ratah*'. This demand seems to be strange for the follower of *gyan-marg*, as he is detached from the world. Not only that, as he needs the solitude of some cave in the hills, how can he do anything for the social good? For him, *karma* itself is a cause of bondage. In the Gita, *karma* also becomes a companion of the *gyan-marg*. The fifth chapter seems to be for achieving this objective.

The sixth verse says that it is difficult to be an ascetic (*sanyas*) without *karma yoga*. One can attain *Brahman* quickly by engaging in *karma yoga* i.e. by being engaged in doing *karmas* without attachment in the spirit of yoga. The disposition a *gyani* should have for doing his *karmas* is mentioned in the eighth verse. The 9th and 10th verses deal with the surrender of *karmas* in the *Brahman*. A devotee surrenders his *karmas* and his Self to *parameshwara* by his devotion. The 11th verse clearly states that the *karmas* be done for self-purification. Yogis do *karmas* for the same purpose i.e. self-purification.

From this discussion, it is clear that the present chapter is for those who have faith in *gyan-marg* i.e. the path of renouncing *karmas* while doing *karmas*. They will also have to do *karmas* because it is not possible to have freedom from doing *karmas*. He has to do his *karmas* for the sake of self-purification. A *gyani* also needs a means for destroying the bonds of his past *karmas*.

It could be said that *gyan*⁸⁷ itself can destroy tendencies, but this will happen only when *gyan* is awakened. As long as *gyan* is not awakened, tendencies of past *karmas* are not destroyed in full measure. This is a problem. Therefore, a way out is needed. The yoga of renunciation of actions (*karma-sanyas-yoga*) teaches the path of doing *karmas* for the followers of the *Nirguna*.

Now we can understand why Shri *Bhagwan* has used the expression '*sarvabhuthite ratah*' i.e. engaged in the welfare of all beings. The follower of the path of renunciation (the *sanyas marg*) would do *karmas* at the initial stage of his *sadhana* for self-purification. After he is purified, there will be no necessity for doing any *karma* for self-purification. However, for him his *karmas* becomes a habit with time. He does *karmas* but they do not bind him. Why then does he have to do *karmas* after self-purification? He does *karmas* for the sake of others' welfare. To serve the interests of others becomes his sole objective. In the state of inner evenness, all are equal. Therefore, the welfare of all becomes the objective of his *karmas*.

If there is trust in wisdom, then how could there be bondage of *karma*? If there is trust in wisdom, then there is no choice. *Karma* is the nature of *prakriti* because *atman* neither does nor leaves anything. Therefore, the question of renunciation of external *karmas* does not arise even for a *Samkhya yogi*. The one, who wants to renounce *karmas*, does not understand the reality.

The fourth verse of the 12th chapter says –

***samniyame 'ndriyagramam sarvatra samabuddhayah |
te prapnuvanti mam eva sarvabhuthite ratah ||12/4||***

⁸⁷ *gyan*: is used for wisdom and discrimination

All adjectives are covered in previous verses. How does the follower of the un-manifested, the formless Reality (*nirguna*) attain perfection? Answer to this question we find, in brief, in subtle form, in just one verse.

This question has been discussed, in detail, in this chapter. There is one more verse on this subject.

*kamakrodhaviyuktanam yatinam yatacetsam /
abhito brahmanirvanam vartate viditatmannam ||26||*

“For those ascetics (*yaties*), who have controlled their minds, who have become free from passion and anger and who have realized themselves, *Brahmanirvan* is everywhere”. (26)

‘For them, *Brahmanirvan* is everywhere’—what does it mean? *Brahman* is everywhere, why is it said? *Brahman* is in everyone. For them, *Brahmanirvan* is everywhere. *Brahmanirvan* is a feeling of merger in *Brahman* i.e. the higher consciousness in which a person becomes a divine being (*brahmanbhuta*) having merged in it. He always feels this divine consciousness within himself and in others, and he stays in the divine state (*brahmi shthiti*) and experiences the Supreme consciousness all around himself. He continues to remain immersed in that feeling. This is the state, he attains during his lifetime. Moreover, that divine consciousness could neither increase nor decrease by death.

The state of such a perfect ascetic (*yaties*) has been further described.

‘*kamakrodhaviyuktanam*’ - who has become free from passion and anger? During the period one exercises restraint there are aberrations. In a state of self-control, disorder is possible. Separation is only when there is something. When there is no impurity or aberration then there is nothing to restrain. Whatever may it be the viewpoint of *gyan-marg* is clear. The impurities are in the *prakriti* or relate to nature. They have to be there. They are manifestations of the *prakriti*. We are unique and our uniqueness should prevail. Here the story of Totapurijee⁸⁸ comes to our mind. Paramhanmsa Jee had received the knowledge of Vedanta from him. ‘Disease is the property of the body. I am *atman* and am untouched by disease’. The objective is to remain in that state.

‘*yati*’ is used for an austere one, an ascetic. Who exercises self-restraint and performs penances; who keeps his mind and body are under control. The word ‘*yati*’ primarily indicates external restraint, living in solitude, frugal food, few clothes, etc. – in short an austere living, paints the picture of an austere person (*yati*), an ascetic. That is why ‘*yatchetsam*’ has been used for those, who have not only controlled their body but have also subdued or controlled their mind, intellect, etc.

It is a beautiful state, in which we are in full command of all limbs and faculties and have full control over all our activities, whether gross or subtle. There is yet another higher state in which all limbs and faculties are influenced by the higher consciousness and the yogi becomes an efficient instrument of the Divine expression requiring no restraint.

This is a difference between the outlook of a practitioner of *gyan-marg* and that of a devotee. A devotee even surrenders his *prakriti* at the feet of *parameshwara*. There remains no problem of restraint as His *prakriti* transforms. As *parameshwara* abides in the pure *sattva*, so

⁸⁸ Totapuri jee was the Guru of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa jee

does his devotee. Influences of *rajas* and *tamas* become negligible. The sage develops a state of liberation (*kaivalibhav*) i.e. detachment from the *prakriti*. He tries to have full control over his *prakriti* for attaining and for the continuance of '*kaivalibhav*'. The changes that take place in his *prakriti* take place automatically, of itself.

The next two verses discuss meditation. They tell us about internal changes that should take place in a person for attaining liberation (*nirvana*). Liberation (*nirvana*) is the subject matter of discussion in the next chapter.

sparsan krtva bahir bahyams caksus cai 'va 'ntare bhruvoh |
pranapanau samau krtva nasabhantaracarinau ||27||
yatendriyamanobuddhir munir moksaparayanah |
vigatecchabhayakrodho yah sada mukta eva sah ||28||

“One, who keeps away from all external contacts, fixing his vision between the eyebrows, keeping even the inward (*prana*) and the outward (*apana*) breath moving only within the nostrils, whose senses, mind and intellect are under control, who is free from desire, fear and anger and who is intent on liberation (*moksha*), is verily free forever. (27-28)

What happens to a seeker when he sits in meditation?

The seeker keeps him aloof from external contacts. He does not hear, does not see and does not smell. He lifts his consciousness beyond the physical level. Then only he remains untouched by the influences of physical contacts. How does he meditate? He fixes his vision between the eyebrows and concentrates at that point. Many of those who have done this practice with open eyes have spoilt their eyes. It is not correct to practice by reading books on meditation. The right way is to find a good teacher, who knows how to teach meditation and to follow his instructions. An entry into the inner world, which one gains by such efforts, is highly effective. If meditation is not done correctly, a person can lose his balance of mind and can suffer physical and mental harm. Meditation is not a play. There are many secrets, which only a knowledgeable teacher teaches at an appropriate time.

Moreover, he ‘makes vital breath (*prana*) and intestinal breath (*apana*) even’. *Prana* is inward going breath and *apana* is the outward moving breath. In this process of breathing, breath becomes even. When there is balance in the forces of the breath going in and coming out then there is balance inside.

Along with this, breathing should also become subtle. Once breathing is controlled and the mind pacified, the breathing becomes subtle. Normally when a person breathes, he breathes so forcefully that the force of his outgoing breath can be felt up to a distance of 9-10 inches. In meditation, the force of breath reduces gradually. Finally, a stage comes when the breathing confines itself to the inside of the nostrils and is not felt from outside. It is the state of *Samadhi* or super-consciousness.

There is a close relationship between breathing and mind. By balanced breathing the mind becomes peaceful and if breathing is not balanced the mind cannot be peaceful.

He, who can make himself peaceful in this manner, can attain *Samadhi*. However, that alone is not enough. One can achieve this much by practice. However, this alone does not liberate

a person. Other changes are also necessary. Some basic changes in the mind and the intellect are also required.

The first demand is restraint. The sense organs, the mind and the intellect - all need to be controlled. People going in for *Samadhi* for several days may be without such self-control. An unusually long *Samadhi* is a play of a juggler. Self-control, especially of the mind and the intellect, is not a play of a juggler.

‘mokshaparayanah’ – he, who is intent on gaining liberation or is determined to have liberation. He who has made freedom from the bonds of *prakriti* as the sole objective of his life is a *‘mokshaparayanah’*. He is the one who has chosen the path of virtue, or the path of beneficence. Moreover, what is the state of his mind?

He is free from desire, fear and anger. Desire is a form of passion. Therefore, he should be free from all desires. Desires make the mind restless. Fear and anger make us agitate as our fears are because of attachments.

The one, who is free from these aberrations, verily is free forever.

These two verses complete the picture. In the present context discussion on meditation, however, is something new.

Here direction is for the path of *sadhana*. A *gyan-yogi* will have to do *karmas*. The required faith is as mentioned in verse 8. By doing *sadhana* in this manner, there will be no binding for doing *karmas* but they do help in self-purification. The sense organs, the mind and the intellect have to be controlled. Without their control no progress can be made. The entire knowledge or wisdom will go waste. Along with a *gyan-yogi* will have to meditate in solitude - in the manner mentioned above. As a result, the person will start liberating from gross consciousness. Gradually he will move forward towards a higher state, free of alternatives and attributes (*nirvikalpa, nirguna*).

Without understanding the exalted nature and purpose of spirituality many people, whether they follow the path of wisdom (*gyan-marg*) or devotion (*bhakti-marg*), practice meditation. Followers of *gyan-marg* usually do not bother about the path paved by *karmas* and abstinence, the path which purifies and makes persons stable within and through which certain basic changes take place in his *prakriti*. Moreover, without those changes, meditation becomes just a play. Such effort is without a sound base and has little scope for a lasting benefit.

The pre-requisites for the love for the feet of *parameshwara* are to develop intense devotion for *parameshwara*, to develop the right motives for doing *karmas*, to remember Him in normal life activities and to stabilize and purify the feeling of self-surrender to *parameshwara*. This love for the feet of *parameshwara* is the treasure of a devotee. The experiences gained by closing eyes are not so much important as these prerequisites are. After all this done other things will follow of themselves. One should always remember His name because that can generate love and can bring all that is necessary. That awakens faith and feelings also. To me, the desire for having experiences through meditation seems to be nothing but childishness. This kind of meditation (*Samadhi*) has no importance in the path of devotion (*bhakti marga*).

Now in the last verse of this chapter, Shri *Bhagwan* reveals the supreme truth.

***bhoktaram yajnatapasam sarvalokamahesvaram /
suhrdam sarvabhutanam jnatva mam santim rcchati //29||***

“Knowing Me as the Enjoyer of all yagyas and penances, as *parameshwara* of all the worlds and as the Supreme friend of all beings, he attains peace and tranquility”. (29)

The seeker, who is free, i.e. who is liberated (verse 28) and has realized *parameshwara* following the path of devotion (*sadhana*) gets peace and tranquility. It has also been stated in the fourth verse of the 12th chapter - ‘they attain Me only’. In the 54th and the 55th verses of chapter 18 Shri *Bhagwan* tells us, 'how they realize Me'. Such a seeker of supreme devotion becoming even towards all beings achieves supreme devotion for Me. By his devotion, He realizes Me, whatever I am in essence. Then by knowing *parameshwara* in essence he enters into *parameshwara*.

Because of doing *sadhana* in this manner, what does he know about *parameshwara*? This is explained in this verse.

Parameshwara is the enjoyer of yagyas and austerities'. An enjoyer is a consumer. Yagya has already been explained. Moreover, we know that He is *Yogaishwara* (the lord of yagyas). He is the Supreme deity of all yagyas. Austerities are means by which the Self purifies, as gold purifies by heating and as fever cleanses the body by its heat. *Parameshwara* is a consumer of austerities as well. He accepts our efforts and gives in turn their results. He is pleased by such efforts.

Whatever we offer to other gods that also He accepts because He alone is the consumer of all offerings? The one, who accepts offerings by becoming fire, is the sole consumer within all gods. When one comes to understand this then the entire life looks like a blessing of *parameshwara*. All human dealings are seen in and through Him and as the Lord of Yagyas, He is seen as the Lord of evolution. He takes us forward by our practice of austerities.

He is the Supreme Lord of all worlds. There are lords of each world and *parameshwara* is their Lord. He is the God of gods. Only His will fructifies through gods, human beings and demons. Whatever good or bad happens in the world it happens according to His disposition. No one is superior to Him. No one is equal to Him. Only after inner eyes open one has the realization of His infinite power and infinite existence and then a person bows before Him. Then only one understands the meaning of surrender.

He is a 'friend of all beings'. A friend is a well-wisher, is beneficent and is always sincere. Only by knowing Him as such one can become His. Only by knowing Him as such, there can be a demand within to surrender Self to Him. Then only surrender is authentic. Then only one has a natural entry into Him and has peace – supreme peace; where there is no duality, no baser tendency and there is unending beneficent existence of *parameshwara*. If there is no peace within then where else can there be peace eternal?

This chapter concludes with this verse. The chapter has been discussed in detail. We can now understand how *karmas* and *gyan* can be harmonized. In other words how a *Samkhya-yogi* can do *karmas* and what is their importance for him. The characteristics of a perfect yogi have

been described in detail. This topic has been concluded with a discussion of internal spiritual discipline (*sadhana*).

The last verse saves a seeker from the confusion by explaining to him the theme with a lofty perspective so that he reaches his destination and does not forget the objective.

|| SHRI RAM ||

CHAPTER 6

The fifth chapter is full of the usage of words like ‘*yati*’, ‘*yatchetsam*’, ‘*yatatmnam*’, ‘*yatendriyamanobudhiah*,’ etc. The last verse of that chapter mentions a different form of self-control. ‘*Samadhi*’, ‘*pranayam*’ and ‘*dhyana*’ have been explained. We are told that for being ‘*sthitpragya*’ self-control is necessary. Self-control is also necessary for getting absorbed in the indeterminate (*nirguna*) *Brahman* through the practice of *gyan-marg*. Self-control alone is the foundation of the path of ascent i.e. of *gyan-marg*. The present chapter further discusses this self-control. In our effort to practice self control we lose sight of some important aspects and are not able to understand correctly the process of evolution. We start perceiving Self-control and worldly life as mutual adversaries. As a result, either self-control becomes impossible or the natural flow of life stops. Life becomes meaning less like a dead stump of a tree.

Bearing this caution in the mind, we begin this chapter. We will discuss in detail other things as per the context.

sri bhagwan uvaca
anasritah karmaphalam karyam karma karoti yah /
sa samnyasi ca yogi ca na niragnir na ca 'kriyah' ||1||

“The one, who does *karmas* which he ought to do without seeking their fruit, is a *sanyasi*⁸⁹ and a *yogi*⁹⁰ and not the one who has renounced the (sacred) fire or has abandoned doing *karmas*.” (1)

In this verse, essence of what was explained about *karmas* in the last chapter, has been mentioned. Whatever path one may follow, he will have to do *karmas*. A *Samkhya-yogi* does *karmas* and so does a *karma-yogi*. The difference in their respective faiths does not make a difference in the requirement of doing *karmas*. A *Samkhya-yogi* also can not remain without doing *karmas*. Nobody can remain without working.

How do followers (*sadhak*) of the two paths work? They are not dependent on the fruits of their *karmas*. They do not work for the fruits of their *karmas*. Moreover, if we go a little deeper we will notice that they are not attached either with *karma* or to its fruit. The one, attached to his *karma* – has a craving for pleasure through his *karma* – becomes dependent on his *karmas*. One becomes uncomfortable when he does not have any *karmas* to do. The one, attached to the fruit of his *karma*, becomes uncomfortable when he does not get the expected fruit. This is the touchstone. Both of them (*sanyasi* and *karma yogi*) do *karmas* without any attachment either with *karma* or with its fruit.

Then why do they do *karmas*? How do they know whether *akarma* is worth doing or not worth doing? ‘*Karyam karma karoti yah*’ they do *karmas* worth doing? Situations in life tell us

⁸⁹ Sanyasi: a follower of the path of knowledge or wisdom (*gyan-marg*) i.e. *Samkhya yoga*; He is the one who renounces worldly life

⁹⁰ yogi: follower of *karma-yoga*

what we should do and what we should not do. So long as we have desires or desire for fruits of *karmas*, we are not able to differentiate between doable and not doable *karmas*. Usually it is the desire that drives us to do *karma* and not the duty-consciousness. When the desire for fruits ends then it becomes easy to do the given work, the duty. We become ready to do the work that we should do. As there is no resolve for doing any particular work, the work itself does not cause any anxiety. We work without any tension.

This is the trait of a true *sanyasi* and a *yogi*. None of them is scared of doing his duty and nor is anxious about the fruit of his *karma*. Neither do they have a desire to take up any specific work nor a wish to ignore any work. For them doing *karma* is their normal behaviour.

In olden days householders used to get 'fire' at the time of their marriage and used to keep that fire for their whole life. In that sacred fire, offerings were made to gods, and in that fire alone food was cooked for distribution as '*prasad*' – as a grace. Moreover, after death that fire was used for cremating the dead body. Therefore, the 'fire' was indicative of five basic rituals(*panchmahayagya*) or *bali-vaishvadevadi*' (offerings to gods) prescribed for a householder. The person who used to renounce worldly life used to leave behind that 'fire'. By thus leaving the fire, he used to become free from the responsibility of discharging duties towards gods and ancestors, prescribed for householders. A *sanyasi* is without fire (*niragni*).

'The one without fire (*niragni*) is neither a *sanyasi* nor a *yogi*.' A *sanyasi* is one, who is internally free from the bonds of *karmas*, recognizes his non-doer ship and is conscious of his duties in life. Without internal renunciation of attachments, outer renunciation (*sanyas*) is meaningless. Therefore, the renunciation of a *sanyasi* is not in leaving behind the fire. The internal renunciation does not take place just by leaving behind the said fire. One can have renunciation even without leaving the fire and simply by doing the prescribed duties for gods and ancestors with devotion. Therefore, true renunciation is not the renunciation of prescribed doable duties but is in having confidence in own wisdom, inner knowledge (*gyan*). A *sanyasi* has the outlook of *Samkhya*, or of renunciation. For him consciousness about duties and responsibilities of life is a means of his renunciation.

'*akriyah*' means without activity. Indolent is without activity i.e. *akriyah*. An idle man without doing any work does not become a *sanyasi*. It was believed that the one who takes to *sanyas* does not have to do any work except to meet his physical needs. He only had to beg for food. One must understand here that inactivity does not lead to renunciation. If there is no awakening within then even the *karma* of begging will create bonds. One is bonded even by breathing and by taking food.

'*sa sanyasi ch yogi ch*' means 'he alone is a *sanyasi* and a *yogi*.' The two are not distinct. The one, who is a *sanyasi*, is also a *yogi*. The attitude by which one truly gets *sanyas* also gives him yoga. The common denominator of the two is that one must do his *karmas* without attachment to their fruits.

The next verse clarifies this concept.

*yam samnyasam iti prahur yogam tam viddhi pandava /
na hy asamnyastasamkalpo yogi bhavati kascana //2||*

“What they call *sanyas*, Arjuna, you know that as *yoga* because no one can become a *yogi* without renouncing every resolve(*sankalpa*).” (2)

In the previous verse it is mentioned that a *sanyasi* is a *yogi* because he also does *karmas* without any expectation of fruits like a *karma yogi*; and no one becomes a *sanyasi* by merely renouncing the fire or by renouncing the ordained *karmas*. The present verse says this from another point of view that a *yogi* is also a *sanyasi*.

The first half of this verse gives the quintessence of the last verse, ‘this being so, you should consider him a *yogi* whom people call a *sanyasi*.’

The second half of the verse tells another aspect. How a *yogi* is also a *sanyasi*? One cannot be a *yogi* without renouncing one’s resolve (*Sankalpa*). For following the path of *karma yoga*, one will have to be without a resolve (*Sankalpa*) (to serve a selfish purpose). On the path of *karma yoga* why resolves need to be discarded?

It was said in the 19th verse of the 4th chapter – ‘whose all works start without any resolve or determination to fulfill desire’. Therefore, it is necessary that there is renunciation of resolves (*Sankalpa*) relating to fulfillment of desires for doing any work. Achieving the desired objective satisfies one's ego. One maneuvers for his satisfaction and thinks that ‘I will get that by doing this, and that will lead to this and I would become so-and-so.’ One can take to the path of *karma yoga* only by renouncing all such desire-driven resolves; otherwise, the person will entangle in expectations of the fruits of his *karmas*. One should do ordained *karmas* without a thought about their results.

For without renunciation, there cannot be *yoga*. A *yogi* renounces his desires for the fruits of his *karmas*. Therefore, a *yogi* is a *sanyasi* also.

What a strange game Shri *Bhagwan* plays. He calls *sanyasi* a *yogi* and a *yogi* a *sanyasi*. There are also similarities between the two paths. They are not different. That is why both take us to the same destination. Otherwise, this is not possible.

Self-control is useful in both paths. For self control one has to be dependent on his determination. This is also necessary for absolute devotion to *karma*. However, this is not true in the case of a devotion-based faith, for in that self-control is secondary. One achieves Self-control gradually on its own. The devotion in the feet of *parameshwara* removes all attractions (for worldly things).

The next verse shows the path to a seeker and gives suggestions for overcoming difficulties that he is going to face.

*aruruksor muner yogam karma karanam ucyate /
yogarudhasya tasyai 'va samah karanam ucyate //3||*

“For the sage, who wants to take recourse to the path of yoga, *karma* is said to be the means. When he has taken to yoga, self-control is said to be the means for moving forward.” (3)

Now Shri *Bhagwan* explains the differences in various stages of the path of yoga. Here discussion relates to the path of *karma yoga* i.e. the yoga of devotion to duty. For taking to this path, *karmas* are the means. Without doing *karmas*, a person cannot have the benefit of this faith. The 18th chapter clearly tells about this requirement. Discussion about *karmas* starts from the 46th verse of that chapter. In the 49th verse, the final accomplishment of the state of *naishyakarmaya* has been described as 'the person attains the supreme state by worshipping through his *karmas* the One from whom all beings come'. This is the state of perfection of the path of yoga. Once the state of *naishyakarmaya* is attained, *karmas* do not form new tendencies rather old tendencies become weak.

The word '*karan*' is used for 'means'. The one, who does *karma* or the one by whom *karma* is got done is a '*karan*'. He is the means. He performs. The one who desires to take to the path of yoga is an '*arurukshuh*'. Therefore, the one who desires to follow the path has to do his duties i.e. his *svadharma*. He cannot escape from performing his duties (*svadharma*).

Without doing *karmas*, one does not develop confidence, depth and balance in him. A person purifies, only by doing his *karmas* with full devotion. Many people are fond of reading books on self-development. They read books authored by Allen Moren, and others. They also read literature of Swami Ram and Vivekananda but no perceptible change takes place in their lives. The study of such books only teaches them to take flights in imaginary world. On the other hand, those who spend a few years devoting themselves to discharging their duties become perfect. Their willpower strengthens. They acquire sobriety in their personality. He, who does his *karmas* with due devotion, really knows the secret of doing his *karmas*. He remains a non-doer even while doing his *karma*. He does not bind himself by his *karmas*. Without doing *karmas*, one cannot find the path of spirituality simply by indulging in futile talks and pursuits. In olden days, teachers used to take service from their disciples by keeping them in their hermitages (*ashrams*) for years. Residency in hermitages (*ashrams*) was a higher form of training and used to prepare disciples for the vicissitudes of life and thereafter they could not deviate from the path of rectitude.

These days, people without understanding that spirituality is a form of devotion to life, run after momentary experiences of extraordinary nature. Instead of spirituality in life, they consider that making progress in the path of meditation is everything in life. One should take to meditation at the appropriate time and then only he can progress in meditation. Why should one be impatient for it? One should first understand life properly. One should develop proper devotion towards life and its duties, and towards the Master of life. Then alone the vehicle of life will move forward smoothly. Discharging of duties (*svadharma*) strengthens devotion and firm devotion opens the path of spirituality. Unfortunately, people do not understand the importance of discharging their duties with devotion. As people are impatient in every walk of life, so they are in respect of spirituality. However, we cannot deceive ourselves. We have to pay the price for our impatience.

What we are not prepared to do in the beginning we will have to do it later. We do come to understand it but after some time.

After ascension on the path of *karma yoga*, the effect of *karma* becomes secondary as it becomes the means for pacifying the mind or for the serenity of mind. The one, who has attained the state of *naishyakarmaya*, has taken the path of yoga. Again, refer to Chapter 18.

*siddhim prapto yatha brahma tatha 'pnoti nibodha men /
samasenai 'va kaunteya nistha jnanasya ya para //18/50||
buddhya vusuddhaya yukto dhrtya 'manam niyama ca /
sabdadin visayans tyaktva ragadvesau vyudasya ca // 18/51||*

“Know it from Me in short, how having attained perfection a person attains to Brahman – the supreme consciousness or wisdom (gyan).” (50 of 18)

“Endowed with pure understanding, having firm control over self, leaving objects of sense organs like sound etc. and leaving all likes and dislikes.” (51 of 18)

These references tell us the method for pacifying the mind and making it even. This is ‘*sham*’. The result of ‘*sham*’ is:

brahmabhutah prasannatma na socati na kanksati //18/54||

“Having attained oneness with *Brahman* and being peaceful in spirit one neither worries nor desires.”

A person, who has taken to the path of yoga, by practicing control over the self (*sham*) attains oneness with the Supreme Reality i.e. *Brahman*.

Is the practice of ‘*sham*’ necessary for a *karma yogi* also? According to the Gita, it is necessary at one stage for some time but not forever. After having become internally peaceful and after having become one with the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*), supreme devotion develops and through that devotion surrender of the Self takes place on its own and one gets an entry in *parameshwara*. After this, it says –

*sarvakarmany api sada kurvano madvyapasrayah /
matprasada avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam //18/50||*

‘Even while doing all *karmas* he gains the eternal abode.’ Therefore, the practice of ‘*sham*’ as a means is required only for a short time. However, one can continue to practice this as a means along with doing his *karmas*. After an aspirant becomes capable, proper conditions also develop. The means become available. Opportunities and places to sit in solitude also become available. It is not necessary to proceed to a forest for the practice of ‘*sham*’. One can have a secluded corner in his house itself. One can think of *parameshwara* even while doing his work. There is nothing unusual, if one spends some time in solitude for practicing meditation. One needs some rest after sometime even while working.

This should have been clear from the statement of Shri *Bhagwan*, quoted above. It is not necessary to abandon *karmas* or one cannot do *karma* after the state of oneness with *Brahman* is

attained or after gaining an entry into the Supreme Reality. The process of doing *karma* spontaneously continues. This should also happen in the *gyan-marg* i.e. the path of wisdom. After one has an understanding of the Truth then there is nothing to leave or to be taken up. The process of doing *karmas* spontaneously can continue. The state attained by not doing *karmas* is not any state. *Brahman* abides equally both in *karma* as well as in *akarma*. After stabilizing in that state, *karmas* do not bind. Of course, there can be differences in mental states while doing *karmas*.

The characteristics of the one who takes to the path of yoga, are now being mentioned—

***yada hi ne 'ndriyarthesu na karmasv anusajjate /
sarvasamkalpasamnyasi yogarudhas tado 'cyate ||4||***

"When one is not attached to the objects of sense organs or the *karmas* and has renounced all resolves (*sankalpas*) then he is said to have ascended on the path of yoga (attained yoga)." (4)

The one, who has taken to the path of (*karma*) yoga, has three characteristics.

First is the absence of attachment to objects of the sense organs. When one is attached to objects of the sense organs has desire and craving for their enjoyment. The expectation for the fruit of *karma* is natural. Having expectations, a person strays from the path. He cannot then follow the path of (*karma*) yoga. Control of the sense organs is necessary. The attachment of sense organs with their respective objects is normal. When one has no control over his sense organs then they drag him to their objects. It should be clear that without control over the sense organs, one cannot take to the path of yoga.

The second characteristic is to remain free from any attachment to *karma*. Attachment to *karma* also takes a person away from the path of his duties i.e. *svadharma*. A person wants to do that *karma* which has the potential of giving him name, fame, gain and happiness, and wants to abandon such duties, which have no such potential. However, a perfect *karma yogi* knows the real benefit of doing *karmas* without attachment. That verily is his *sadhana* and so he is devoted to his own duties and responsibilities (*svadharma*). He is never confused about them. About him, it is said —

***na dvesty akusalam karma kusale na 'nusajjate /
tyagi sattvasamavisto medhavi chinnaamsayah ||18/10||***

‘He does not hate doing undesirable *karmas* and is not keen to do desirable ones’. Where there is like, there is dislike as well. Where there is a valley there is a hill nearby. The one who has taken to the path of yoga has evenness towards all *karmas*. Every *karma*, which is part of his duty (*svadharma*) has same importance for him. Each *karma* being his duty (*svadharma*), one forgets that *karma* has any independent existence of its own as a vice or a virtue.

Third is renunciation of resolves (*sankalpas*). So long as there are plans for the future, the cycle of hope and expectation continues and there is a desire for enjoyment and expectation for happiness and honour. Until such times these continue and one has expectations, he can always stray from the path of his duty (*svadharma*) under their influence. Until such time a person is not stable in yoga his expectations can become strong to force him to deviate from his path.

As long as duty (*svadharma*) alone is important for a person, he sacrifices his past and future and lives only for performing his duty. When he is devoted to his duty then only he takes to the path of yoga. Then he remains free from the bonds of *karmas* even while doing them. Without such commitment, *karmas* will certainly bind him and he cannot become a perfect yogi.

A person who has taken the path of yoga is in a state of indifference towards the fruits of his *karma* (*naishyakarmaya*). This will become clear by making a comparison with the 18th chapter. In the 49th verse of that chapter, it says—

***asaktabuddhih sarvatra jitatma vigatasprah /
naiskarmyasiddhim paramam samnyasena 'dhigacchati ||18/49||***

The phrase '*asaktabuddhih sarvatra*' has the same meaning as the first half of the present verse. This phrase includes the first and second characteristics. '*vigat sprah*', 'free from desires' can only be the one who has renounced all volitions.

The next two verses give suggestions for attaining the state of *naishyakarmaya* and sound a note of caution.

***uddhared atmana 'tmanam na 'tmanam avasadyet /
atmai 'va hy atmano bandhur atmai 'va ripur atmanah ||5||
bandhur atma 'tmanas tasya yena 'tmai va 'tmana jitah /
anatmanas tu satrutve varteta 'tmai 'va satruvat ||6||***

"One should lift himself by his efforts and should not degrade himself. One is his own friend and is also his own enemy." (5)

"For the one who has conquered his self, it becomes his friend. One who has not control over his own self, it behaves like his enemy". (6)

Wherefrom does the path of uplifting courses through? One has to uplift himself through his efforts.

An individual has both lower and higher tendencies within himself. A tussle between higher and lower tendencies continues within. In this duel, sometimes-lower tendencies have an upper hand and sometimes-higher ones. When higher tendencies have an upper hand we think good and do good for everyone. Under the influence of lower tendencies evil thoughts come to mind. Moreover, so becomes one's intents for his *karmas*. When lower tendencies are strong, a person becomes a sport of evil thoughts and begins to feel extremely helpless. A storm of passion, anger, greed and infatuation wages and the person helplessly weighs down under their sway and loses his discretion. The storm is so powerful that even the intellect comes under its sway and one gets busy in adoring lower tendencies. When that phase ends, the person wakes up. Then the phase of higher tendencies comes. The person repents and decides, 'I will not do so in future'. Again, what had happened earlier repeats. Moreover, in the process one gets frustrated.

For such a state the direction is –

‘apne ko apne se uthao, girao nahin |’
(Lift yourself by yourself. Do not debase yourself)

He, who is frustrated, accepts defeat at the hands of lower tendencies and gets continually debased. He who does not accept defeat and keeps making efforts for his uplift does succeed in due course of time.

How will there be victory? By determination. A firm determination can defeat lower tendencies. One recognizes his friends and enemies.. Lower tendencies are enemies of an individual and they are a part of his Self too. They are part of the same Self of which divine or higher tendencies are a part. One has to recognize that a particular tendency is evil and is his enemy. That tendency is not to be followed. It will try to deceive and may come in a disguised form. However, a person has to be watchful. If at all evil tendencies given a chance in life then one will move away from the path of his evolution. Instead of *sattva*, he will involve in *tamas*.

When any tendency surfaces it is weak and tender like rays of dawn. If recognized in the beginning itself one can take necessary remedial action. By recognizing an evil tendency at the initial stage itself, the individual can save himself from its hold. Half of its strength is lost once it is recognized. It is good to recognize an enemy as soon as he surfaces.

One part of the Self is divine. That is a friend. That paves the path of evolution. Another part of the same Self is demonic. That hinders progress. Only by discriminating between the two, it is possible to get over the devil in us.

It is wrong to get frustrated. We are masters of our minds, the intellect and the vital. Our command alone should prevail over them and surely can prevail. We make our destiny. If we so wish we can rapidly move forward on the path of our evolution or we can degrade too. Keeping this in mind, Shri *Bhagwangave* the direction and asked Arjuna, 'uplift yourself by your own efforts'.

The one who thinks that somebody else will work for him; he lives in a fool's paradise. *Parameshwara* remains far away from those who look towards Him for serving their interests and do not do even little *karma* they can do because of their indolence. *Parameshwara* certainly does not want us to be indolent. Even small effort to rise, awakens a person. Individuals as well as races rise only after sustained struggle. A person should do whatever he can do for his self-development and his internal victory. When he does so, any shortcoming is made good by the grace of *parameshwara* and then higher tendencies succeed.

Whose Self is his friend? The Self of the one, who has won himself by himself, is his friend. He alone is our true friend who works in our interest and is truly sincere to us. Our controlled mind, intellect and sense organs can become our friends. They can help us to perform our duties (*svadharma*). Then peace becomes easy, as they do not create trouble.

The conquered Self is like a tamed horse, which can take us to our destination. Trained horse does not refuse to move on seeing green grass. He does not become stubborn on seeing

water. To conquer the Self should be our *mantra*. It is of great assistance in making us move forward on the path of our evolution. When the Self is conquered, the body cooperates and the mind helps. One does not become a victim of the forces of lower tendencies. They come entirely under one's control. However, for the one who has not achieved control over his Self, they become his enemy. In that state, the person knows the futility and perniciousness of a particular evil thought, still he comes under their sway. He desires that he should not have evil thoughts but they keep coming repeatedly. He feels uncomfortable but having no control over his intellect, he is not able to get over them; a painful state indeed. It should not happen, but the intellect continues to carry its force with it. The heart of such a person starts sinking and the mind starts reeling. Is this behaviour of his intellect not like that of an enemy? Our intellect, which is a part of our Self –our being, starts harming us. Similar is the condition of our heart. When we hate someone, we feel jealous. We want to get over that feeling but our heart keeps it alive. It is not concerned with our pain. Its behaviour is like that of an enemy.

The unconquered vital also behaves just like an enemy. Passion, anger, etc. are the forces, which by rising repeatedly weaken the body. We do not want that to happen but the vital wants to have its satisfaction, which it gets through them. This behaviour of the vital is also like that of an enemy.

Sense organs also behave like enemies. It is a matter of common experience that after overeating, there is pain in stomach. The enjoyment of taste becomes a cause of pain. When the physical body becomes a hindrance in the path of service then it also becomes our enemy.

When the mind, body and the vital are controlled then they behave in our interest. They then become our friends and abandon their interests in our favour.

Therefore, one can understand how important self-control is. If one wishes to make progress on the path of yoga he will have to have control over his Self.

How can one achieve this control? As has been mentioned above this is achieved by discrimination. The method for gaining this control is mentioned earlier. And, along with self-control, it is necessary to have proper understanding and faith. We should also know that lower tendencies could destroy on their own. One should have faith that victory of the divine tendencies in the course of evolution is certain and one will be certainly victorious. Lower tendencies weaken slowly. What happens all of a sudden is bound to be just suppression and that can burst any time. Absolute freedom from tendencies is possible only by their complete removal.

The way for achieving self-control is to strengthen higher tendencies. Accept lower tendencies – recognize them, do not be afraid of them and do not fight with them. Just watch them and make them feeble with confidence. For the person who remains busy doing his work (*karmas*), the problem of self-control becomes easy to solve. *Karmas* gradually clean a person of lower tendencies by slowly reducing their vitality.

What is the state of the one who has control over his own Self i.e. who is a '*jitatman*'?

*jitatmanah prasantasya paramatma samahitah /
sitosnasukhadukhesu tatha manapamanayoh //7||*

“One, who is *jitatman*⁹¹ is calm and serene, his *atman* is ever in the state of supreme evenness in cold and heat, in happiness and unhappiness and honour and insult”. (7)

‘*samahit*’ means composed i.e. equanimous, even, balanced. ‘*Param samahit*’ is a state of supreme composure where one is not disturbed in the least by any kind of conflict and in any situation or condition, either physical or mental. It is ever-peaceful state.

Extreme cold and heat make a person uncomfortable. A specific condition suits some persons and some other conditions suit others. A person feels happy in situations favorable to him and uncomfortable in unfavourable situations. He tries to avoid unfavourable situations or keeps himself away from them. Even heat or cold do not influence the body of a person who has conquered his own self. He remains even in varying temperatures and remains healthy.

He remains absolutely even in happiness and unhappiness as well as in honor and insult. There is no difference in his internal reactions in either of them (dualities). The subject has already been discussed earlier in detail.

Who reaches such a state?

‘*jitatmanah prasantasya*’ – ‘the one who has conquered his own self and has become calm and serene’. He has full control over his mind, intellect and sense organs and they obey his commands.

Moreover, he is fully calm and serene. He is pacified after gaining ‘*sham*’. The state free from mental aberrations verily is the peaceful state.

*ahamkaram balam darpam kamam krodham parigraham /
vimucya nirmamah santo brahmabhuyaya kalpate //18/53 ||*

One becomes peaceful only after overcoming his ego, power, vanity, passion, anger, and desires. This is ‘*sham*’ of the mind. The sense organs are subdued. This bestows calmness and serenity. It is only by becoming free from these aberrations that one can attain evenness, as mentioned above. For unevenness is only because of these aberrations.

The description of the state, attained by taking to the path of yoga through the practice of ‘*sham*’ (verse 3 supra), continues in the following verses. (Verses 8 & 9)

*jnanavijnanatrptatma kutastho vijitendriyah /
yukta ity uchayte yogi samalostasmakancanah //8||*

“A yogi whose self is full with wisdom and knowledge, who is steady and master of his sense organs, for whom a lump of earth, a stone, and a piece of gold have same value, he is said to be the united one i.e. ‘*yukta*’. (8)

⁹¹ Jitatmana: the one who has won over his self or has acquired control over his self.

'*Yukta*' is a state, gained by the practice of '*sham*' after taking to the path of *yoga*. '*Yukta*' means united i.e. the one united with the Supreme Reality (Brahman). In the 18th chapter, '*Brahmanbhava*' i.e. the mature state of Brahman realization is perfection (*paripakva*) of this state. Elsewhere this state is called '*brahmi-sthiti*'. It is also called *Brahman-nirvana*. In this state, the characteristics mentioned in the preceding verse are experienced. Here, this concept has been elaborated.

'*jnanavijnanatrptatma*'- 'Who's self is full with wisdom and knowledge'. The *gyan* i.e. the wisdom relating to the Self (*atman*), which is called *Brahman gyan*⁹², has been discussed in the second chapter of the Gita. '*Vigyan*' is knowledge relating to matter or the manifested *prakriti*. 'How One Supreme entity becomes many'? How *prakriti* behaves? Knowledge of the behavior of diverse manifestations of *prakriti* is *Vigyan*. '*Jnanavijnanatrptatma*' is the one who knows both the manifested as well as the un-manifested and has no need to know anything more.

At higher levels of consciousness, we know considerably much more than the knowledge at mental or intellectual level. The only purpose of making a reference to it is to refer to the one in whom the desire to know has ended and who is in a state of contentment. To convey 'how much he knows' is not the purpose here.

'*kutashtha*' means firm like a pillar. A pillar is not movable. People were tied to it. A pillar does not become unsteady. A person tied to it could not escape. A yogi is firm within himself like a pillar. The *Brahman* is also steady i.e. '*kutashtha*'. '*kutashthamchalam dhruvam*', '*nitya sarvagatah sthanurachaloayam sanatanah*'.

The one who is firm in the Self (*atmanishtha*⁹³), who is firm in the Supreme Reality (*brahmanishtha*⁹⁴), becomes stable like a pillar. Within himself, he becomes immovable like a rock, for nothing can move him. Even about the characteristics of a '*gunatit*' (one beyond attributes) it is said: '*gunairyo navichalyate*' (verse 23 of chapter 14) i.e. 'the one who is not disturbed by attributes. A '*kutashtha*' is also like him.

'*vijitendriyah*' means the one who has won over his sense organs. As a person moves forward, he gradually acquires fuller control over his sense organs. In the state known as *yukta* or the united, one has full control over his sense organs. We should not forget that it is self-deception and foolishness to think that one can attain the state of evenness without having full control over his sense organs. Intellectual knowledge becomes ignorance in the absence of full control over the organs.

In addition, '*samalostasmakancanah*' means the one for whom a lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold are the same, or have the same value. For '*gunatit*' (refer verses 14 and 24) exactly a similar condition was mentioned. Does he become so indifferent that he does not know the difference between a lump of earth and a stone, or does he not know the difference between

⁹² Brahmanyam: the divine knowledge or the knowledge of the Supreme Reality or Brahman

⁹³ atmanishtha: having faith in the self

⁹⁴ Brahmanishtha: the one who has faith in the Supreme reality or Brahman

them and gold? He does recognize them and knows the difference between the two, but for him, there is no difference in their value as people assign to them.

For him, there is nothing valuable and attractive in gold. He understands the utility of everything but keeps everything in its proper place. He is not lured by gold because he does not have greed for it. He is like a child who plays with his choicest toy for some time and after that, he throws it away and picks up another toy. He has a similar state. He is free from attachments; free from avarice. Therefore, he is free from bonds.

Such a person is 'yukta' or a united one. The one who has above qualities is. *gunatit* beyond attributes. He is fully devoted to *hiskarmas* and has no selfish interest i.e. he is 'karmanishtha'⁹⁵. Such a person attains supreme peace.

The next verse further elaborates the concept of 'yukta' i.e. the united.

suhrit *mitr* *aryu* *dasin* *am* *adhyasthad* *vesyabandhsu* /
saddhusv *api* *ca* *papesu* *samabuddhir* *visisyate* ||9||

“He alone excels who is even-minded towards friends, companions, foes, towards those who are neutral, indifferent, and impartial, towards those who are hateful and related, and towards saints and sinners”. (9)

First half of the verse mentions many categories of mutual relationships. 'suhrit' is a dear friend. A deeper love exists between them. Two 'suhrit' are said to be two bodies and one soul. Friends are sincere and they think well of each other. There is affection too but not like the one existing between *suhrit*. An enemy desires harm for his adversary; there is enmity and not love. Neutral is the one who is neither a friend nor a foe. Indifferent is the one with whom there is no relationship. An impartial one is in the middle between a friend and an enemy. He is neither a friend nor a foe because he is not inimical to anyone and hesitates to do well for any one. He has neither prejudice nor any bias in favour or against anyone. He is not indifferent either. He desires to do well (for someone) but does not do so. There is no enmity but his indifference causes harm. He remains impartial. Being impartial to the two parties, he becomes an intermediary as Shri Krishna was between the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*.

'Dvesya' is the one hated. Enemies are inimical towards each other. 'Dvesya' is hated because of his misdeeds from the worldly point of view. Sometimes hatred continues from generation to generation. Because of disputes or clash of interest also, people hate each other.

Bandhu is a near and dear one. He is related to us with a bond of blood or relationship due to family, marriage or parental ties.

A person who is even minded towards every one is excellent and his state of enlightenment is indeed very high. He is highly enlightened, whose mind can remain uninfluenced by external relationships and not affected by considerations centering on personalities. He, who accepts

⁹⁵ karmanishtha: fully devoted to his work

everyone equally recognizing the presence of *atman*, is in a state free from likes and dislikes and free from all kinds of prejudices, is even above yogis known as the united ones.

'*sadhusv api ca papesu*' means that he is even towards saints and sinners alike. The usual principle of life is affection for virtuous persons and hatred for sinners. 'Happiness on seeing virtue and indifference on seeing evil' is a method given by Patanjali for mental peace. It is, however, difficult to maintain an attitude of disregard towards evil even though same *atman* is seen in every one. This is normal. The mental peace of the person who can treat both of them with equal respect and love is beyond the normal human level.

The one united in Yoga is:

*sarvabhutasthamatmannam sarvabhutani chatmanni /
ikshate yogayuktatman sarvatra samdarshanah || 6/29 ||*

'(A yogi) perceives himself in everyone and everyone in himself'. He is so equanimous. Both virtue and evil have no place in his perception of Self (*atmandarshan*⁹⁶).

It is an excellent state. It will be interesting to compare this state with the attributes of a *gunatit*.

There is no place for any anger in a truly realized saint. There is no right anger or wrong anger. Anger arises only because of attachment at the mental plane. What is the social behaviour of such a saint? He always works in public interest like *parameshwara*. *Parameshwara* is even towards everyone yet He plays the entire game of life. He makes someone laugh and someone miserable. Someone takes birth and someone dies. However, his evenness cannot be understood merely by his visible behaviour. For evenness is his internal state.

The next six verses from 10 to 15 describe the practice of '*sham*' for attaining the supreme state of peace. These verses compare well with verses 51 to 53 of chapter 18. A person, who has attained the state of *naishyakarmaya*, achieves the state of oneness with *Brahman* i.e. *Brahmanbhava*, through his *sadhana*, in the same way a yogi unites with the Supreme. He gains the supreme peace of *nirvana*, liberation. In both places, direction is for attaining the same peaceful state.

This *sadhana* is for controlling the mind and intellect, which is also necessary for a *karma yogi*. This discipline is of the path of ascent and in this personal effort is important; it does not require surrender to *parameshwara*, refuge in *parameshwara* or the support of *parameshwara*'s grace. It is the path to attain the state of staying in *Brahman* by pacifying the mind through self-control.

Earlier, it was mentioned that for meditation proper course is to take directions from a competent teacher. It is dangerous to take to meditation just by reading books.

⁹⁶ atmandarshan: self-perception

These considerations are not for those taking to the path of descent. The traditions and rules of the path of descent are different. Therefore, we should not mix them unnecessarily. The path of descent is the faith in surrendering to *parameshwara*. Its success is through surrender. Internal *sadhana* and meditation is according to this requirement. For this, the reader must read both parts of the author's book '*adhayatmik sadhana*'. The details described here are not for the followers of the path of descent.

How should a yogi practice for peace?

*yogi yunjita satatamatmanam rahasi sthitah /
ekaki yatcittatma nirasir aparigraha //10//*

“He should continuously concentrate on *atman* remaining alone in solitude, having controlled his mind and self, and free from desires and longing for possessions”. (10)

An aspirant should do meditation in solitude, not in the company of others. In the practice of meditation company is a cause of distraction. One has to do this practice of meditation alone.

And '*rahasi sthitah*': - in secrecy - out of the sight of others. The word, '*rahasi*' is derived from the root '*rahas*', which means 'secrecy'. He should sit at such a place where no one can see, no one can know; may be in a forest. One can sit in a closed room of his house. One can do that even at midnight when everyone is asleep.

Why so much effort for secrecy required? By keeping secrecy, possibility of emergence of aberrations is avoided. One is distracted by other's gaze and intentions. One may feel honoured when others know it but that can also be a cause of distraction.

The path of ascent is fraught with the danger of a fall. There are many secrets. One should not share his experiences with anyone.

'*yatacittatman*': meditation can be practised by controlling '*citta*' and '*atman*'. '*Citta*' refers to both mind and the intellect and '*atman*' refers to the entire self. If mind and intellect are not under control then *sadhak* is disturbed and is not able to concentrate. Nothing can happen by practising just for a day. It may take several lives for one to be successful. Therefore, one should prepare his mind and body with the resolve that objective of the *sadhana* has to be achieved with patience.

One can practice only when his body supports him. The practice of ascent demands undisturbed sitting for hours. There will be difficulty if the body is not properly trained. A seeker should develop physical tolerance, should practice posture for yoga and should have a controlled diet. Then alone practice can continue.

'*nirasir*': free from any hope. He should not only have no worldly expectations but should not have expectations from meditation too. He should not be impatient nor should be anxious about the coming state. He should not think: 'why it is not coming soon or why it does not

continue'. He will have to do his practice without internal desires as well as without any expectation from his *sadhana*.

'aparigraha'- free from longing for possessions. He should not have any worldly dealings nor should he keep with him any material goods or people. More goods and people are near him, more will be the feeling of ownership. The mind will be distracted and the success will elude. This is the utility of external renunciation.

Evidently, in this *sadhana*, one will have to be free from worldly duties and responsibilities at least for some time. It has been mentioned in the 18th chapter: '*viviktasevi*' i.e. living in solitude.

What should a yogi do while living in this manner? '**yunjit satatmatmanam**' – he should continuously unite himself i.e. unite with the Self (*atman*) and try to be a *Brahmanishtha*⁹⁷. He should make continuous efforts. The direction is for uninterrupted efforts of day and night. Demand is for total withdrawal. This is possible only gradually. Wisdom demands that one should practice as much as his body can endure. If one exceeds his limits, he may have to stop his *sadhana* altogether. By overdoing one may lose interest in his *sadhana* after some time. One should move very cautiously for increasing the duration of his *sadhana*. And there should always be an effort for staying in *atmabhav*⁹⁸.

How this *sadhana* be done? That is explained in next two verses –

*sucau dese pratisthaya sthiram asanam atmanah /
na 'tyucchritam na 'tinicam cailajinakusottaram ||11||
tatrai 'kagram manah krtva yatacittendryakriyah /
upavisya 'sane yunjyad yogam atmavisuddhaye ||12||*

“He should prepare a firm seat in a clean place, which should neither be too high nor too low, covered with *kusha*-grass, a deerskin and at the top a piece of cloth, one over the other. Sitting on that seat one should practice yoga for the purification of self by controlling his thoughts and sense organs and by concentrating his mind”. (11-12)

There should be a clean place for meditation. The concentration of the mind is not dependent upon external conditions but in initial stages, they help. A clean place has its special effect. The mind pacifies quickly. As is the place of meditation, so is its effect. Mind pacifies easily in a temple, on the bank of a river or in solitude of a green forest. Vibrations of the outside realm make the seeker calm within. Therefore, the direction is for a clean place for meditation.

There should be a proper seat to sit for meditation. It should be firm and should not be shaky. The mind does not concentrate by sitting on a shaky seat. The mind will not be able to concentrate on a roof, as there will be disturbance due to movement of people. The seat should be stable.

⁹⁷ Brahmanishtha: the one firmly devoted to Brahman or the Supreme Reality

⁹⁸ atmanbhav: the state of self-concentration

One should also sit firmly. If posture is changed after every five minutes, then nothing will be gained. One should sit in meditation in such a manner that he could sit for a long time without any disturbance.

What kind of a seat should it be? Either spread the *kasha* grass under the seat or the seat (*asana*) itself could be made of *kusha*-grass, over that seat place deerskin and a piece of cotton cloth on top. It should be such as to prevent flow of energy from the body to earth. By sitting in meditation, energy level in the body goes up. If there is contact with earth then the energy will flow down to earth. Consequently, one will not be able to gain the desired benefit of deep concentration, which could otherwise come. It is comfortable to sit on a soft seat. The *kusha* grass makes it soft. Deerskin makes it even and smooth and one does not get moisture and coldness from the earth below. By keeping a cotton cloth over the deerskin, hair does not prick and protects skin. Besides, maintains cleanliness because the cotton cloth can be washed frequently.

In addition, the seat should not be too high or too low. Sitting too high or too low from the ground level does have a distinct effect on the mind. By sitting on a high level, one has a strange and uncomfortable feeling of uneasiness and instability. By sitting at low level, one has the feeling that he is sitting in a pit. For bringing a healthy state of mind, a proper place for sitting is of considerable help.

What one need to do by sitting in such a place and on such a seat. One is to practice this yoga for purification of his *Atman*. By doing *karmas*, one purifies but full purification is not possible. Past tendencies and passions persist in subtle form. This *sadhana* helps in removing them. One should do this *sadhana* keeping this specific objective of self-purification in mind.

This *sadhana* does bring under control activities of '*chitta*'. '*Chitta*' means heart- beats and mind taken together. Along with thoughts, resolves and counter-resolves come and with that, there is an awakening of emotions. One has to exercise control over all these impulses. One will have to develop an ability to change their direction and to arrest them completely. *Sadhak* should be able to control their activity and of the activities of sense organs.

By concentration, the mind is directed to flow continuously in one direction so that it moves towards one's objective. Mind is not to be made free of thoughts. Only an objective is to be placed before it and directed towards that objective without any deviation. This is concentration. The mind flowing in one direction alone is concentrated. The mind remains active in concentration but that activity is only in one direction.

*samam kayasirogrivam dharayann acalam sthirah /
sampreksya nasikagram svam disas ca 'navaokayan //13||
prasantatma vigatabhir brahmacarivrate sthitah /
manah samyamyam maccitto yukta asita matparah //14||*

“Sitting firmly holding the body, keeping head, and neck erect, gazing at the tip of the nose, not looking around, with pacified *atman*, fearless and practicing celibacy and with mind

under control and turned to Me one should practice meditation with devotion and having Me as his supreme goal". (13-14)

The word 'yukta' means united, for being regular in *sadhana*. It also indicates concentration and evenness of mind. The intention behind this seems to be that one should be regular in his efforts.

A seeker should practice having faith in Me, considering Me as the motivating force of his existence and knowing Me as his essence i.e. '*matparah*' and concentrating his mind (*chitta*) in Me i.e. '*maccitah*'. He should practice by concentrating his mind and thoughts in *parameshwara*, the *Purushottama*. This is not a direction for the worship of '*nirguna*'. This is a direction for '*saguna*' worship. A seeker will have to sit and think of *parameshwara* and will have to move considering Him as the ultimate goal of his life. Is it then a *sadhana* for followers of the path of knowledge (*gyan*) or of those devoted to *karma*? This practice of meditation is for self-purification. This is a direction for the follower of the path of *karma* after he reaches the stage ready for meditation. Shri *Bhagwan* is giving directions for an easy way. The devotion and *karma* get along very well.

How will the mind concentrate on *parameshwara*? When the mind reined i.e. when the mind is in control? And, how is the mind controlled? The mind is controlled by practicing concentration and thinking of *parameshwara*. Concentration developed by practice. With proper concentration, the mind becomes ready for the task. Mind comes under control by thinking of *parameshwara*. One knows how to do it just by doing it. The restlessness of the mind perturbs those who do not understand this simple process. They think that concentration of mind is beyond them. However, this is their impatience and ignorance. One achieves control just by regular practice. One learns to ride only by riding a horse. One learns singing only by practicing singing.

And what else needs to be done?

While sitting, one has to be careful that the back, neck and head are erect and in one straight line. Nothing should be out of this alignment and there should not be bending of body to move in front or behind, to the right or the left. And this should not mean that there is tension in the body. The lesser the tension better will be concentration. The body should be as relaxed as possible. For the mind moves to the place where there is tension. One knows the correct posture by experience. This principle is for the path of ascent and not for the path of descent.

It is necessary to keep the body steady. There should be no need for turning the neck upwards or downwards or bending forward or backward. At the time of meditation, the body should remain steady and relaxed.

Direction is for fixing the gaze on the tip of the nose. When the gaze is fixed at the tip of the nose then the *agya chakra*, which is situated between the eyebrows, is automatically activated and is internally connected with the '*brahmanrandhra*' (hole at the top of the head) through the nervous system. Therefore, the path up to the '*brahmanrandhra*' opens by concentration at the tip of the nose.

During meditation should eyes be closed or open? It is necessary to keep eyes slightly open because then only it is possible to continue with meditation. The gaze fixed at the tip of the nose without looking around i.e. this way or that way. By looking around internal awakening will not take place.

‘prashantatman’ – having a pacified self. In verse 7, supra, the word '*prashanth*' was used for the united one. One should make oneself calm. Causes of unhappiness should be recognized and dealt with effectively. If any work needs to be done it should be done before sitting for meditation. If any decision is to be taken, it should also be taken so that the problem is solved and does not disturb during meditation. The mind should not engage in other pursuits. It is useless to think about something, which cannot be resolved now.

‘vigatbhih’: fearless. Concentration is impossible when there is fear. For the mind will repeatedly go towards the cause of fear. Some may even have the fear that others may not see those singing devotional songs while doing meditation. The causes, which can create disturbance, be identified, recognized, dealt with and removed. Only a few people know how to think correctly. The one who uses his mind correctly can quickly become a master of his mind.

An aspirant of the path has to practice celibacy. Preservation of semen, avoidance of all kinds of sexual indulgence and an austere life are the main requirements of celibacy. In this discipline, the reading of scriptures has no use.

The mind becomes firm when semen is preserved. When semen is discharged the mind too becomes capricious. All other means are for gaining firmness of the mind. By avoiding sexual indulgence, semen is automatically preserved.

The *sadhana* of the path of ascent cannot continue without preservation of semen. A householder, who indulges in procreation, is also a celibate i.e. '*brahmachari*', but meditation demands total abstinence. Moreover, in this path of ascent when semen is discharged one may have the feeling that all that he preserved is lost.

After mentioning all requirements for proper *sadhana*, *Shri Bhagwan* mentions its results.

*yunjann evam sada 'tmanam yogi niyatamanasah /
santim nirvanaparamam matsamstham adhigacchati ||15||*

“A yogi always doing practice in this manner and with a subdued mind gains '*nirvana*', the supreme peace, the peace that abides in Me”. (15)

When the mind is subdued with continuous practice (of meditation) then the yogi attains '*nirvana*', the supreme peace.

‘nirvanparam-shanti’ - Peace in the form liberation or deliverance. The peace which takes to liberation or deliverance.

‘*matsamstham*’ – which abides in Me. The yogi, who attains Me, attains the peace abiding in Me. That is the peace of liberation, of deliverance. By gaining that peace, one is liberated.

By continuous singing of devotional songs in praise of *parameshwara*, the mind gets automatically concentrated; gains peace and bonds removed.

The objective of this yoga was self-purification but here we are discussing the ways of gaining peace. The extent to which a person is purified, to that extent he automatically becomes peaceful.

Causes of our mental disquiet are our passions, attachments and fear. With self-purification, we become free from them.

Next two verses mention about the daily life of an aspirant.

*na 'tyasnatas tu yogo 'sti na cai 'kantam anasnatah /
na ca 'ti svapnasilasya jagrato nai 'va ca 'rjuna //16||
yuktaharviharasya yuktacestasya karmasu /
yuktasvapanavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkhaha //17||*

"The Yoga is not for the one who eats too much or for the one who does not eat anything. It is neither for the one who sleeps too much nor for the one who keeps awake all the time". (16)

"For him, who is temperate in eating and his behaviour, in his efforts for doing *karmas*, and in his sleep and wakefulness, yoga is the remover of his sufferings". (17)

In this verse, yoga means the yoga of self-control, the practice of meditation. This *sadhana* relates to all activities of life. The mind is disciplined by regulating various activities of life because the mind and the body are closely related. Therefore, regulation of the body is very necessary. This spiritual practice is not a play of a magician, which one can learn by practice. It is internal purification and it comes after total change in one's nature and temperament.

One who eats too much cannot practice meditation. When he sits for meditation he will feel uncomfortable because of a heavy stomach, or he will feel sleepy. The gas produced in the stomach will divert his mind to the body repeatedly. His efforts for meditation will become purely physical. Moreover, it will become impossible for him to rise above the physical level. The one, who does not eat and keeps fasting, cannot proceed with this *sadhana*. Too much fast makes the mind weak and nerves lose their capability of effective concentration. A strong healthy mind alone can be successful in achieving an effective and powerful concentration. Secondly, when one feels hungry, the mind rushes towards the body and the vital becomes capricious.

Therefore, the middle path is the golden principle. One should eat moderately. One should eat just to meet requirements of his body. This is moderation in food. We have to assess requirements of our body and only that much we need to eat. A wise man knows how much his body requires and only he can do meditation properly. While moving on the path, the

body requirements may also change. We must remain alert about them too. One should eat only that food and in the quantity which suits his body. The obstinacy of any kind in this regard is harmful.

The same is true about sleeping and remaining awake. One who sleeps too much suffers dullness all the time. He doses during meditation and soon his dosing transforms into sleep. His efforts to concentrate his mind go waste. The one who keeps awake all the time has so much tension in his nerves that it becomes impossible for him to meditate. During meditation, his mind and body are heated. Therefore, here also, one should follow the middle path. It is necessary to know how much sleep is enough for rest for practicing meditation properly. With a little experience, one knows. One should do whatever is proper for him. By trying to win over his sleep, a person loses both his physical and mental balance. The requirement for sleep also changes with the progress in the practice of meditation. Seasons also have their effect. In this respect, our working conditions and related physical and mental efforts also require due consideration. More the physical labour, longer the rest is required. That should be given due consideration otherwise proper meditation will not be possible. Meditation requires great alertness. Nothing happens simply by moving blindly. It is for this reason, proximity with a teacher is essential. Even if physical proximity is not possible, it is necessary to obtain his guidance from time to time.

The 17th verse speaks of general principles (incorporating everything stated above).

Whose misery can yoga remove? Misery removes only after success in meditation. If the spiritual practice becomes topsy-turvy then yoga will also become a cause of misery instead of its removal. By this *sadhana*, some aspirants can become sick and some can have mental problems. This happens sometimes due to absence of control in life. It is harmful if medicine and food not taken properly or instructions not followed. Similarly, it happens in the practice of this yoga.

For getting benefit from this yoga, *sadhana*, regulate life by following the golden rule of self-discipline.

A spiritual aspirant should have proper food. Craving for tasty food and the practice of yoga cannot go together. Only after abandoning craving for tasty food and exercising moderation in food intake one can practice this yoga.

And, what should be his behaviour? The conduct of an aspirant should also be proper. He should properly use his time and energy: only such use, which is helpful and not a hindrance in *sadhana*, is proper use. If we engage in such activities, which are a hindrance in *sadhana* and waste time and energy unnecessarily, then we cannot succeed in *sadhana*. It is necessary for a practitioner to devote himself entirely to his *sadhana* and to make it the sole objective of his life. He has to be conscious of all his activities at all times. He has to be watchful whether a particular activity is proper for him from the point of view of his *sadhana* or not.

Regarding behaviour, Patanjali has prescribed rules (*niyam*⁹⁹) for self-discipline in *yogadarshana*. '*shauchsantoshatapahswadhyayeshvarpranaidhananiniyamah*'. There are five

⁹⁹ niyam: cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study, and self-surrender to God

*yama*¹⁰⁰ also. One has to observe both *niyam* and *yama*. One will have to regulate his activities as per these rules. Without observance of these rules, *sadhana* cannot be fruitful. They are necessary for attaining supreme peace and for reaching the destination without problem.

People do have some stray experiences even without having discipline in life. However, these experiences become the limit of their *sadhana*. Though they may have covered a little distance, yet it is difficult for them to go far. It is not possible to go far in *Sadhana* without internal purification. We cannot deceive *parameshwara*. How can one reach the abode of *parameshwara* without becoming both internally as well as externally pure and without purity in behaviour? How one purifies? One has to purify himself - whether he does it in the beginning or along with efforts of spiritual practice. One should understand that without control in life, it is not possible to move forward. It is better if we remove all our misconceptions at the earliest.

About sleeping and waking much is written above.

The next verse is the foundation of yoga *sadhana*.

***yada viniyatam cittam atmany eva 'vatisthate /
nihsprhah sarvakamebhyo yukta ity ucyate tada ||18||***

'When the mind is properly disciplined, free from yearning for desires, is fully established in *atman* then a *yogi* is called 'yukta' (united)". (18)

The state of the united one (*yukta*) in *yoga sadhana* is now being described. United is the state of '*brahmanbhuta*'. What happens in that state? In that state all volitions (*vruttis*) of one's *chitta* (i.e. the heart and the mind taken together) arrested i.e. fully controlled. In other words, all volitions (*vruttis*) effaced. Mind is established in the Self, '*atman*'. '***tada drashtuh swarupe'vasthanam***' then the seeker abides in his own Self. His *chitta* is fully under control. It becomes firm in all respects and does not wander. Then no other effort is required to discipline it.

One reaches such a state only when longing for desires end.

We should understand that the follower of this path attains this state automatically. Only necessary internal and external changes need to take place. All longings need to be pacified. So long as there are desires, the mind (*chitta*) could at any time become capricious. Cravings will surely end if a person continues to do his *karmas* with prudence by understanding the way passions move. In the process of evolution as we move forward, these passions end on their own. By becoming impatient, one gains nothing. Only by moving properly, inherent tendencies do get destroyed - some by enjoyment and some at a subtle plane. When one knows the process of evolution, he is not impatient. Then his faith is firm.

Moreover, after some progress in the practice of yoga, the volitions (*vruttis*) of the *chitta* gradually subside. If we put our mind into the flow of meditation then gradually stability comes. The more one is free from cravings and attachments, more his fear and longings depart from him

¹⁰⁰ *yama*: non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-receiving of any gifts

and to that extent his mind becomes even and calm. In this respect, experiences of life are very important. The practice of doing *karmas* without attachment has great value.

The rest is a matter of practice. The practice has to continue. Just as boiling milk by itself gets cold after it is taken off from the stove, and just as ripples on the surface of water become calm after breeze stops, so too is the condition of the mind. One will have to practice regularly. Gradually mental stability will develop. The aspirant will get support from within. The mind will stabilize. Gradually volitions (*vruttis*) will start dissolving and with it, the mind (*chitta*) too will be completely subdued. The self (*atma tattva*) will bloom. The seeker will then abide firmly in the Self i.e. he will become *atmanishtha*.

Shri Bhagwanasked that during meditation one should think of Him (verse 14), but in this verse abiding in the Self (*atmanishtha*) has been mentioned. This is true. The state of super-consciousness (*samadhi*) passes gradually from determinate ‘*savikalpa*¹⁰¹’ to indeterminate ‘*nirvikalpa*¹⁰²’ state. All thoughts dissolve. When the mind itself does not exist where then is any question of thinking? Who is there to think?

A yogi in this state is called the united one i.e. ‘*yukta*’. This state is also the state of being ‘*yukta*’. In this state, the aspirant unites with *atman* and stays in the state of super-consciousness or *Samadhi* beyond mind and intellect. He attains the state of oneness with the Supreme Reality i.e. the *Brahmanbhava*. A person having attained this state is in a state of perfect evenness. He is calm and peaceful. Inner storms have ended.

***yatha dipo nivatastho ne 'ngate so 'pama smrta /
yogino yatacittasya yunjato yogam atmanah //19//***

"Just as a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, so too the yogi of subdued mind who practices this yoga of *atman* and mind does not waver". (19)

A simile for the state of a *yogi* in the ‘*yukta*’ state is now given. Flame of a lamp in a windless place does not flicker. The flame remains stable. So is the mind of the yogi without any disturbance. The flame is continuously stable. Flame is formed by burning of oil and is uniform. Similarly, the mind of a yogi becomes firm, one-pointed. Therefore, it is unwavering.

In kathopanishad also, there is a verse just like this:

***yada pancavatisthante jnanani mansa sah /
buddhisca na viceshte tamahuh parmaam gatim //
(Kathopnishad 2.3.10)***

‘The state, when all five sense organs are subdued and stabilized along with the mind and the intellect do not make any effort, is called the supreme state’. This is a description of *Yukta* State or the state of unison.

***yatro 'paramate cittam niruddham yogasevaya /
yatra cai 'va 'tmana 'tmanah pasyann atmani tusyati //20//***

¹⁰¹ savikalpa: an indeterminate state or is a state with vruttis, with alternatives

¹⁰² Nirvikalpa: a determinate state, free of vruttis, without alternatives

*sukham atyantikam yat tad buddhigrahyam atindriyam /
vetti yatra na cai 'va 'yam sthitas calati tattvatah //21||
yam labdhva ca 'param labham manyate na 'dhikam tatah /
yasmin sthito na dukhena guruna 'pi vicalyate //22||
tam vidyad dukkhasamyogaviyogam yogasamjnitam /
sa niscayena yuktavyo yogo 'nirvinnacetasa //23||*

"Yoga is a state where mind is controlled through practice; in which the *atman* sees the *atman* through the *atman* and rejoices in the *atman*; a state of supreme bliss. This state is beyond the sphere of the senses and is perceived by the intellect. If a person is firm, he will not deviate from the truth. In this state the person thinks that there is no greater gain beyond this. When you are steadfast, even the deepest sorrow will not shake you. This state known as yoga, removes any possibility of suffering. A person should practice this yoga with determination and free from mental distress. (20-23)

In these four verses, we find a beautiful description of what happens by achieving perfection in this yoga of self-restraint (*atman-sanyas-yoga*).

In the state of perfection of this yoga, a yogi attains the highest form of consciousness i.e. *nirvikalpa samadhi*, where there are no volitions. This is the state in which, one stabilizes in his own Self. He feels blessed and his wandering ends forever. We will consider these verses in their sequence.

The sentence starts from the 20th verse and ends with the first half of the 23rd verse. The second half of the 23rd verse is a sentence in itself.

The sentence is completed by the words, 'that should be known by the name of yoga, which removes any union with suffering'. The remaining three verses describe the state reached by the practice of this yoga.

After *sadhana* completed, whatever happens in the mature state of this *sadhana*, the same happens in the state of union with the Supreme i.e. the *yukta* state. A mind restrained through the practice of yoga comes to rest. The spiritual practice of yoga as described in the previous verses is an effort to subdue the mind. By doing that practice, mind is defeated and loses its fidgety nature. Just as a restless horse is defeated and tamed, so is the mind tamed. It then neither runs within nor rushes outside after objects of the sense organs.

As and when the mind loses interest in any object it ceases to be capricious even if that object is very close. The mind does not become capricious when it is at rest. Then there is no need for exercising any restraint as it is under control.

In the second half of the 20th verse, it is mentioned that in this state 'the *atman* beholds the *atman* from the *atman* and rejoices in *atman*'. This state of *atman* (*Self*) is in the mind. When the *vrittis* i.e. the volitions of *chitta* are absent, when even their absence is not felt, then one is established in *atman*. The witness (*sakshi*) establishes within the Self. The consciousness, which

used to perceive others through the mind, intellect and sense organs, having established in the self now perceives the Self within and without. It is not correct to say that 'it perceives'. The consciousness becomes stable in itself beyond the *prakriti*. That is the state of aloofness (*kaivalibhav*) of *yoga* philosophy. In that state seer alone exists and he sees, his own self. The result of this perception of the Self is supreme satisfaction. The Self is complete in itself. The mind, the intellect and the sense organs receive peace supreme and satisfaction. The aspirant also becomes full of energy and wisdom. It is only because of the feeling of lack of that fullness that a person becomes miserable and he looks for pleasures in *prakriti* and through the *prakriti*. When he realizes his own Self as the source of supreme bliss he is fully satisfied and is at rest. His dependence on *prakriti* comes to an end. After realizing his immortal, eternal and indestructible *atman*, he has nothing but perennial satisfaction in abundance. His search for bliss ends: As musk is in the navel of a musk deer but since he does not know of it, he wanders all around in search of it. The wandering can only be over when the musk deer realizes that the musk is within him. So too is the condition of a person. The supreme bliss is within him but since he does not know this truth, he searches for it elsewhere.

That supreme bliss is described in the next verse 21. In the state of self awareness alone, a person knows that bliss. What is that bliss? '*atyananitikam*' – infinite, in abundance or everlasting. In that state, there is no limit or excessiveness; it is greater than the great as there is no greater pleasure. *Atman* is infinite and has no boundaries of time and space. The bliss of *atman* is also infinite. In the *prakriti*, that infinite manifests itself by becoming finite i.e. limited. Through this *sadhana* when a person establishes in his *atman* beyond the boundaries of mind, he experiences infinite bliss. The worldly pleasures, the pleasures of gods in heaven are insignificant in comparison with the bliss of *atman*.

The intellect experiences this bliss but it is certainly beyond the sense organs. The bliss is not the object of sense organs because that does not come through their contacts with the *prakriti*. Ordinary pleasures are born out of contacts of sense organs with their objects. It is only by stabilizing in the Self that one experiences this bliss. This is the blissful self-experience of the *atman*. One has this experience only by establishing in the Self.

How is this perceptible by the intellect? If *Atman* has experienced the bliss then after the interruption of *Samadhi* no memory of it should remain. After interruption of *samadhi*, consciousness returns to the *prakriti* and the intellect captures the said blissful experience. That explains how its memory remains. If it were not such as is acceptable by the *prakriti* then its memory too should not have been possible. The memory, which remains, is evidence of the fact that the intellect does accept and remembers the pleasure of the bliss supreme.

The experience of the state of self-realization influences the mind, the intellect and the sense organs. Its direct effect is on the intellect. It starts glowing with the light of this great experience. The properties of *atman* influence the Intellect. As a result, the entire existence experiences a kind of unique satisfaction.

And, '*na cai 'vam sthitas calati tattvatah'*— a yogi firmly established in his *atman*, does not deviate from the truth. Who? A successful *sadhak of yoga-sadhana*. Where he establishes? He establishes in his *atman*. Does he not come out of his super consciousness after gaining it? He does come out of that state and after he comes out of it he has such strong experience of the *atman* that he does not deviate from the Truth, which he has experienced. His self-cognition is the Truth. That is also the supreme Truth. One does not forget that Truth even after he comes out of the state of the *atman* or super consciousness (*Samadhi*). Such an experience of the *atman* awakens self-awareness forever. Then there will be no superimposition of mind, intellect and body on the Self. In addition, one does not become miserable by decay. Then he says

'kimichan kasya kamaya shariramanusanjvaret'?

Brahadaranyaka 4.4.12

'For fulfillment of what wish, of what desire a person should be unhappy in this body'?

The meaning is clear. Once a person establishes in his *atman*, he can never forget that experience. His awareness of *atman* can never vanish. From the point of view of evolution, it can be said that many storms may come due to pre-formed tendencies and one's perspective may be sullied but that will happen only for some time. After the destruction of tendencies, there is no significant difference between the state of super-consciousness and the state outside. However, this happens in due course of time.

The 22nd verse mentions the importance of the experience of *atman*. This is such an experience after which nothing else remains important. There is a traditional belief in the world that each experience, which comes, is better than the previous one. Whatever a person has already gained becomes insignificant to him. Then there is craving for a new experience and the rat race continues. This is true, especially regarding experiences relating to the *prakriti*, there is no experience of the senses which could fulfill the demand of the infinite *atman*. Therefore, the search for new experiences in life continues. There is no experience better than the experience of the *atman* and after that experience no better experience is possible. That experience is one's ultimate gain. After which no doubts remain unresolved. Therefore, there is no scope left for any confusion. That is when the journey of an aspirant ends. He knows that no better experience of bliss in life is possible. Here comparison of a saint is with the unlimited or the Supreme Being. For that reason, wandering comes to end. If the one in search of pennies gets a diamond then why should he continue his search for pennies? The one who has gained an unending source of infinite bliss what better pleasure can he wish for.

Moreover, in the end, it says: 'the person established in this state cannot be shaken even in gravest sorrow'.

Is a person established in *samadhi* or a person established in self-awareness, not shaken in sorrow? The more a person is unsteady, more quickly he is disturbed. In misery the evenness and wisdom of a person is tested. If both evenness and wisdom are a result of an intellectual exercise, then both can shake - only the impact has to be forceful enough. After all, everything that belongs to the *prakriti* has limitations. A person established in the Self is always peaceful and poised. This

evenness makes his intellect also even. The realization of Self also takes the person beyond birth and death. It is only because of the evenness of the Self that a person does not become uncomfortable even amidst the greatest sorrow. Sikh Gurus, who were great saints, had suffered intense physical tortures and mental agonies from the worldly point of view but they had borne everything smilingly like a shower of flowers.

This state of abiding in the Self is yoga. The state of super consciousness (*Samadhi*) and the state of unity or oneness is also yoga. '*ujir Samadhi*'. The word yoga is formed from the root '*uja*', which is also used in the meaning of *Samadhi*.

Its name is yoga. This yoga removes pain and takes one beyond the feeling of pain. Thereafter, the person is never unhappy even if he wants to be. He is so firm in his stability. Tears dry up. In addition, his heart even being soft becomes as hard as the hardest rock. The path of total removal of pain opens up with the understanding of the Self (*atmangyan*). After this consciousness of the self-awareness, the person cannot identify himself with *prakriti*. The pain is due to the illusion that the body is *atman*, known as *dehadhyas*.

This yoga is worth practicing. For, this yoga completely removes misery and gives unlimited inner happiness. Therefore, this is worth practicing. How this yoga is possible? The mind should be free from turbulence, of all forms of agitations of heart and mind, worries and problems. One should also be free from anxiety, hope and despair. He should be patient and tolerant. Then only this yoga is successful.

In addition, one should have firm determination. Without having faith in his *sadhana*, success in yoga is not possible. The mind of the individual gets fickle. Getting scared of the difficulties of the path, he may leave the path of *sadhana*. This happens because of his indecisiveness and due to predominantly negative thinking. He goes on destroying whatever he gains through *sadhana*. One has firmness by determination. One can achieve his goal with determination.

The next two verses tell us the technique of doing spiritual practice (*sadhana*). The technique for moving ahead in *sadhana* is now described.

samkalpaprabha an kamams tyaktva sarvan adestah /
manasai 've 'ndriyagramam viniyamya samantatah ||24||
sanaih sanair upamed buddhya dhrtigrhhitaya /
atmasamstham manah krtva na kimcid api cintayet ||25||

“Abandoning all desires born out of selfish resolves (*sankalpas*) and restraining by mind all the sense organs from all sides let him gain slowly, very slowly, tranquility through carefully controlled intellect by steadfastness. One should not think of anything else by fixing the mind in the *atman*”. (24-25)

One should practice by sitting on a seat. Abandon all desires completely, for the desires make the mind wavering and unsteady. The thought that after meditation some particular work needs to be done become a source of distraction. It is not difficult to imagine how much trouble

bigger desires can cause. Money is to be earned, a daughter is to be married, an election is to be contested, honour is to be gained, profit and wealth from business have to be earned, etc., etc. are such endless desires, which have no end. One will have to abandon all of them. They have to be abandoned completely.

Is it also necessary to abandon desires related to social responsibilities? If we desire success in this yoga, we will have to abandon even social responsibilities. So long as there is desire, there is a barrier – an impediment. While understanding this fact of life, wise people do not easily permit everyone to take up the path of renunciation, the path of *sanyas*. There are many duties, from which one can be free only by discharging them well. Whosoever is a householder is sure to be conscious of his duties. He can be free from this feeling, of this bondage, only when the feeling of responsibility disappears. The means for ending this feeling have been stated by the exponents of Vedanta thus – ‘*Brahman satyam jagat mithya*’ i.e. *Brahman* alone is real; the world is an illusion. Who is for whom? Which duty? All this is an illusion and leave it. Such thoughts do not remove the bonds of past tendencies or *samskaras*. These bonds crop up repeatedly. At best, such bonds can be suppressed only for some time. If a person does not give way for removal of these tendencies then they also do not give him way for his progress. Progress becomes impossible. That is why the rule was that one had to have a son before taking to renunciation (*sanyas*). By doing that alone, his wife could be cared for in a joint family and she could have support for her future life too. Later on, a practice came into vogue which ordained ‘*yadah virjet tadah pravrajat*’ i.e. the day you become indifferent towards worldly life (*vairagai*) that very day leave the house without any hesitation considering external renunciation as the supreme objective of life.

Then, how can desires be given up? Fulfillment of desires will consume one's whole life. Just by running away from life, bonds do not remove. One has to abandon, with prudence, *karmas* not related to one's responsibilities. 'Desire is the mother of unhappiness, is the mother of fickleness and is the dwelling place of misery and is the daughter of ignorance.' For discharging duties, one has to work like a *karma yogi*. One should work keeping in mind the need for discharging one's duties. Then there is no fickleness. When the right time comes, one will become free from the bonds of duties. Moreover, we should not forget that peace of mind and its stability is not possible without renunciation of desires.

All desires have to be abandoned. There is no place for having any kind of desires irrespective of whether these are good and relate to duties, religion or to any other kind of requirement. If any desire exists even at the level of sub-consciousness then too one cannot have peace. Only with prudence, renunciation is possible but patience is also required. Moreover, all this is for yogis. It should not be forgotten the path of a devotee, his outlook and the method of his renunciation are different.

‘*samkalpaprabha van kamams*’– desires born out of one's resolves. Mental impulses are resolves. These impulses emerge due to tendencies. Impulses getting the support of likes and dislikes, take the form of desires. It is in the nature of the mind to think of resolves and counter-resolves arising from different thoughts.

All desires, which may arise in the mind after sitting in meditation, should be resolved through intellect. This will gradually make the mind calm and peaceful.

Moreover, it is necessary to control all sense organs from their attractions. How this be done? One should exercise control through his mind and should not allow his sense organs attracted by allurements of the physical world. The mind is the master of sense organs. Therefore, it can restrain sense organs. When one feels like opening his eyes, he should not open them. When ears want to hear something, he should turn them away from it.

The fact is that, even if, sense organs are in contact with their objects but the mind is not in contact with sense organs, then the mind does not register the objects. If the mind is tuned somewhere else then even if ears receive some music it is not heard. In that very state, one does not see even though his eyes are open. Similarly, one does not feel a cut on his hand. Therefore, an easy means of controlling the sense organs is to divert the mind away from objects of senses. Then the sense organs are automatically restrained. As compared to external restraint of sense organs, this is surely an easy method. However, this is not always successful. Therefore, when it is not successful take precautionary measures.

Here the term mind means analytical or critical mind. In other words, the intellect, which discriminates, is the mind.

Gradually one has to withdraw from the outside world and has to divert attention inwards. One has to withdraw from physical to subtle level, from subtle to causal and then after crossing that stage one has to establish his Self firmly in the *atman*. In English, this is known as 'withdrawal' – the withdrawal of consciousness from one level to another in the previously mentioned sequence. If we keep on rejecting activities of mind and intellect gradually then we will reach depths. Just as a pebble or sand thrown in water sinks and settles in the bottom as soon as the water settles and then there is no possibility of the pebble coming up again on the surface. Mind also settles down like that.

The right thing is not to suppress one's resolves and counter resolves but to remain observant. View the rising resolves and counter-resolves with prudence. They will disappear by themselves. Moreover, by their continuous rejection, their frequency of emergence will come down considerably.

Withdraw gradually. Withdrawal is not possible in a hurry. If one tries to hurry through the process of withdrawal, surely it is bound to take much more time. Anxiety itself will make the mind capricious. Just as an elephant sits slowly, the mind also comes to rest slowly. Therefore, one should never try to gain anything in a hurry. For gaining tranquility of mind, extra efforts are seldom fruitful. For that, proper understanding is necessary.

'Control through intellect with patience'. Withdrawal will take place through the intellect. Prudence is necessary for withdrawal. This was also mentioned before. However, one should not be impatient to achieve withdrawal. If one becomes impatient then the intellect will try to suppress impulses of mind or *vrittis* of *chitta*. Moreover, any effort by suppression will lead to

tension. If there is tension, tranquility is bound to end. Exercise prudence with patience. Because of prudence, new causes for restlessness will not surface. New passions will not manifest. As a result, past tendencies will remove quickly. Therefore, with the removal of past tendencies, tranquility will come naturally.

Storms do come in the beginning of *sadhana*. Whatever is within that comes to surface. Sudden eruption of latent tendencies do disturb people who take to this path. Patience is necessary at this time. This is the first valley to be crossed. Once that is crossed following path becomes clear and easy to traverse. While moving forward, sometimes some strong tendency again comes in the way. There is then again a possibility of becoming impatient. However, if one has firm faith in his *sadhana*, and has necessary understanding and true yearning then one will be able to bear such disturbance.. If there is lack of trust within then there will also be impatience.

'After fixing the mind in *atman* one should not think of anything else'. Is there any substantial objective behind this withdrawal or is it mere withdrawal? There is a definite purpose and that is self-introspection. What is the Self? 'I am the Self.' 'I am like this.' There are many aspects of the Self, about which one can reflect. One should reflect consciously. In addition, one should also discard resolves and counter resolves. At last, volition (*vritti*) for cognition of the Self will only remain. Then, he should make an effort to remain in this state. After that, one will automatically develop ability to discriminate.

What will happen by making such an effort?

*yato yato niscarati manas cancelam asthiram /
tatas-tato niyamyai 'tad atmany eva vasam nayet ||26||*

“For whatever reason the wavering and unsteady mind wanders away, restrain it and bring it back under the control of *atman*”. (26)

The mind is restless and unsteady. Unsteadiness is its natural property. It has fluidity of air. Therefore, it is restless and it is difficult to keep stable. Whenever there is an effort to stabilize the mind in *atman*, it always tries to run away. It becomes as difficult to concentrate at a specific point as it is difficult to make a child sit at one place.

After it runs away, the mind has to be arrested and brought back. It can be brought back by persuasion too. Alertness by itself brings it back. As soon as it is noticed that the mind has run away, its capriciousness is defeated. In this manner, the game of hide and seek is played within. One has to persist in his efforts with great patience. Ultimately, the mind will be defeated and its natural capriciousness will end. After getting tired, it will finally sit down weighed with the feeling of defeat. It will then work in the manner we want it to work. However, it may take many years of efforts to accomplish this work. For some, it may even take the span of several lives as this amount to changing the nature of the mind itself. This is an effort to discipline the mind to make it abide in the Self or *atman*.

When the fire ignited, its flame goes high. As the fuel is consumed, the flame becomes shorter and shorter. The fire dies after consuming entire fuel. Therefore, with the destruction of

internal maladies, the mind also calms down. In reality, the restful and calm mind alone gives stable peace. The calm gained by one's efforts subsides quickly and does not last for long. On the contrary, the peaceful state gained after arresting the capriciousness of mind by pacification of resolves, remains constantly peaceful because it is not a result of any special effort instead it is a spontaneous manifestation. It is very valuable. There is no doubt that regular practice is necessary but without internal purification, the practice by itself is not very helpful. Practice done for this purpose is helpful for internal purification.

Now it is desirable to review the position. In the second half of the 14th verse, Shri *Bhagwan* had said: '*manah samyamya maccito yukta asita matparah*' i.e. with the mind under control and tuned to the Self one should practice meditation with devotion. Here he says: '*atmansamstham manah krtva*' i.e. 'by stabilizing the mind in *atman*'. There are many techniques for meditation. For a devotee concentration of his mind on a personal deity is easy. For the follower of the path of knowledge (*gyan-marg*), the *atman* is the only basis for concentration. Both have been mentioned. For a *gyani* concentration on the tip of the nose is required but for a devotee it is necessary to concentrate on his deity. Do not mix the two. For considering all this, a warning has been given that for the path of meditation, it is proper to get initiated by a competent teacher. Books confuse an aspirant. A mere touch of a competent teacher can enlighten an aspirant. *Astu!*

What is the state of a person who does *sadhana* in this manner?

*prasantamanasam hy enam yoginam sukham uttamam /
upaiti santarajasam brahmabhutam akalmasam ||27||*

“A yogi, whose mind has become peaceful, whose *rajoguna* has come to rest, who is free of evil and who has become one with Brahman, gains supreme happiness”. (27)

The result of doing meditation in the given manner is the same as is achieved by one who constantly thinks of *parameshwara* (verse 14).

The mind gradually becomes peaceful. It becomes tranquil. It is subduing of the mind or the dissolution of the mind. *Rajoguna* is pacified. *Rajoguna* is indicative of restlessness. Both intellect and sense organs lose their restlessness. It is the natural result of *sadhana*. It only takes time. Totapuri Jee was the preceptor of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Deva. He did *sadhana* for 40 years in forests to attain peaceful state but Shri Ramakrishna attained peaceful state in a few minutes in Dakhineshwar. The mind and the intellect need to become *sattvic*.¹⁰³ Although this is a state beyond the three *gunas*, the three constituents of *prakriti*, namely, *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*, yet the only way of attaining it is through *sattva guna*. The inner self does not become peaceful because of *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*. Because of them, there is instability and inertness. How can there be cognition of the Self without *sattva guna*?

He becomes '*brahmabhut*', the one abiding in Brahman or deeply immersed in Brahman. He is blessed with divine consciousness. It is the very state called '*atmanishtha*'. The *Samkhya* and the *Yogadarshan* have used the word '*atman*' or the Self for the same reality for which

¹⁰³ *sattvic*: Pure, pious and sublime

Vedanta has used '*Brahman*'. The confusion is unnecessary. There is no difference between the two states.

Moreover, the person becomes '*akalmash*¹⁰⁴' i.e. free of every evil. In fact, he becomes free of both evil and virtue. All tendencies or *samskaras*, whether evil or virtuous, are removed. He, the *yogi*, becomes pure and transparent like a glass.

When this happens then he 'attains supreme happiness' i.e. the happiness which has been mentioned above in verse 21. Then only his *sadhana* truly matures. A new higher consciousness emerges and that influences his thought process and destroys past tendencies. In initial stages, higher consciousness is not stable as it disappears under the pressure of lower tendencies. But in due course of time higher consciousness influences lower tendencies and purifies them.

The higher consciousness manifests and disappears repeatedly but every time it manifests it leaves its imprint behind. The stability comes gradually when the entire personality of the aspirant becomes capable of enduring the weight of higher consciousness. The higher consciousness then becomes permanent. The attainment of infinite bliss is the outcome of this effort.

*yunjann evam sada 'tmanam yogi vigatkalmasah /
sukhena brahmasamsparsham atyantam sukham asnute ||28||*

"Always doing *sadhana* of *atman* in this manner and getting free of sins, a *yogi* easily experiences infinite bliss of contact with *Brahman*". (28)

If a *yogi* continues to do his *sadhana* in the manner mentioned above then he achieves this bliss. What is this bliss? The bliss is eternal happiness in great abundance and there is no other happiness better than this. (Verse 14 supra)

This bliss is in the nature of contact with *Brahman* i.e. '*Brahmansamsparsh*': it is one, which carries with it the experience of *Brahman*. Put differently, it is the pleasure of experiencing the *atman*, which is the same as has been discussed earlier.

The only requirement is that a *yogi* has to persist with his *sadhana*. He should not leave it in the middle becoming impatient. He should not be in a hurry. Just as after a train is boarded it takes to the destination. So also, the train of *sadhana* takes one to his goal. Therefore, there is no reason for being impatient.

Very comfortably, one attains his objective. He faces no difficulty and no special effort is required. The meaning of this verse is that for attaining the objective, only regular *sadhana* is necessary.

This verse emphasizes the certainty of success. As in the material world, one is sure of getting the desired result by doing the work with sincerity and dedication, so also an aspirant can

¹⁰⁴ akalmash: free of any impurity

be sure of success in the field of spiritual *sadhana*. This assurance alone gives confidence and patience too.

The next four verses describe the state of a perfect yogi, of his wisdom and the state of his internal consciousness.

*sarvabhutastham atmanam sarvabhutani ca 'tmani /
iksate yogayuktatma sarvatra samdarsanah ||29||*

“He whose *atman* has been united by yoga and who looks at all beings with evenness sees all beings in himself and himself in all beings”. (29)

One who has attained success in his *sadhana* is a yogi, *yuktatman* i.e. person united with his Self i.e. *atman*. This yoga is the path of meditation, of discipline. It is one through which one abides in the self and in *Brahman* – in a state of union – and is known as ‘*atmanishtha*’ or ‘*Brahmanishtha*’. (A person having confidence in himself)

‘*sarvatra samdarshanah*’: He, who knows his Self and also knows *Brahman*, sees everyone equally. He alone is balanced and considers everyone as equal or sees everyone with evenness and does not consider anyone superior or inferior. He knows the Supreme Reality beyond time and space.

What is the philosophy of such a person? He sees all beings in himself; not in the body but in his Self because his self is his *atman*, soul. He is established in his Self. He perceives everyone in the Supreme Reality, which pervades all – from within and without - in which time and space abide and remains untouched by them. He sees all things in the Supreme Reality and in himself (for both are the same) and perceives that Supreme Self pervades all beings. That Supreme Reality animates all existents and is behind all existents. It is pure, untouched and peaceful without any restrictions or bonds.

This consciousness is abstract. In fact, there is none in it nor is it in anyone. It is untouched. This is the abstract (*nirvishesha*) form of the Divine Reality i.e. *Purushottama* and is without attributes (*nirguna*). In the 9th chapter this alone has been described in a strange manner stating thus: ‘*na ch matsthani bhutani pasya me yogam aisvaram*’ (verse 5) i.e. these beings do not dwell in Me, behold My Divine mystery’.

In fact, this is a unique form of Divine Reality i.e. *Purushottama*, which is beyond time and space and is unrelated to everything. Those who follow the path of wisdom (*gyan*) keep this as an objective of their *sadhana*. This is the form related to *para-prakriti* and is a form of *parameshwara*. ‘Therefore, they also attain Me’. So is said in the ninth chapter.

This is the nature of higher consciousness, called *adhyatman* in the ninth chapter. When united with *prakriti*, we perceive it as embodied i.e. the *jiva*. *Purushottama* or the Supreme is the one, who pervades all existents but is still beyond them at the same time. He is the one who is without any attribute (*nirguna*) and is also the one possessing all attributes (*saguna*), He is active as well inactive at the same time and is a deity of a devotee and *Brahman* of the wise.

It should have been clear by now as to why I have used both the terms ‘*Brahman*’ and ‘*atman*’ as synonyms. The ‘*atman*’ of the Samkhya is masculine element (*purusha-tattva*), untouched, different and beyond *prakriti*. It is unborn, uninvolved and inactive consciousness. The *Brahman* of the *Vedantis* is also the same unborn, uninvolved and inactive consciousness - different from *prakriti*. The only difference is that there are many *purusha* but there is only one *Brahman*. How could there be any plurality of elements beyond *prakriti*? In Upanishads, the word ‘*atman*’ indicates the consciousness, mentioned above. That alone is the Supreme Brahman of the followers of the path of wisdom (*gyan-marg*). In this manner, all three streams converge in the same stream ‘*atmabrahman*’ and indicate the same objective. Amongst olden Upanishads, only the *shwetashvatara* speaks a different language. Elsewhere, this state is the supreme objective of *sadhana*.

In the next verse, Shri Bhagwan has used entirely new expression to explain that *Purushottama* is not different from this Reality and to show the path to devotees i.e. followers of the path of devotion (*bhakti*).

*yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvam ca mayi pasyati /
tasya 'ham na pranasyami sa ca me na pranasyati ||30||*

“He who sees Me everywhere and sees everyone in Me, I am not lost to him nor is he lost to Me”. (30)

While describing the method for renouncing *karmas* according to the discipline of Samkhya Shri Bhagwan in keeping with the spirit of devotion (*bhakti*) said in the 10th verse of the 5th chapter:

brahmanyadhaya karmani sangam tyaktva karoti yah /

‘Offer one’s *karmas* to *Brahman* etc’. The word ‘*Brahman*’ is synonym of *Purushottama*. In the Gita, the word ‘*Brahman*’ has been used, with this meaning, at many places.

Here too the situation is the same. It is the *sadhana* of the one without attributes, *nirguna*. Corresponding to this *sadhana* is the perception i.e. *atmansthiti* and *atmandarshana*; the feeling of *atmanbhav*. After this description, we find discussion about the concept of *Purushottama*, the Supreme Being. This chapter is concluded in this manner. Even in the preceding chapter, Shri Bhagwan concluded the discussion with this higher perspective. The Gita is concluded with the advice to surrender to the Supreme Being, *Purushottama*. Therefore, there is nothing surprising.

‘The one who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me’ is the one who sees *Purushottama* playing in all beings and perceives all of them as His manifestations and His expressions. In fact, the Supreme Existence is only One. However, it has innumerable expressions. One alone plays assuming many forms. There is none else except Him. It is only because of differences in expressions and their diverse stages of manifestations that we perceive multifarious existences. We are unable to see the One because our vision cannot go so deep nor can it rise so high and we see only multiple existences. At the root of perceiving this multiplicity is our ignorance and our limited knowledge. We know too little. It is the same as not knowing wheat but only knowing bread and other wheat products. It is not seeing the roots but only seeing the tree.

When the consciousness descends to a lower level then awareness becomes increasingly limited. The human level is the level of ego. At that level, differences are important and therefore only multiplicity is experienced. However, in truth the One alone manifests in multiple appearances. The one who sees the One can also see the multiplicity arising from it. He is the one who while seeing multiplicity does not lose sight of unity and vice-versa. Seeing the unity he does not lose sight of multiplicity. He is the one who resides both in *saguna* and in *nirguna* (i.e. determinate and indeterminate) existences of *Purushottama*, the Supreme Being. He is the One who transcends *gunas* but continues to create multiplicity in *gunas* and sustains them too. Therefore, he, who is like Him, whose consciousness gives the feeling of being both *saguna* as well as *nirguna* is complete and fully abides in the Supreme Being.

It is to see Him in all beings and to recognize His radiance glowing in all embodied existents. It is to recognize Him within self too. It is to perceive Him in every atom of the inert world. It is to perceive him in all expressions. It is to see Him in the evil as also in virtuous souls, in sin as well as in virtue, in animals, in birds, in cows, in dogs. Etc. Such a seeing is an even seeing. This alone is the perception of seeing unity in manifest diversity.

And, 'sees everything in Me'. The entire universe dwells in the Supreme. Moreover, it is to make us feel that everything is from Him, is in Him and is moving towards Him. We are filled with His consciousness and dwell in that consciousness just like a fish in water. Firstly, an aspirant starts experiencing that he is dwelling in Him. He feels Him residing everywhere both within and outside and finds himself completely dependent on Him. He finds that all activities taking place in him are from Him and in Him. That is the supreme unity i.e. the lover meets the beloved to become one. The possibility of any separation ends for all times to come. Both become one.

This awakened feeling of oneness is comprehensive. As one dwells in the Supreme, all beings dwell in Him. He dwells in Him but does not know that it is so. In the process of *sadhana*, the higher consciousness awakens in us and we become aware of the truth.

This feeling of oneness comes with maturity and we realize that *parameshwara* is everywhere i.e. '*Vasudevah sarvamiti*' '. He is unique in Himself. He is comprehensive - pervading all and pervaded by all. For this state it is said –

***'malik tu hi rahe, teri raja rahe |
baki na men rahun, na meri arju rahe ||***
'O' Lord! Only you should prevail and your will should
prevail. Neither I, nor my wish should matter.
(Free translation)

Thinking constantly of Shri Krishna, a Gopi started experiencing herself and the entire universe pervaded by Him. '*srshti sari shyammai hai*', '*jit dekun tit shyammaihai*' i.e. the entire creation is filled with Shyam¹⁰⁵ and so wherever I look at, it is pervaded by Shyam himself.

¹⁰⁵ Shyam: the Lord, Shri Krishna

A Vedantin speaking of it says, '*sarva khalvidam brahman*' i.e. 'the entire universe is *Brahman*'. This is the extreme of *Advaita*. A devotee dwells in that *Advaita*. Such consciousness can awaken only when one overcomes nay eliminates his ego.

In such a state (which has been described above), what finally happens to the feeling of duality? Shri *Bhagwan* says, 'neither he forgets Me nor I forget him'. In the present context 'forget' means 'being out of mind'. This is a state of supreme unity. Devotee and *parameshwara* become one. Devotee starts abiding permanently in *parameshwara* and *parameshwara* in the devotee. Therefore, how could then there be a possibility of their forgetting each other?

It is *dvaita* but it is also supreme *advaita*. This love is of the highest order but it is not possible without oneness with *parameshwara* i.e. without *advaita*. It is *dvaita* because without having a feeling of being different it is not experienced.

In fact, these concepts are incomprehensible and intellect cannot understand. Only experience can make us understand them. It is only by His grace that right awareness awakens in us and discloses all secrets.

*sarvabhutasthitam yo mam bhajaty ekatvam asthitah /
sarvatha vartamano 'pi sa yogi mayi vartate //31||*

"A yogi, who worships Me taking recourse to Me abiding in all beings, verily abides in Me, whatever may be the mode of his life." (31)

He, who recognizes *parameshwara* in all existents, his entire conduct itself becomes a worship of *parameshwara*. He worships, serves and greets *parameshwara* in everyone. Moreover, by perceiving *parameshwara* within himself he serves *parameshwara* even while meeting his own physical needs of food, water, etc. This worship of *parameshwara* becomes natural and spontaneous for him. It does not require any special effort. All *karmas* become a worship of *parameshwara* because he does all *karmas* for Him without any conscious effort to that effect. It is only for such a saint Kabirdas had said:

*sadho sahaj samadhi bhali /
jehn jehn dolon so parikarma,
jo kucha karon so seva /
jab sovon tab karon dandvat,
pujon aur na deva //*

(Saints, simple meditation is better. – Wherever I move that is circumambulation of the deity, and whatever I do, is His service. Whenever I sleep that is prostration. I do not worship any other god. – Free translation.)

These lines are apt for the one, who is described in the previous verse i.e. the one 'for whom *parameshwara* is never lost and who is never lost for Him. As long as our behaviour keeps us away from *parameshwara*, our yoga is partial and limited to the mind. It is merely an intellectual effort.

When one identifies himself with *parameshwara*, yoga becomes natural and then separation from *parameshwara* is impossible. Then *hissadhana* comes to maturity and he need not make any effort to remember *parameshwara* because he never forgets Him.

This is the worship of *parameshwara* by becoming one with Him i.e. ‘all are in one and one in all’.

Along with this, let us read verse 56 of chapter 18. What happens to yoga after one identifies himself with *parameshwara*? Shri Bhagwan says:

***sarvakarmany api sada kurvano madvyapasrayah/
matprasada avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam ||18/56||***

‘By continuously doing all his *karmas* taking refuge in me, he gets My grace and attains My eternal, undying abode’. There it says ‘continuously doing all *karmas*’ and here it says ‘whatever be the mode of his life’. Meaning of both the statements is same. This statement is for a person who has realized *parameshwara*. In the previous verse, the consciousness of the person who has realized *parameshwara* has been described.

It becomes clear that a person who has attained this consciousness has no restriction about his behaviour. He can do any *karma* and his *karma* will not bind him. For the fruition of yoga, the Gita does not expect us to live in a forest or in wilderness. According to the yoga of the Gita, indolence is not a desirable state.

If his *karmas* bind a person, he has not attained success in his *sadhana*. *Parameshwara* governs such a vast universe yet He remains free of the consequences because He is always in a state beyond the three constituents i.e. the *gunas* of the *prakriti*. Then how could it be possible that His devotee, united eternally with Him, will be bound by his *karmas*? He has developed divine qualities. He has divine consciousness. He does not require solitude, etc. for his evolution.

This much be understood here: ‘he recognizes Him in everyone and everyone in Him’. He simply becomes ‘*sarvabhut hite ratah*’ i.e. engaged in doing well for all. All his *karmas* without any special effort are for the benefit for others and done as service to *parameshwara*. His *karmas* are not tainted, not in the least, by any selfish motive whatsoever.

The life of a devotee by itself is devoted for the benefit of all.

A yogi abides in *parameshwara*?. His *karmas* do not take him away from *parameshwara*. What is that which could take him away from *parameshwara*? The one, in whom we always dwell, how could He ever be far from us?

***atmaupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati yo 'rjuna /
sukham va yadi va dukkham sa yogi paramo matah ||32||***

“O’Arjuna! The one, who sees everyone with the same standard as he applies to himself, both in pain and in pleasure, is considered a yogi of the highest order”. (32)

‘As I feel pain so also others feel pain’, the one who feels for others in this manner is a yogi. *Sadhana* of that person is not proper who loses sympathy and compassion for others. The objective of *sadhana* is to develop sympathy and compassion for others.

While enumerating qualities of a devotee, Shri Bhagwan himself says in chapter 12, ‘*adwaista sarvabhutanam maitrah karun eva cha*’, i.e. ‘nurses no ill-will towards any one and is friendly, sympathetic and compassionate towards all; having a friendly and compassionate disposition towards all’ – these attributes have been stated differently in this verse.

The spiritual *sadhana* usually takes a person away from others. In general, the practice of the yoga of renunciation demands solitude. It demands undivided attention with minimum worldly contacts. Therefore, there is a good possibility that a sadhak loses his natural feelings of human tenderness. Many ascetics had lost their feelings of human tenderness after their *sadhana*. However, this is not necessary. It is not at all necessary to sacrifice normal humane *sattvic* nature for gaining divinity. *Parameshwara* is compassionate and is the benefactor of everyone. Despite being even to all He is the redeemer of the sinner. He is the one who purifies the lowly and debased. We should understand that these qualities could co-exist with evenness.

Secondly, the highest idle, Shri Bhagwan mentioned to Arjuna, is devotion and surrender of the self to *parameshwara*. The attributes of a devotee flow from this idle. This *sadhana* of surrendering the self to *parameshwara* transforms *karma* into worship. In the eyes of *parameshwara*, a devotee occupies a very high place. He is merciful, compassionate and sympathetic to others. So says this verse.

One can appreciate the pleasure and pain of others through his own experiences. One will have to feel the pain of others by forgetting one's own self and by entering into the Self of others; then only can he realize what other's pain is and then only there will arise in him the feeling of compassion. *Parameshwara* sitting in every one of us knows all kinds of feelings we have. He knows the misery of the miserable in the same manner as the miserable himself knows his misery i.e. by sitting in the depths of his being and having attained a state of oneness with him. After all, why would He not know? He dwells within everyone. Moreover, despite knowing the suffering of others He does not suffer nor does become miserable but remains untouched like a lotus flower in water. A yogi also develops this capability. By identifying himself with others, he can know the misery of others, yet at the same time can remain unmoved. Only knowing this much is enough for him to stimulate the source of his compassion but he does not have to flow with it. Despite being compassionate, he need not lose the balance of his mind. In his own manner, he can be active for the good of others. For a saint friendliness is natural. His friendliness and compassion combine for doing good for others. A yogi, however, does not lose his evenness and wisdom and can keep himself under full control.

Yogi remains even while experiencing within him his own pains and pleasures. He remains even while feeling the pleasures and pains of others. This by no means is being insensitive but is being wise. If tears are useless, then, why weep? But, if tears could console someone then why one should not weep?

Seeing this wonderfully unique behaviour of such a yogi, a poet said the following lines–

*vajradapi kathorani mraduni kusumadapi /
mahattaranam chetansi ko nu vigyatumarhati //*

‘Who can know the mind of saints which is harder than the hardest rock and tender than a soft flower?’ Stories of incarnations of *parameshwara* mention similar state. Gopies suffer deep distress for Him. Shri Krishna massages the feet of Sudama¹⁰⁶. *Parameshwara* in his incarnation as Shri Rama killed Bali but performed last rites of Jatau. He sent Sita Jee to the forest but how deeply compassionate he was to Bharat Jee. That inner equanimity manifests in strange expressions of unevenness in behaviour. In the heart of *parameshwara*, there is no limit to His compassion.

A devotee is an image of his deity. Such a yogi is the highest of all.

On this, Arjuna asks a question–

*arjuna uvacha
yo 'yam yogas tvaya proktah samyena madhusudana /
etasya 'ham na pasyami cancelatvat sthitim sthiram //33||
cancalam hi manah krsna prmathi balavad drdham /
tasya 'ham nigraham manye vayor iva suduskaram //34||*

Arjuna said –

“O’Madhusudan¹⁰⁷! I am not able to comprehend that the yoga, a state which you have described can be attained by evenness (of mind) and can ever become stable because of the restlessness (of mind)”. (33)

“O’Krishna! The mind is certainly restless and is very turbulent. I think it is as difficult to control it as it is to control the wind.” (34)

Shri Bhagwan has described the yoga of self-restraint. Referring to it Arjuna said, 'this yoga, which you have mentioned, can be attained through evenness', i.e. the one to be attained through evenness of mind. In other words, the success of this yoga of self-restraint is dependent upon the evenness, calm and composure of one's mind. When the mind becomes even by continuous restraint then only there is a possibility of awakening of higher consciousness. That is why Arjuna called it, 'as a state achievable by evenness'. Further, he said, 'I do not see the stability of this state'. 'I could never imagine that this restless mind can ever become stable.' 'I can of course think that occasionally, by a fluke, the mind can become stable but I cannot think that it can continue to be restful for long as you have said. It is something beyond me’.

Arjuna primarily was one in whom *rajoguna* was predominant. He knew only to do *karmas*. He was never an introvert. Therefore, whenever he would have made an effort for evening

¹⁰⁶ Sudama: He was a friend of Shri Krishna. They had studied together in the hermitage of Guru Sandipani. Sudama and his family were in penury. His wife goaded Sudama to visit his friend Shri Krishna in Dwarika. When Sudama visited his friend at Dwarika, Shri Krishna washed and massaged his feet.

¹⁰⁷ Madhusudan: Shri Krishna had killed the demon Madhu. Consequently, he was called Madhusudan, killer of demon Madhu

worship (*sandhya-pooja*) he must have miserably failed. He was, therefore, clueless about inner stability. That is why he said so.

In the next verse (34th), he has clearly given the reason for his doubt.

The mind is restless, impetuous, noisy, turbulent, deeply unsettling, strong, unyielding and obstinate. It is difficult to control because it is strong and obstinate. It is as difficult to control as it is to control the wind.

Fickleness is the nature of mind. One, which does not remain stable at any one point, is fickle. The mind dances like a monkey. In a moment, it moves from one place to another. It is difficult to keep it fixed at one place. Why should it be so impetuous? It troubles the individual because it continues to be a playground of lower tendencies. Sometimes storm of desires within trouble the person and other times forces of internal aberrations trouble him. They do not allow him any rest.

The mind is strong. One has the idea of its strength and power when he makes any effort to control it. Mind is as strong and firm as lower tendencies are. Its strength and firmness reduces gradually with the removal of lower tendencies in the course of evolution. Mind is compared with wind. Any effort to control the wind is sure to fail. When strong wind enters a house and does not have an outlet for it to exit then either the roof of the house blows away or its wall collapses. A strong wind demolishes all obstacles coming its way. So is the mind.

Madusudan – killer of demon Madhu. Krishna is the one who attracts. In the present context, both names are appropriate.

To this Shri Krishna answered thus –

sri bhagwan uvaca
asamsayam mahabaho mano durnigraham calam |
abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena ca grhyate ||35||

Shri Bhagwan said --

“O’ Brave! There is no doubt that the mind is fickle and is difficult to control. But, O’ son of Kunti, It can be controlled by regular practice and non-attachment”. (35)

Shri Krishna accepts the view of Arjuna that the mind is fickle and difficult to control. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to control it and can be controlled.

How? One can achieve control over the mind by regular practice and non-attachment. This is a proven method for controlling the mind. Practice means regular efforts for stabilizing the mind. One should practice sitting down quietly to control it. From whatever thought mind wanders away – repeatedly- it has to be brought back under one's control, as a young horse is trained for use in a carriage. Similarly, by regular practice, we can discipline the mind and subdue its restlessness. Regular practice is necessary. There is no doubt about this.

The other means of effecting control is non-attachment. 'Raga' is attachment with a thing or a person and the absence of *raga* is *viraga* or *vairagya* i.e. a state wherein there is no attachment. Renunciation is a state free of attachments. Attachments cause mental restlessness. Wherever there is attachment, the mind goes towards the object of attachment. Worldly attachments assuming the form of desires makes the mind restless. The feelings of fear and doubt also make the mind restless. They become the cause of sorrow and becoming so they also keep agitating the mind. Therefore, the advice is to be free from attachments. Moreover, by being free from attachments, mind will lose the very basis of restlessness—the problem is solved automatically. Without bamboo there cannot be a flute.

Earlier also, renunciation of desires has been advised (Verse 24). Attachment is in the root of desires. Therefore, desire is lost by becoming free from attachment.

Our mind can by itself i.e. without any effort, becomes stable when it is free of, devoid of all its agitations. *Rajoguna* is a form of agitation and is the cause of restlessness. *Rajoguna* and *tamoguna* constitute our lower *prakriti*. Their sublimation easily makes the mind restful.

The single word, 'vairagya' i.e. detachment, devoid of attachment, contains a direction for withdrawing the mind from all kinds of attractions of the world. One will have to withdraw himself from all forms of indulgence. Moreover, the mind has to be withdrawn from demands for all kinds of external satisfactions.

Detachment (*vairagya*) is a form of *sadhana*. Usually, it takes the form of unevenness. In place of fancy or liking for things, dislike may develop. Sometimes there is fear also. Quite often, it takes the form of aversion towards work and develops insensitivity of heart. From one extreme, a person moves to the other extreme. From the state of attachment to objects, he ends up with hatred for objects. Both are bonds. Hatred is another form of attachment. One should be free from both likes and dislikes. Within us, there should be neither a desire for gaining anything nor an aversion for anything.

Just as small plants making a hedge provide security, so too in the path of ascent detachment provide security from many dangers. However, I have no doubt that the complexities created by practicing detachment can cause more harm both to the society as well as to individuals.

When tendencies are suppressed excitement goes out of life. Our evolution demands faithful discharge of duties, but by practicing renunciation we ignore our duties. Spirituality becomes a kind of pessimism and an escape from the struggles of life. All this is undesirable. What is required is just a balanced outlook towards life, which could teach us to see both life and spirituality being the same so that one should find spirituality as something that raises the values of life.

An authentic detachment (*vairagya*) is not hatred. It does not ignore real, authentic values of life. It does not reject human values of life or humanity itself. Equally, it is not dependent on the rejection of the doctrine of illusionism (*maya*) of *Shivam and Sundaram* i.e. the good and the

beautiful. An authentic detachment (*vairagya*) rests on comprehensive awareness or perception i.e. *samyak darshan*, of the truth of life. Every thing in this universe has its value and place. The one, who understands this truth, becomes free from attachments and attractions. He who understands right value of money is never overpowered by greed. He alone becomes greedy who considers money as more valuable than what its real worth is. He who undervalues it instead shows disregard for it and indirectly bounded. He will also have to realize the truth someday. *Gyan or wisdom* teaches the way to recognize truth and by knowing it, a person becomes free from attachments. Then there is no liking or dislike for anything, neither a desire nor fear. There is then only evenness of perception.

In whatever state of evolution one is, he should accept that state and should be ready to move forward by having experiences of that state. That alone is the serene path of spirituality. To emulate the state of others verily amounts to ignoring the truth.

After knowing the truth of detachment (*vairagya*) one can have peace and serenity. That childish renunciation which holds that a woman is only a body of flesh and blood to satisfy the needs of lust, that money is dirt, that education is sheer foolishness, is only an outburst nay an emotional upsurge. That does not sustain when eyes open. That only deceives.

To me, *vairagya*, based on the theory of illusionism (*Maya*) is rejection of life. I feel such *vairagya* is simply a rejection of the process of evolution itself. Only a rare person can remain firm on that kind of renunciation. At this place, the story of Totapuri comes to my mind, which one can read in the biography of Thakur Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

There is yet another path of renunciation and that is the path of devotees. Basis of that path is love for the feet of *parameshwara*. The more this love increases more the mind withdraws from worldly attractions. That love eventually destroys all attachments. That love makes an aspirant single-minded in his devotion to *parameshwara* and purifies him.

How can one develop that kind of renunciation? The lives of devotees tell us how that is developed. All that is required is the inner urge and the grace of a saint. How did that awaken in Mahaprabhu? How did that awaken in Dadu? How did that awaken in Sur and Tulsi? Deep devotion awakens best in those who love intensely. Some ascetics taking recourse to talks on renunciation do become free from attachments but they become insipid and insensitive and lose interest in life. The possibility of any kind of love or compassion also vanishes almost completely in them. Therefore, in them, love for *parameshwara* and its associated renunciation arise with considerable difficulty.

According to the philosophy of yoga (*yoga darshan*), the highest state of detachment is a state of supreme control over the self. When there is control over the *prakriti*, in other words, when there is total control over one's inner realm, then that is the supreme state of renunciation.

The mind controlled with practice and detachment and stability achieved through that practice is never enduring. Stability dependent on the purity and firmness of an authentic renunciation is firm and stable.

This is the method. The mind is subdued i.e. brought under control by this method. Once the mind is so subdued, the fire of knowledge, of wisdom ignites and burns to ashes all impurities and aberrations of the mind. Then the inner evenness becomes firm and well established.

Shri *Bhagwan* says on the same subject.

*asamyatatmana yogo dusprapa iti me matiah /
vasyatmana tu yatata sakyo 'vaptum upayatah ||36||*

“For the one who has not controlled his Self it is difficult for him to attain (this) yoga. Such is my conviction. But, whoever has controlled himself can attain it by striving through right means”. (36)

Self-control is the basis for success of this yoga. He who has not controlled himself cannot attain success in this yoga. He who has acquired control over himself will certainly be successful.

Along with control, proper efforts are also necessary. Self-control alone is not enough though it is necessary.

One will have to know the method. Those who know can tell us the method and the path for *sadhana*. Then one has to make his efforts. However, without self-control both methods are useless.

One has to understand the importance of self-control or discipline in the process of *sadhana*. One achieves Self-control on the strength of firm resolve by properly understanding his inner situation and functioning of the mind, the intellect and the sense organs with prudence and patience. One has to make demands on his Self by adopting a new code of conduct and has to use the strength of resolve and imagination. One has to have confidence in himself before he can have self-control. One can surely achieve Self-control. Self-control is a science; is an art too. One needs to learn.

Arjuna had considered him incapable of this *sadhana*. That was perhaps correct.

It is not surprising if someone fails in such a difficult *sadhana*. The moment there is some slip in control, the aspirant will fall to the ground. Arjuna had curiosity about this and so he asked thus—

*arjuna uvaca
ayah sraddhaya 'peto yogac calitamanasah /
aprapya yogasamsiddhim kam gatim krsna gacchati ||37||
kaccin no 'bhayavibhrastas chinnabhram iva nasyati /
apratistho mahabaho vimudho brahmanah pathi ||38||
etan me samsayam krsna chettum arhasy asesatah /
tvadanyah samsayasya 'sya chetta na hy upapadyate ||39||*

Arjuna said –

“The one who has no control though he has full faith but his mind has wandered away from yoga, and having failed to attain perfection in yoga, O’ Krishna, what fate does he meet?” (37)

“O’ brave, Does the one whose feet have not become firm and who has strayed from the path of Brahman having failed to gain success in both, perish like a rented cloud?” (38)

"O'Krishna! Do dispel this doubt of mine completely. I do not see anyone else except you who could dispel this doubt of mine". (39)

Shri *Bhagwan* had said that the one who has no control could not attain this yoga. Arjuna, therefore, asked, 'What then is the fate of such a person who has no control?

One has faith. There is also a desire to gain success in yoga. Such a person also does *sadhana*. Somehow, he is not able to meet the demands of *sadhana* and so he is not able to make progress. This often happens.

Secondly, one has faith and is able to exercise self-control. He makes rapid progress in his *sadhana*. However, while making progress there comes a time, when due to terrific force of latent tendencies he loses his control. The fences fall by the up-surfing aberrations and the control shatters. Lower tendencies gain supremacy and the person is blown away by their force. His entire *sadhana* ends and along with it ends his inner stability.

Curiosity of Arjuna relates to such a person. What is the fate of such a person after death? As it is, he has already gone astray in this life.

Why all this happens, that has been explained above. The person himself is not aware of his strong passions hidden in his latent consciousness. Perfection in yoga demands perfect untainted purity. Therefore, all such tendencies need removal. When strong latent tendencies surface they carry away the person from the path of *sadhana*. When a powerful storm comes, even the prudence of the person vanishes. He is blown away by their terrific force.

Arjuna expressed his fear.

Will one benefit from the efforts he had already made? Will he suffer any catastrophe? Will he go down in the process of evolution? Gives an example –'*chinnabharam iva*' – like a rented cloud. Sunshine comes and falls on a big cloud and the cloud disintegrates into small pieces and disappears. Nothing of the cloud remains. Is the person who has strayed from the path of yoga meets such a fate?

He has fallen from the path. He neither got worldly pleasures nor the Divine i.e. *parameshwara*. People of the world enjoy the pleasures of life. They enjoy them to their hearts' content. An aspirant even while enjoying the pleasures of life cannot enjoy them like others. He cannot derive pleasure like others. On the other hand, since he used his energies for controlling himself, for the practice of yoga, he lost opportunities for enjoyment and also failed in his *sadhana*.

'*apratisthah*' –not stabilized. His feet could not find a firm footing on his way. He is uprooted. He strayed from the path of *Brahman*. He was to go somewhere but moved in a wrong direction. He wrongly started moving with his face towards the world.

Arjuna had become restless due to that fear. He was anxious to know the answer to his question. He knew no one else who could categorically answer his question without any ambiguity. Krishna was the Lord of yoga (*Yogaishwara*). He knew very well about such situations in life. Arjuna had started recognizing his Divinity.

‘*na upapadyate*’ –not gained, not seen

‘*asheshtah*’ – totally, without residue

It is not easy to find a person who can remove doubts without any ambiguity.

shri bhagwan uvach
partha nai 've 'ha na 'mutra vinasas tasya vidyate /
na hi kalyanakrt kascid durgatim tata gacchati //40||

The Lord said --

"O'Arjuna! He is not destroyed either in this life or in life hereafter. O' Dear one, he who works for good (of others) never comes to grief". (40)

Now tells the principle of the practice of spirituality. Those, who make an effort for the good of others, never come to grief. Working for the good of others is a means for spiritual progress, deliverance and attainment of *parameshwara*. Therefore, any effort made for achieving such goal is never goes waste.

Any effort done in the interest of others is an effort to move faster than the normal pace of evolution. The important point is that it is an effort to overcome lower nature faster than the normal course. Manu also said ‘*pravrittiresha bhutanam nivrittistu mahaphala*’- ‘it is in the nature of existents to bow before the lower tendencies. And any effort for getting over them is always fruitful’.

The way common people usually behave is known as, ‘a fall from a higher perspective’. It is a 'fall' only from the point of view of the height we wish to attain in life.

In this path of ascent i.e. in the yoga of self-restraint, there is always a danger of failure. There are many examples of failure. What is 'failure' from the worldly point of view is not a 'failure' from the point of view of evolution. So long as we do not understand the force of our latent tendencies it is desirable to give them a way, let them come to the fore in this gross world, for if we do not accept this truth then *prakriti* revolts and wins. We get frustrated. The awakening of the inner realm and its stability has a very close relationship with the burden of these tendencies. One can endure pressure to some extent but beyond that, it leads to explosion. Therefore, for moving forward it is necessary to destroy these tendencies. Whenever there is pressure, it creates tension within and blocks the path of progress. The path of *tantra* understand this reality.

The path of restraint attempts to develop internal peace, the wisdom (gyan), by any means and in any manner, because gain of wisdom by itself destroys all tendencies. An aspirant of this path of *sadhana* understands that he is sitting on a volcano, which can explode at any time. As has been stated above, here also only one rule applies. An aspirant should exercise to the extent he can bear beyond that he should allow tendencies to work in the interest of the progress of the aspirant. Due to ignorance, manifestation of tendencies is called 'failure'.

An aspirant may think that if that had not happened he could have made much progress. However, this is his ignorance. If that had not happened then perhaps he would have lost all interest in his *sadhana* and possibly it would have ended or because of internal tension, he could have developed some sort of a neurological problem. His mind would have affected. Internal forces of evolution do have some kind of control over us. These ups and downs in *sadhana* do come due to these internal forces. Surely, there are limits to the speed of human activities. They cannot be accelerated forcibly. So to overcome those tendencies, a way has to be found – a way through an understanding of their nature. There should be no doubt about the fact that the chosen path should agree with the demands of social ethics and morals.

External renunciation and restraint closes the path to serene exhaustion of latent tendencies. Many emotions lie hidden within a person. Initially, detachment (*vairagya*) can be there but after some time latent passions come to the surface. A person does not have only intellect but has many other things. The intellect is not the sole master and that too is unstable. Lower *prakriti* influences the intellect. The intellect gets defeated, for it cannot bear the impact of passions. Lower *prakriti* needs purification. It seems to be a great folly to enforce external renunciation without understanding the present state of evolution. For renunciation suppression is not the right course. It is better if things are allowed a normal course. An effort to hold on to something is equally wrong, as it is for renunciation.

What people call failure, I look at it differently from the point of view of evolution. The path of devotion i.e. the path of surrender is free from any possibility of such failure. A devotee accepts pleasures as well as pains as coming from *parameshwara*. In the beginning a devotee loses interest in pleasures of senses and after some time he loses desire for them. A devotee gets this freedom by having trust in *parameshwara* and by depending upon Him. The inner self loses desires. Gradually the mind, intellect and sense organs also change accordingly and then there is no reason for any conflict. There is no danger of failure, no arrogance of self-restraint and no burden of passion. The aspirant has innate inner serenity.

An effort to do well for others does create a *samsakar* for a short while. That *samsakar* also needs removal because that is the demand of purification. Therefore, there is no question of any misfortune on this count and an aspirant need not be afraid of it. His progress assured to the extent he works. No one is punished for stopping his efforts for a while. There is no reversal from the point already reached. He only moves forward. What people call a failure that has nothing negative in it.

This does not mean that an aspirant can start doing as it pleases him. He should always proceed with a clear understanding of what serves and what does not serve his purpose.

Therefore, Shri Bhagwan says, 'he is neither destroyed in this life nor in life hereafter'. Why is he not destroyed? The inner nobility which he has developed through his *sadhana*, continues. His inner nobility, the grace of temperament, cannot end suddenly. The evil nature, which he earlier had also changes gradually.

He is not destroyed even in life hereafter. His old *samskaras* forcibly bring him back into this world. His *sadhana* does not allow creation of new bonds and also removes old bonds. Even if old bonds carried to next life then also in the new life the aspirant purifies after bearing their consequences.

Jadbharat had developed attachment with a deer calf and people called it his failure. Only the ignorant ones thought so. When he was reborn, there was some *samskar* of attachment in him. If he had been a householder then that *samskar* could have manifested as love for his children but he was not a householder, so the feeling of attachment persisted in him. Therefore, finding an opportunity, that *samskar* manifested as his attachment with a deer calf. That past *samskar* had created a bond with deer calf. After the said *samsakar* exhausted, he rid of the very possibility of attachment and became pure. He firmly established in *Brahman*. Some timid aspirants look upon it differently saying: 'had he not come in contact with dear calf then he would not have had another birth'. However, if that had not happened, who knows where that attachment would have manifested and he might had to take two births instead of one. This then was the demand of his inner state – demand of the inner feeling of attachment requiring expression – once it came out and found an expression he was liberated i.e. he became free from the bond. The *prakriti*, which treats us like loving Mother Divine, arranges all things appropriate for us and purifies us in this manner. People say that the *prakriti* binds us because they do not know that she is the one who liberates us too. It binds us only to liberate us from bonds. She merely brings out bonds hidden within to liberate us from them.

What then happens to an aspirant straying from the path of yoga?

*prapya punyakrtam lokan usitva sasvatih samah /
sucinam srimatam gehe yogabhrasto 'bhijayate //41||*

“Having attained to the world of the righteous and after residing there for many years, one who had strayed from yoga is again born in the house of virtuous and prosperous people”. (41)

After death, he goes to those worlds where virtuous people go. Virtuous people are those who do noble deeds in their lives. Yagya, charity, etc. are noble deeds. The *karmas* done for the good of others create highly noble *samskaras*. Therefore, the virtues, which people usually gain by performing many *yagyas*, etc. such people gain by their work. They attain heavenly worlds not for a short time but for many-many years as if for eternity. This is possible only because of their deeds of great virtue.

While living in those subtle worlds, an aspirant can exhaust many of his cravings for various pleasures, which used to obstruct his progress on the path of his evolution in the phenomenal world. This, however, happens by the demand of his evolution. After purpose of living in subtle world is served, he returns to the phenomenal world. He takes birth in a house of pious and virtuous people. When he returns to this phenomenal world, he is predominantly virtuous by nature because his lower tendencies stand depleted and consequently he takes birth in a house suitable for him.

Virtuous people can be poor - so poor that they may not even two square meals. Then, in a house of what kind of virtuous people do they take birth? In the house of those who are prosperous and wealthy, where there is no shortage of anything. Such houses alone are suitable for their rapid progress. Wealth is gained because of good deeds done in the past. Houses of such people are usually suitable to meet demands of their progress.

The needs of our evolution and our past *karmas* are the sole determinants of our rebirth.

***athava yoginam eva kule bhavanti dhimatam /
etad dhi durlabhataram loke janma yad idrsam //42||***

“Or he is born in a family of *yogis* who are endowed with wisdom. Such a birth is rare and is difficult to gain in this mortal world”. (42)

By taking birth in a family of *yogis* endowed with wisdom, success in one’s *sadhana* (*siddhi*) becomes almost certain. In such a house, the family environment itself is conducive for taking him forward in his spiritual evolution. He will get guidance and support from his parents and will get their blessings too. He will find his *guru* in the house itself. Perfect realization (*siddhi*) becomes certain by a birth in such a house. For this reason, such birth is rare.

One is born in a prosperous household when he still possesses a strong desire for worldly pleasures and indulgence; because by birth in such a house he can easily exhaust these tendencies. However, a birth into a family of *yogis* is possible when a fresh life is needed to attain perfection (*siddhi*) in yoga after exhaustion of latent tendencies and cultivation of single-minded devotion towards liberation. Such a birth is the result of unwavering devotion. It is, for this reason that birth into a house of *yogies* is exceedingly rare..

***tatra tam buddhisamyogam labhate paurvadehikam /
yatate ca tato bhuyah samsiddhau kurunandana //43||***

"In (new) life he regains he spiritual attainments of his previous life. O'Arjuna! Then he makes further efforts for perfection (*Siddhi*)". (43)

In the new life, tendencies relating to yoga cultivated in the previous birth awaken. '*buddhisamyogam*'– memories, tendencies. Achievements of past life imperceptibly influence the person. He has uneasiness and restlessness within until the path for further development does not re-open. In some persons, this uneasiness and restlessness is due to suppressed past tendencies. In some others, past tendencies emerges quite easily – almost spontaneously. He gains the state attained in past life instantly without much effort. A person who knows to ride a bicycle and has

not cycled for a long time may think that he has forgotten to cycle but when he rides the bicycle again, he starts cycling because of his past knowledge and practice. The same happens in respect of spiritual *sadhana*. What a new aspirant takes years to learn, he learns in a few minutes or may be a few hours. Similarly, he also regains his past intellectual attainments.

Vivekananda used to meditate on his own, right from his childhood and used to enter into a state of super-consciousness (*samadhi*). Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Deva used to have *bhava-samadhi* from his childhood. That was possible for him only due to his *sadhana* of past life even without any *sadhanain* new life.

A person has to do *sadhana*. What has been done in the past life remains credited in his account and when the account reopens in a new life past *sadhana* manifests.

The inner self of such an aspirant has already been surrendered to *parameshwara*. He does not have to go back. An awakened longing for the Supreme takes him to the path in life after life. He has the same objective in every life. He starts moving forward. He makes more efforts for supreme success (*param siddhi*) and self-confidence (*atmanishtha*).

In fact, a person who had once taken to the path, had a glimpse of his innermost realm, had experienced the touch of *parameshwara*, can never forget the bliss, the happiness, which is beyond the *prakriti*. Moreover, once a person has some inner experiences, he can never forget that experience even if he strays from the path of yoga after having made some progress. Such a person is 'yogabhrashtha' - fallen from the path.: 'yogabhrashtha' is the one who has somehow strayed from the path after making some progress.

purvabhyasena tenai 'va hriyate hy avaso 'pi sah |
jijnasur api yogasya sabdabrahma 'tivartate || 44||

"Based on his past practice he is pushed forward irresistibly as if under someone's control. An aspirant of yoga also transcends the '*shabdabrahman*'. (44)

The *sadhana* of his previous life compels an aspirant to the same path. He does not know why he is attracted towards spiritual matters and spiritual people, but he still feels attracted towards them. He just cannot resist. Sometimes he does want to be free from such matters and does want to live like other persons enjoying pleasures of life but he is unable to do so. He takes to the spiritual path as if under compulsion.

He wants to escape from all this and avoids company of holy people, does not read religious books and does not go to holy places but how long can he ignore? He can ignore them only until his tendencies for enjoyments persist. Once that barrage is breached then that happens which he does not want to happen.

Some people try to run away from spiritual matters fearing that if they involve themselves in such matters they will be so deeply involved that they will not be able to discharge their worldly duties. Yet, they are strongly drawn towards spiritual matters with great intensity.

Due to the force of inherent tendencies, there are coincidences. One suddenly meets holy persons. In addition, spiritual environment starts building up around him. The directions (*dishayen*) seem to become vibrant with the message and start leading him to the path.

A person cannot ignore these pressing demands, inner requirements of his evolution. Beyond the individual, there is the force of the Supreme Reality, i.e. *Parameshwara*, who has taken upon Himself the responsibility for his evolution. Who can go against Him?

Such a one, who has strayed from the path of yoga (*yogabhrashtha*), is an aspirant of the path of yoga. He has not yet gained success in yoga (*Siddhi*). For him, it is said in the second half of the verse that he goes beyond *shabdabrahman*, the *Brahman* in the form of scriptures.

‘*shabdabrahman*’ is used for *parameshwara* embodied in words i.e. scriptures. As it is in ancient literature the word ‘*Brahman*’ stands for Vedas. With the prefix ‘*shabda*’, the word ‘*shabdabrahman*’ means the Vedas.

Going beyond the ‘*shabdabrahman*’-- means over-reaching the Vedas. What does that connote?

The rituals mentioned in the Vedas relate to *gunas*. There are rituals prescribed for satisfying one's desires. An aspirant of the path of yoga can gain much more than what he can gain by performing ritualistic sacrifices (*yagyas*). And we have already seen that the worlds, which the virtuous people can gain by performing *yagyas*, the *yogabhrashtha* gains unexpectedly – without much effort on his part. Then he takes birth in the house of wealthy and prosperous people.

In this context, it is interesting to refer to verses 45-46 of the second chapter. Those verses also discuss transcending the Vedas, but not in the context of success in yoga (*Siddhi*).

*prayatnad yatamanas tu yogi samsuddhakilbisah /
anekajanmasamsiddhas tato yati param gatim //45||*

“The yogi, who has been cleansed of evil tendencies and who has been striving assiduously for perfecting himself through many lives, gains the supreme state”. (45)

This answers the question, as to how such a yogi gains the supreme state.

He does spiritual practice assiduously. He continues to strive. He does not accept defeat thinking that the goal is beyond him. He is so deeply involved that he has no peace. How could there be rest for him – sitting down and doing nothing? He continues to move tirelessly on his path.

What happens with this kind of practice? All impurities washed; evil tendencies (the lower *prakriti*) removed; and the tendencies of lower category eliminated. Passions depleted.

Here the word used is ‘purification’ and not ‘suppression’. . The intention behind purification is total elimination and total removal of every impurity. How could there be peace with the burden of sins over one’s head? One has to repay debts of the *prakriti* and remove bonds

created in the past. It is wise to do so happily. The Mother Divine, the Supreme, will not allow us to remain impure even if we weep or make an effort to run away. She will catch hold of us and cleanse us forcibly. She will bathe us and change our clothes too. We will not feel distressed nor will try to wriggle out of her grip if we understand the secret of this beneficent cleaning or the secret of the inevitability of the said process. It will be better to surrender quietly in the beneficent hands of the Mother Divine saying, 'Do whatever you think right for us'. Then the work of the Mother Divine will also become easy. We will be cleaned of hidden impurities. Moreover, that has to happen, for without it there is no future for an aspirant.

All this may take many lives. Even a *yogabhrashtha* has to put in spiritual practice for many lives. This is not something, which can be achieved in few days. Divinity has to manifest itself. The lessons of the *prakriti* have to be learnt and the aspirant has to gain freedom from all his bonds.

Even for the enlightened one (*gyani*), the same has been said in the seventh chapter

bahunam janmnamate gyanvan mam prapadyate /

Giyani attains *Me* after many lives. 'The enlightened one (*gyani*) also has to do *sadhana* for many lives before he attains *Me*'.

Remember that the *yogabhrashtha* is the one who has strayed from his path. He who leaves his body while moving on the path is not a *yogabhrashtha*. He is an aspirant. This happens many times because *sadhana* is not such which can be perfected in one life. A *yogabhrashtha* is one who has left his *sadhana* under the force of his lower tendencies.

An aspirant need not think how many more births he will require before he attains perfection in yoga. Those persons, who have the curiosity to know the time and number of lives they require for perfection of their *sadhana* are not firm in their devotion and look for something other than their *sadhana* and its success. We should concentrate only on the fact that we are on the path of our *sadhana* and ultimately there will be success. One should continue moving forward on his spiritual path. That should be enough. Why should there be unnecessary speculation? Impatience and spirituality do not go together. One should not nurse unnecessary thoughts. Does one have no confidence in himself? Does one have no confidence in *parameshwara*? Is there no desire to move on the path? If there is a longing for something else then undertake the spiritual path only after achieving that objective. It is only after leaving worldly desires that one can step on this path of the brave, the valiant one.

***tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogi jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah /
karmibhyas ca 'dhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhava 'rjuna ||46||***

“A yogi is regarded superior to ascetics and is also considered superior to *gyanies* (those who take to the path of wisdom i.e. *gyan*). Yogis are also superior to those who perform *karmas* (rituals). O’Arjuna! Be a yogi”. (46)

Shri Bhagwan is encouraging Arjuna to become a yogi. Shri Bhagwan is asking Arjuna, who was about to run away from the battlefield, to become a *yogi*. At other places, He had asked him to 'fight'. Even later, He asks Arjuna to fight. What then is the meaning of asking him to become a yogi? The meaning is very evident, very clear. Shri Krishna was evidently asking Arjuna to become a perfect yogi, who abides in the *Brahman* and who knows his own Self (*atmadarshi*). A yogi is '*sarvtha vartmanoapi sa yogi mayi vartate*'.

Could Arjuna become a yogi after retiring from the battlefield? 'You still have to take to the path of yoga. Moreover, for that, do your *karma* with single-minded devotion. When you are ready for *sadhana* in solitude then you do your *sadhana* in solitude.'

aarurukshormuniryogam karma karnamuchayate ||3|| (chapter 6)

“For the one, who wants to take to the path of *yogakarma* is the means’. Arjuna was still in the category of aspirants. Therefore, for him, the question of going to a solitary place and taking to meditation did not arise. Arjuna himself had mentioned the difficulties involved.

The rest of the three parts of the verse compare a yogi with an ascetic, *gyani* and the one who performs *karmas* (rituals) relating to *yagyas* etc. A yogi is superior amongst all three.

An ascetic is one who practices penances and austerities, like fasts of *chandrayan* etc. The 17th chapter indeed tells us about these austerities. The austerities are of three kinds; namely, relating to body(*kayaik*), speech(*vachic*) and mental(*manasic*), depending upon their properties. Please refer to verses 14-19 of chapter 17.

Austerities mean enduring suffering. Metals are heated to melt away their dross and for purification. Similarly, the body, the mind, etc. purifies by self-imposed sufferings.

yajno danam tapas cai'va pavanani manisnam ||18/5||

'Yagyas, charity and austerities purify learned'. A Yogi does not have only purity but he also has divinity. He is transparent and is free of all impurities. He is beyond attributes i.e. the *gunas*. An ascetic can be deceived because he is purified only from outside and he may still have impurities within. He can fall from his position. Regarding austerities, a saint says thus:

suddha ka hoi kachi bhit (Guru Nanak)
(Mud wall can never be cleaned)

How a wall made of mud can ever cleaned? The more you wash, more mud will come off. Whatever one can attain by austerities or by penance, that is never permanent because total removal of impurities is not possible through austerities.

vishya vinivertante niraharasya dehinah/
rasvarjam raso'pasya param drishtva nivertate ||2/59 ||

So long as one does not go beyond the attributes (*gunas*) he remains within the bonds of *prakriti*. Attributes so inter-mingle with each other that they can never be separated. There can be predominance of one or more attributes. Therefore, there is always a possibility of a fall. Whoever

is beyond these attributes is free from the bonds of the *prakriti* and sin. A yogi is beyond all three attributes. Therefore, he is free from any possibility of a fall.

The other possibility is that of divinization of the *prakriti*, which the *Vaishnavites* call pure or untainted *sattva* and that does not have even the least taint of *rajas* and *tamas*. That is not possible simply by practising austerities. Is it possible for anyone to rise above the ground by just pulling up the soles of his shoes? Similarly, can anyone purify *rajas* and *tamas* merely by practising austerities? Can untainted *sattva* manifest?

Untainted *sattva* can manifest only by a powerful descent of the Divine consciousness, which is beyond the *prakriti* and attributes. The divine consciousness is so exalted and so powerful that only pure untainted *sattva* (truth) can bear its force and higher expression. This is the divinization of *prakriti* and is possible only in a yogi. There is no possibility of it in an ascetic.

An ascetic is like a juggler who only tries to prevent certain things from happening. All his efforts are temporary. These austerities are good to the extent they prepare a person to traverse the spiritual path. However, as compared to inner awakening it is insignificant.

One can achieve success by practising austerities but his success being egoistic in nature is a cause of bondage.

A yogi is certainly superior to the wise (*gyani*). A *Gyani* who takes to the path of yoga is still on the path. He has only developed some faith in *parameshwara*. His inner self stands pledged to *parameshwara*. He is yet to travel a long way. Shri Bhagwan himself says in verse 19 of chapter 7 that a wise person (*gyani*) attains Me after many births.

A yogi is one who has attained success in yoga (*Siddhi*). He is the one who has the experiences of '*Vasudeva sarvamiti*'.

A yogi is even superior to all those who are engaged in doing *karmas* (here *karmas* mean rituals of *yagyas*). They do their *karma* with a purpose. They are those who perform *yagyas* for attaining higher worlds and some others give charity for earning name for doing good deeds. Such persons enjoy a reputation in this world. They are respectable in the eyes of the world. However, they are inferior as compared to the yogis who have attained success in yoga (*Siddhi*). They are in a whirlpool of desires. They are still subservient to their *prakriti*, bound to their vanity and selfishness. There can be no comparison of their *prakriti* with that of an enlightened yogi. On the path of evolution they are still infants and have not yet learnt to crawl while yogis have already reached their destination.

When a person starts feeling that desire is a binding then the path of yoga opens up for him. When desires end then only one can take to the path of yoga. When he is beyond the possibility of any desire, beyond ego and the feeling of selfishness then he becomes a yogi.

It will be interesting to read the 12th verse of the twelfth chapter along with the present verse. That will take the readers to a greater depth.

*yoginam api sarvesam madgatena 'ntaratmana /
sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatamo matah ||47||*

“(And) amongst all the yogis, the one (yogi) full of devotion and abiding his inner-self in Me and worships Me, I consider him to be the most attuned (to Me in yoga)”. (47)

A yogi established in the *Brahman*, the Supreme Reality, has perfect realization. Should he also worship *parameshwara*? Why should he do so? Shri Bhagwan considers him superior than others. Why is he superior? These questions need consideration.

Shri Bhagwan gives a clear answer to these questions. For the one abiding in *Brahman* (*Brahmanbhuta*), He says in the 18th chapter, ‘having become even towards all beings he has supreme devotion towards Me, known as *para bhakti* (verse 18/54), and through 'that devotion he fully realizes Me and knows as to who and what I am'. In addition, 'then having known Me in reality, he forthwith enters into Me' (verse 18/55).

A yogi is *Brahmanbhuta* (a divine being). He abides in *atman*, in *Brahman*. *Brahman* is also *parameshwara*. He is also *Purushottama*. However, there is a difference in their expressions. He is indeterminate (*nirguna*) as well as determinate (*saguna*), formless as well as with form, and manifest as well as abstract at the same time. He is father of someone and son of someone else. Despite being one, there are differences in various states He is seen. Similar is the difference between the state of *Brahman* (*Brahman-bhava*) and the state of being divine (*Bhagwad-bhuta*). The difference is in experience. Though there is no difference between them, yet there is a difference that cannot be denied.

This is the point at which the *Vedantis* and the devotees come to a conflict. *Vedantin* calls the Supreme Entity *Brahman* circumscribed by illusion (*maya-vishishtha*). They do not accept any experience beyond *Brahman-bhava*. They consider *para-bhakti* or supreme devotion and knowledge (*gyan*) as one. They do not distinguish between the state of having merged or absorbed in *Brahman* (*Brahmanleenta*) and or the state of abiding in *Brahman*

However, the reality is that there is a difference. If we do not want to do injustice to the scriptures then we will have to admit that according to the Gita, there is a difference in the two states. After the attainment of the *Brahman-bhava*, the state of *para-bhakti* i.e. supreme devotion arises and as a result there is awareness, a realization of the form of *parameshwara* and thereafter one enters in Him, the Divinity. The difference needs understnading. The present verse is based on this understanding. Even amongst the yogis, the one who has supreme devotion (who is fully committed) is superior. Because, such devotion is possible only after achievement of perfection (*siddhi*) in yoga. Therefore, this state is superior from the point of view of evolution. Only he who is fully devoted to *parameshwaracan* sing songs praising Him. He is ofcourse a man of faith. How can one have intense devotion without faith? He has ultimate devotion. Therefore, the inner self of such a yogi surly dwells in *parameshwara*. ‘One, who has ultimate devotion, has received the grace of *para bhakti* and sings songs in prayer, is the highest amongst the yogis.’

Even in Shri Tulsi Ramayan, there is a statement to this effect. Intellect can understand devotion but it cannot understand *para bhakti* or transcendental devotion, which awakens after the awakening of *Brahman-bhava*. The state of *Purushottama* is beyond the immutable state (*akshara-bhava*), which is *Brahman-bhava* because it transcends both the mutable (*kshara*) and the immutable (*akshara*) states. Both of them are His expressions. The immutable state (*akshara-bhava*) alone is the Supreme State (*Purusha-bhava*), the the *para* or the higher *prakriti*. That *Purushottama* or the Supreme Reality in manifest form becoming mutable (*kshara*) plays the entire drama of the universe. The immutable state (*akshara-bhava*) is pure consciousness and mutable (*kshara*) state is activity. Yet He is neither activity nor consciousness. Even in His manifestation, He is beyond consciousness and activity.

Being absorbed in *Brahman (brahmanleenta)* is to abide in the immutable state i.e. *aksharbhav*. It is a passive state of liberation (*kaivalibhav*). It is a state of absolute or total separation from the *prakriti*. It is abiding in the Self or seer state. There is only consciousness. There is an undisturbed state of peace and serenity, but it has no control over the *prakriti*. The divine consciousness (*purshottamabhav*) while dwelling in the *prakriti* – moving both inside and outside - is indeed beyond and untouched. This Divine consciousness i.e. *purshottamabhav* is perfect both in activity as well as in inactivity.

The state of being absorbed in *Brahman (brahmanleenta)* is without attributes (*nirguna*). However, Divine consciousness i.e. *purshottamabhav* is with attributes (*saguna*) as well as without attributes (*nirguna*). While being beyond attributes it manifests with attributes. It has personality and transcends that too. *Purushottama* is pure Divinity and can be worshipped.

For *para bhakti* or the state of supreme devotion, it is necessary to move beyond the *Brahman* state (*Brahman-bhava*). For uniting with *Purushottama*, one will have to leave the state of isolation and inactivity (*kaivalya*), the state of void. Then only supreme devotion can develop. The purified individual existence will move towards the One, which is beyond both activity and inactivity. That will be a fantastic state. Then the Lord (*Purushottama*) will completely reveal Himself and *Purushottama*-consciousness will fully manifest in a yogi. Then he will become one with *Purushottama*.

How can the door open for the one, who is not prepared to sacrifice the state of void, the *nirvikalpa*, and who continues to be attached to his state of isolation (*kaivalya*)? The door will easily open for the one not attached to the state of inactivity or void. .

If a yogi does not bind himself to any such state, the flow of evolution will normally take him to the state of supreme devotion.

This chapter concludes here. This chapter has special importance in the Gita. It is important not only for its description of internal *sadhana* but also for clarifying the inner stages of evolution.

|| SHRI RAM ||
CHAPTER 7

Slowly we are moving towards the real-life experience of the Divine existence and of total surrender. Fourth chapter describes the concept of incarnation. Shri Bhagwan gave introduction of his Divine existencethat was talking with Arjuna and revealed the path of surrender of *Karmas* in *Brahmana*. Arjuna had developed respect and trust for Shri Krishna. Then in the fifth chapter, he described renunciation based on wisdom. In the sixth chapter, He discussed the method for inner control and based upon that renunciation and its accomplishment. The present chapter describes in detail the form of Divinity. For the first time philosophy of the Gita becomes clear and one can have an understanding of wisdom and science. One can have faith and trust based on this understanding. This faith and trust is not emotional. Proper understanding is the basis of this faith and shows the importance of divinity in our life. For these considerations, the present chapter is very important to understand the Gita.

Sribhagwan uvaca
mayy asaktamanah partha yogam yunjan madasrayah /
asamsayam samagram mam yatha jnasyasi tac chrnu ||1||

Shri Bhagwan says:

‘O Arjuna’ hear then by concentrating your mind on Me, by depending and practicing Yoga the way you will know me in My comprehensive form without any doubt. ||1||

In the last verse of the previous chapter an accomplished yogi full of devotion was praised. A yogi devoted to the divine knows, on the strength of his devotion, the reality of the divinity and also its various manifestations and their glory (18/55). In this chapter, Shri *Bhagwan* is going to reveal to us its conceptual understanding.

One can develop this understanding only through devotion. The realization of divinity is possible only by devotion. There is a difference between this understanding, and the knowledge of self (*atmagyan*) based on *Samkhya*. *Samkhy* differentiates between *prakriti and purush*, through which it is possible to establish in the Self (*atmabhav*) and gain *kaivalya*. It is said that old *Samkhy* believed in Supreme Reality but the present *Samkhya*, whose basic scripture is *samkhya-karika*, does not believe in the Supreme Reality. The preaching of Kapil Jee to Devhuti in *kapileyakhyan* in the third chapter of Shrimad Bhagwat is known as, ‘*Samkhya*’. Kapil Jee was the founder of this philosophy. There the concept is not very clear. There *Purush* and divinity are considered as one. There is no difference between the understanding of the Self (*atman*) and devotion. It is necessary to understand the viewpoint of the Gita while keeping in view this distinction. Philosophical clarity has its importance.

This wisdom is not intellectual. This is the result of higher consciousness awakened by divine grace beyond intellect. It is definitive wisdom and there is no scope for any doubt. There is always a possibility of doubt in intellectual wisdom. Intellect concludes by making imaginary

presumptions based on knowledge gained through the senses. The basic information can be wrong, analysis of information can be wrong and therefore there is always a possibility of doubt. That is why it is said ‘*tarkoapratishtha*’ – arguments have no basis.

We know the knower and the known as a single entity through their inter-relationship, which is beyond intellect. Once that wisdom is gained, there remains no doubt.

That is knowing in full, in entirety, ‘*samagra*’. It is not that a part is known and the rest is unknown. Wisdom knows the reality in full, completely. Intellect has its limitations and, therefore, knows only a part as it looks at things with limited perspective. The consciousness beyond intellect looks at things with their inter-relationships. It will not be an exaggeration to say that Divine consciousness knows things by identifying itself with them. Therefore, that knowledge becomes complete (*samagra*).

A devotee knows the Divine in this manner. Is it possible to know the Divine? Is not Divine infinite? If He is infinite, then how can He be known? As has been stated above He is not comprehensible by intellect because He is not finite. He is recognised by a consciousness beyond intellect. Of course, He becomes finite by intellectual expression. That is natural.

The first half of the verse tells us the state of its perception. This we will have to understand in continuation with the last chapter. ‘By completely devoting mind in Me’. The attachment with divinity removes all other attachments because that attachment unites a yogi with the Divinity and consequently all other attachments vanish on their own. That easily gives exclusivity.

‘Practice yoga by being dependent on Me’. Make efforts for progress by taking the support of Divine grace. Not being dependent on own efforts alone. Which yogi is referred here? The yogi discussed in the last chapter.

Here Arjuna has been addressed and not a yogi who was discussed toward the end of the last chapter. However, that does not make a difference. There is no doubt that if Arjuna follows the path of ‘yoga’ he will also realize and gain the same state.

Here ‘yoga’ means that grand path in which Arjuna should now engage by fighting in the war. Then he will be ready for the yoga of self-control and will be able to benefit from this wisdom.

*jnanam te ‘ham savijnanamidam vaksyamy asesatah |
yaj jnatva ne‘ha bhuyo ‘nyaj jnatavyam avasisyate ||2||*

I will declare to thee in full this wisdom together with knowledge knowing that there shall remain nothing more to know. ||2||

How great is the promise? ‘I will declare that after which nothing more will remain to know’.

Wisdom is the understanding of the Divine. The Divine wisdom relates to the awareness of the primal existence, the Supreme entity. Science is knowledge of the *prakriti*, knowledge of properties of His many manifestations where cause and effect is predominant. The awareness of Divinity is wisdom and knowledge of His manifestations is science.

The word 'science' is used for specialised knowledge relating to any matter or activity. In the Gita the word 'science' has been used with this meaning. This chapter gives us evidence of this usage.

We need to know only this much that the supreme Reality and His play is one but He manifests in innumerable forms and activities. One who has understood this has understood everything because everything in the universe is His expression. With this understanding, the basis for his expression is understood. Intellect can do the rest of the work. That can perceive changes due to changes in place and time.

'*gyatavya*' is worthy of knowing. Knowing which one benefits. As it is, there is no end to knowledge. Scientists have not been able to know everything even at the gross level and the cosmos has no end. However, an aspirant need not know everything. His objective is to move towards the Supreme Reality. He only needs to understand the Supreme Reality and live with that understanding. For him knowing the basic principles is enough. He should not concern with the knowledge of irrelevant matters.

*manusyanam sahasresu kaschid yatati siddhaye /
yatatam api siddhanam kaschin mam veti tattvatah ||3||*

From amongst thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive and succeed, scarcely one knows Me in reality. ||3||

Now Shri *Bhagwan* speaks about how difficult it is to have conceptual understanding of the Divinity. Amongst thousands, scarcely one strives for perfection. Most people are engaged in acquiring worldly possessions. They are not aware of higher realities. Then, how will they make an effort towards knowing them? It is just like a rare student goes for higher studies after passing his school. Most of the people are at lower rungs of development. For them, there is no question of perfection. Most humanity is engaged in worldly affairs. Only a rare person is interested in knowing matters relating to the Divine.

Even those who make efforts and achieve some success do not understand Divinity properly. They do try to know but they do not succeed.

As has been stated above, the conceptual awareness of the supreme Reality is possible only through worship and devotion. Even after perfection, if there is any deficiency in total devotion then one will not have this awareness. Only a rare one can have the benefit of this awareness. For this reason, in the last verse of chapter six it was said that amongst the yogis, the one devoted to worship and devotion is the best.

Now Shri *Bhagwan* describes this Divinity, which only rare people understand ---

*bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhireva ca |
ahamkara iti 'yam me bhinna praktir astadha ||4||
apare 'yam itas tv anyam prakrtim viddhi me param |
jivabhutam mahabaho yaye'dam dharyate jagat ||5||*

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and ego – this is the eightfold division of my nature '*prakriti*' (4)

This is my lower nature (*apara*). 'O Arjuna! Know My other nature which is the soul, by which this world is upheld. (5)

The Supreme Reality has two modes: one is *para* (higher *Prakriti*) and the other is *apara* (lower *Prakriti*). *Apara* has eight divisions. *Para Prakriti* is the soul, the being, which holds this world.

What is *prakriti*? The word '*prakriti*', *nature*, has been used for disposition. Disposition is that expression in which existences manifest. Disposition of a person or properties of other existences is his/their nature, *prakriti*. That is not different from the person or the existence. That is only a manifestation of the person or the existence and is limited. A person or an existence is not limited to its physical appearance as they are much beyond appearance.

Prakriti does not have an independent existence. Without the person, what is his disposition, what is his *prakriti*? Therefore, what is *prakriti* without *purushotam*? *He is nothing without consciousness. An existence cannot be imagined without consciousness.*

The Supreme Entity has two *prakriti, modes*. The Supreme Entity manifests in two expressions – *apara prakriti* and *para.prakriti*. The Supreme Entity, which is incomprehensible, expresses in two forms – one in the form of energy (*para prakriti*) and the other in the form of physical appearance (*apara prakriti*). Living beings have consciousness; have awareness. Consciousness has no physical existence, nor any strength. We should not forget that consciousness is Divinity and that alone gives character. That Divinity does all the play by expressing in two modes.

Beings are active and changeable according to their *prakriti*. Consciousness is alertness but inactive.

None of the two modes exists in their pure form because they do not have independent existence. The entire universe operates through their mutual interplay. Whatever is there that is the Supreme Existence with its two modes and that alone is experienced. Intellect generally ignores this truth and is lost by imagining that the two modes have independent existence.

This is the extreme duality (*dvait*) of the Gita. The unity of *prakriti* and of being is self-evident because only one i.e. *Purushotama*, the Supreme Reality exist.

Apara prakriti has eight divisions. The Samkhya doctrine counts 24 elements. Some scriptures mention 36 elements. This depends upon the view of the person who was counting.

Five elements, with mind, intellect and ego make eight. Five elements have their five secondary elements. Secondary elements are expressions of primary elements.

Organs of action and senses are born out of the *rajasic* ego. Intellect regulates their activities. Therefore, they have been included in intellect. It appears, the ego is counted as an important element (*mahatatva*). The difference between the intellect and the ego is only of stages. For this reason, 'ego' is not counted as an independent element. In this way, 24 elements of *Samkhya* doctrine have been mentioned as 8 elements.

The gross world is the expansion of '*apara*' *prakriti*'. Because of its grossness, it is '*apara*'. It is perceptible.

Para prakriti is consciousness and is inperceptible. That holds this universe. Consciousness gives beings/existences their identity. Consciousness alone keeps eightfold *prakriti* together. As if that is the thread holding the pearls of the *prakriti* and manifests as beings/existences. *Apara prakriti* becomes a means for '*para*' *prakriti* to express. Inherent capabilities of '*para*' *prakriti* manifest through mind, intellect, etc. That alone is the basis of actions and reactions taking place within *apara prakriti*. It is only through them that inherent strength of beings/existences manifests. This is the evolution of spiritual world.

In real life, we cannot imagine beings as different from the *prakriti*. Without consciousness 'being' is not a being. That becomes zero because that has no strength except intellect. That is the *purush* of *Samkhya* doctrine which is inactive but has consciousness. If we imagine *prakriti* without consciousness then it is only activity, change and mutation. That is the *prakriti* of *Samkhya* doctrine.

Without *prakriti* 'beings' can have only consciousness where there will be no activity That is *kaivalibhav*. This is as a state free of alternatives (*nirvikalpa*). This is a formless state of *Samkhya*.

There is no doubt that the *kaivalibhav* has proximity to the Divine state. However, that cannot be alone. The Divine state also includes *prakriti*. This doesnot exclude activity, the *prakriti* but the divine state transcends *prakriti*.

According to the definition given in the Gita, the *para prakriti* dwelling in beings is immutable *purush* and *apara prakriti* is mutable (15/17-18). 'Being' is a conscious soul (*kshetragya*) and the *apara prakriti* is unconscious body (*kshetra*) (chapter 13)

In fact, all this analysis and differentiation is a creation of our analytical mind. The entire universe is the play of that Supreme Existence (*Purushottama*). He alone manifests in different forms. He having manifested as a 'being' evolves into the Divine state (*purushottma-bahv*). This is His amazing play. That is why the attainment of the Divine state is the ultimate objective of life.

Immutable *per-se* is without attributes. That is the reason why abiding in that state is inferior to abiding in the Divine state (*purushottma-bahv*). *Purushottama* despite having attributes is beyond

attributes. Moreover, the immutable is totally devoid of attributes. In fact, by abiding in the state of isolation (*kaivalibhav*) we cannot understand the one with attributes – we cannot understand *prakriti* full of attributes. We try to escape that situation by taking recourse to illusionism.

The philosophy of the Gita does not allow problems of *Advaita-Vedanta* to arise. The problem arises by considering the state of isolation (*kaivalibhav*) as supreme. In the state of isolation, it is impossible to find a solution to this problem. Efforts to find a solution result in more complexities. To reinforce the indescribability of the indescribable they create a new indescribable (*maya*). To explain *advaita*, they take help of illusion (*maya*). In the process, they confuse a person by their explanations.

We can say that the philosophy of the Gita is not dependent upon reason. The Gita harmonizes the two different natures, *prakritis*. How the gross can also be conscious? We can accept that the intellect cannot understand this. However, intellect is not the basis of this philosophy. Experience of consciousness beyond intellect is definitive. Followers of the path have to accept this. The intellect can understand this.

To prove as understandable what is not understandable *Vedanties* take recourse to falsehood, *illusionism*, which even after becoming a tradition, ignores the truth. Therefore, it is better to accept the incomprehensibility of what is beyond intellect.

Along with this, read verse 7 of chapter 15 and verses 3-4 of eighth chapter.

etadyonini bhutani sarvani 'ty upadharaya |
aham krtsnasya jagtah prabhavah pralayas tatha ||6||

'Know that all beings take birth in this two fold *prakriti*. I am the origin of this entire world and its dissolution as well.'

All beings are born due to the interplay of *apara* and *para prakriti*. In the 13th chapter, this concept is mentioned more clearly.

yavat samjayate kimcit sattvam sthavarajangamam |
ksetrasetrajanasamyoga tad viddhi bharatarsabha ||13/26||

'O bharatarsabha, know that whoever, animate or inanimate being, is born that is through the union of the field and the knower of the field, || (13/26) ||

Kshetra is *apara prakriti* and *kshetragya* is *para prakriti*. Beings are mutable existences, 'satta'. The existence that acts like a unit in its conduct and evolves is 'satta'. In English, it is called becoming. All that which can be observed and experienced in various ways is a 'being'. In the thirteenth chapter this has been called 'sattva'. Man is a being, animals-birds, trees and givers (*dev*) are all beings.

All beings have invisible consciousness and their physical form is matter. They are a reflection of the Supreme. One cannot even imagine an existence having only consciousness or

having only physical matter. Even in primal existences the two modes are not separate or distinct. Then how beings born from that primal existence can be different?

The entire understanding of *purush-prakriti* relies on this distinction. This is the understanding of the consciousness and the gross elements. By this understanding, it is possible to attain *Brahman-bhava* abiding in pure consciousness, the divine state (*brahmi-sthiti*). This is abiding in nature or spirituality. (8/3)

In the second half of the verse description of the divine existence starts.

‘I am the cause of the creation of the universe. All this is born from Me’. Undoubtedly, this world is an expression of His *prakriti*. He himself is its source. *Parameshwara* is our consciousness, our life, and our mind and intellect. Everything is because of Him. Therefore, He is our father and also our mother.

‘I am dissolution’. The world dissolves in *parameshwara*. Like during night all living beings go to sleep and their limbs become inactive. Similarly, this world disappears in Him, the Supreme Reality. After dissolution there is a peaceful state, a state free of any activity. Elements cease to exist. Darkness covers darkness – ‘*tam evasit tamsa gudham’gre*’

There is no existence in dissolution. Dissolution is a form of *Parameshwara* himself. When He withdraws manifested existences it is dissolution.

*mattah parataram na ‘nyat kimcid asti dhanamjaya |
mayi sarvam idam protam sutre manigana iva ||7||*

‘O Arjuna! There is nothing higher than Me or beyond Me. All that is here is woven in Me like rows of gems on a string.’ ||7||

There is nothing higher or beyond the Supreme Entity. It is because of His existence others have existence. He exists by his own existence.

*tamev bhantamanubhati sarvam |
tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati ||*

‘All have light because He is illuminated. All are illuminated by His light.’ *Upanishad* says thus. His existence alone is supreme.

There is nothing beyond Him even in wisdom, power and bliss. How there can be any thing beyond Him? How anything born out of Him can be beyond Him? Birth is only a manifestation of the Unmanifested. Man is a limited manifestation. In a manifestation, only a fraction of Him, only a fraction of His expression, manifests. Only His wisdom appears in the wise, his strength in the strong and his love in the lover. He is an inexhaustible repository of everything. What manifests, is miniscule.

A person in his arrogance thinks himself great. This is uncultured (*asur*) nature. Arrogance demands its confirmation. He forgets *parameshwara* and His authority. What appears great that is only a glimpse of *parameshwara*’s greatness? What is beautiful that is only a shade of His beauty?

Who can exceed that Infinite? Intellect is defeated and is never satisfied singing His praises. The mind has no access to His realm.

The entire Universe and all existents live because of Him. Who can compete with Him?

When a person comes to know of this secret his head bows before *parameshwara*. Earlier in arrogance, one used to think, "who is greater than me". However, this realization removes un-merited arrogance. It is the wounds given by the society that make a person realize *parameshwara* and makes him understand how much dependent he is on *parameshwara*.

He is blessed, who can see the transcendental existence in everything, in every activity and every event.

And, 'everything is woven in Me like rows of gems on a string'.

How much life a string has? String exists so long as there is thread in it. When that thread is broken, all gems get scattered. Likewise, this world is strung on *parameshwara*. He is the regulator, administrator, and support of this manifested world. *Parameshwara* alone is the authority regulating this entire play. He upholds this by becoming duty or religion.

While gems can have independent existence out of thread, the world has no existence independent of *parameshwara*. It is not difficult to understand how much we are dependent on Him. He is our foundation and the basis. He is our life and our preserver.

The entity that supports us, that preserves us, is 'Vishnu'. He becomes pervasive and cares for everyone. Without Him, not even a grain of wheat can grow. Without Him nothing can be seen. Without Him, there is no food, no life. One cannot even imagine, what will happen without Him.

A person becomes fearless and assured after he discovers the thread inside everyone is in himself, in his life. He has the blessings of the Supreme (*paramadhar*) after he understands how much dependent he is upon Him. That thread is in everyone and is in us. He is like a thread in our every atom. That thread needs to be discovered. That can be discovered. Finding Him is discovering the core of life, understanding the purpose of life, and knowing the formulae of evolution.

It is after finding that thread one can unite with others. When we have found Him within ourselves, we can find Him in others also. He dwells in us and we dwell in Him. The only requirement is to know this truth.

He regulates this world and the worlds beyond.. He is the only thread of the creation.

What was stated in verses 6 and 7, supra, that is being explained now in detail. This is the first description of the glorious manifestations of *parameshwara* in the Gita. We will find detailed descriptions of His glorious manifestations later in the tenth chapter.

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabha 'smi sasisuryayoh |
pranavah sarvavedesu sabdah khe paurusam nrsu ||8||*

‘O son of Kunti, I am taste in waters. I am light in Sun and Moon. I am syllable Aum in all Vedas. I am sound in ether and manhood in man’. (8)

Water is not water without taste. Water is born out of a subtle element (*tanmatra*) taste. Taste is the property of water. If there is no taste, water will have no basis. What makes the Sun and the Moon as Sun and Moon? It is their light. *Parameshwara* is their light. In His absence, sun and moon cannot exist. Their existence is dependent on their light. In Vedas, the syllable Aum is foremost. ‘*Mantras*’ cannot be recited without reciting ‘Aum’ first. Vedas are born from the syllable Aum. For Vedas, ‘Aum’ is *parameshwara*. That is the source, life and basis of the Vedas. The existence of the Vedas depends on that. The property of ether is sound. Ether is born from the subtle element (*tanmatra*) sound. What is ether without having the property of sound, nothing? Therefore, the source of ether is *parameshwara*. The existence of ether depends on Him.

And, manhood in men is *parameshwara*. Without manhood, a man is not a man. Therefore, *parameshwara* is the manhood of man.

***punyo gandhah prithivyam ca tejas ca ‘smi vibhavasau |
jivanam sarvabhutesu tapas ca ‘smi tapasvisu ||9||***

‘I am pure fragrance in earth and brightness in fire. I am life in all existences and austerities in ascetics’. (9)

The property of the earth is fragrance. The normal property of earth is a sweet fragrance. *Parameshwara* is fragrance. Fragrance is a subtle element of earth. Without that earth does not exist. Therefore, *parameshwara* is the source as well life on Earth.

Similarly, the property of fire is brightness. *Parameshwara* is brightness. Therefore, fire is fire because of Him.

I am life in all beings. How beings can be beings without life? Therefore, only *parameshwara* is the basis of everyone. Everyone is dependent on Him. How clearly, this concept has been explained?

***bijam mam sarvabhutanam viddhi partha sanatanaam |
buddhir buddhimatam asmi tejas tejasvinam aham ||10||
balam balavatam ca ‘ham kamaragavivarjitam |
dharmaviruddho bhutesu kamo ‘smi bharatarsabha ||11||***

‘O Arjuna, know Me, to be the seed of all existences. I am the intelligence of the intelligent (and) I am the splendour of the splendid. (10)

‘I am the strength of the strong, devoid of desire and passion. O’ Best of Bharatas, in beings I am ethical passion. (11)

How *parameshwara* is the seed of all beings that is clear from the above statement. As a seed manifests in the form of a plant, so *parameshwaramanifests* in all beings.

Eternal seed! *Parameshwara* is eternal – has always been there. He never becomes non-existent. He has been creating existences at all times.

One is intelligent by His intelligence and is splendid by His splendour.

Shri *Bhagwan* says I am strength devoid of desire and passion. The strength of the strong is pure and devoid of desire and passion. *Rajoguna* creeps in due to desire and passion. Strength becomes demonic. A man becomes strong by that strength which is pure. As was stated above about earth, '*punyo gandha*', just like that has been stated here for strength, devoid of desire and passion.

Moreover, 'I am desire in beings – desire per ethics.'

Desire is a wish, is a craving. It is normal property of evolved consciousness. Only due to divine inspiration, one can have human values and divine nature. In pure form, it is normal property of beings. A being does not remain a being without this property. The inherent power to act cannot manifest and one cannot move ahead. After achieving perfection this desire is automatically pacified.

This has been said to indicate pure passion with morals and ethics. Passion contaminated under the influence of *rajoguna* forces one to do evil deeds. Evil deeds are not a result normal nature of beings, as brightness is the normal property of fire. Therefore, this description of passions was necessary. Similarly, no one becomes strong by desire or passion but becomes strong by strength of character.

The purpose of these statements is to clarify statements made in verses 6 and 7, by giving examples. This way we can understand how *parameshwara* is the creator, sustainer and dissolver. How is He the foundation of the universe and how everything exists in Him and there is nothing without Him

*ye cai 'va sattvika bhava rajas as tamasas ca ye |
matta eva 'ti tan viddhi na tv aham tesu te mayi ||12||*

“In whatever states beings are, such as *sattvic*, *rajasic*, *tamasic*; know them to be from Me. I am not in them, they are in Me.’ (12)

As stated above ‘I am the origin of the entire Universe’. Everything comes within the term ‘Universe’. The Universe has three kinds of beings/existences, viz. *Sattvik*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*. All of them are from *parameshwara*. If *parameshwara* is the source of everyone then he is the source of *rajasic* and *tamasic* beings/existences also.

‘The word '*bhava*' has the same meaning as '*bhut*' and '*sattva*' have. Appearance of an existence is '*bhava*'.

A man understands various forms of *parameshwara* according to the limits of his understanding. We consider *parameshwara* as absolutely pure and full of *sattva*. Therefore, how the world, which has *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*, which is bad, can be from Him? We think that such a world would be from someone else. *Parameshwara* is goodness personified. Therefore, any

entity that comes from Him cannot be bad. Whatever is bad in the world that would have come into being from a bad entity? That bad entity is 'satan'. Christianity and Islam have that conception. He is the rival of God. There are *devata* (gods) and *daityas* (demons) in the Hindu religion but gods are not *parameshwara*. Gods are many but *parameshwarais* only One. Gods are many and are predominantly sattvic forms of *parameshwara*. Demons are predominantly Rajasic forms of *parameshwara*. For the sake of development demons are also necessary. Just as, without *rajoguna* and *tamoguna* development is not possible so also gods cannot progress without demons. However, no one is equal or opponent of *parameshwara*. The status of other gods is much lower.

We read in Puranas that when demons defeat gods, *parameshwara* incarnates to destroy demons. This is necessary for development. Demons are not independent of the Divine existence. They are *tamasic* expressions of the Divine existence. They are also due to a resolve of *parameshwara* and exist due to His existence. They are always in His control. They are allowed to grow only to the extent it is useful for human evolution.

If evil is also an expression of *parameshwara*, then why should one avoid evil? Then, what is the difference between good and bad? Some people may think like that. If bad is bad then good is also good. All three properties are in the *prakriti* but their nature is different. Both cake and bread are made of wheat yet there is a difference in their properties. Steam and ice are forms of water yet their characters are different.

One should keep away from evil because that results in misery; it debases a man; it is a hindrance in the path towards divinity. One should also keep away from evil because it harms others; and it is necessary to overcome it in the process of development. The process of development is from *tamas* to *rajas* and from *rajas* to *sattva*. The Divine Existence can be experienced only after establishing in *sattva*.

Since both virtue and evil are from *parameshwara*, we should not hate evil while keeping away from it. We should recognize *parameshwara* in all activities, including evil, and in evildoers. The one who hates evil, the evil follows him. The virtue and evil of the world are our virtue and evil. To accept this truth is to accept the world as it is with open heart and is to accept *parameshwara* pervading the world. Only a man who understands this truth can have a balanced vision. For him, both virtue and evil become the same. He can ignore both auspicious and inauspicious. (12/17). He does not have to accept only one of them.

It is necessary to recognize *parameshwara* by ignoring *rajas-tamas*.

Though *parameshwara* expresses in all the three attributes, He is beyond all of them. The three attributes cannot taint *parameshwara*. He does not become *sattvic*, *rajasic*, or *tamasic* while expressing through them. He remains free of attributes and uninvolved. He is beyond attributes. This secret is revealed in the fourth part of the verse: '*na tv aham tesu te mayi*'-- I am not in them they are in me.

I am not in them. I am not limited to attributes, nor related to them. They do not bind me. I do not become *Tamasic, Rajasic, or Sattvik*. On the contrary, they are in me. I am their basis, support, life and seed. Despite being everything, I am beyond them, like, gems strung in a thread. Just as the thread, inside gems is not bound to gems, so He remains beyond attributes.

In this context verses 4, 5, and 6 of chapter 9 are worth referring to. An example given in the sixth verse makes the point very clear.

*yathakashasthito nityam bayuh sarvatro mahan /
tatha sarvani bhutani matsthanityupdharya || 9/6 ||*

As air circulating everywhere abides in the etheric space (*akasa*), know that in the same manner all existences abide in Me. Air is in the sky but sky is not limited by air nor takes the property of 'touch' of air. Similarly, beings abide in *parameshwara*. As the sky pervades the air, so *parameshwara* pervades all beings.

*tribhir gunamayair bhavair ebhish sarvam idam jagat /
mohitam na bhijanati mam ebhyah param avyayam ||13 ||*

'Deluded by the three attributes, the whole world does not recognize Me as beyond them and imperishable'. || 13 ||

The expressions of three attributes – the creation of three attributes. Whatever is visible and experienced is the play of these three attributes. This deludes the entire world. Reality is not recognized. The play of attributes is visible but its player is not. As the director of a play remains behind the curtain and is not seen so is here. In reality, actors follow the instructions of the director. Director appears through them but he is not visible. People do not know him. They go away praising or criticizing actors. They remain ignorant about the one who directed them.

How is all this delusion? On one side, there is the multiplicity and on the other side is the consciousness capable of perceiving the multiplicity of multiple elements. Play of attributes takes place both inside and outside. As if one entity creates the mind, the intellect, and the organs and the same entity creates many entities spread all over material world. The consciousness descends in the field of multiplicity. The boundary between inside and outside is relative. Whatever is inside, the same is outside. The creation of attributes is inside and the same is outside. Consciousness manifests both inside and outside through them.

Internal balance is disturbed. Because of that disturbance, whatever is perceived appear disturbed. The internal disturbance is due to attributes. Whatever disturbs the vision inside that also disturbs the scene outside. It is incorrect to think that the disturbance in the scene, the multiplicity, is due to distorted vision. There is multiplicity but there is also singularity behind that. Undisturbed vision can see singularity. When an eye is able to see singularity then multiplicity goes in the background. In my view, that is only extreme visual creativity.

The world is under delusion. It does not recognize *parameshwara*, the infinite entity beyond the visible. Whatever is visible is mutable. The basis of the mutable is the infinite existence, the Supreme Entity, *purushottama*. Because of delusion, we are unable to see Him. Because of our

ignorance, we are unable to perceive that Supreme Entity. We think that there is nothing beyond what is perceived. Therefore, those who do not know remain miserable due to their ignorance.

*daivi hy esa gunamayi mam maya duratyaya /
mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te //14||*

‘It is certainly difficult to overcome My *Maya* having attributes. But those who take refuge in Me overcome this *Maya*’. (14)

Maya is like a river, which is difficult to cross. A boat is required to cross it. Only by having a boat of the feet of *prabhu* (the Supreme Entity) this can be crossed.

What is this *Maya of Prabhu*? In the fourth chapter (6) it was stated – ‘I take birth by taking recourse to My *Prakriti*’. *Maya* is that power which measures. It creates limits in unlimited. Limitation is the basic principle of expression. *Maya* is the mother of delusion. A dot does not have length or breadth. When a dot moves, it draws a line. The line has length but no breadth. When a line moves, that creates a square. When square moves it creates a cube, a solid material, and creation comes into existence. All this is created by a dot. Everything that appeared was inherent in the dot.

How small an atom is? There is nothing solid inside it. Only electronic charges are there. The charges are positive and negative. Atom is formed by movement of charges. Atoms make small particles. Elements appear after particles unite. Elements create this grand universe. All this is the result of electronic charges creating an atom.

The Supreme Existence is unmanifested and is without attributes. The unmanifested (*para prakriti*) is masculine and immutable. The manifested *prakriti* (*apara prakriti*) is feminine and mutable. The unmanifested is only vibrations. From unmanifested, vital element comes into being. It is impossible to perceive its existence. The ego comes from the vital element, which is beyond the boundaries of time and space. It is subtle yet it is active but not identifiable. It contains five primary elements and the mind, the intellect, the organs, and the subtle elements. It is from them that the entire universe comes into being. That unmanifested manifests, and surprisingly the unmanifested remains unmanifested. Nothing changes in That unmanifested. The dot remains the dot but from that dot the entire universe comes into being. This is *Maya*. This is like magic. The magician brings out articles one by one from his bag, plays many games and then puts everything back in his bag. Just like that, the entire universe comes out of that Unmanifested, immutable, and finally dissolves in That. What a great surprise, the entire universe dissolves in that unmanifested.

It is for this reason the universe is unreal and the *parameshwara* is real. However, the one who can see atoms in everything in the universe where is the need for him to reject the universe? The one who knows atoms in every material where is a need for him to reject the material. After all this entire play is experienced. That unmanifested one plays such a grand game and this cannot be without purpose.

It makes no difference whether one calls it unreal or real. We have to find a way to have the benefit of unity with that Supreme Existence. Once that unity is achieved then there is no

necessity of calling it unreal. The illusion of *Maya* ends. Then one has the experience of '*Vasudeva sarvam iti*'. The player and the play become one. Then one experiences *parameshwara* every moment (7/13). Then there is no delusion.

(As was mentioned above, whatever exists in the world, the same exists inside. The one becomes the scene as well as the seer. The scene is according to one's ability to see. The ability of the seer sees the scene from the infinite angles.)

What is this *Maya*? It is Divine and full of attributes. Full of attributes – it manifests through attributes and in the form of attributes, all three attributes of the *prakriti*: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamasic*.

And, what is divinity? Divinity relates to gods. This entire play relates to gods. Gods are glories of the Supreme Entity, which appear in subtle form and contribute to this entire play. The Supreme Entity runs this entire creation taking the form and through various gods. Divinity means out of the world and higher than the capability of human beings.

'*durattya*' – difficult to confront, difficult to transgress. One can overcome *Maya* by overcoming all its causes from subtle to gross – even the ego. We will have to transgress even *sattva* and *prakriti*, will have to transcend the feeling of a being (*purush bhava*). *Maya* is then transgressed. Only after transgressing *Maya* divinity is realized. But there are many temptations on the way. Initially, lower tendencies hold. Thereafter, achievements hold. Then ego becomes a hindrance. There is no doubt that because of all these hindrances, it is very difficult to transcend the *Maya*.

Nevertheless, this can be transcended. Difficult it is but not impossible. Now Shri Bhagwan tells the method.

"Those who take my shelter cross over it". Shelter of divinity, *parameshwara*, is the solution. What is this shelter? Shelter is unconditional surrender or acceptance. In '*mamev*', the meaning of '*ev*' is certainly. '*prapadya*' -- surrender to Me. '*prapatti*' is used for surrender. Surrender does not take place by being indecisive or by looking for shelter of *parameshwara*. *Parameshwara* accepts you after unconditional surrender, acceptance and total dependence on Him.

Man takes shelter of *parameshwara*, after having been defeated in his own efforts and after having fed up with *Maya*. 'I did whatever was possible for me but was not successful. The more I tried to become free, the more I got involved. I have failed and now I have come to you for shelter, kindly help me'. *Parameshwara* gives shelter when the inner self having awakened cries for help after accepting defeat. Then one receives the grace of *parameshwara*.

The inner self must accept defeat. The prayer for help should express helplessness. The prayer should be only to *parameshwara* when no other help is expected. When such a condition develops, the door of *parameshwara* opens, the person called inside and accepted. It is necessary to knock the door with total surrender. Without the cry of helplessness door does not open.

Whether the door will open or not depends upon the call of the caller, his internal condition, and his inner craving. After the cry of helplessness that door opens for everyone without any discrimination.

The door does not open for him who has ego and believes in his own strength. The door will also not open for him who has some other hope. The call will not be heard where there is no failure, no helplessness. Without the cry of helplessness the door will not open.

The easy way to transcend *maya* is to seek refuge from the lord of *Maya*, *parameshwara*. He can withdraw his *maya*. He can give His vision. As *maya* is a maid of *parameshwara*, it does not confuse His refugee.

Is there no other method except taking refuge in *parameshwara*? Nothing about this is said here. The way of *Samkhya* is dependence on self-efforts, is dependence upon self-control and discrimination. Self control through sacrifice and renunciation is the way of success according to *Samkhya*. Some people do follow that path and may be able to overcome *maya*. But only a rare one can overcome *maya* by following that path. That is why so is said.

The one who transcends *maya* becomes peaceful. *Parameshwara* is never lost for him and he is never lost to the *parameshwara*. (6/30)

***na mam duskrino mudhah prapadyante naradhamah /
mayaya 'pahrtajanana asuram bhavam asritah ||15||***

‘Those who do evil deeds, who are foolish and those who are low on the human scale do not seek refuge in Me. *Maya* steals their mind. They are dependent upon their demonic nature.’ (15)

First, answers the question – who does not take the refuge of *parameshwara*? Then in the next verse (verse 16) mentions those who take His refuge.

The evil doers, who commit evil deeds, do not take refuge in *parameshwara*. It is only after many pious deeds one is ready for taking refuge in *parameshwara*. By evil deeds mind is contaminated, and becomes vicious. Man does not accept defeat even after being defeated, and does not find a way for development. He keeps indulging in sensual pleasures of the world, which gives misery and suffering. Such people are not able to think anything different. They do not move towards their redemption despite there being a way. Such people are mean. Their mean nature has full control over them.

Why will they, whose intelligence *maya* has corrupted, take refuge in *parameshwara*? Under the powerful influence of *maya*, one does not have trust in the powers of *parameshwara*. Man abuses *parameshwara* saying "how wicked is He who has taken away my child". He does not see the auspiciousness of the Auspicious. He cries and sighs, but is not able to say, Ram, Ram. He feels as if he will die by taking the name of *parameshwara*,.

What is this *maya* of *parameshwara*? *Maya* is passions coming to surface. One sees dreadful dreams. His intelligence supports him. A fool considers him wise. An idiot calls others idiot. Servant of passions considers himself wise.

Maya abducts prudence. It gives wrong understanding of doable and not doable. Virtue appears evil and evil appears virtue. 'Why he said so?' A man when angry shouts with red eyes: 'I will eat him raw' and then he sinks into gloom. If there is an assault on his passions his world becomes monotonous, for him life becomes meaningless. Aspirations alone keeps dancing before his eyes, day in and day out, and finally he starts sinking in gloom. He considers that as love and considers his blindness as a solemn sacrifice. This is *Maya*.

What had overpowered Narad jee, (*ramcharritmanas*, *balakand*) was the *Maya* of *parameshwara*. His divine *Maya* prevails over a man at all times and makes him dance like a servant to the tunes of his mean tendencies. This *maya* is persistent (*duratya*). This steals wisdom, and undoubtedly makes one dance for a fistful of grain, as a monkey.

People of evil temperament do not take refuge in *parameshwara*. In evil people *pran* prevails as their ego is predominant; and there is craving for enjoyments. There is passion and anger. Such people do not know how to bend. When hurt, they cry but do not apply medicine. Due to predominance of malice, they only think of taking revenge.

This is the picture of evil-minded people, painted in this verse. In the 16th chapter, there is a detailed description of such people. They do not take refuge in *parameshwara*. Such people are always worried and as per their nature also make others worried. They never think of getting over their worries.

Then, when does the path open for them? The door does not open through evil. Only virtue gives satisfaction, and man becomes peaceful. Evil minded persons do not feel the need for refuge. Then, when does the path open for them? The path opens when their pious tendencies emerge though evil tendencies are still there; even when *sattva* starts developing they continue to remain uneasy due to the presence of *rajas* and *tamas*. It can be said that virtue is indicative of the predominance of *sattva*. When *sattva* is predominant, activities of *rajoguna* and *tamoguna* appear especially painful; and make the person miserable. By the predominance of *sattva*, there is purity inside, and there appears a possibility of peaceful life.

There is anxiety for freedom from present worries caused by *rajas* and *tamas*. However, due to the excess of lower tendencies, man is not able to have control over his Self and fails repeatedly. Then he looks towards *parameshwara* and has the benefit of His refuge. This is not possible without the development of *sattva*. Proper conditions do not develop without worries caused by *rajas* and *tamas*. It is not enough to fail. Along with, it is necessary to have a desire and ability to rise above the miserable state caused by failure.

Now Shri Bhagwan tells about those who worship *parameshwara*.

caturvidha bhajante mam janaj sukrtino 'rjuna |
arto jijnasur arthartha jnani ca bharatarsabha //16||

‘O Arjuna, there are four kinds of virtuous people who worship me – the man in distress, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of wisdom’. (16)

This verse seems mentions those people who worship and take refuge. This is with reference to the context. In the previous verse, he said ‘such people do not come to my refuge’. Now says; ‘such people come to my refuge’.

Just recitation of His name does not serve the purpose of worship. There is only one purpose behind the intent of taking refuge and worship. In due course, the desire for worship grows and becomes stronger. As the intent for taking refuge becomes strong, *parameshwara* starts taking care.

People take refuge for different purposes. Everyone has both virtuous and evil tendencies. By saying virtuous, the purpose is to say; having predominantly virtuous tendencies but not free from evil tendencies. Otherwise how *parameshwara* could be the redeemer of the fallen? His worship removes evil and the man becomes free from evil - ‘*vigatkalmash*’.

Which are those four kinds of people who worship? The second half of the verse mentions them in sequence.

The first category is of the people in dire distress, tormented by grief. A man suffering from the sorrows of life and having got no relief from anywhere comes to the shelter of *parameshwara*: ‘*hedeenanath* redeem me from my troubles’. Such a thought comes when good sense prevails. Otherwise, one keeps suffering but does not take refuge in *parameshwara*. Not remembering *parameshwara* even during suffering is nothing but misfortune.

What happens to him? Does he get freedom from suffering? Even if he does not get freedom from suffering he gets strength to bear his suffering. He can bear his suffering with patience. *Parameshwara* is the redeemer from suffering. He provides such relief as is proper for a refugee.

The second category is of the curious ones. The person who wants to know is a curious one. The followers of the path of (gyan) yoga take refuge for the sake of knowledge; they desire to have knowledge by the grace of *parameshwara*. People taking the path of (gyan) yoga worship with this intent. Even a person desirous of secular knowledge worships *parameshwara*.

What happens to the curious one? *Parameshwara* helps him and shows him the path for gaining knowledge. He is the guardian of a refugee. One does not gain success instantly. It takes time.

The third category is of the seeker of wealth, praying for material possessions. I need wealth, need son, need fame. Worship with this kind of desire is known as, ‘with purpose’ (*sakam*). The meanness of desire of the seeker of wealth makes him mean. There is a difference between his craving and of the person in distress. The call of the person in distress is very earnest and heard promptly.

Does *parameshwara* fulfil demands of seekers? Sometimes He does and sometimes He does not. It depends upon the spirit of the seeker of wealth and *parameshwara* gives whatever is proper for him. A mother will never satisfy unreasonable demand of her child. *Parameshwara* does not fulfil a harmful desire. If the person has taken refuge in *parameshwara* then either his demand will be fulfilled or will subside. The same happens in the case of a seeker of wisdom. It will be a different matter if the person is trying to test *parameshwara*, or is trying to make *parameshwara* a means to satisfy his ego or wants to use Him. We cannot fool Him. *Parameshwara* knows us in and out. Worship is to become dependent. Worship is to become dependent on Him and one cannot claim fulfillment of desire as a matter of right but can claim with humility.

The fourth category is of a *gyani*. *Gyani* means wise. What kind of wisdom? It is the wisdom discussed in this chapter and for which this chapter is called: '*gyan-vigyan yoga*'. The understanding of the Supreme Entity, of His glories and His attributes. The understanding mentioned in verse 14 supra. The person having that understanding is a *gyani*.

However, only a perfected yogi, who has absolute devotion (*para bhakti*), can gain this understanding. How can a common person have it? A person can have this understanding by the teachings of a realized person, by self-learning, by contemplation, etc. Arjuna gained it through the discourse of Shri Krishna. He is a wise person who develops faith in the glories of *parameshwara*, who has veneration, who has the feeling of surrender. He has an understanding of *parameshwara*, not direct knowledge.

Why does he worship? He has trust in *parameshwara* and accepts Him as Almighty. For him *parameshwara* is everything; livelihood, activity, and everything else in life. He does not see any other shelter except Him. His craving demands that he takes shelter in *parameshwara* and worships Him. He does not need to have any special inspiration or a condition. His inspiration for worship is devoid of any desire, curiosity or need for help.

He slowly gains this state. It is only by the grace of *parameshwara* that one has wisdom and reverence. His mind becomes gradually pure through experiences of life, self-learning and with good company. A man of virtue has such pious feelings.

All the first three, a person in distress, etc., become wise by gradually gaining understanding. After the misery of the miserable removed, he starts worshipping *parameshwara*. When after some time he forgets *parameshwara* his misery returns and he again remembers *parameshwara*. By doing so, he starts loving *parameshwara*. His feeling of distress finally ends. Even the seekers of wealth and seekers of knowledge forget their desire for wealth or knowledge and become wise in due course of time. It seems this happens naturally by moving on the path of worship.

What happens to the wise, the man of wisdom? Shri Bhagwan answers this question in the next verse.

*tesam jnani nityayukta ekabhaktir visisyate /
prio hi jnanino 'tyartham aham sa ca mama priyah* ||17||

'Amongst them, the wise one, who is constantly engaged in his undivided devotion, is the best. Certainly, I am very dear to the wise and he is dear to me. (17)

Gyani is the best amongst the three. Why? He is regular in worship. Because of his wisdom, he is constantly united with Me. His devotion is so deep and sincere that he is always united with Me. Secondly, since I have become his goal he remains engaged in his devotional service. He is regular in his efforts. His commitment is not one-time exercise but eternal. His soul has accepted *parameshwara* for all times.

Secondly, he is a single-minded devotee. Single-minded person has undivided feelings. A person in distress desires removal of his pain and suffering; he surrenders to *parameshwara* because he has hope of redemption from his distress. His devotion is not single-minded. The wise desires only *parameshwara* nothing else. He worships *parameshwara* because He is *parameshwara*.

Even the curious one does not have single-minded devotion. His craving for knowledge itself divides his devotion. He wants *parameshwara* for the sake of gaining knowledge. He may not want *parameshwara* if he feels that he will not gain knowledge. The same is the condition of a seeker of wealth. In all of them, fulfilment of desire is primary and worship of *parameshwara* is secondary. For them *parameshwara* is only a means, their objective is somewhat different. For the wise, *parameshwara* alone is the objective and the means. In this manner, his devotion is single-minded.

Surrender smells of distress. The wise one is devoid of this feeling. He has an easy relationship. The basis of his relationship is love.

'I am very dear to the wise'. The gyani does not love anything or anyone else more than *parameshwara*. *Parameshwara* is his ultimate: 'Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram', then who else will be dearer to him? The one who knows –

**'tvemva mata ca pita tvemva
tvemva bandusch sakah tvemva'**
(you alone is my mother, father, relative and friend)

For him, who else will be dearer? The one who has understood '***mattah partaram naanyat kinchidasti dhananjaya***' how can he love anyone except *parameshwara*. In whatever way you look at it, *parameshwara* is the dearest entity. He is dearest; He is the soul of our soul, life of our life; He is dearest for being the life of our life, being most compassionate and benevolent to us; He is dearest for his absolute beauty and Supreme Glory, for His Supreme Wisdom; because of His love for the wise; because He is love personified.

Only a devotee knows, how much dear *parameshwara* is for him.

'And he is dear to Me'. Relationship of love has no selfishness. *Parameshwara* calls only a gyani his dear. There is no selfishness in his devotion. In all three others, there is a trade-off, not pure love. There is desire; self-surrender is not important for them.

Then, does *parameshwara* love His devotee?

ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathai 'va bhajamy aham ||4/11||

“In whatever manner one approaches me I accept him in that very manner’. This is reciprocal behaviour. This is just. One loves the one who loves. Feelings of a devotee reach *parameshwara*. There is no scope for any doubt in this matter. One comes to know of it when the time comes. Why there is curiosity to know whether or not *parameshwara* loves his devotee? He only loves, that is it.

The world of true love is strange. The devotion to true love is also strange. That is desireless devotion. That unites a devotee with *parameshwara*.

In subsequent verses, this topic has been further discussed.

*udarah sarva evai 'te jnani tv atamai 'va me matam |
asthitah sa hi yuktatma mam eva 'nuttamam gatim* ||18||

‘Gracious are indeed all these, but I consider *gyani* as my own soul (my own being) because that united soul has taken (My) resort considering Me the highest goal’. (18)

All four of them are gracious. Those moving forward towards *parameshwara* are known as: ‘*udara*’ gracious. All four of them are meritorious. It is only as a result of pious deeds that a man can devote himself to *parameshwara*, and by his devotion he becomes meritorious irrespective of the motive of his devotion, whether with objective (*sakam*) or without objective (*nishkam*); he is noble and is worthy of appreciation. He is much better than those who do not worship. Those are unfortunate who do not take refuge in *parameshwara* even in misery.

As has been mentioned above, persons in distress, seekers of knowledge and seekers of wealth forgetting the purpose of their worship become devotees, like the wise ones. Once the misery of the person in distress removed, the curiosity of the seeker of knowledge satisfied, and the seeker of wealth gains wealth, they develop a feeling of gratitude toward *parameshwara*. That is the beginning of their love. Gradually they start worshipping without purpose.

Therefore, the person worshipping with purpose also deserves respect. He need not be looked down upon. He has taken a step on the path towards *parameshwara*. Today he worships with purpose tomorrow he will worship without purpose. ‘For whatever purpose he worships me’ he is worthy of respect.

A saint says ---

*sapney hun borai ke ja mukh niksat ram |
vake pag ki pantry mere tan ki cham* //

(Sleepers can be made from the skin of my body for the one who worships *parameshwara* even in his dream)

All of them are gracious, but the wise one is My soul– my own Self. No one is equal to him. One loves his own self the most, and others appear dear only due to a relationship with it.

Only because they are my own that son, wealth, etc. appear dear. Therefore, the meaning of saying, 'wise is my soul', is that he is very dear to Me. Why is he so dear?

'He has surrendered to Me'. '*aasthitah*' – he has confidence, he has taken shelter. He has taken My shelter, after ignoring all other shelters. His devotion is exclusive. He does not see anyone else as his shelter except Me; no one else is seen as his own. It has been stated in the 18th chapter '*mam eva sharnam vraja*'—has come to my shelter, this statement applies to him. The promise made in chapter nine, '*ananyas cintayanto mam*' (9/22) 'those who worship me with exclusive devotion' applies to him.

'*gati*' is destination. Where one is to reach is '*gati*'. I alone is the destination of his life. He does not expect anything else in his life.

*arth na dharm na kam ruche gati na chahun nirvana /
janam-janam rati ram pad yeh vardan na aan //*
(Ramcharit Manas)

(Do not desire wealth, wisdom, passion, or liberation.
All that I ask for is devotion for Your lotus feet)

The craving is for the love of the feet of Shri Ram. All the resources of life are for *parameshwara*. He lives only for Him.

*jiyun teri khatir marna bhi yun ho /
mera sisa charno pe nyochar ho , Maa //*
(O, Mother I live for you and die in a manner
that my head is offered at your feet.)

Such a sentiment indicates the wise one. '*anuttamam*', nothing is better, unequal. He has understood that *parameshwara* is the highest. '*mattah parantaram nanyat kinchidasti dhananjaya*' 'o' Arjuna, there is nothing more above Me.'

'*gati*' – is also used for shelter and support. He is the only objective of a *gyani* and his support. In the world, there is no other support better than Him.

The one who is dependent upon his master and lives for him is certainly dear to the master. Why Hanuman jee was dear to Shri Rama? After the battle, Shri Ram asked everyone except Hanuman Jee to return to his home. He allowed only Hanuman Jee to stay with him. For Hanuman Jee, there was nothing else in his life. Such wise devotees are dear, like self, to *parameshwara*.

Even such a wise devotee does not get the grace of *parameshwara* immediately.

*bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mam prapadyate /
vasudevah sarvam iti sa mahatma sudurlabhah //19||*

"A man of wisdom attains to Me after many lives. It is very difficult to find a great soul who believes that 'everything is Vasudev' (the supreme Entity)," (19)

Merely by having an understanding about *parameshwara*, one does not attain Him. That understanding only develops a relationship, develops faith and opens a way. However, it is a long way to travel before *parameshwara* is reached and this journey is completed in many lives.

The path of evolution is not like a play of a juggler, which a man can know in a moment. Man has to destroy all his tendencies. That needs removal of all attachments. All accumulations of the past need elimination. All cells of the body and mind have to be cleaned or purified. For that full awareness is required and all attractions and distractions need to be removed. All debts taken from the *prakriti* have to be repaid in the form of enjoyments of passions. One has to be fully developed, pure, transparent and free from tendencies. This is a great work. A tree has to grow from a sapling. One will have to cross even divinity. Therefore, it is not surprising that this process takes many lives.

It is not that a follower of the path of wisdom attains perfection in a short time. He will also have to complete this entire work. Of course, the wise has the advantage that the powers of *parameshwara* work for him and he always enjoys His protection. The divine forces help him to finish this great task relatively quickly. In the path of devotion, behaviour and devotion to duty facilitate removal of tendencies. However, the wise one does not have such a facility. He has to walk on his own feet and he has no assistance.

Many aspirants become impatient and wish to have success in no time; want to have someone to help so that he can achieve success quickly. Like Yagyavalkya gave cognition to Raja Janaka. Like Shri Ramakrishna gave cognition to Vivekananda. We wish that someone may also give us cognition like them. The inner self thinks: 'we are no less than anyone; all that we require is a right preceptor. If a preceptor has infinite capability then why should he expect anything?' Those who think that way are innocent children. They have not yet understood the value and importance of spirituality. They just want to play with it. They do not know even the basic value of spirituality. For the present, they are not even in the category of an aspirant.

If a man understands the value of spirituality then he knows the expectations, and the value of time and effort required. When there is no alternative except to make continuous efforts as nothing can be achieved in a hurry, then why impatience? It is a process of evolution and it takes place in due course. A fruit is sweet and tasty after it is fully grown, and then it falls from the tree. A raw fruit rots by incubation. Only ignorant ones want to attain spirituality in a hurry.

What is the state of a wise person who has attained *parameshwara*? He experiences, even with open eyes, *Vasudeva sarvam iti* – everything is *parameshwara*, *Vasudeva*. This state is not an imagination. It is an experience. He finds *parameshwara* in everything. He also considers himself accordingly. He perceives the entire universe as a manifestation of *parameshwara*. For him '*sarvam khalvidiam brahman*' (the entire universe is brahman) is the truth.

It is very difficult to find a great soul having such a stage. '*durlabh*' which is difficult to find. '*sudurlabh*' – which is very difficult to find. Only an exceptional one can reach this stage; therefore, he is difficult to find. All his activities become worship of *parameshwara*. Even by taking food he serves *parameshwara*. When he eats, *parameshwara* also eats. This is his normal

state where doer, action and deed become *parameshwara*. Then *parameshwara* abides in *parameshwara* in every manner. Then his act of surrender is Divine and is the worship of the Divine.

brahma 'rpanam brahma havir brahmagnau brahamana hutam ||4/24||

His entire life becomes *akhand brahman samadhi* – unbroken contemplation of the Divine. That is abiding in *parameshwara*. Only in such a state, a saint can sing.

***aapi kathai aapi sunvainharu /
aaphi eku aap vistarhu || (sukhmani sahib)
(He says. He listens. He is one and He is all)***

'prapadyate' – gains, reaches, enters. Intent to surrender is the beginning of *sadhana*, and this state is its culmination. What was stated in verse 15 above that was the beginning of *sadhana* and this is the stage of its perfection.

A wise man lives by doing his *karmas* with devotion, as his *sadhana*. His *karmas*, his work, and his life make him comfortable. His eyes open and he gradually starts finding his own Self near to *parameshwara*.

To avoid long duration of *sadhana* it will be improper to give a different meaning to **'gyanvan mam prapadyate'** and will be out of context. It will be deceiving ourselves.

***kamais tais-tair hrtajnanah prapadyante 'nyadevatah |
tam tam niyamam asthaya prakrtya niyatah svaya || (20)***

'But they are constrained by their natures whose intelligence has been distorted by various desires or by worship of other gods observing various rituals.'" (20)

People worship different gods. Some worship *Indra, Yama, or Agni*. Some worship evil spirits and some worship male or female ghosts. *Parameshwara* is in everyone. All of them are manifestations of *parameshwara*. Then whomsoever they worship, they worship only *parameshwara*.

This concept has already been discussed. All gods (including demons) are His manifestations but every one of them has his distinct form, qualities and *karmas*. There are limitations to their powers. The result of their worship is also according to their powers. By worshipping *tamasic* existences, only *tamasic* results can follow and rituals of their worship are also *tamasic*. Otherwise, how can the worshipped entity be satisfied and can give desired results? Though these entities are manifestation of *parameshwara*, yet in practice they have their individuality and properties.

Then why do people worship lower and limited existences ignoring *parameshwara*, the God of gods? Their desires rob them of their wisdom. A person may think that Hanuman Jee will do his work quickly, so he makes an offering to him, offers a coconut. He just forgets *parameshwara*.

It is as easier to please lower entities.

*anksantah karmanam siddhim yajanta iha devatah /
ksipram hi manuse loke siddhir bhavanti karmaja || 4/12 ||*

'Lesser gods are worshipped for the success of *karmas* i.e. for the fulfillment of desires. As compared to *parameshwara*, lesser gods fulfill their desires quickly.

After all, idols of *parameshwara* have limitations. Their play and powers are limited. Idols have specific qualities and powers. An idol also comes in the category of lesser gods. *Upanishad* says –

'nedam yadidamupasate' Brahman is not the one which people worship.

And, in this context, verses 24 and 25 of this chapter says – *'avjananti mam mudha manushim tanum 'ashritam' (9/11)*

'Even an incarnation coming in human body is limited in his powers and capabilities.' Whatever is tangible is small and limited. An incarnation is a manifestation of the Supreme Being and has limited powers. Then, how can the Supreme Being *parameshwara* be worshipped?

The unlimited can be worshipped through the limited. An idol is to be treated as a symbol of the infinite. In a body, the idol, the formless is to be worshipped. We know that He accepts such worship. (9/26)

Our sentiments decide the nature of our worship. If we call the infinite, the Supreme Being, He will come and will accept our offerings in the idol of our worship. Goddess Devi is worshipped in young girls. *Parameshwara* is worshipped in guests (**athiti devo bhava**). The ultimate power, the Goddess Mother, descends in women to shower Her blessings. He speaks through a teacher and gives knowledge. He comes for our sentiments and accepts our worship within the limits of our sentiments. Where unlimited is not seen in the limited, where sentiments are not for the unlimited, then our worship is accepted by a lower entity, whether that is a god, a demon or a ghost. *'bhaveshu vidyate devah'* 'god resides in sentiments' this is true. By installing a specific god in an idol, we worship that god through our sentiments.

Fire is also a god. Indra and other gods are worshipped by making offerings in fire. In this manner, they accept our offerings by making fire as their mouth. In the same manner, He accepts our service, our love, and our offering by being present in idols. Our sentiments, purity, stability and strength of our devotion are the limits of that acceptance.

The worship of any god reaches *parameshwara*, the God of gods, but desires confuse our minds. One does not think of *parameshwara* when he thinks of a lesser god. He wants his purpose served by pleasing a lesser god. He is not able to think beyond that god. Desire is the cause of this ignorance. The worship of *parameshwara*, the God of gods, results in unlimited blessings. We can be satiated if He is pleased. Lesser gods are dependent upon the mercy of *parameshwara*. How long will we be satisfied by begging from a bagger?

Lesser gods have their likes like human beings. A god of a domain has specific qualities and nature, and so are his likes. Royal gods are pleased with royal offerings. *Rajasic people* (people with passions) are attracted towards gods of that nature. People of identical character and nature like each other. *Tamasic* people like *tamasic gods*. They have *tamasic* likings. They like meat and wine. To please them it is necessary to follow corresponding rituals. Look at the third verse of chapter 17th.

Parameshwara, God of gods, is beyond all likes and dislikes. To please Him, only sincere devotion is required. A true, stable and sincere sentiment is required. There should be trust and faith in His feet. He is pleased by a fistful of coarse rice and may not be pleased by all the delicacies of the world. He loves to go to the hut of Vidur Jee instead of going to the palace of Duryodhan. He loves to eat a preparation of leafs made by the wife of Vidur Jee and likes to eat berries given by Shabri Jee. He is not hungry for offerings. He is bound by Love.

A person devoid of desires, devoid of a motive, can call him anywhere anytime and can experience Him at the gross level. This is not true about lesser gods. They are dependent upon their likes. They cannot be pleased without observing prescribed rituals. They may give desired results on payment of the price according to rules, if one can pay.

A person worships a god according to his nature. The prescribed rituals are according to the nature of each god.

*yo yo yam yam tanum bhaktah sraddhaya 'rchitum icchati |
tsya tasya 'calam sraddham tam eva vidadhamy aham ||21||*

'Whatever idol a devotee wants to worship with faith I make his faith steady in the idol of his choice'. (21)

In the previous verse, words 'other gods' have been used. In this verse, the word 'idol' is used. All idols are of *parameshwara*. *Parameshwara* alone pervades idols of all gods. *Parameshwara* plays the game in all gods accepting their limits as per their characters. An idol is 'vighrah' - the deity, as it has consciousness of the god. The 'vighrah' is a body. This representative form in gross is 'vighrah', body of the god.

Whatever god a devotee worships, *parameshwara* gives him devotion for that god. The devotee knows the god through his gross idol. The word, 'tanu' (body) is used for an idol in physical form. *Parameshwara* gives devotion. Then only a devotee can worship by observing prescribed rituals. If devotion is not stable then worship is useless. Therefore, said 'gives stable devotion.'

The purport of saying this is: the worship of gods is also as per 'My will'. 'I give faith and also open the way for worship'.

'*tam eva vidadhamy*' – means appropriate faith. 'I develop in him faith appropriate to his chosen god'.

Then what a devotee does?

*sa taya srddhaya yuktas tasya 'radhanam ihate |
labhate ca tatah kaaman mayai 'va vihitan hi tan ||22||*

'Having endowed with appropriate faith, he worships his (chosen) god and has the benefit of the fulfilment of his desires, which I decreed.' (22)

He worships the chosen god with appropriate faith and follows prescribed rules. There are rules for purification, for food, etc. He is required to take specified food at a fixed time and not to take some other specific food. There are rules for celibacy, sleeping on the floor, cleanliness, etc. A man full of faith does everything. The worshipped god is pleased and fulfills his desires for which he did all this exercise.

Shri *Bhagwan* says 'I alone arrange for the fulfilment of desires. Infact, I alone fulfill his desires'. The idol of the god is only a façade and I am the real provider. What gods can do without My permission? I alone sitting in them accept and also give'.

He alone is the trader. Only He accepts and He alone gives. This is the truth applicable everywhere. This principle applies as much to gods as it applies to human beings. Not knowing this reality, we fear and keep swinging between hope and hopelessness. There is no one other than *parameshwara* who can give. He is the only provider. Man is only His instrument.

'*sarvadevnamaskaram vasudevam pratigachati*', 'salutations to all gods submitting to 'Vasudev', *parameshwara*. Now we can understand the meaning of this phrase,

*anatavat tu phalam tesam tad bhavaty alpamedhasam |
devan devayajo yantimadbhakta yanti mama pi ||23||*

'What the people of small mind gain is temporary. Those who worship lesser gods reach their abode and my devotees reach My abode.' (23)

Those who worship lesser gods have limited understanding. What they have done is not a good bargain. With their efforts they could have gained much more than what they gain. If with one rupee someone purchases something worth a quarter, then there is no doubt about his foolishness. This is the condition of worshipers of lesser gods. After observing so many rules, austerities, etc, they please only lesser gods whereas with much less effort they could please *parameshwara*.

Secondly, there also I am the One who develops their devotion and give results of their efforts. They do not recognize Me and keep engaged in worshipping lesser gods. This also proves their foolishness.

They worship gods with limitations. The powers of lesser gods are limited. Whatever such gods can give is much less than I can give. Their grace exhausts in due course. Whatever they give is exhaustible. Only *parameshwara* has inexhaustible treasure.

*kahan kami jake ram dhani/
mansa nath manorath puran, sukh nidhan jaki mauz dhani //
dharma arth kam moksha fal chari padarath det gani /
indra saman hen jake sevak, nar bapure ki kaha gani //*

(Where is shortage for the one who has Ram as his giver?

One is lucky because He fulfils all his desires and gives all pleasures of life

He gives all material goods and also *dharma, artha, kaam* and *moksha*

He has servants like Indra, what to say of ordinary human beings.)

If they had worshipped *parameshwara* instead of lesser gods then they would have received inexhaustible grace. This is the purport.

The basic principle of devotion and worship is to unite with the chosen deity. A devotee can unite with his deity and gain his grace. Worshippers of lesser gods go to their abode and worshippers of *parameshwara* go to His abode. The best is to worship *parameshwara*. *Parameshwara* also gives to lesser gods. There is none above Him and nothing is beyond Him. He alone is the Supreme Being and complete, and all others are only a fraction of Him. By worshipping the whole, one can become whole, and by worshipping a fraction, one becomes a fraction.

In the next verse, this position is further explained.

*avyaktam vyaktim apannam manyante mam abuddhayah /
param bhavam ajananto mama 'vyayam anuttamam ||24||*

‘Men of no understanding think of Me, the unmanifested, as having manifestation, not knowing My higher nature, changeless and supreme. (24)

People do not know about My infinite existence. *Parameshwara* has many expressions. He alone is the Supreme *purush*, He alone is beyond nature, conscious nature, (*para prakriti*) and He alone is in nature, the material world (*apara prakriti*). He alone is the witness, He alone is the Controller, and He alone manifests. He alone is without attributes (*nirguna*) and is with attributes (*saguna*). He alone appears in the form of this creation, and He alone pervades it as its core, the inner Self.

Which expression is superior than other expressions? That alone is Supreme, which is most powerful, where activity is more perceptible than the power of wisdom, and which still remains unaffected.

Parameshwara is infinite and immutable. He is unborn. He directs the entire play by remaining behind the play. He is beyond attributes. He is the primal cause of the Cosmos. He is infinite. He is the Lord of sacrifices (*yagyas*). He is *Lok-maheshwara*. This is His Supreme Expression.

And, this expression is the Best, is unique. The best is without a second, better than the best and is unique. Shri *Bhagwan* says: ‘there is nothing beyond Me’ for this expression. It is the best of all expressions-*Purushottama bhava*.

Shri *Bhagwan* says: 'I am imperceptible, cannot be perceived.' Can anybody know imperceptible? Can the infinite be perceived? Can the one, who has no boundary, be confined within a boundary? Will the unborn take birth? Can the one which has no attributes, will have attributes? No, this cannot happen.

Then who is this person? He appears from the unknown. Every expression is only a fraction of the unexpressed. That is only one expression of the unexpressed. Any expression cannot fully express the unexpressed – that cannot put the unexpressed in boundaries. As rays do not bind the Sun, air cannot bind the sky so no expression can bind Him. Every expression is only His play.

(Refer to verse 12 supra and verses 4, 5, and 6 of chapter 9.) In the ninth chapter, it says:

*avajananti mam mudha manusim tanum asritam /
param bhavam ajananto mama bhutamahesvaram // 9/11 //*

'Fools ignore Me when I come in human form. Not knowing My higher nature as the Lord of all existences.' (9/11).

It is almost the same as has been stated in verse 24.

What does it mean? Only rare people know the infinite nature of the descended infinite. Most people considered Krishna, an incarnation of *parameshwara*, as a normal human being. They did not recognize his superconscious nature, (*para bhava*), his incomprehensible nature.

Perhaps so far, Arjuna had also not believed in the divinity of Shri Krishna. He was not yet dazzled by Shri Krishna by showing him the Universal form. We, therefore, find such a statement here.

Parameshwara had descended into a human form. He was playing the game even though He is unborn and immutable. People considered Him as an ordinary person. It appears that during the period of Shri Krishna only a few people recognized Him as an incarnation. Most people considered Him as an ordinary human being.

Perhaps, Shri *Bhagwan* was saying: 'Do not recognize Me, do not worship Me. These fools keep running after lesser gods'.

By properly understanding the above description, many references to various forms of *parameshwara* mentioned in the Gita can become clear.

Unmanifested remains unmanifested. Manifestations are from Him. He even while appearing in manifestations remains beyond them. Though He appears with limits, yet He remains beyond all limits. He takes a body yet remains unmanifested. That infinite comes in a body but not confined to that body. There is a danger in giving any example because examples become proof and on that basis, disputes may arise.

Just as the Sun is seen in a mirror or the water is not in the mirror or in the water, so also His existence does not reduce, even a bit, by coming as an incarnation. In the same manner, the unmanifested *parameshwara* manifests in a body as his image.

***na 'ham prakasah sarvasya yogamayasamavrtah |
mudho 'yam na 'bhijanati loko mama ajam avyayam ||25||***

‘Veiled by My *yogmaya* (creative power) on all sides I am not manifest to everyone. This deluded world does not recognize Me, the unborn and the inexhaustible. (25)

Not everyone is able to recognize *parameshwara*. Nothing is surprising about this. *Parameshwara* is in veil of His *yogmaya* from all sides. *Yogmaya* – the power of yoga. *Maya* is that power which can deceive; which can transform a dot into a universe. The one, that confuses. What is there is not visible; and what is not there is visible.

yogmaya – the power of yoga. Shri Krishna was the lord of *yoga*. He by his supernatural powers of yoga created such a web around him that people were not able to recognize Him. Sometimes He had shown his supernatural power and some other time he became a naughty child. Once He had shown his mother the entire universe in his mouth and soon after He started eating mud. The childhood of Shri Krishna was full of such episodes. The tenth canto (*dasam skandha*) of *Shrimad Bhagwat* gives a beautiful description of the childhood of Shri Krishna.

It is not easy to recognize *parameshwara*. The state of absolute purity (*sattva*) cannot be easily recognized because that state is entirely different from *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*. However, the state beyond the three modes, despite having the three modes, does not have any attribute. In appearance, that state appears a play of three modes but from within it is uninvolved, is without companion and transcends all. In Dwarika, Shri Krishna used to live like an ordinary householder enjoying every luxury of life yet he was a Supreme *yogi*. He was free from any influence. No person was able to see his real nature. During the Mahabharata war, what a game he played for having Dronacharya killed, how he got Bhishma and Karna killed; all those actions confuse ordinary persons. The *yogeshwar* was not perceived as *yogeshwar* because he behaved like a person of mean nature. That is Shri Krishna. He says ‘I am not manifest to everyone.’

In *Ramavatar*, *parameshwara* appeared as *Maryada purushottama*. He established the code of morals and ethics for humanity. He himself practised those morals. About that behaviour there is no confusion but when he became anxious due to separation from his beloved wife, Sita, even the learned ones get confused. Even Sati (first wife of Lord Shiva) got confused.

Tulsidass Jee has rightly said __

***Soi janahi jehu dehu janai |
Janat tumahai tumahai hoi jae ||***
(Only he can know whom you make know,
Once he knows you, he becomes yours)

And Upanishad says ___

*yamevaish vrnute ten labhyah
tasyeshatma vivranute tanum swam /
(kathopinishad 1.2.23)*

'Only he can know Him whom He accepts. For him, He opens his entire self.'

Only a rare and fortunate one can recognize *parameshwara* when He lives on earth assuming a human body.

'This foolish world does not recognize Me, the unborn and inexhaustible'. The world is foolish and is in a state of delusion. The delusion is not knowing, or knowing something differently than the reality.

'*na 'bhijanati'* – do not recognize.

Shri Krishna says: 'I am unborn and immutable.' *Parameshwara* despite coming on earth as an incarnation remains unborn. It is only one of His innumerable rays, which does the entire play. Sun remains in the sky as it is and remains undisturbed by this play. *Parameshwara* remains unborn even after creating the entire universe. By taking birth as an incarnation, does He become an entity that takes birth?

He is immutable, *parameshwara*, beyond comprehension. Even after creating the entire cosmos, He remains immutable. He creates and regulates the entire mutable cosmos. That cosmos finally dissolves in Him yet nothing changes in Him.

This is the property of incomprehensible consciousness. The incomprehensible cannot be comprehended in any manner. He remains immutable. He is beyond the three modes. For him, even purity (*sattva guna*) is no binding, what to say of *rajoguna and tamoguna*. A saint having gained his consciousness becomes like Him i.e. untainted by any of the three attributes.

*veda 'ham samatitani vartamanani ca 'rjuna |
bhavisyami ca bhutani mam tu veda na kascana //26||*

“O Arjuna, I know beings of the past, beings in the present and those who are yet to come. But no one knows Me.' (26)

Parameshwara knows about all the three periods – past, present and future. The divisions of time as past, present and future, are for us. Time relates to movements of manifested bodies in this infinite and eternal universe.

Behind the place where we stand is the past, where we stand is the present and what is to come is future. All these three positions relate to our position; they are not independent positions.

The Sun, which we see, is thousands of miles away, and its light takes about 8 minutes to reach us. We see the Sun of 8 minutes before. That appears to us as in the present but it is 8

minutes old. There are many stars in the sky, whose light takes years to reach us. In respect of them, what is the meaning of being in present? We now hear the thunder which occurred minutes before. Therefore, the concept of time is relative.

Everything is present for the one, whose consciousness is unlimited, who is not bound by time. For Him past and future are also in present. The one who has a very wide vision can see equally in every direction at the same time: in the front, in the back; towards right and towards left. For Him everything is in front of Him; He is beyond the limits of space. Similarly, He is beyond the limits of time. He knows about all three periods, *trikalagya*.

Even while everything is within *parameshwara*, they appear on the screen of time and space. Just like pictures of a reel appear on the screen of a cinema yet remain within the reel. So also, everything is visible even though within Him. Time also remains in the womb of *parameshwara*.

How foolish people are? No one knows Him. *Parameshwara* knows all beings, but no one knows Him.

Then why is said: '*tato mam tattvato jnatva visste tadantaram*' (18/ 55)? By knowing Me in truth enter into Me. And, '*jnatum drastum ca tattvena pravestum ca paramtapa*' (11/ 54) 'O the valiant one! Knowing and seeing the truth is entering'.

What is it knowing in truth, and what is not knowing? This 'not knowing' has been used for common people who are ignorant, and do not recognize. After all, during the period of *Mahabharata*, there were people like Bhishma, Vyas etc. who recognized Shri Krishna. The word "*kashchasn*" – meaning 'perhaps' is not an exception and does not apply to everyone. This applies to normal ignorant people.

Parameshwara can be known by a unique method. He is beyond common sense. One can have cognition only by devotion and by His grace. This has been said above:

*icchadvesasamutthena dvandvamohena bharata |
sarvabhutani sammoham sarge yanti paramtapa ||27||*

'O tormentor of foes! All beings in the universe are in delusion caused by conflicting emotions arising out of likes and dislikes (27)

paramtapa – tormentor of foes, the valiant Arjuna.

sarge --in the universe, in the creation

All beings get into delusion. Delusion is deep confusion -- deep unconsciousness. The state where one has no knowledge, no awareness of reality: such a state is delusion. How is this delusion more harmful than attachment?

dvandvamoh --delusion or confusion arising from the dualities or pairs of opposites in the material world or attachments arising out of conflicting emotions. When a person is faced with:

happiness- unhappiness; profit–loss; honour-dishonour; etc. there is conflict inside. That conflict perverts understanding; one does not know what he wants.. So happens in respect of profit and loss; and, in honour and dishonour. Because of this conflict inside,man is not able to understand reality.

And, why one has this conflict, delusion? It is because of likes and dislikes. There is a desire for what is liked and hatred for what is not liked. Desire is an intense form of liking. Attachment leads to craving then there is anger that leads to loss of memory. Wisdom is lost and finally leads to ruin. Delusion is only a state of loss of wisdom.

Patanjali describes causes of all this trouble as under –

Avidya (ignorance), asmita (arrogance), raag (attachment, passion), dwesh (malice,hatred) and abhinivesh (desire to keep an independent identity) are klesh (misery, tribulation).

Infatuation due to likes and dislikes becomes a cause of misery.The man starts moving in wrong direction and suffers.

Likes and dislikes are present right from the beginning. However, at the time of dissolution, everything disappears. Even likes-dislikes disappear.

*yesam tv antagatam papam jananam punyakarmanam /
te dvamdvamohanirmukta bhajante mam drdhavratah ||28||*

‘And those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have been washed away, freed from the delusion of conflicts, worship Me with determination’. (28)

Who can worship *parameshwara*?

Those worship *parameshwara* whose sins have been washed. So long as evil tendencies are strong, man is interested in doing evil deeds. After he loses interest in doing evil deeds, he suffers from internal diseases: *dwesh, anger, and malice*. He is not able to remember *parameshwara*. Though he does not do evil deeds, he continues to think evil and remains disturbed. When he is free from such tendencies, he becomes light and develops interest in the worship of *parameshwara*. Then only worship of *parameshwara* becomes possible.

When, in initial stages, any strong evil tendency comes to the fore, the person is not able to continue worship. When such tendencies are strong the person keeps wandering --in some cases for his whole life. He is not able to do worship. It should, however, be understood that even in such a state, efforts and strength used for liquidating evil tendencies do not go waste. After all, such tendencies need elimination. It is not possible to move forward without their elimination. A debt taken from the *prikriti* has to be repaid. That is repaid by removing evil tendencies.. The one who understands the process of evolution is not afraid. After all, for making progress, a price has to be paid and one should pay it happily.

punyakarmanam – having virtues, doers of virtuous deeds, who have plenty of noble tendencies. Generally, both virtue and sin coexist. Only those can worship who have noble tendencies and whose evil tendencies are almost finished. Worship is not possible without virtues.

During evolution, as ego develops and we move forward at the human level, our virtues and sins also keep growing. After reaching old age one becomes aware and makes efforts for dissolution of his evil tendencies. Then he becomes pure and transparent and worships. Those who are still a child in the process of development are not fit for worship. They will have to have good and bad experiences of life and have to liquidate virtues and sins. After that, a time will come when they will be able to worship. Without worldly experiences, the inner self is not prepared and the desire for getting away from happiness-unhappiness cannot develop within.

***jaramaranamokshaya mam asritya yayanti ye /
te brahma tad vidviduh krtsnam adhyatmam karma ca 'khilam ||29||
sadhibhutadhidaivam mam sadhiyajnam ca ye vidhu /
prayanakale 'pi ca mam te vidur yuktacetasa ||30||***

‘Those taking refuge in Me strive for deliverance from old age and death, know the *Brahman* (the absolute), have full knowledge of the Self (*adhyatma*) and about *karmas*. Those, having peaceful mind, knowing Me as the One that governs material (*adhibhautik*) and the Divine aspects (*adhidevik*) and all sacrifices (*adhiyagya*) know Me even at the time of their death. (29-30)

Those who try to know *parameshwarado* come to know Him. An easy way to succeed in efforts is to take refuge in *parameshwara* and make efforts after taking refuge in Him. With His grace, means become available and one quickly achieves success. With His grace, one gets strength, right inclination and the direction. The saviour is there to rescue in difficult situations. Taking refuge in Him does not mean giving up efforts. According to His inspiration, efforts have to be made.

That stage requires practice. When a person reaches the stage of freedom from ego and is fully dependent on *parameshwara*, he can give up efforts. as they become a hindrance. The person has to watch the play of the Supreme Power. Then his entire responsibility is upon the auspicious Mother.

Jaramaranamokshaya – a person worshipping for deliverance from old age and death also comes to know of Him. The desire for deliverance can be a call of distress or understanding. This demand is before old age and death. In every respect, this stage is inferior to the stage of a wise person. A wise person worships *parameshwara* even without such motive and for knowing His glories - in different expressions. He does not expect anything.

What such practitioners know has been mentioned in the first half as well as in the second half of the last verse. They know the *Brahmana*. *The Brahmana*, the Supreme Entity, as explained above. They know the entire spirituality; the spirit of *parameshwara*, the immutable nature relating to the self.

Karma caakhilam – knows *karmasin* entirety. Fully understands the secret of *karmas*. This is knowledge.

adhibhut – relating to beings –relating to every thing in the external world.

adhidev – relating to gods –the spirit of the God prevailing in gods.

adhiyagya – relating to yagya – the spirit of the God prevailing in yagyas, sacrifices.

They recognise *parameshwara* in all these expressions. It appears that the use of the words '***ye viduh***' (those who know) makes a distinction between the previous verse and verse 30. However, from the context, it appears that it is not so.

These people comprehend all this when while making their efforts. They have peaceful and composed minds and abide in *parameshwara*.

Because of such comprehension, they retain the memory of *parameshwara* even at the time of leaving their body i.e. at the time of death. Ignorance results in memory loss. For the one, who recognises *parameshwara* in all beings and existents, everything is full of divinity and is a form of the *parameshwara*. How can he forget? His eyes of wisdom are open at all times.

For having memory in the last moments of life, the mind should be peaceful and composed. In a peaceful mind one has awareness and remembers *parameshwara*.

With knowledge and wisdom one comprehends. There is no strict division between knowledge and wisdom because only one existence, *parameshwara*, is responsible for all developments.

The seventh chapter completes here.

GLOSSARY

<i>advaita</i>	having no duality, the supreme reality without a second, expresses unity of self (atman) with Brahman
<i>ahamkara</i>	ego, self-will, separateness
<i>ahimsa</i>	non-violence, doing no injury, wishing no harm
<i>akasha</i>	space; sky; the most subtle of the five elements
<i>ananta</i>	the eternal, the syllable 'aum'
<i>annanya</i>	undivided
<i>apan</i>	intestinal breath
<i>apara</i>	mutable, material, the one which manifests
<i>aparigraha</i>	free from longing for possessions
<i>asat</i>	untruth; any thing unreal
<i>asura</i>	he who is not in harmony with others, a being with evil nature
<i>atman or Self</i>	identity of a person, or a being, or of an existence
<i>avatara</i>	incarnation of the Divine
<i>avidya</i>	ignorance; lack of wisdom
<i>avyaya</i>	the eternal; the changeless; inexhaustible
<i>bhagwan</i>	the Lord
<i>bhakti</i>	devotion, worship; love; desire to follow
<i>bhakti yoga</i>	constant devotion; regular practice
<i>brahman</i>	the supreme reality underlying all life
<i>brahmanvidya</i>	understanding of the unknown
<i>brahma</i>	God as creator; (this should not be confused with Brahman)
<i>brahmabhuta</i>	Brahma realized
<i>brahmacarivrate</i>	
<i>sthitah</i>	firm in the vow of celibacy
<i>brahmacharya</i>	celibacy; self control; purity
<i>Brahmanbhav</i>	a divine state state of total neutrality
<i>brahmanirvana</i>	the final stage of spiritual fulfillment; eternal union with Brahman
<i>Brahmanishtha</i>	evenness of mind and body free of all conflicts
<i>Brahman-nirvana</i>	total liberation
<i>buddhi</i>	understanding; intelligence; the faculty of discrimination
<i>daivam</i>	divine; destiny
<i>dehadhyas</i>	illusion that body is soul
<i>deva</i>	a divine being, the ones who give
<i>dharma</i>	guide to ethical action; is not religion but a balance between differing ideologies; ethical framework in which to pursue justice, fraternity, equality,
<i>dharmakshetra</i>	sacred land
<i>dvanda</i>	conflict
<i>guna</i>	Rajas, energy, passion, activity -- rajasic
<i>guna</i>	tamas, inertia, ignorance, -- tamasic
<i>guna</i>	the attributes that make the phenomenal world: sattava, law, purity, goodness -- sattavic
<i>gyanyoga</i>	path of wisdom
<i>ishwara</i>	the desired, the objective, the goal

<i>jnana</i>	wisdom, knowledge
<i>kalyan</i>	salvation
<i>karma</i>	action, deed, work, duty, past deeds bearing consequences
<i>karma yoga</i>	devotion to duty; the path of selfless service
<i>kashmal</i>	sinful samskar
<i>lila</i>	the divine paly
<i>manas</i>	the mind, the faculty which registers and stores sensory impulses
<i>Maya</i>	illusion, creative powere of God
<i>moksha</i>	liberation, freedom, salvation
<i>naishyakarmaya</i>	an impotent action, the action which does not bring any consequence.
<i>nihsreyasakaro</i> ’	de-glorify
<i>nirasi</i>	free from desires; having no expectations
<i>nirguna</i>	without attributes, indeterminate
<i>nirodh</i>	efface
<i>nirvan</i>	cessation of material existence
<i>nirvan</i>	deliverance
<i>nirvikalp</i>	indeterminate, without alternatives
<i>nirvikalpa samadhi</i>	a state of spiritual awareness in which there is no perception of duality, of inside or outside
<i>nityasattva</i>	beyond the reach of three gunas. Be stable in purity . follow the Truth, possessing the sattavik qualities of eqability, peseverence, and enthusiasm
<i>nivritti</i>	renouncing worldly affairs.
<i>parabhakti</i>	transedental devotion
<i>parah</i>	ultimate goal
<i>prakriti</i>	the basic energy from which the mental and physical worlds take shape, nature
<i>pran</i>	vital breath
<i>prasad</i>	a portion of left over of offering to gods
<i>prasanta</i>	unagitated
<i>prashantatman</i>	unagitated mind
<i>pravritti</i>	involving in worldly affairs
<i>purushartha</i>	the effort to obtain any particular thing which a man likes and which he wants to obtain.
<i>rahasi</i>	in solitude
<i>sadhan</i>	meditation, spiritual practice, spiritual discipline
<i>sadhana</i>	cnstant practice to achieve a goal or a target, practice to discipline the mind
<i>saguna</i>	with attributes
<i>samadhi</i>	such a state of concentraion where mind haas no volitions, state of thoughtlessness
<i>samagrta</i>	completely, in totality
<i>amatvam</i>	inner poise. It is conquest of anger, sensitiveness, pride, and ambition
<i>Samyagasthitah</i>	
<i>sanskar</i>	(1) ceremony (2) upbringing
<i>sanyasi</i>	ascetic
<i>sarnagat</i>	refugee
<i>satatam</i>	constantly
<i>savikalpa</i>	determinate, with alternatives
<i>shraddha</i>	devotion

Chapter-7

<i>shraddha</i>	faith, reverance
<i>shreshtha</i>	best
<i>siddha</i>	perfect, successful
<i>siddhavastha</i>	the state of perfection
<i>siddhi</i>	fulfillment, accomplishment
<i>siddhi</i>	matured, accomplishment
<i>sthitapragya</i>	focus remains steady on the path of truth
<i>sthithpragya</i>	stable minded, Of undisturbed equilibrium of mind
<i>svadharma</i>	one's own duty
<i>tadatmaya</i>	relationship
<i>tanmata</i>	subtle element
<i>tapas</i>	austerity; self-control
<i>tatavagyan</i>	philosophy
<i>ulhas, umang, utsah</i>	joy; jest and enthusiasm
<i>vairagya</i>	ascetism
<i>vidya</i>	knowledge, learning
<i>vigat-bhiih</i>	devoid of fear
<i>vihit</i>	prescribed
<i>vikriti</i>	deformity, degeneration
<i>vivek buddhi</i>	analytical mind
<i>yajana or yagya</i>	offering, sacrifice; vedic ritual
<i>yatacittatma</i>	self-controlled
<i>yoga</i>	union, integration, dedication
<i>yogakshema</i>	maintenance of worldly life
<i>yogasthah</i>	steadfast in inner composure ability to look above and beyond towards higher dimensions experience of desires in moderation
<i>samyavastha</i>	a state of equilibrium