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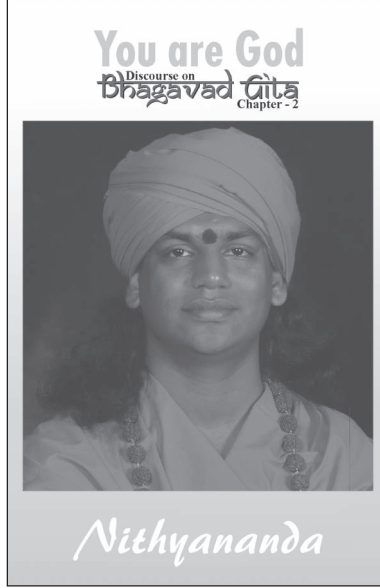
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## Nithyananda

Talks given in USA on The Bhagavad Gita – Chapter 2

*The only original sin is in ignoring your own Divinity.  
Drop your guilt and realize you are God!*

YOU ARE GOD!

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ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भागवता नारायणेन स्वयं  
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतं  
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं  
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीं

*Om paarthaaya pratibodhitam bhagavataa naaraayanena svayam  
Vyaasena grathitaam puraanamuninaa madhye mahaabhaaratam  
Advaitaamrutavarshineem bhagavateem ashtaadsaadhyaayineem  
Amba tvaamanusadadhaami bhagavadgite bhavadveshineem*

Om Bhagavad Gita, I meditate upon you, the affectionate Mother, the divine mother showering the nectar of non duality and destroying rebirth, incorporated into the Mahabharata in eighteen chapters by sage Vyasa, with which Lord Narayana, the Supreme Consciousness Himself, enlightened Arjuna.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कम्सचाणूरमर्दनम्  
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुं

*Vasudeva Sutam Devam Kamsa Chanura Mardanam  
Devaki Paramaanandam Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum*

I salute you Lord Krishna, Teacher to the World, son of Vasudeva and supreme bliss of Devaki, destroyer of Kamsa and Chanura.

## *Bhagavad Gita: A Background*

Bhagavad Gita, or Gita, as it is often called, is considered a sacred scripture, a *sruti*, that which was transmitted by hearing. As a *sruti* Gita is clubbed along with the ancient scriptures of Veda and Upanishad which are the expressions of the great sages, the *maharishi*.

Veda and Upanishad, the *sruti*, were not God given as some people believe. They arose through the insight and awareness of the great sages when they went into a no mind state.

Gita is a part of the *purana*, the epics; it forms part of the Hindu epic Mahabharata. Unlike the Veda, which were internalized by the great sages, the *maharishi*, or the Upanishad, which were the teachings of these great sages, Gita is part of a story narrated by Vyasa, a great sage.



No other *purana*, or part of a *purana*, has this special status as the Gita. Gita arose from the super consciousness of Parabrahma Krishna, the Cosmic Consciousness and is therefore considered a scripture.

Mahabharata, literally the Great *Bharata*, refers to the nation and civilization developed by the descendants of Bharata, a great King who ruled a region, what today is known as India. The story of this epic is about two warring clans, Kaurava and Pandava, closely related to one another. Dhritharashtra, the blind King of Hastinapura and father of the 100 Kaurava men was the brother of Pandu, whose children were the five Pandava princes.

Pandu, originally the King of Hastinapura, was afflicted by a curse of a sage and he handed over the kingdom and his children to his blind brother Dhritharashtra. Vyasa, the sage who tells this story, says that all the five Pandava children were born to their mother Kunti through her union with divine beings by immaculate conception, since Pandu himself was incapable of siring children as a result of his curse. Kunti received a blessing when she was still a young unmarried adolescent that she could at will summon any divine power.

Duryodhana, the Kaurava Prince, had no love lost for his five Pandava cousins. Along with his even more wicked brother Dushassana, he made many attempts to kill the Pandava brothers off without success. Karna, Kunti's eldest son whom she had cast away at birth, since he was born before she was

married through her union with the Sun God, by a strange twist of fate joined hands with Duryodhana.

On his coming of age, the Pandava Prince Yudhishtira being the rightful heir to the throne that his father Pandu had vacated, was given by his uncle Dhritrashtra half the kingdom. Yudhishtira ruled from his new capital Indraprastha with his brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Arjuna, won the hand of Princess Draupadi, daughter of the King of Panchal in a *swayamwara*, a marital contest in which princes fought for the hand of a fair damsel. To obey the promise that the five Pandava brothers made to their mother Kunti that they would share everything equally, Draupadi became the wife of all five Pandava brothers.

Duryodhana persuaded Yudhishtira into a gambling session, where the evil Sakuni as Duryodhana's representative defeated the Pandava King. One by one, Yudhishtira was made to lose all that he owned, his kingdom, his brothers, his wife and himself to Duryodhana. Draupadi was shamed in public by Dushassana who disrobed her. Pandava brothers and Draupadi were forced to go into exile for 14 years, with the condition that in the last year they should live incognito.

At the end of the 14 years, Pandava brothers tried to reclaim their kingdom. In this effort they were helped by Krishna, the divine reincarnation of Vishnu in the form of the King of Yadava clan. However, they were rebuffed by Duryodhana. Finally, war resulted, the Great War, the War of

Mahabharata. Various rulers of the entire nation, that is today India, aligned with one or the other of these two clans, the Kaurava or the Pandava.

Krishna offered to join either of the two clans. He said: ‘One of you may have me unarmed, not taking any part in the battle. The other may have my entire Yadava army’. The first offer was made to Duryodhana, who predictably chose the vast Yadava army, in preference to the unarmed Krishna. Arjuna chose Krishna as his unarmed charioteer.

The armies assembled in the vast field of Kurukshetra, now in the state of Haryana in modern day India. All the Kings and Princes were related to one another, often on opposite sides. Arjuna was charioted by Krishna himself. Facing the Kaurava army and his friends, relatives and teachers, Arjuna was overcome by remorse and guilt and wanted to walk away from the battle.

Krishna’s dialogue with Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukshetra is the content of Bhagavad Gita, which literally means Song of the Divine. Krishna persuaded Arjuna to take up arms and vanquish his enemies. ‘They are already dead’, says Krishna, ‘all those who are facing you are dead. Go ahead and do what you have to do. That is your duty’. Bhagavad Gita has eighteen chapters and is presented as the narration of Sanjaya, Dhritrashtra’s charioteer to the blind king.

The Great War of Mahabharata lasted 18 days. All the Kaurava Princes as well all their commanders such as Bhishma, Drona and Karna were killed in battle. The five Pandava brothers survived as winners and became the rulers of the combined kingdom.

In this dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, the dialogue is between man and God; *nara* and *Narayana* as they are termed in Sanskrit. Arjuna's questions and doubts are those of each one of us. The answers of the Divine, Krishna, transcend time and space. Krishna's message is as valid today as it was on that fateful battlefield some thousands of years ago.

Like Arjuna many thousand years ago, you are here in a dialogue with a Master. May the Master's words resolve your questions and clear your doubts.

Nithyanandam!

## *Introduction*

In this series, a young enlightened Master, Nithyananda comments on the Gita. Thousands of commentaries of the Gita have been written over the years.

Amongst the earliest were by the great spiritual Masters such as Sankara, some thousand over years ago.

In recent times, great Masters such as Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharishi have spoken from the Gita extensively. Many others have written volumes on this great scripture.

Nithyananda's commentary of the Bhagavad Gita is not a literary translation and an explanation of that translation. We have added here, for the sake of the curious reader, all the

verses in Sanskrit or Devanagari script along with the Roman or English script transliteration, word by word meaning and a summary of that verse's meaning. Here the comparison with other commentaries stops.

Nithyananda takes the reader through a world tour while talking about each verse. It is believed that each verse of the Gita has seven levels of meaning. What is commonly rendered is the first level meaning. Here, an enlightened Master takes us beyond the common into the uncommon, with equal ease and simplicity.

To read Nithyananda's commentary on the Gita is to obtain an insight that is rare. It is not mere reading; it is an experience; it is a meditation.

Sankara, the great Master philosopher said:

*'Bhagavad gita kinchita dheeta, ganga jala lava kanika pita,  
sakrutapi ena murari samarcha, kriyate tasya yame na charcha'*

'A little reading of the Gita, a drop of Ganga water to drink, remembering Krishna once in a while, all this will ensure that you have no problems with the God of Death.'

The original discourse delivered by Nithyananda has been further expanded with His inputs into this book version.

May this reading help you in your endeavor to attain Truth.

## *You Are God!*

It is here that we enter into the real *Gita*.

It is from here that *Bhagavan* or *God* starts speaking.

Till now Krishna was speaking as a man, as Vasudeva Krishna, but it is only from hereon that Krishna speaks as the Parabrahma Krishna, as *Bhagavan*.

An important point we all need to understand is that only an intelligent man will allow the other person to speak.

We all speak continuously but a conversation does not happen. We carry out simultaneous monologues with another person. The two are quite different.

When the other person speaks we do not listen; we are busy preparing our own reply.

We are polite enough to pretend that we are listening so that we will in turn, be heard. A conversation does not happen. You need intelligence to allow the other person to speak. Please understand: you do not need intelligence to speak; you need it only to listen.

As an aside, because *Bhagavan* is a male, he allowed Arjuna to speak!

A small story:

A person was telling his friend that he had not spoken to his wife for a whole week. His friend asked him whether he was angry with her or if he had fought with her.

The man replied, 'No, I am afraid of interrupting her'!

We may either speak verbally or mentally, but in any case we are speaking continuously. Why do you think psychiatrists are paid so well? The professions of psychiatry and psychoanalysis are nothing but the art of listening. A psychiatrist is a person who asks expensive questions and just listens, nothing else! We speak continuously; even when we keep quiet, we are not listening.

Here, *Bhagavan* allowed Arjuna to speak fully for one whole chapter. He kept quiet even on seeing the depth of his



confusion and depression. He consciously analyzed the origin of Arjuna's thoughts to determine the platform from which he was moving. It is possible to become a successful businessman just by studying the first chapter of the *Gita*. You can reach the peak in your profession just by learning the art of listening. Once you listen clearly, you will automatically be able to answer and clearly that too.

A devotee once asked me, 'Master, how is it that you are able to answer so many questions?'

There is only one secret to this question. I know how to listen to the question; that is all. If you know the technique of listening, the reply is immediately ready in your Being. First, mentally we do not trust ourselves, rather our intelligence, that we can respond to a question without preparation. That is why we start preparing the reply even before listening to the question. We do not have the patience to listen to the problem. Before we listen to it, we start giving the solution to it. We are only interested in expressing what we know, not in addressing the real problem or even in understanding what the other person has to say.

Here, Krishna was interested in the real problem and not interested in expressing what He knows. He wanted Arjuna to have the clarity of mind and was interested in solving his problem. He allowed Arjuna to speak so that He could go to the root of the problem and address the issue. One needs intelligence, or I may say enlightenment, to listen.

Only an enlightened Master like Krishna can listen. Among the chapters, he listens fully and completely for one whole chapter.

Even in the second chapter, He allowed Arjuna to speak in many *slokas*, verses.

He knew that once He allowed Arjuna to express his problems, he would himself find the solution to them.

People come to me and say, 'Master, you know our problems; please give us the answer'. I ask them to state their problems clearly.

They say, 'You are enlightened and already know of our problems; please give us the answer'.

I say, 'Yes, I know your problem even if you don't speak, but you will not know your own problem if you do not speak'.

Even if, in some cases we may not be able to speak out in detail, with clarity, we should be able to think through our problem, so that at least we understand what the problem is. Our mind should be open to possibilities.

I tell people during the *ananda darshan* part of our programs that they can ask me for advice as solutions to problems that they face.

Actually, it is not even necessary to speak and hold up people who are queuing up behind you. All that is needed is to keep your mind open so that the transmission can take place.

That is what happens on the Kurukshetra battle field. People who have the rationality to compute time may wonder, 'Arjuna spoke for so long, now Krishna speaks for so long, how is it possible for these two to hold such a long conversation in the middle of a battle field? What were all the others doing? Wasn't Duryodhana fed up or didn't he think that this was a good opportunity to get rid of Arjuna and Krishna, as they were wasting everybody's time talking?'

That's how the logical, rational, unaware mind would think. Such a mind cannot conceive of the possibility that a conversation can indeed take place in silence. When they talk of great Masters like Ramana communicating in silence, it was indeed true. To communicate, you need not open your mouth. You only need to open up your mind. When the mind is open, especially in front of the Master, communication can take place at the speed of light. Even before your questions are asked, answers will appear.

Seekers, intellectual seekers, with years of questioning and doubting behind them, come to me and ask, 'Master, why is it that when I come to you with hundreds of questions, when I am in front of You, there is no need to ask You about them? I feel as if the answers are already there!'

This is not imagination; this is truth. Questions can only raise more questions. Questions are a reflection of your inner ego, which is violence. When you are in front of the Master, a Master you truly believe in, the first thing that happens is the melting of your ego. The ego just disappears as if like snow in the sun. Questions too, therefore, disappear. In their place the answers that you were already aware of, but which were hidden by the veil of your ego, your ignorance, they make their appearance. You start feeling that magically, miraculously the answers appear in front of the Master.

The truth is that the answers were all there, already there. Our ego would not allow us to accept and be aware of those answers. The Master's presence dissolves the ego and lets the answers out.

There is an interesting Zen parable.

A soldier went to the Master Nansen with this problem.

A man kept a goose in a bottle, feeding it till it grew too large to get out of the neck of the bottle. Now, how did he get the goose out without killing the goose or breaking the bottle?

Nansen said to him, 'Oh, Officer?'

The soldier responded, 'Yes, Master?'

Nansen exclaimed 'There, the goose is out of the bottle!'

The moment the soldier addressed Nansen as Master, accepted that he was his Master, the goose, the ego was out of the bottle, his body mind!

Only when you open up to the Master do you actually come to know your problem clearly, and the answers come as if from nowhere. Here Krishna allowed Arjuna to verbalize, so that to begin with, Arjuna himself has the clarity to understand his problem.



सञ्जय उवाच :  
तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्।  
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः॥२.१॥

*Sanjaya uvaacha*

*tam tathaa kripayaavishtam ashrupoornaakulekshanam  
visheedantam idam vaakyam uvaacha madhusoodhanah (2.1)*

*sanjayah uvaca:* Sanjaya said; *tam:* to him; *tatha:* thus; *kripaya:* by pity; *avistam:* overcome; *asru-purna:* full of tears; *akula:* agitated ; *iksanam:* eyes; *visidantam:* depressed; *idam:* this; *vakyam:* words; *uvaca:* said; *madhu-sudhanah:* the killer of Madhu.

Sanjaya said: Madhusudhana spoke these words to him, whose eyes overflowed with tears and agitation and who was overcome with pity and despair.





श्री भगवानुवाच :  
कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।  
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥२.२॥

*Sri Bhagavanuvaacha*

*kuthasthwa kashmalamidam vishame samupasthitham  
anaaryajushtamaswargyamakeerthikaram arjuna (2.2)*

*sri-bhagavan uvaca*: Lord said; *kutah*: wherefrom; *tva*: upon you; *kasmalam*: dejection; *idam*: this; *visame*: in this critical time; *samupasthitam*: arrived; *anarya justam*: unworthy as an Arya; *aswargyam*: not lead to heaven; *akirti karam*: disgraceful; *arjuna*: O Arjuna.

Bhagavan said: From where has this dejection come upon you at this critical time, Arjuna! This disgraceful behavior is not worthy of an Aryan that would preclude you from heaven.





क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।  
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्प्रल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥२.३॥

*klaibyam ma sma gamah paartha naitattwayyupapadyate  
kshudram hrudayadaurbalyam tyaktwotthishtha parantapa (2.3)*

*klaibyam*: impotence; *ma*: do not; *sma gamah*: yield; *paartha*: son of Partha; *na*: not; *etat*: this; *twayi*: to you; *upadyate*: is fitting; *ksudram*: mean; *hrdaya*: heart; *daurbalyam*: weak; *tyaktva*: abandoned; *uttistha*: get up; *param-tapa*: destroyer of enemies.

Do not yield to unmanliness, Partha! It does not befit you. Drop this faint heartedness and stand up, Destroyer of enemies!





Arjuna was distraught with pity and despair; pity for his opposition that consisted of kinsmen, elders, teachers, relatives and friends who he loathed to kill and despair at the thought of what would happen if he did have to fight and kill them. His dilemma was complete and total. He had collapsed in his chariot and his bow and arrow had slipped from his hands.

Lord Krishna now speaks for the first time as if opening his being directly.

He had allowed Arjuna to exhaust himself, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

He listened to him carefully. Krishna wanted to give time to Arjuna to open his mind, heart and being to Him, his friend, philosopher, guide and Master, so that His answers would penetrate Arjuna's very being.

*Sri Bhagavanuwaacha:*

*kuthasthwa kashmalamidam vishame samupasthitham  
anaaryajushtamaswargyamakeerthikaram arjuna*

Krishna says, 'My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not, to higher planes, but to infamy'. This *sloka* is connected to the next one.

*klaibyam ma sma gamah paartha naitattwayyupapadyate  
kshudram hrudayadaurbalyam tyaktwotthishtha parantapa*

‘O son of Partha! Do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O destroyer of the enemy’.

I may say that this is the gist of the whole *Gita*.

Krishna is the true Zen Master and does not beat around the bush.

Understand that He is not a philosopher and addresses the issue straightaway.

He asks Arjuna directly, ‘How did such impurities come upon you? They are not for a man like you. They will not lead you to higher planes but only defame you’. In the next *sloka* he asks Arjuna to give up this weakness and addressing him as ‘destroyer of enemy’, asks him to arise.

This is a straight Zen answer.

A disciple goes to an enlightened Zen Master and asks, ‘Master, what is *Buddha*? How can I become *Buddha*? Please teach me’.

The Master gives him a hard slap.

The disciple is shocked as he expected to receive some kind of meditation technique, a blessing or guidance. It was like

going to a *swami* and asking him how to realize God or *atman* and receiving a blow in return! But the disciple being mature does not speak ill of his Master. He says, 'Master, I know that you do not do anything without a meaning. Though I am unable to understand the reason for your action, I cannot say it is wrong. Please explain'.

The Master says, 'Fool, you *are Buddha*; why do you try to become something you *are* already? If a horse comes to me and asks how it can become a horse, how to eat grass and drink water, what can I do? You *are* already *that* and nothing else needs to be added to you. That's why I slapped you, to awaken you. That's all.'

Similarly, Krishna gives the gist of the whole *Gita* with one 'slap'.

Krishna knows Arjuna's problem. Please understand that Arjuna is not depressed because of spiritual search. It is just that he does not want a solution; he wants only support.

Understand, that asking for solution and asking for support are two different things.

What Arjuna needs is support, not a solution. This is why Krishna does not speak of spirituality in these two *slokas*. Arjuna's problem originates from fear and worry. His *Manipuraka* and *Swadishthana chakras* which are energy centers within that get locked due to worry and fear are now locked completely! He has deep seated complexes, stress and

worry, because of fear. Krishna addresses Arjuna's deep fear straightaway, without any philosophy and asks him to give up his foolish weakness and to get up and fight. He does not offer any consolation, no candies; just a straight forward admonition, a slap to awaken him.

If Arjuna were in a mood of *Stotra* or surrender, where he reaches only later on, these two *sloka* would have served as *Sutra* or techniques for him. If Arjuna had no fear and full faith and devotion in Krishna, these two verses would have been enough to get him up and going. He would have become enlightened or would have achieved the Ultimate just with these two *slokas*. The entire *Gita* would have been encapsulated within these two *slokas* and there would have been no need for more. Neither of us would need to come here for eighteen days!

I spoke to you about *Sastra*, *Stotra* and *Sutra* in the first chapter.

All three can be means to enlightenment of people of different aptitudes.

*Sastra* are scriptural inputs aimed at the intellectual seeker, at the head; *Stotra* are aimed at the emotional, at the heart, in the form of devotional songs and stories; *Sutra* are for the being level people, techniques of meditation and *yoga*. These are not exclusive, in that, one must be practiced to the exclusion of another. The same person may be in a state to

receive a *Stotra* today and a *Sastra* tomorrow. Right now, Arjuna was in the state to be intellectually convinced, and Krishna employed *Sastra* as the right approach.

Since he was not in the mood of *Stotra*, not yet ready with devotion and faith, Krishna has to create the *Sastra* or method, to bring him to the *Stotra* state. The whole issue is due to fear; worry and depression because of this fear.

All our depressions have their roots in anxiety and fear.

A small story:

A presidential candidate was addressing a press conference, 'I am very optimistic about my future'.

The journalist asks, 'Then why do you look so worried?'

The candidate replies, 'My optimism is not warranted. So, I am worried'.

We constantly expect our optimism to be warranted, and when we do not get the warranty, we start worrying. All your depression, worry and anxiety are nothing but a deep fear of life and of losing something.

There are many levels of fear: fear of losing our wealth, fear of losing a limb, fear of losing our near and dear ones, fear of the unknown or death. That is why Krishna says that Arjuna is not behaving as an *Arya*. The term *Arya* is applied

here to denote an aware human being, not to a particular race or caste. The *Smriti* (*Vedic* teachings) say that an *Arya* is one who is evolved, cultured, a man amongst men.

Here, Arjuna is confronted with all the four fears: fear that he may lose whatever he possesses or that he may lose a part of his body in war; third, a major fear, that he may lose his near and dear ones, and fourth, the possibility of his losing his very life. These fears have in turn, led to his worry.

Here, Krishna directly addresses this worry and fear. Had Arjuna been in the *Stotra* state, that is, in the complete understanding that Krishna is none but God, *Poornavatara*, these two *slokas* would have been enough and no further instruction would have been necessary.

Unfortunately, rather, fortunately, as otherwise we would not have had the *Gita*, Arjuna was not in the state of *Stotra*, and these two *slokas* have become *Sastra*.

Now the *Sastra*, the explanation that is directed to the head, the intellect, starts.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter after the *vishwaroopa darshan*, Arjuna realizes who Krishna truly is. He understands that Krishna is beyond everything and beyond his imagination, his comprehension. He is not surprised any longer that all the deities worship Him and surrender to Him. Krishna then, repeats the same words that he has said now, after which the

*Gita* ends and Arjuna starts the war.

The same words uttered by Krishna when Arjuna is in the state of *Stotra*, state of pure devotion and faith, become the *Sutra*, the technique of enlightenment for Arjuna. Now that Arjuna is not yet in the *Stotra* state, these words are plain *Sastra*.

Krishna is not a philosopher. All of philosophy is an attempt to convince the other to do what the philosopher wants of him. It may be a very slow process, but still a process of trying to convince the other person of what to do.

Hitler, in his autobiography says that if a lie is repeated a hundred times, it becomes the truth and if a truth is expressed for the first time, people think it is a lie. Whether something is true or false does not depend on the actual fact, but on how many times it is repeated!

All philosophies, whether they are of communism or religion or politics, are the same. Philosophers invent logical reasons as to why you should follow their words.

Here Krishna is not a philosopher, and does not want to create any philosophy.

He directly tries to give the conclusion to Arjuna. However, as Arjuna is not in the mood to receive it because he is not mature enough to assimilate it, He needs to give Arjuna the experience.

There is a beautiful story in the Upanishad:

A disciple goes to the Master and asks, 'O Master! Teach me *atmagnanam*, knowledge of the inner Self'.

The Master says, 'Thou art that! *tatwamasi*, you are God'.

The disciple, unable to believe this, thought to himself, 'How can I be God? I am still afraid of my wife, I have all these problems and a thousand questions!'

Only when the Master proves to him that the Master is God himself, the disciple trusts the Master's words. The Master needs to first prove that he is God, in order to make you understand that *you* are God. Here, Krishna does the same thing by repeating that He is all of this.

Krishna says later, that amongst the *Rishis*, the sages, He is *Narada*; among the mountains, He is *Maargashirsha*. He explains His glory that all the *Devatas*, the deities, *Veda*, the scriptural wisdom, are -at His feet and the whole world is in Him. He makes these big statements, which to a normal person would appear as egoistic. Krishna says all this, even at the risk of being misunderstood. He repeats that He is God, to make you realize that *you* are God. He makes the statement, 'I am God' just to make you realize that *you* are God.

You would not believe the words of ordinary persons. You need to hear the words from a source of authority that has the right to say them. Here, Krishna says the same words



that He repeats in the entire *Gita* but now Arjuna is not able to believe His words.

Once Krishna proves His Divinity, Arjuna believes His words and is ready to follow them.

Similarly when Masters prove their divinity and perform great deeds or miracles, they do not do so for their ego-satisfaction. They do them, to prove that they are God, so that you believe their words and experience that *you* are God. This is the reason why Masters repeatedly prove their divinities through their energies.

Bhagavad Gita is not part of the Veda or Upanishad, which are traditionally classified as sacred scriptures, the *Sruti*, which are believed to have had Divine origin. *Gita* is part of an epic, a *purana*, the Mahabharata. Some even believe that the *Gita* was a later day addition to Mahabharata. Despite all that, *Gita* is accepted universally as a scripture by all Hindu scholars. It is the authority with which Krishna is seen to deliver the *Gita* that makes it a scripture. ‘I am the Divine’, says Krishna, ‘if you believe in Me, you too shall realize your inner Divinity’. It is this profound, and yet simple message, that has resounded so deeply in the heart, mind and being of generations of Hindus, in turn establishing the scriptural sanctity of *Gita*.

A great author wrote a book of just forty pages giving the gist of his philosophy. A reader asked him why the book was

of only forty pages to which he replied that if he had the time, he would have written a book of only twenty pages!

It requires intelligence to put anything in simple form or in a nutshell.

To go on and on, not much intelligence is required. Only fools write big volumes! Intelligent people express the same content in a few words. The less you know of something, the more you speak and write.

Here, all the 700 *slokas* of the *Gita* is reduced to just two *slokas* by Krishna.

He straightaway addresses and clears the point where Arjuna is stuck: name and fame or *rajas*. A man who is centered on *satva*, neither greed nor lethargy but a neutral attitude, will work out of compassion; a man, who is centered on *rajas*, will work only for name and fame; a man who is centered on *tamas*, lethargy, will work only for sensual pleasures.

Duryodhana works only on *tamas*, cruel and gross behavior. Dharmaraja Yudhishtira works on *satva*, out of compassion. Here Arjuna is centered on *rajas*, therefore works only for name and fame. This is why *Bhagavan* asks him not to work this way as it would bring Arjuna a bad name. This is how He straightaway puts his hand on the tumor, the tumour that is the subtle ego working within Arjuna.

Fortunately, Arjuna is not intelligent enough, rather he acts as if he is not intelligent enough to understand these words. He has lived with Krishna for more than thirty years and must have had intelligence. He puts his questions and addresses his doubts not for himself but for the future generations, and for the whole of humankind.

*klaibyam ma sma gamah paartha naitattwayyupapadyate  
kshudram hrudayadaurbalyam tyaktwothishtha parantapa*

Krishna again comes to the point straightaway. He is not creating a philosophy and does not beat around the bush. He emphasizes, 'O Arjuna! Lead not into this debasing fraility, do not behave like this, come out!'

A small story I read in the Newsweek magazine recently:

There was a person who had a compulsive, obsessive habit of tearing up whatever paper he saw or laid his hands on, into small bits. His family was worried and took him to Jungians, Freudians and psychoanalysts. They spent a lot of money and tried all possible treatments, but nothing worked. One day, they read about a young and innovative psychotherapist in the newspaper and decided to try him. The therapist said, he wanted to spend a few minutes alone with the patient. He and the patient simply walked up and down for a few minutes, after which the therapist returned, and pronounced that the patient was now cured of his malady, and could be taken home.

His family was surprised when they found that he was really cured. Even after a year, he was found to be perfectly alright. No one however, knew how the problem had disappeared. The family returned to the doctor to express their gratitude. They wanted to know what the doctor had really done, to cure him of the problem, which others could not achieve.

He replied that he had simply asked the patient not to tear any more paper and if he did so even once more, the patient would be brought to the doctor again, whereupon he would be thrown out of the window!

Most of the time, our problems are very simple; we complicate them by analyzing them. When we verbalize and analyze a problem, we complicate them and give power to them. Our problems are not as big as we think. When we verbalize, analyze, label and categorize them, we have created a whole new problem which had not existed earlier in our being. This is how psychiatric doctors continue to invent newer diseases! The more we analyze, the more problems and difficulties we create.

The simple, direct approach of the young doctor solved the problem, which all the detailed analysis and lying down on couches did not.

You have only one mind – you can either use it to solve the problem or it would naturally get used to creating more problems. Understand that if you are not solving your existing

problems, you would be creating more problems. In the level of the mind, there is no position of simply standing, no *status quo* – you either climb or fall.

Here Krishna straightaway addresses Arjuna's problem.

Another small story:

A man walks into a bar with his pet pig. The bartender notices that the pig has a wooden leg. He is surprised that a pig is brought into the bar and that too, one with a wooden leg. He asks the customer about the pig's wooden leg. The man realizes that he could cash in on the bartender's curiosity and replies that if he could get a free drink, he would relate the whole story. The bartender agrees.

The man after the first drink said that this was a special pig that had saved him, his wife and his family when his house was on fire. The bartender nods but says that he still cannot understand why the pig has a wooden leg. The man replies that he would continue the story, if he gets another free drink.

The bartender agrees. The man says when he fell into a lake, the pig had rushed to his wife, called her and he was saved again. The bartender could not take it anymore; he said he understood that the pig was special but still did not know why it had a wooden leg. The man asks for one more free drink. The bartender agrees to give one last drink.

The man began the story of how the pig once again had saved him from a tornado, but the bartender would have no more of it. He caught hold of the man by his neck and demanded why the pig had a wooden leg. The man replies calmly, 'Such a special pig! Who would eat it all at once? I'm eating it part by part!'

The man narrated the whole thing as a story which he could have finished in just one line. He must have been a great philosopher!

Here Krishna is not creating any philosophy, and gives the answer straightaway in just one line. However, as Arjuna is not mature enough, He has to give an intellectual explanation.

All Western philosophies begin with logical analysis and end in the conclusion; all Eastern processes begin with the conclusion and then give the analysis.

As Eastern Masters are compassionate, they do not want to torture us with all the logic. They give us the first option of grasping the solution if we have the intelligence.

If we do not have the intelligence, they have no other option but to go into detailed explanation and analysis.

They expect us to transform with just the trust in them. When they find that we do not have this qualification in us, they start the regular process.

Here, Krishna tried the first method of sudden enlightenment, the immediate liberation. But Arjuna is not mature enough to receive it or comprehend it. So Krishna now starts the process of explaining it to him step-by-step.

There are two ways in which people react to the sanctity and divinity of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. To one set of people, Krishna has no special qualification to be called Divine, and these people may not believe in anything such as the Divine. As atheists or agnostics, the only way such people can be convinced is, at first through the rationality of the dialogue process in the *Gita*, which surpasses in its clarity and wisdom, anything written in any language at any point in time.

The message of Krishna is universal and timeless. If they do not accept and understand, it just means that it is not their time as yet to accept and understand.

Laws of nature do not change because we do not accept and understand them. The Earth was round, not flat, and it revolved around the sun and not the other way around, even when the Christian Church killed people for expounding these truths.

There is another class of people who say that there is only Krishna who is Divine and all other divine manifestations have no relevance.

One such group of people came to me, very perturbed, after I had spoken about the *Gita*. They said, 'From what you say, we see that you accept the divinity of Krishna.' I said, 'Yes, I very much do; He is the *Poornavatara*, the Complete Incarnation.'

They complained, 'Then how can you worship Siva in your ashram? We believe you have a Dakshinamurthy temple in your Bidadi ashram in India. How can you do this?'

I asked them, 'Have you read the Anu Gita, which is also another part of the Mahabharata?' They said, 'No.'

I then explained to them about Anu Gita. After the war, Arjuna and Krishna are together and Arjuna says, 'Krishna, I do not remember all of what you taught me at Kurukshetra, when you delivered to me the *Gita*. Can you please enlighten me again?'

Krishna said, 'Oh, you forgot, have you? I too have forgotten what I then said!'

Arjuna exclaims, 'Krishna, how is that possible?'

Krishna says, 'At that point I was *Parabrahma* Krishna, I was *Bhagavan*, I was the Super Conscious, I was the Divine. Now, I am just *Vasudeva* Krishna, son of Vasudeva. So, I do not remember what I then spoke to you as *Parabrahma* Krishna. I shall try and remember.'



What he remembered and recounted was Anu Gita.

Krishna as *Parabrahma* Krishna is the Divine Energy, the formless *Brahman*, the same as Siva, Vishnu or Devi. He is the Ultimate Truth, the *Puroshottama*, as are these other manifestations of the same *Brahman*.

It is only the ignorant cows of Krishna who fight with the equally ignorant monkeys of Rama, forgetting that they are both the same Energy.

Krishna is no doubt the *Poornam*, the Whole, and the Infinite, as was enunciated in the Upanishad:

*poornamadah poornamidam poornaat poornamudachyate  
poornasya poornamaadaya poornamevavasishyate*

That is Infinite, this is Infinite, from that Infinite arises this Infinite

If this Infinite is taken out that Infinite, Infinite still remains Infinite.

As the Infinite, the *Brahman*, Krishna too is Vishnu, Siva, and Devi, as well as all other Divine manifestations.

The Ultimate Energy behind all of Them has no name and no form; that is the Truth.

The constant, repetitive reference to *Bhagavan* in the *Gita* is to emphasize this point that Krishna is not just the mere

divine charioteer of Arjuna, *Parthasarathy*; or *Kesava*, destroyer of the demon Kesi; or *Madhusudhana*, destroyer of the demon Madhu; but, that He is the *Parabrahma* Krishna, the Supreme Energy, who is formless and nameless.

This constant repetition is also to reinforce the concept that *you* too like Arjuna are God, and no less.

Understanding the divinity of Krishna is a step to accepting and understanding one's own divinity. That awareness is what liberates. That is why Sankara says in *Bhaja Govindam*, 'Even a little reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* will liberate you from death.'



अर्जुन उवाच :  
कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।  
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥२.४॥

*arjuna uvaca*

*katham bhismam aham sankhye  
dronam ca madhusudana  
isubhih pratiyotsyaami  
pujarhaav ari-sudana (2.4)*

*arjunah uvaca:* Arjuna said; *katham:* how; *bhismam:* unto Bhisma; *aham:* I; *sankhye:* in the fight; *dronam:* unto Drona; *ca:* also; *madhu-sudana:* O killer of Madhu; *isubhih:* with arrows; *pratiyotsyaami:* shall counterattack; *puja-arhaav:* those who are worshipable; *ari-sudana:* O killer of the enemies.

Arjuna said: O killer of Madhu [Krishna], how can I counterattack with arrows in battle men like Bhisma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship?





गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।  
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥२.५॥

*guroonahatvaa hi mahaanubhaavaan  
shreyo bhoktum bhaikshyamapeeha loke  
Hatwaarthakaamaamstu guroonihaiwa  
bhunjeeya bhogaan rudhirapradhigdhaan (2.5)*

*guroon*: the superiors; *ahatvaa*: not killing; *hi*: certainly; *mahaanubhaavaan*: great souls; *sreyah*: it is better; *bhoktum*: to enjoy life; *bhaiksyam*: begging; *api*: even; *iha*: in this life; *loke*: in this world; *hatva*: killing; *artha*: gain; *kaman*: so desiring; *tu*: but; *gurun*: superiors; *iha*: in this world; *eva*: certainly; *bhunjiya*: has to enjoy; *bhogaan*: enjoyable things; *rudhira*: blood; *pradigdhaan*: tainted with.

I would rather eat food by begging in this world than slay the most noble of teachers. But if I do kill them, all my enjoyments of wealth and desires will be stained with blood, even in this world.





न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।  
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥२.६॥

*Na chaitadvidmaaha katharanno gareeyo  
yadwaa jayema yadhi vaa no jayeyuh  
Yaaneva hatvaa na jjeevishaam  
sthevaasthitaah pramukhe dhaartharaashtraah (2.6)*

*na*: nor; *ca*: also; *etat*: this; *vidmah*: do know; *katarat*: which; *nah*: us; *gariyah*: better; *yat*: what; *va*: either; *jayema*: conquer us; *yadi*: if; *va*: or; *nah*: us; *jayeyuh*: conquer; *yan*: those; *eva*: certainly; *hatva*: by killing; *na*: never; *jijivisamah*: want to live; *te*: all of them; *avasthitah*: are situated; *pramukhe*: in the front; *dhaartaraashtraah*: the sons of Dhritarashtra.

I can hardly say which is to be preferred, whether they should conquer us or we conquer them. We do not wish to live after slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra who stand facing us.





कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः।  
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्॥२.७॥

*Kaarpanyadoshopahataswabhaavah  
pricchaami tvaam dharmasammoodachetaah  
Yacchreyah syannischitham broohi tanme  
shishyaste'ham shaadi ma tvaam prapannam (2.7)*

*karpanya*: miserly; *dosa*: weakness; *upahata*: being inflicted by; *svabhaavah*: characteristics; *pricchaami*: I am asking; *tvaam*: unto You; *dharma*: religion; *sammudha*: bewildered; *cetaah*: in heart; *yat*: what; *sreyah*: all-good; *syat*: may be; *niscitam*: confidently; *bruhi*: tell; *tat*: that; *me*: unto me; *sisyah*: disciple; *te*: your; *aham*: I am; *saadhi*—just instruct; *ma*: me; *tvaam*: unto You; *prapannam*: surrendered.

My heart is overwhelmed with pity and my mind is confused on the issue of duty. I beseech thee. Tell me decisively what is best for me. I am your disciple; instruct me who has taken refuge in thee.





न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।  
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धम् राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥२.८॥

*na hi prapashyaami mamaapanudhyaad  
yacchokam ucchoshanam indriyaanam  
avaapya bhoomaav asapatnamruddham  
raajyam suraanaamapi chaadipatyam (2.8)*

*na*: do not; *hi*: certainly; *prapasyami*: I see; *mama*: my; *apanudyat*: can drive away; *yat*: that; *sokam*: lamentation; *ucchosanam*: drying up; *indriyanam*: of the senses; *avapya*: achieving; *bhumau*: on the earth; *asapatnam*: without rival; *rddham*: prosperous; *raajyam*: kingdom; *suranam*: of the demigods; *api*: even; *ca*: also; *adhipatyam*: supremacy.

Even if I should attain prosperity and unrivalled dominion on earth or even Lordship over the Gods, I do not see that it would remove this sorrow that burns up my senses.



Despite what Krishna had said to him, and with total clarity, that Arjuna should get up and fight, Arjuna now recounts all his previous arguments. It is as if he had not heard Krishna at all or not heard him right.

He once again, implores Krishna, ‘You, as the Lord of the Universe have the right to destroy what you please. You destroyed the demons Madhu and Keshin, and you destroyed many other enemies. You are justified because you are the Lord. How can I, a mere mortal, be bold enough to wage war against my grandfather and my teacher, with the intent to kill them? They are people I should worship, not destroy. I shall be condemned if I fight them.’

He continues, ‘It is better for me to seek alms as an ascetic or even a beggar than to kill these elders. Once my hands are stained with their blood, what and how can I enjoy worldly pleasures? I am confused as to which would be better, for them to slay me or for me to slay them? How can we live after slaying our kinsmen and elders?’

Arjuna says further, ‘Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of misery and weakness. I can see no solution to my dilemma. Even if I slay these people and gain control over the earth, or even control over the heavens, what good will it do to me? In this condition, I ask you to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am your disciple and the soul, surrendered unto you. Please instruct me.’



I must now tell you an important truth. Here Arjuna says, 'My soul is surrendered unto you'. This is a lie. Had his soul been truly surrendered to Krishna, he would simply have followed what Krishna said and would not have waited for intellectual explanation.

I have seen many people in the same situation.

A small story, rather, a piece of history:

One night around midnight I got a call from one of our devotees who was a government officer pleading for my help from a serious problem. He said that if he could not have my help, suicide was the only alternative for him. I asked him to come the following morning and that we would do whatever had to be done to take care of his problem. He however, insisted on a solution right then.

After going into details about the problem I assured him that his problem would be taken care of but that he should come the following morning anyway, so that the problem could be analyzed properly and ensure it did not repeat itself. He replied that coming in the morning of the following day was not possible because he had to go to work!

When he was speaking of his problem, he said his life itself was at my feet and that as my disciple he had surrendered completely and only I could save him. But when I asked him to come on the following day, he said he had to go to office!

Arjuna is in exactly the same position. He says his soul is surrendered to Krishna but when Krishna asks him to do His bidding he is not ready to do so and is confused.

Surrender out of confusion, is not surrender as you do not even know if you are doing the right thing.

Understand that surrender after clarity of *Sastra* or intelligence, is true surrender.

Here Arjuna surrenders only verbally as he himself says that he is confused.

You must either do what you think is right or do as the Master instructs.

Here, Arjuna wants the Master to say what he wants to listen to, not what the Master is saying. So, although Arjuna says he has surrendered, he has not done so.

Time and again, people come to me for advice and ask me, 'Master, I have this problem or that problem. Please advise me what to do. Whatever you tell me I shall do.' Then, if I ask them to come to the ashram for a few days or attend a meditation course because I know it will help them, they give me a dozen reasons why it cannot be done. They cite all other important tasks that they need to complete before they undertake anything that I suggest to them.

Some even say, 'Master, the time has to be right before we do that. Perhaps the time is not right.'

Nonsense, unadulterated nonsense! You are all not controlled by some unknown destiny that you conveniently blame, when you cannot do something right, or when you do something that is not right.

Your destiny is in your own hands.

An enlightened Master, on the other hand has no control over what he does. Everything that he does is in the hands of the Universal Power, *Parasakti*.

I cannot move a little finger or utter a word without active direction of *Parasakti*, but, each one of you, every one of you has the power to decide what you want do. So does Arjuna.

Arjuna is asking Krishna to tell him what he needs to do, in the same way that my disciples come and ask me.

If, what I tell them is in line with what they want, they will agree. So will Arjuna. Krishna knows this only too well.

However, only out of *karuna* or compassion, Krishna continues to express and teach him the Truth. Here begins the *Sastra*. The two *sloka* which Krishna spoke are *Sutra*. But as Arjuna is not ready to receive them, he has to commence the *Sastra*.

An interesting episode happens after the Mahabharata war is over. Arjuna and Krishna are walking together. Krishna points to a crow sitting on a tree and says. 'Arjuna, can you see that green crow?'

‘Yes, Krishna!’ replies Arjuna immediately.

They walk a little further. Again Krishna points and says, ‘Arjuna, can you see that black crow?’

Again Arjuna responds, ‘Of course, Krishna, I do see that black crow.’

Krishna laughingly says, ‘Arjuna, you really are a fool. When I asked you to see the green crow, you said you saw one. How can a crow ever be green?’

Arjuna said, ‘Krishna, what can I tell you. When you said that the crow was green, what my eyes saw was indeed a green crow!’

Arjuna by then had truly surrendered to his Master. Not merely intellectually and emotionally, but Arjuna had surrendered his senses to Krishna, so much so, that when the Master told him that the crow was green, what his eyes saw was just that.

Here, at this point, Arjuna is not yet in that state. He is confused. He is in a dilemma. He knows that his duty is to defeat his enemies and kill them if needed. But, his enemies are his kinsmen, his elders, and his teachers. The relationship, the *samskara* of his relationship with them makes him hesitate. Arjuna brings up all that he knows, from scriptures, from tradition, and from hearsay and whatever he

can, to avoid the unpleasant decision of fighting his own kith and kin.

Krishna, fully aware of his dilemma, moves forward in his mission to destroy that identity. The Master is a surgeon who removes the cancer of ego. This is what Krishna does throughout the *Gita* dialogue. To give Arjuna credit, he stays through this surgery. Many weaker men would have run away from the operation theatre, this battle field, with no desire to let go of one's identity. The greatness of Arjuna lies in his determination to listen to his Master and be guided by him. So he implores his Master, 'Krishna, please tell me what to do. I am your disciple. You are my refuge.'

It is this attitude of surrender to the Master that redeems Arjuna and helps him win the war, which in reality is the war within his own self.

This is the war that each one of you, if you are truly aware, is fighting each day. This is the war that you would need to be fighting to drop your ego, your mind, the identity that binds you to all the bondages upon this earth.

What ever you think is yours, whatever you think is you, is different from the truth

It is the Master, who can lead you through the path of this self discovery, as Krishna is leading Arjuna now.

To be led, you need the attitude of surrender.



सञ्जय उवाच :  
एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तप ।  
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥२.९॥

*sanjaya uvaca*

*evam uktvaa hrsikesam  
gudaakesah parantapah  
na yotsya iti govindam  
uktvaa tusnim babhuva ha (2.9)*

*sanjaya uvaca*: Sanjaya said; *evam*: thus; *uktvaa*: speaking; *hrsikesam*: unto Krsna, the Master of the senses; *gudaakesah*: Arjuna, the Master at curbing ignorance; *parantapah*: destroyer of the enemies; *na yotsye*: I shall not fight; *iti*: thus; *govindam*: unto Krsna, the giver of pleasure; *uktvaa*: saying; *tusnim*: silent; *babhuva*: became; *ha*: certainly.

Sanjaya said: Having spoken thus, Arjuna, destroyer of enemies, told Krishna, 'Govinda, I shall not fight,' and fell silent.





तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।  
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥२.१०॥

*tam uvaaca hrsikesah  
prahasann iva bhaarata  
senayor ubhayor madhye  
visidantam, idam vacah (2.10)*

*tam*: unto him; *uvaaca*: said; *hrsikesah*: the Master of the senses, Krsna; *prahasan*: smiling; *iva*: like that; *bhaarata*: O Dhrtarastra, descendant of Bharata; *senayoh*: of the armies; *ubhayoh*: of both parties; *madhye*: between; *visidantam*: unto the lamenting one; *idam*: the following; *vacah*: words.

O descendant of Bharata, at that time Krishna, smiling, in the midst of both the armies, spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna.





श्री भगवानुवाच :  
अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।  
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥२.११॥

*Sri Bhagavan uvaacha*

*ashochyaan anvasochastwam  
prajnaavaadaamscha bhaashase  
gataasoonagataasoonscha  
naanushochanti pandita (2.11)*

*sri-bhagavan uvaca*: the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *asocyaan*: that which is not worthy of lamentation; *anvasocah*: you are lamenting; *tvam*: you; *prajnaavadan*: learned talks; *ca*: also; *bhaashase*: speaking; *gata*: lost; *asun*: life; *agata*: not past; *asun*: life; *ca*: also; *na*: never; *anusocanti*: lament; *panditah*: the learned.

Bhagavan said: You grieve for those that should not be grieved for but yet, speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.





Even though it is written here in the past tense, I feel Krishna should always be addressed in the present tense; He is still relevant to each of us today. We cannot say, 'Krishna was' but 'Krishna is'; not 'Krishna said' but 'Krishna says'.

Once again, having lamented about what he was being forced to do, and not wishing to do what he was expected to do, Arjuna, like a petulant child, sat down, saying, 'I am not going to fight.' It is as if, Arjuna was waiting to be persuaded.

He was seeking an explanation.

Krishna said to him gently, and smilingly, 'While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise, lament neither for the living, nor for the dead.'

Again, Krishna addresses the issue directly, 'O Arjuna! You speak as if you are intelligent, enlightened. You speak the words without having experienced them. Therefore, your words do not carry conviction.

Your emotion, your being shows that you are not enlightened; that you have not understood; that you have not experienced. A real, enlightened person will never worry for the living or the dead'.

If you worry for somebody living or dead, you cannot be a man of intelligence. What is death and life after all? There

are thousands, rather, millions who have lived and gone.

Someone once asked me, why is it that natural calamities happen? Why is it that so many people die in wars and calamities? Why is God doing these things and why is God being mean?

I told him, 'To give you an honest answer, I do not know', but if you insist on an answer, I can give you an answer the next time God calls for a conference, I can ask Him to give me an answer!'

These questions have no answer in existence. The question is asked from a very low level, from your logic, but God is beyond your logic.

You can never have an answer for these questions.

For example, a small ant asks the elephant, 'Why are you as dark as I am? How is it that we both have the same color of skin?'

Will the elephant be able to answer? The elephant will not even know that it is being asked this question.

Likewise, it is important to understand the rules of Existence, of the Divine.

Only fools worry about people who are living or dead. A truly intelligent man does not bother about death.

Often people ask me 'How was the Universe created? Was it by Brahma as Hindu scriptures say? Or was it created in six days by a nameless God as the Old Testament would have us believe?'

I say to them what Buddha said thousands of years ago, based on his personal perception. The Universe, Buddha said, has neither been created, nor will it ever be destroyed. It always has been.

The Universe created itself. It is the Creation which embodies the Creator and results in what has been Created. The Universe is the ultimate expression of the non dual *advaitic* experience, in which the Experience merges with the Experiencer and the Experienced.

Our questions regarding the 'right' and 'wrong' of what happens around us arise only when they threaten us in some manner or another. These questions, these issues about the morality of Universe, spring forth when our ego is threatened; our identity is threatened; our life is threatened.

Every person stricken with an incurable and fatal affliction such as cancer would invariably question 'why me?' If it is a young child, the parents, relatives and friends are bound to question the justice of God, the fairness of God.

What do you know about the fairness of God? What do you know about God? All you know and care about is your

selfish welfare. All you wish is to be secure in the comforts of your own well being and that of your near and dear ones. Any concern about the rest of humanity is only after one's own comfort zone is taken care of.

The Creator is also the Destroyer. What is created will be destroyed. There is no covenant with God that you have when you are born about how long you will live, when you will die and how you will die. You are born in this world with no awareness of why you are here. You will also die with no awareness of when and how. The Truth is that simple.

When you truly realize your Self, when you are enlightened, you will be aware of when you will die and how you will die. It will then, make no difference to you.

Living and dying are no longer issues that you feel you need to play a part in; they are progressions of nature and you will flow with nature.

We are just playing with words when we talk about *karma* and destiny; that these are responsible for everything that happens to us; responsible for everything that we do.

Let me tell you this: We are responsible for what happens to us; we are responsible for what we do. It is a tragic misrepresentation of nature's law to blame nature for what happens to us.

Earthquakes and tsunamis occur because man has plundered nature. We have drilled holes tens of thousands of meters into the bowels of the Earth, on land and in the ocean, looking for oil and minerals. We have rapaciously destroyed forests and hills. We have drilled holes through the ozone layer in search of our comfort zone. Then, we wonder why nature misbehaves. Nature only behaves, never misbehaves.

Nature does not guarantee that the person who creates havoc and destroys nature is the one to suffer in that body. Nature is patient and all knowing. Nature's law strikes without fear or favor. What one generation did to destroy nature, may visit upon another generation. In nature's standpoint we never die. We just disappear and reappear. In whichever scene we reappear, we still bear responsibility for what we had done in an earlier scene.

That's why questions of why a ten year old should die or contract cancer have neither meaning nor relevance. The ten year old is only the reappearance of someone who had been here before, and probably might be here again. We are not normally aware of what one had done before, and what one is therefore responsible for.

Some people question, 'It is not fair that we are held responsible for what we did in another lifetime that we are not even aware of'.

Who said anything about fairness? What do we know of

fairness, except what we deem fair out of our own selfishness? It is possible to be conscious of what one had done in previous births; it is possible to have even a conscious birth, coming into this world fully conscious and aware. Before that happens, we need to drop our ego, and merge with nature. We need to surrender to nature, our existence. When we do, nature responds and opens up.



न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः।  
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम्॥२.१२॥

*Na tvevaaham jaatu naasam  
na twam neme janaadhipaaha  
Na chaiva na bhavishyaamaha  
sarve vayamathaha param (2.12)*

*na: never; tu: but; eva: certainly; aham: I; jatu: become; na: never; asam: existed; na: it is not so; twam: yourself; na: not; ime: all these; jana-adhipah: kings; na: never; ca: also; eva: certainly; na: not like that; bhavisyamah: shall exist; sarve: all of us; vayam: we; atah param: hereafter*

It is not that at anytime indeed, was I not in the past, nor were you, nor these rulers of men; nor shall we all ever cease to be hereafter.



With this *sloka* begins the essence of the whole *Gita*:

*natwevaaham jaatunaasam natwam nemejanaadhipaah  
nachaiva nabhavishyaamah sarve vayamatah param*

‘Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.’

This is the gist of the whole *Gita*. This is *atmagyana*, Self Realization. If you can understand this *sloka*, you can become enlightened straightaway and enter into Eternal Bliss.

Krishna says there was never a time when I, you and all the kings did not exist. If you think our souls will also die with our bodies, you are wrong. We were there before our birth and this death and will remain after death. It is not true that any of us will not be in the future.

In Zen Buddhism there is a beautiful meditation technique to achieve enlightenment.

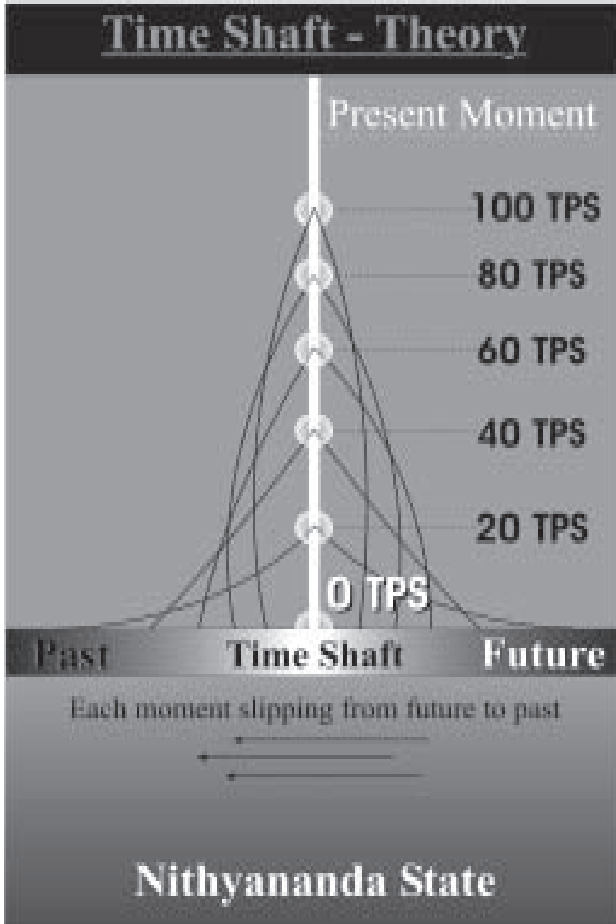
You are asked to meditate on the face you had before your birth. The *Koan* says: what was your face like before your father and mother were born?

Upon meditating on this *Koan* you realize that you existed in the past, exist in the present and will exist in the future. Your face and body may change but you continue to exist. Then why do we think we shall die and why do we fear death? If what Krishna says is true, why are we worried



about this life and about death? May you first understand the concept of the past, present and future to enable you to understand what Krishna says.

I shall try to explain this concept and the *atman* or soul, by means of a small diagram.



Time is like a shaft continuously moving from the future on the right into the past on the left. Here is the future on your right and here is the past on your left. The future is continuously moving into the past; every moment and every second it is turning into the past. The present is the point where the future and the past meet. Your mind as such, is nothing but movements between the past and the future.

Understand you cannot have any thoughts if you stop thinking about the past and the future. Your thoughts consist of nothing but the constant movements between past and the future. The more your thoughts shift from past to future or future to past, the higher the frequency of thoughts. The less you shift from past to future or future to past, less the number of thoughts. Try to think of something in the present, you will find that you cannot; you can think of it only by taking it into the past or future. You are either worrying about the future or remembering the past.

The higher the frequency of thoughts, the grosser you are.

For example, if you have 100 Thoughts Per Second (TPS), it means you have jumped 100 times between the past and future and from future to past. If you have 80 TPS, you would have jumped as many times between these two dimensions. The more the frequency, the more you would be away from the present. The higher the frequency of thoughts, the more are the worries and problems that you have. If the number of thoughts reduces, you fall into the present moment.

When your frequency of thoughts is high, you are in the physical body or the *Annamaya kosha*. When the frequency is a little less, you move into a higher energy layer called *Praanamaya kosha*. When your TPS is say 60 (here the reference is just proportional), you move into the mental layer of *Manonmaya kosha* and come a little close to the *atman*. If you fall in the present moment, you *are atman*.

The past, present and future, all the three put together is Eternal, *nithya* or *atman*. Only when you come to the present moment, you experience *atman*, but as of now you are constantly shuttling between the past and future.

The Upanishad talks of five body layers: the *Vignanamaya* and the *Anandamaya koshas* in addition to the three *koshas* described above. The *Vignanamaya kosha* is the layer where the TPS is still less, say 40. When your TPS is say 20, you come to the *Anandamaya kosha*.

Understand when the number of thoughts reduce you will not even be aware of the passage of time. For example, when you are with someone you love, even two or three hours will seem like a short while. On the contrary, when you are with someone whose company is boring, even a short time seems very long; you would keep glancing at your watch and wondering why time does not move!

Understand: time is more psychological and not chronological. That is why in our scriptures or *Vedas*, we have the word,

*kshana*. This does not denote a second, but the gap between two thoughts. The larger the *kshana* or the gap between two thoughts, the more in the present we are. Our *kshana* will be in the region of microseconds because we are continuously flooded with thoughts.

When our TPS is less, we will naturally be in ecstasy, in bliss. When our thoughts are less, we will not know how much time has passed and we are naturally in bliss or heaven. When the number of your thoughts is high, we are in hell. Hell and heaven are nothing but number of thoughts, that is all.

With higher frequency of thoughts, you are in hell, caught in the physical layer; you think you are the body. When frequency of thoughts reduces, you think you are the mind and just emotion and bliss. When the thoughts become zero, you realize you are *atman*; you are there in the past, present and future. Only a man who's TPS is zero can realize what Krishna says, 'You will be there forever'. The past, present and future are just words; you exist throughout.

But right now, the frequency of thoughts is very high. We do not have the patience or the energy to understand who we are, our base and our nature. The moment you fall into the present moment, you experience that you were there in the past, are in the present and will be in the future. Krishna says, 'you were there in the past, you are in the present and you will be in the future; you do not die'. When He says

that, he means that you are *nithya atman*, Eternal Consciousness, you are beyond your mind.

But we are restless and know only this space of moving from past to future, that is why we are unable to believe that this space of the present exists within us. We are away from the present moment, away from the Eternal Consciousness, therefore unable to see the truth of *nithya atman*. The higher the TPS, the farther away you are and from there, cannot see it clearly (referring to the diagram). When you come down in your TPS, you can see and experience your nature more clearly, more deeply.

When Krishna says, ‘You are the Eternal *atman*’, he means that you were in the past, are here in the present and will be in the future; you are beyond time. He means that as a being, you are beyond time but as of now, you are caught in the mind between the past and the future.

He says beautifully, ‘There was never a time when I, you and all these kings did not exist. If you think that our souls will also die along with our bodies, you are wrong. We existed before our birth and will remain after our death. This is also not true that any of us will not be in the future’. We *will* be in the future as there is no death of our being or consciousness. Whatever dies, can never live. Whatever lives can never die.

Here, your deep consciousness says that something is living in

you. This quality you attribute to your body and mind.

Do not misunderstand your consciousness to be your body and mind.

You are not the body and mind. As long as you are caught in the past and the future, you think that you are the body and mind. The moment you come down to the present moment, you experience that you are beyond the body, beyond the mind.

Krishna does not mean that we existed in the form that we are here now, or that He was present always as Krishna in the form we imagine Him to be, with a flute in His hand and a peacock feather on His head. Our spirits, which are eternal, always existed and will always exist. In our spiritual state, that of our *atman*, we are divine, one with the Universal energy, *Brahman*.

The gist of the second chapter is that you are *atman*, that you are divine and that you are God.



देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।  
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति॥२.१३॥

*dehino'sminyathaa dehe  
kaumaaram yauvanam jaraa  
tatha dehaantarapraaptir-  
dheerastatra na muhyati (2.13)*

*dehinah*: of the embodied; *asmin*: in this; *yatha*: as; *dehe*: in the body; *kaumaram*: boyhood; *yauvanam*: youth; *jara*: old age; *tatha*: similarly; *deha-antara*: transference of the body; *praptih*: achievement; *dhirah*: the sober; *tatra*: thereupon; *na*: never; *muhyati*: deluded.

Just as the embodied soul in this body passes into childhood, youth and old age, so does he pass into another body. The firm man does not grieve at it.



Even as the spirit resides in this body, the body passes through its seasons of childhood, youth, middle age and old age as the seasons of nature do in each year. Finally, it passes through death, and then reappears, the same way as the leaves shed by the trees in autumn and winter grow back during spring and summer.

Transition of the spirit through the body as it ages is no different from the transition of time through the seasons. One does not grieve as one enjoys the pleasures of childhood, youth and middle age. Why then should one grieve the onset of old age and then death?

At death the spirit passes from one body into another body. It has three *kshana*, each *kshana* being a time period between thoughts, to achieve this. A person who is in a high thought frequency state, a high TPS (thoughts per second) state, therefore has a much shorter time to shift from one body to another compared to another person whose TPS is low, whose frequency of thoughts is low.

A person in a no mind and therefore no thought state has infinite time, as the time between thoughts is infinite. His spirit is at liberty to stay free as long as he chooses, or more correctly as the Universe chooses, without taking another body.

All enlightened Masters fall into this category.



When the spirit leaves the body mind system, it becomes one with the universal energy. If you can imagine a number of circles drawn on a whiteboard, think of the whiteboard space as the universal energy. Individual body mind systems are represented by the circles drawn on the whiteboard. The whitespace enclosed by the perimeter of the circles is the spirit, which is the same energy as the whitespace outside. The space within is *atman*, space outside is *brahman*.

When a body mind dies, when an individual dies, all that happens is that these perimeter lines get erased; that is all. The space within the circle merges with the space outside the circle. White merges with white. Energy merges with energy.

When the spirit, the energy is ready to move into another body mind system, it enters another circle. It is a continuous on going process, and a natural process. One who understands this process and accepts it is a grounded person. Krishna refers to him as a '*dhirah*', one who is firm, centered, and aware.



मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।  
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥२.१४॥

*maathraasparshaasthu kaunteya  
sheetoshnasukhadukhadaaha  
aagamaapaayino'nityaas  
taamstitikshaswa bhaarata (2.14)*

*matra*: sensuous; *sparsaah*: perception; *tu*: only; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *sita*: winter; *usna*: summer; *sukha*: happiness; *duhkha-dah*: giving pain; *aagama*: appearing; *apaayinah*: disappearing; *anityah*: nonpermanent; *tan*: all of them; *titikshasva*: just try to tolerate; *bhaarata*: O descendant of the Bharata dynasty.

O son of Kunti, the contact with sense objects which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain, have a beginning and an end. O Bharata, these are not permanent; endure them bravely.





यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।  
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥२.१५॥

*yam hi na vyathayantye  
purushampurusharshabha  
samadukhaasukham dheeram  
so'mrutatwaaya kalpate (2.15)*

*yam*: one whom; *hi*: certainly; *na*: never; *vyathayanti*: are distressing; *ete*: all these; *purusam*: to a person; *purusa-rsabha*: O best among men; *sama*: unaltered; *duhkha*: distressed; *sukham*: happiness; *dheeram*: patient; *sah*: he; *amrtatvaaya*: for liberation; *kalpate*: is considered eligible.

O chief among men, these surely do not afflict the firm man to whom pleasure and pain are the same and who is fit for enlightenment.



Krishna says here, that the sensory experiences are all temporary. Feelings of hot and cold, sweet and sour, wet and dry as experiences of pain and pleasure, as well as other experiences of pain and pleasure are impermanent and temporary. These experiences do not affect the grounded person, who is qualified to be enlightened.

Buddha refers to sensory experiences as *anichha* or impermanent and unreal. That they are impermanent is easy to understand. These experiences last only as long as the sensory stimuli are in place. Moreover, they are relative. What may be considered hot by one person may not be perceived as hot by another. Certainly, the conclusions that heat is pleasurable or cold is pleasurable are both specific to individuals and circumstances.

There are many *sadhus*, ascetics, who stay in the higher reaches of the Himalaya mountains, in what everyone would consider as bitter cold, with very little clothing. There are those who carry out the *parikrama*, circumambulation, of the Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar with meagre clothing and footwear. Studies have been conducted on Tibetan Lamas in their high altitude snow covered monasteries that show how the Lamas can bear extreme cold without any discomfort. Such studies have been conducted by Harvard Medical School and others.

When nature is accepted totally, heat, cold, rain, dryness

and all these changes do not affect the mind body system. If we walk around without footwear, the earth that we walk upon becomes our friend. As long as we wear footwear with the intention of protecting ourselves from nature, we are treating nature as an outsider, as an enemy. We can, therefore, never be comfortable with nature because of this attitude.

One who is firmly grounded in himself is grounded in nature. To such a person, changes in nature's parameters such as heat and cold, rain and shine, make no difference. They do not give him either pleasure or pain. Such a person treats them naturally, equally, with no difference.

Krishna says that such a person is qualified and ready for enlightenment. Such persons have brought their senses under control, and as a result have their mind too under control.



नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।  
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥२.१६॥

*naasato vidhyate bhaavo  
naabhaavo vidhyate sataha  
ubhayorapi drushto'ntas  
tvanayostattvadarshibhih (2.16)*

*na*: never; *asatah*: of the nonexistent; *vidyate*: there is; *bhavah*: endurance; *na*: never; *abhavah*: changing quality; *vidyate*: there is; *satah*: of the eternal; *ubhayoh*: of the two; *api*: verily; *drstah*: observed; *antah*: conclusion; *tu*: but; *anayoh*: of them; *tattva*: truth; *darsibhih*: by the seers.

The nonexistent has no being; that which exists does not cease to exist; this truth about both has been seen by the Knowers of the Truth, the Seers of the Essence.



What Krishna says here, and which has been understood by the wise sages of the East thousands of years ago, is only now being grasped by science and scientists.

The body mind system that we are born with is transient, in the sense that it is perishable and ceases to exist at death. No human being or for that matter any living being on this planet Earth is exempt from this rule. Everything, in material form ceases to exist at some point in time, and in that sense does not have permanence and a truth base.

It is now accepted by medical science that the body mind system dies many deaths before its final exit. Cells within our body die in thousands everyday and get reborn. Over a period of a few years, every single cell in the body mind system is replaced and renewed. What you were two or three years ago is not what you are today. What you are today is not what you will be two to three years later. Every single cell in your body mind system, and therefore every single bone, muscle, tissue, artery, vein, limb and body part are new, completely different from what they were two or three years ago.

The mind body continually ceases to exist and gets recreated. It is not permanent. It is transient.

Separate from the mind body system is our spirit that lives on. The spirit remains the same right through our life, despite all the changes to the mind body system, with no

change. It continues to be, to exist, even after our death. The spirit does not die with the body. It lives on. It is permanent and true.

When one understands this difference between what is eternal, *nithya*, and what is transient, *mithya*, one becomes a seer and knower of Truth.

*Nithya* and *mithya* do not translate into real and unreal. In the same way *maya* is not unreal. *Maya* and *mithya* are real and perceived by our senses; but they are not true, they are not *sat*, they are *asat*, untrue. That which is true will always be true, it cannot cease to exist.

I say: A living Master is not present as you think, and a dead Master is not absent as you think. The presence of a dead Master, an enlightened dead Master is permanent and always real. A living Master's form is not His presence; He is present in His absence as well.

Our perceptions through our senses may be real but not necessarily true. What is an observed fact is not necessarily true. A dream is very real when it happens. You may get angry, frightened, excited, lustful and all of these when you dream. Your body responds to these emotions that you feel in a dream, and your senses react to what you observe in the dream. Yet, the moment you start witnessing the dream you awake. You cannot dream when you become aware. The dream is not true, though it was real.



The same happens when we are awake but day dream, which is most of the time. We are awake, but we fantasize. The fantasies are real when you undergo the experience; they exist in your mind and even your senses, but they are not true. They are not permanent and you cannot do anything tangible with them.

That is the reason why the great Masters have always exhorted their disciples to wake up; *jagrat* is the word used to awaken them. This is not the call to wake up from sleep, but the call to wake up into awareness. It is the call to emerge from the non existent reality of facts and observation into the truly existent truth of self experience.

Most of the time, you exist in your past and future. You are constantly caught in the experiences of the past, reliving them under the excuse of learning from them, but in actuality wallowing in guilt, regret or pleasure of the past experiences and memories with no ability whatever to do anything about them. The past is history, it is gone. The moving finger, as it has been said, has written and moved on; there is no way that it will erase a word of what has been written.

Or, you speculate about the future. The future is just as unreal as the past. If anything, it is more unreal, as it has not even happened. Yet, we build castles, we plan, we dream, we fantasize about the future, for us and others, with no capability to execute any of it. We are not even confident

of taking the next breath, which is not under our control, how can we control events of the future?

The unreality of our constant move from past to future and back again, which is the stuff of our thoughts, and our belief that all this is real, is the greatest wonder of it all.

The only truth, the only true reality is the truth of the present, which lies between past and future. As long as we focus on this present moment we are truly aware. The present moment never ceases to exist. In fact, that is all that there is, that is all that exists. The present moment alone is *sat*, truth, everything else is *asat*, untruth.

One who realizes this and acts accordingly, says Krishna, is enlightened.



अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।  
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥२.१७॥

*avinaashi tu tadviddhi  
yena sarvamidam tatam  
vinaashamvyayasyaasya  
na kashchita kartumarhati (2.17)*

*avinaasi*: imperishable; *tu*: but; *tat*: that; *viddhi*: know it; *yena*: by whom; *sarvam*: all of the body; *idam*: this; *tatam*: pervaded; *vinaasam*: destruction; *avyayasya*: of the imperishable; *asya*: of it; *na kascit*: no one; *kartum*: to do; *arhati*: is able.

Know It to be indestructible by which all this body is pervaded. Nothing can cause It's destruction, the Imperishable.





अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः।  
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥२.१८॥

*antavanta ime dehaa  
nityasyoktaah shareerinah  
anaashino'prameyasya  
tasmaadhyudhyaswa bhaarata (2.18)*

*anta-vantah*: perishable; *ime*: all these; *dehaah*: material bodies; *nityasya*: eternal in existence; *uktah*: it is so said; *saririnah*: the embodied soul; *anaasinah*: never to be destroyed; *aprameyasya*: immeasurable; *tasmaat*: therefore; *yudhyasva*: fight; *bhaarata*: O descendant of Bharata.

These bodies of the embodied Self are perishable. The Self itself is Eternal, Incomprehensible and Indestructible. Therefore, fight, O Bharata.



We are all made of body, mind and spirit. The body is tangible; we can feel its boundaries. When a part of the body is unwell, we can feel the discomfort. As long as we do not feel the body, the parts of our body, we are in good health.

Our mind is more subtle. We do not feel the mind as we feel the body. We do not feel its boundaries. Yet, we feel the effects of the mind; thoughts, desires, emotions etc. Modern scientific studies have shown that what we term as mind is spread all over the body. Mind and its intelligence are inbuilt into our cellular structure.

Recent studies have shown that it is our belief systems which in turn arise from our experiences that define the development of our mind and in turn influence the cellular structure. Earlier it was believed that genetic modifications to the cellular structures influenced the way we behaved. Now, it is shown that it is our behavior which leads to our beliefs and thereafter determines our genetics.

Even more subtle is the spirit. In fact, many question this entity called spirit. What is it, they ask, we cannot see, we cannot feel; what is this thing called spirit or soul? Understanding what this subtle spirit or soul is just what self realization is all about.

Krishna says in these verses, first, that the spirit pervades the body. His definition of body is the body mind system.

Secondly, that the body mind is destroyed at death. Thirdly, that the spirit does not die at death. Fourthly, that the spirit is beyond our comprehension.

When death happens, body functions stop. Senses which are a function of the mind stop working. Brain, which processes thoughts stops working. Left to itself, the entire system, the body mind system rots and self destructs. This part is clear to all of us who have seen death.

What is unclear is that there is something within us that does not perish at death. Krishna says that this is the Self, the *Atman*, which never dies.

Upanishads talk about this spirit as dwelling deep in our hearts and being of such minute proportions, that it is smaller than fraction of a fraction of one's hair!

What is death? Is it the spirit leaving the body that causes death or is it that death forces the spirit into leaving the body? This argument becomes irrelevant once one understands that the body and the body mind system are perishable; that it has a definite shelf life; it comes with an expiry date, though that date is not known to us. However, beyond this expiry date, there is something that lives on, the spirit.

This spirit is energy; it is the energy of life. As we explained before, after death, this energy moves from within the body that it occupied temporarily to the energy that is outside the body, the universal energy that surrounds the body.

Krishna exhorts Arjuna to fight, with the full understanding that what he thinks as real is unreal, that what he thinks as permanent is impermanent, and what he thinks he is about to destroy can in fact be never destroyed.

Arjuna is overcome with remorse, guilt, pity and insecurity at the very thought of killing his kinsmen. He believes that he is committing a mortal sin by killing them, which he believes to be their termination. Krishna tells him to open his eyes. He tells Arjuna that what he is doing is only to destroy that which in any case is going to perish, and that he cannot in any event destroy the imperishable spirit that lives on.

Arjuna's concern about the death of his kinsmen and elders arises out of his insecurity about his own death. He is afraid of dying and therefore he is afraid of others dying. Krishna tells him that there is nothing such as death. He tells him that death is unreal.

All our lives we see people around us dying. We all know that there is no one who is immortal. We all know that death is the only certainty in this otherwise uncertain world. Everyone, a beggar or a prince must die.

Krishna is stating this reality as we know it, straight. He says firmly that there is nothing such as death. He says what dies or seems to perish is unreal; it had no existence any way.

What does have existence, what is truly real, is that which continues to exist.



य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम्।  
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥२.१९॥

*ya enam vetthi hantaaram  
yaschainam manyate hatam  
ubhau tow na vijaaneeto  
naayam hanti na hanyate (2.19)*

*yah*: anyone; *enam*: this; *vetthi*: knows; *hantaram*: the killer; *yah*: anyone; *ca*: also; *enam*: this; *manyate*: thinks; *hatam*: killed; *ubhau*: both of them; *tau*: they; *na*: never; *vijanitah*: in knowledge; *na*: never; *ayam*: this; *hanti*: kills; *na*: nor; *hanyate*: be killed.

Neither of them understands, he who takes the Self to be slayer and he who thinks he is slain. He who knows and understands that the Self does not slay, nor is he slain.







न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्-नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।  
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥२.२०॥

*na jaayate mriyate ava kadaachin  
naayam bhoothvaa bhavithaa va na bhooyaha  
ajo nityaha shaashvato'yam puraano  
na hanyate hanyamaane shareere (2.20)*

*na*: never; *jayaate*: takes birth; *mriyate*: never dies; *va*: either; *kadaacit*: at any time (past, present or future); *na*: never; *ayam*: this; *bhutva*: came into being; *bhavitaa*: will come to be; *va*: or; *na*: not; *bhuyah*: or has coming to be; *ajah*: unborn; *nityah*: eternal; *saasvatah*: permanent; *ayam*: this; *puraanah*: the oldest; *na*: never; *hanyate*: is killed; *hanyamaane*: being killed; *sarire*: by the body.

Self is not born nor does he ever die. After having been, he never ceases not to be. He is Unborn, Eternal, Changeless and Ancient. He is not killed when the body is killed.





वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम्।  
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम्॥२.२१॥

*vedaavinaashinam nityam  
ya enamajamavyayam  
katham sa purushha paartha  
kam ghaatayati hanti kam (2.21)*

*veda:* in knowledge; *avinasinam:* indestructible; *nityam:* always; *yah:* one who; *enam:* this (soul); *ajam:* unborn; *avyayam:* immutable; *katham:* how; *sah:* he; *purusah:* person; *paartha:* O Partha (Arjuna); *kam:* whom; *ghaatayati:* hurts; *hanti:* kills; *kam:* whom.

O Paartha, how can that man slay or cause others to be slain, who knows Him to be indestructible, Eternal, Unborn, unchangeable?



Krishna addresses some of Arjuna's earlier doubts directly in these verses. Arjuna had claimed that destroying his relatives and his mentors would bring him untold grief not only in this world but in future births as well. He claimed that his progeny would suffer as a result of such evil deeds.

Krishna explains to Arjuna that all his fears were misplaced. There is no death in reality; what is seen as death is the destruction of the impermanent body. No one therefore, can kill another person or be killed by another person. Both are illusions.

The spirit that occupies the body lives on forever. It occupies the body temporarily, but by itself the Self is eternal, indestructible, and it has no births and deaths. It is the body, the sheath that covers it, that dies and is reborn. The spirit, the Self lives on forever.

It is the individual's attachment to the body that creates the illusion that the individual too perishes with the body.

Attachment to the body is the most intense of all attachments. We also get attached to material possessions as well as our relationships. The potential loss of these attachments too leads to fears similar to that of losing one's body.

One who understands, that all these attachments are temporary and are in fact the cause of all our suffering, understands the Truth.

Understanding of this truth removes all fears.

Religions which do not accept the concept of the continuance of the spirit inculcate this fear of loss of identity deeply into the individual psyche. People are bred on the belief that one's life ends at death; it is a permanent end. This belief leads to desperate behavior as if there is no further time for the individual to seek happiness. Hell and heaven have been created based on this concept of permanence of death. Hell and heaven are used by religions to control people through fear and greed.

Once a person understands that death too, is a phase of passage, as birth is, as childhood is, as adulthood is, and as old age is, and that there is a continuance to life after death, the fear of losing one's identity disappears. One is relaxed. One is no more terrorized by the whip of religion.

This is why religions that accept the continuance of life after death as Hinduism and Buddhism do, breed a culture of tolerance amongst their followers. There is no rush to live and extract the maximum juice out of one's life in this one birth. We all come from a common energy source and we go back to this source, and the cycle continues, is what these religions say. Those who understand this spiritual truth in these religions, preach the concept of tolerance and acceptance, inclusion and compassion, instead of the exclusion and enmity that are preached by religions who say that there is no life after death.

It is easy to misinterpret these verses and say that if there is no one killing and no one killed then we all can indulge in mindless killing. That is not what Krishna intends.

One who truly understands that death is not the end of the path, but only a milestone in the journey is not perturbed by death when it happens naturally, or when it is caused for a purpose.

These truths are preached to Arjuna, who already understands the basic truths of *yama* (The first step of the philosophy formulated by Patanjali, a great ancient Master) : that of *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non violence), *aparigraha* (living by one's needs), *asteya* (non covetousness) and *Brahmacharya* (living without fantasies).

Arjuna fully understands the implications of killing, though as a *Kshatriya*, it is his *dharma*, his code of conduct, to slay his enemies. Here, Krishna preaches to the man what he does not know yet. Arjuna shies away from killing, not because of his conviction of *ahimsa*, non-violence, but because he identifies with the people he has to destroy. His hesitation is from the ignorance of attachment, not from the wisdom of non-violent compassion.

Krishna's message to Arjuna is as it would be to someone who has to uphold *dharma* at all costs, and in today's context would apply to a soldier or a policeman. However, it would not be a blind acceptance of orders that would compel such

people to take lives, but an absolute necessity which is not driven by fear and greed. It would not be killing for gain, and it would not be killing out of fear that one would be killed. It would be an ultimate action, born out of the knowledge that such destruction is needed for universal good, and that such destruction is not permanent.

Such is the destruction of nature. Nature destroys to recreate. Siva is the rejuvenator not the destroyer. What Krishna preaches to Arjuna is in this context.

You may ask: If nothing is slain, and nothing can be slain, there is no sin in killing at all? All these people we call villains, Hitler, Bin Laden and others, they commit no sin by killing, as they are not really killing anyone. So, Krishna is recommending mass violence, isn't He?

No, He is not. For one thing, Krishna speaks as an enlightened Master from an existentialist sense and perspective and says that even when the body perishes the spirit lives on, and therefore there is no death, so to speak.

Violence and killing are not merely body acts; they are psychological compulsions that are acted out. A Hitler, had he not the opportunity to destroy millions, would have destroyed smaller numbers without gaining such notoriety, and his mindset would have been the same. The generals who ordered the bombing of Hiroshima were far more violent than the poor pilot who was ordered to press the button that

dropped the bomb. The mad ruler of a country who orders warfare against others is the violent one, even if he hides behind his throne.

Violence of the mind is fatal; violence of the body is not. Violence of the mind carries on as the *vasana*, the essence of the spirit is from birth to birth, and does not perish with the death of the body. That is the horror; not the act of killing. The spirit is violated, degraded, degenerated by this attitude of violence.

A violent man is always a coward. He does not have the courage to face the truth. He does not have the courage to treat others as he expects to be treated.

He isolates himself in a cocoon of lies, using the excuse of defending himself, and commits offensive violence against others.

In modern times, violence has increased because it is so much easier to kill.

Most often you do not even have to face the person you wish to kill. You can fire a pistol or a rifle, you can throw bombs, you can detonate bombs, and if you are a ruler with power you can press a button unleashing havoc. You do not at all have to face the horror of what you are doing and pretend you know nothing about it. You can even pretend that God asked you to commit violence.

When we become aware, when we become conscious that the person next to us is verily an image of God, how can we possibly respond violently? It has nothing to do with whether some one is part of our family, part of our culture, part of our religion or part of our nation or whatever. The other person may disbelieve in all that we believe in, may oppose our ideas. Yet he is as much a part of this Universe as we are.

That is why Krishna says: How can that man slay or cause others to be slain, who knows Him to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, unchangeable?

How can we? How can violence breed in us when we recognize ourselves to be God, which automatically enables us to be aware that every other living being, animate and inanimate too, is God's image.

If this message of Krishna is truly understood, there can be no violence in this world, no killing at all. You will not even kill an insect. You will not kill even in self defense, because once you are in awareness, your awareness is transmitted to the other being.

Once, in Omkareshwar, a forest region, I ran into this huge bear when I got up from meditation. It was very close to me. I felt no fear. The bear looked at me and walked away. I have come across deadly cobras; very close. They just look at me and go away. When I feel no fear, and therefore no



enmity to them, they understand and accept. All this talk about killing others in self defense is a lie.

All the nations in this world claim they have standing armies because they need to defend themselves. The right to defend is enshrined in all self respecting constitutions. So, if everybody is only defending, who then is offending? Does anyone think about that?

Even, a domesticated dog reacts in anger only when it detects our fear; our violence arises out of our own fear. Even that dog knows that, because it is intelligent, naturally intelligent, unlike us humans. Only humans have the choice to deny nature and be stupid.

Understand what Krishna says, and you will never have fear, either for yourself or others. You are imperishable, everyone around you is imperishable. Shed your fear and violence. Let love for others fill your being.



वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय  
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्य्  
अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥२.२२॥

*vaasaamsi jeernaani yathaa vihaaya  
navaani gruhanaathi naro'paraani  
thatha shareeraani vihaaya jeernaanya  
anyaani samyaati navaani dehi (2.22)*

*vaasaamsi: garments; jirnaani: old and worn out; yathaa: as it is; vihaaya: giving up; navaani: new garments; grhnaati: does accept; narah: a man; aparaani: other; tathaa: in the same way; sariraani: bodies; vihaaya: giving up; jirnaani: old and useless; anyani: different; samyati: verily accepts; navani: new sets; dehi: the embodied.*

Just as man casts off his worn out clothes and puts on new ones, the embodied self also casts off worn out bodies and enters others which are new.





नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।  
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः॥२.२३॥

*nainam chindanti shastraani nainam dahati paavakaha  
na chainam kledayantyaapo na shoshayati maarutaha (2.23)*

*na: never; enam: this soul; chindanti: can cut to pieces;  
sastrani: all weapons; na: never; enam: unto this soul; dahati:  
burns; pavakah: fire; na: never; ca: also; enam: unto this soul;  
kledayanti: moistens; apah: water; na: never; sosayati: dries;  
maarutah: wind.*

Weapons do not cleave It, fire does not burn It, water does  
not moisten It nor does wind dry It.





अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।  
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥२.२४॥

*achhedyoya'madhahyo'yam  
akledhyo'shoshya va cha  
nityaha sarvagathaha sthanur  
achalo'yam sanaathanaha (2.24)*

*acchedyah*: unbreakable; *ayam*: this soul; *adahyah*: cannot be burned; *ayam*: this soul; *akledyah*: insoluble; *asosyah*: cannot be dried; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: and; *nityah*: everlasting; *sarvagatah*: all-pervading; *sthanuh*: unchangeable; *acalah*: immovable; *ayam*: this soul; *sanaatanah*: eternally the same.

The Self cannot be broken, nor burnt, nor dissolved, nor dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.





अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।  
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥२.२५॥

*Avyakto'yam achintyo'yamavikaaryo'yamucchyate*  
*Tasmaadevam viditwainam naanushochitumarhasi*

*avyaktah*: unmanifest; *ayam*: this soul; *acintyah*: unthinkable;  
*ayam*: this soul; *avikaryah*: unchangeable; *ayam*: this soul;  
*ucyate*: is said; *tasmat*: therefore; *evam*: thus; *viditva*: knowing  
it well; *enam*: this soul; *na*: do not; *anusocitum*: to grieve;  
*arhasi*: you ought.

The Self is said to be Unmanifest, Unthinkable and Unchangeable and Able. Knowing this to be such, you should not grieve.



These verses are amongst the most quoted verses of Bhagavad Gita. Here, in very few words, Krishna expounds upon the entire truth of life and death; body mind and spirit. He clarifies why we should accept death gladly, as a matter of fact and course, instead of grieving over it.

He says this so simply, that even an innocent child can understand this truth.

One does not have to be learned in scriptures. In fact, it is a great liability to read the *Gita* when one is well versed in scriptures. We then miss the truth, the simplicity, the innocence of what Krishna says.

What makes *Gita* stand apart from all scriptures, and yet be considered one of the most sacred *sruti*, amongst the Veda and Upanishad is this simple authority and clarity with which this *Jagat Guru*, Master of the Universe, this *purnavatara*, the complete incarnation, speaks.

So simply He says: Just as you cast off your shirt when it is dirty and put on a new one, so does the spirit cast of this body and enter into a new one.

Do we grieve over a dirty shirt that we have cast away when we know we will have a new one? Do we say, 'Oh, I was so attached to this shirt; I cannot let it go; let me keep wearing it; I shall be heart broken if I have to get out of this shirt'?

When we see a new shirt, a new garment, the feeling is automatic. We let go the old and take on the new. Why then this hesitation, this fear when the spirit says, 'Let me get out of this body; it is so old and decrepit; it is diseased and foul; let me go find a newer better body'.

If only we understand that there is no permanence to the body just as there is no permanence to a garment, and a body needs to be changed when it grows old, just the same way as the shirt needs to be changed when it is dirty, there would be no grief, no attachment.

This simple truth is so profound that it takes the greatest Master of all to say it.

'Don't worry', He says, 'What you will find is a newer, better and more attractive model. Let go of your fears; let go of your attachment. Look forward to what is to follow with joy and a sense of anticipation and celebration. Celebrate death, do not mourn over it'.

Krishna goes on to explain further, what that unchanging continuity is, even as the spirit moves from one body to another. What is the nature of that spirit? How is that it is everlasting?

Krishna says, 'Please understand Arjuna, the soul, the spirit is not destroyed as you think. It cannot be destroyed at all. No weapon can destroy It. No *astra*, no *brahmastra*, no nuclear weapon can destroy the soul, the *atman*, the energy within

the body. Fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It, air cannot dry It. It is not made of the elements and cannot be destroyed by the elements. Neither can the absence of the elements destroy It. It is beyond the five elements. It is the energy behind the elements. It is the energy that creates the elements. How can It then die?’

‘It cannot be disintegrated in any manner, by breaking, dissolving, burning or drying as one could do to any other substance made of the five elements of nature. It is eternal. It transcends all the elemental powers and transcends them; it pervades the Universe. It has been there always. It never had to be created. Therefore, it never can be destroyed.’

An understanding of the Truth that Krishna unveils here is the key to immortality. It is the key to liberation from the bondage of life and death. It is the doorway to enlightenment.

Do not fear death, Krishna says, neither yours nor that of others. It is just a passage. It is the disappearance of this material body. However, you are beyond this material body. Even if the body perishes, you live on; so you do not have to worry or fear.

Death is like changing shirts; removing one dress and putting on another. It is routine. It is necessary. What follows is renewal; and therefore, it needs to be celebrated, not grieved over. It is to be looked forward to instead of being avoided.



What survives death is the sacred spirit in you that can never be destroyed. It is not like the body which is made of elements that can be destroyed by the elements, such as earth, water, fire, air and space. It is the energy behind the elements; it is that source which created the elements. It is the energy that is the Universe which has always been and will be; never created, never destroyed. It is unchanging, neutral, eternal and all pervading.

‘When you are that spirit, that energy’, asks Krishna, ‘what is there to grieve about? When you are the Divine yourself, what can you fear? What can you want? What more can you ask for?’

The same answer, the same explanation holds good for every one of us. We are the Divine. We are the Universe. We cannot be destroyed. We live on despite what we see to be the destruction of our body and identity. Once we understand this truth, nothing can disturb us. We can be in bliss.

In the *Mundakopanishad* there is a story of two birds:

Two birds were sitting on a large fruit-bearing tree that had many branches. It had many fruits on each of its branches. One of the birds was a golden hued bird with a lovely plumage. It had a serene calmness about it and was perched silently upon one of the upper branches, which had fewer fruits. It spent most of its time unmoving, showing no interest

in the fruits around it. The second bird was smaller and livelier; this bird was always restless and kept jumping from one branch to another branch searching for fruits to eat.

The second bird felt very happy when it tasted sweet fruits and chirped happily. When it came across a bitter or sour fruit which was often, it made irritated noises and looked unhappy. More the sour and bitter fruits that it tasted, more sorrowful this bird became. It said to itself that there is no joy in these fruits and there is no joy at all in living like this.

It then looked up and saw the blissful golden bird perched above it, sitting in silence, calm and relaxed. The golden bird seemed to light up the entire tree. The smaller bird flew up to look at the golden bird more closely. On the way up, it saw some juicy fruits and it stopped to peck at them. The fruits were tasty and it settled down to eat more. Then some fruits turned bitter, and some sour, and it grew disappointed. It looked up and saw the golden bird again, calm, happy, and relaxed. It moved up again.

It flitted up and down, right and left. Each time it saw the golden bird, it would fly up closer. It would then stop to taste a fruit that first tasted sweet, only to move on to bitter and sour fruits as it stayed on to eat more.

Finally, it reached the treetop where the golden bird was perched. It looked at it up close and was startled to find

that the golden bird was none other than its own self. It went closer and closer, becoming happier and more relaxed. The smaller bird felt a deep connection with the golden hued bird. It was love; not falling in love, but rising in love. Soon it lost its own identity and merged with the golden bird.

When we realize that we are one with the golden bird, our inner Divinity, there is no longer any fear of death; there is no longer any question about who we are. We know.

‘Weapons cannot cleave it, fire cannot burn it’. If only the so called leaders of this world understood what Krishna is saying! There would then be no need for United Nations, Peace Days, Friendship Days and so on. Everyday would be a Peace Day.

What are we trying to do by killing people, by eliminating the physical evidence of their existence? We are trying to eliminate the evidence of people who do not believe us, who dare to question us, and worse still who dare to laugh at us. We would only like to be surrounded by people who fear us, and out of that fear pretend to respect us, like us, love us. People kill people because they would like to eliminate any evidence that they are not loved and respected. They believe that by eliminating this physical evidence of their discomfort, they will generate from the remaining, love towards them. Is this possible?

Hitler killed Jews, not because they offended him in any way but because he was afraid of them. He was a coward. Only cowards kill. If you are courageous you will face up to anyone and argue out your case. In the event you cannot convince the other person, you accept the situation and walk away. In life, in this world, there is enough room for different opinions. It is when we get opinionated, fixed in obsessive beliefs, become intolerant to others who share different values and belief systems that we become afraid. We become afraid that we too may lose our belief, that we may lose our identity. That insecurity and fear of loss of identity is greater than the fear of death. It is in fact nothing but the fear of death, since we see death as the ultimate elimination of our identity. So we respond violently. To avoid being killed, we kill. We kill out of fear.

Once we understand what Krishna says, that death is like changing a worn out garment, this fear of loss of identity will disappear. If we are truly wise, this false identity itself will disappear. Why do we need that garment at all? We will feel freer, fully liberated when we do not have that garment. Then, there is no need even to worry about that change.



अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।  
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२.२६॥

*atha chainam nithyajaatham  
nithyam vaa manyase mrutham  
thathaapi twam mahaabaaho  
naivam shochitumarhasi (2.26)*

*atha:* if, however; *ca:* also; *enam:* this soul; *nitya-jaatham:* always born; *nityam:* forever; *va:* either; *manyase:* so think; *mrtam:* dead; *tatha api:* still; *tvam:* you; *mahaa-baaho:* O mighty-armed one; *na:* never; *enam:* about the soul; *socitum:* to lament; *arhasi:* deserve.

O mighty-armed, even if you should think of the soul as being constantly born and constantly dying, even then, you should not lament.





जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।  
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२.२७॥

*jaatasya hi dhruvo mrityur  
dhruvam janma mritasya cha  
tasmaadaparihaarye'rthe  
na twam shochitumarhasi (2.27)*

*jaatasya*: one who has taken his birth; *hi*: certainly; *dhruvah*: a fact; *mrtyuh*: death; *dhruvam*: it is also a fact; *janma*: birth; *mritasya*: of the dead; *ca*: also; *tasmaat*: therefore; *apariharye*: for that which is unavoidable; *arthe*: in the matter of; *na*: do not; *tvam*: you; *socitum*: to lament; *arhasi*: deserve.

Indeed, death is certain for the born and birth is certain for the dead. Therefore, you should not grieve over the inevitable.



The celebrated Greek philosopher, Socrates, was sentenced to death because the Greek society could not accept his path breaking views and his constant questioning attitude. He was asked to recant his sayings failing which he was sentenced to die by drinking poison. Since he refused to reject his own philosophy, Socrates was sentenced to death.

As he calmly awaited his death, his disciples asked him, 'Master, are you not afraid of dying?' Socrates said, 'There are two possibilities. One that there is indeed life after death; in which case I shall go to a place better than where I am. The other is that there is no life after death, in which case I shall not be aware of anything that would happen now. In either case, what is there to worry?'

Death is inevitable. Whether the spirit lives on after the body perishes and locates itself in another body may be a debatable point to some. Krishna says that this is not a reason to lament death. In either case, death can be a passage that one can look forward to as Socrates did.

Whether the spirit goes to a region called hell or another region called heaven, is as debatable a point as to whether there is an undying spirit at all, or whether that spirit reincarnates. You may believe whatever you like to believe. Occidental religions profess not to believe in the cycle of life and death. They seem to believe that the death is once and for all. Even then, what is there to worry about?

We all know death is inevitable.

Buddha was approached by a deeply disturbed woman one morning. She had brought the body of her dead son to Buddha and said, 'Master, they tell me that you are the only one in this world with the power to revive the dead. Please give life back to my son.'

Buddha knew that no words of His could console the mother. He merely said, 'Mother, please bring me a handful of rice from any household that has not experienced death so far and I shall revive your son.'

The woman went door to door seeking a handful of rice. Every household she went to was only too glad to give her what she asked for. However, they all said that someone or another had indeed died in their household at some time in the past. She went to neighboring villages and got the same reply.

She came back to Buddha, 'Master, I now understand that death is inevitable and that there can be no life without death. Thank you for teaching me this invaluable truth. I would like to sit at your feet for the rest of my life. Please accept me as your disciple.'

Bringing the dead back to life is not a miracle. It can be done under certain circumstances. But, to transform the individual, and to instill Truth in them is indeed the miracle that only a true Master can achieve.





अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।  
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥२.२८॥

*avyaktaadeeni bhootaani  
vyakthamadhyaani bhaarata  
avyaktanidhanaanyave  
tatra aka paridevanaa. (2.28)*

*avyakta-adini*: in the beginning unmanifested; *bhutaani*: all that are created; *vyakta*: manifested; *madhyaani*: in the middle; *bhaarata*: O descendant of Bharata; *avyakta*: nonmanifested; *nidhanaani*: all that are vanquished; *eva*: it is all like that; *tatra*: therefore; *ka*: what; *paridevana*: lamentation.

O Bharata, being unmanifest in the beginning, unmanifest again in their end, seem to be manifest in the middle. What is there then to grieve about?





आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिद् एनम् आश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः।  
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित्॥२.२९॥

*aascharyavatpashyati kaschid enam*  
*aascharyavadwadati tathaiva chaanyaha*  
*aascharyavacchainamanyaha shrunoti*  
*shrutwaapyenam veda na chaiva kaschit (2.29)*

*aascarya-vat*: amazing; *pasyati*: see; *kascit*: some; *enam*: this soul; *aascarya-vat*: amazing; *vadati*: speak; *tatha*: there; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also; *anyah*: another; *aascarya-vat*: similarly amazing; *ca*: also; *enam*: this soul; *anyah*: others; *smoti*: hear; *srutva*: having heard; *api*: even; *enam*: this soul; *veda*: do know; *na*: never; *ca*: and; *eva*: certainly; *kascit*: anyone.

One sees This as a wonder, another speaks of It as a wonder, another hears of It as a wonder. Yet, having heard none understands this at all!





देही नित्यमवधोऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।  
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२.३०॥

*dehee nityamavadhyo'yam  
dehe sarvasya bhaarata  
tasmaatsarvaani bhootaani  
na tvan shochitumarhasi (2.30)*

*dehi*: the owner of the material body; *nityam*: eternally; *avadhyah*: cannot be killed; *ayam*: this soul; *dehe*: in the body; *sarvasya*: of everyone; *bhaarata*: O descendant of Bharata; *tasmaat*: therefore; *sarvaani*: all; *bhutaani*: living entities (that are born); *na*: never; *tvam*: yourself; *socitum*: to lament; *arhasi*: deserve.

O Bharata, This that dwells in the body of everyone is ever indestructible; and therefore, you should not grieve for any creature.



Many of us do believe that life is a wonder; truly so. Life indeed is wondrous. We do not understand how life is created. We may have a biological explanation as to how a sperm impregnates an egg and cells are created; but that is not life at all.

Even till today there is no proof as to how the Universe was created. All one has are theories such as big bang etc. What was there before big bang? No one knows. Buddha rightly observed, 'Universe creates itself. It always was and always will be.' No one knows as well how the first life form originated. Again all that there is, are theories. The explanation for 'abiogenesis', creation of life from non-living matter has no scientific proof as yet. The first life form just seems to have happened. One fine morning or evening or night, the first amino acid, the first life block seems to have sprung up from no where.

All that we know is that life exists. All we can observe and wonder is, the life form that is in front of us, that is manifest. What there was before and what happens to it thereafter are shrouded in questions and mystery. We can believe in what we believe, but we do not know, as we have not observed.

From time immemorial, this has been the human quest. What happens after life, more correctly after death? Conversely, what were we before we were born? There is a famous Zen *koan*, 'What was your face before your father and mother

were born?’ What was it indeed? If only you knew you would have solved the mystery of life and death, wouldn’t you?

Such is the mystery of life, and such is its wonder. Those who are confident enough to take it as it comes are the fortunate, the blessed. Those who fight and grieve are the wretched, the miserable. You cannot fight life or death. They are both beyond you, out of your control. You can marvel at them and be happy and joyous. Or you can keep questioning them and be miserable. This is the choice and freewill you have.

The illustrious King Yayati lived for hundreds of years. Bhagavatam, the Hindu epic, says that when Yama, God of Death came to Yayati at his appointed time of death, Yayati begged to be allowed to live on. He said he had lived life enough, he needed more time. Yama relented and said if one of his sons would give Yayati the rest of his life time, he can live that long. Using the life span of his sons Yayati lived many hundreds of years. Finally, the realization dawned on him that no matter how long he lived his desires would never cease and that fulfillment would never happen through material enjoyment. Yayati gave himself up to Yama once he realized this truth.

It is not death that frightens us. It is leaving this bundle of desires, the feeling of leaving life un-tasted, even after living for decades, that frightens us. The problem with us is that we do not know how to live a fulfilled life; how to genuinely

enjoy ourselves so that our desires are fulfilled. All our desires are partially fulfilled because before they are fulfilled we move on to other desires. The simple fact is that we do not know how to be joyful.

To be truly joyful, to be eternally blissful, is to understand the truth that you are indestructible; that your spirit lives on. Death is not an end; it is a mere passage of sorts. The truth is that the spirit is not satisfied with mere material pleasures. However much you please your senses, you cannot achieve satisfaction. More you enjoy through your senses, more the need for more enjoyment. It never stops. Discontent with material pleasures alone is hardwired into the human psyche.

People are greatly confused about the concept of spirituality. Spirituality is not something intangible or something mysterious that religion and religious leaders need to explain. Spirituality is the total understanding and enjoyment of life, materially, physically, emotionally, relationally, and in all senses without discontent and with responsibility. This enjoyment and responsibility arise out of awareness. This awareness arises out of our ability to focus on the present moment; that is when our mind stops flitting from the past to the future; from regrets to speculation.

The present moment is the only moment when we are truly alive. That is the only moment we are awake. The rest of the time we are in deep sleep, even if our eyes are open; we are in virtual death. Yet, we, the already dead, are afraid to die.

Whether one believes in God, or the inner divinity within ourselves or not, is not relevant for the understanding of death after life. If instead of believing in God we choose to believe in science, we still need to accept that there are no answers to what we were before we were born, and what we will be once we are dead. It is still un-manifest at both ends; it is still a mystery before and after, with no answers. This understanding can only come with the understanding that we live on in spirit.

A Zen Master was asked, 'Now that you are enlightened, what is the difference in your perception of things around you?'

The Master said, 'Before I started the process, I saw a mountain as a mountain and a river as a river. During the process, the mountain was not a mountain, and the river was not a river. Now, again, the mountain is a mountain and the river is a river.'

The Master here means that before he set out on his spiritual journey, he just saw the physical forms of the mountains, rivers etc. But once he started experiencing the energy behind them, he saw them all as manifestations of the very same energy. Eventually, upon enlightenment, he saw them all as the very energy itself, which is the real nature of them all.

Krishna says whatever was permanent and real was unmanifest before, it became manifest, and again it will be unmanifest. Everything is in a state of becoming something else. At every moment, we die and are reborn; millions of cells in our body mind system die everyday and are reborn. Yet, through all this change there is continuity. There is a continuity that we cannot see, touch and feel. What we see as manifested, as this body and mind, hides from us the process of constant change that happens within us as well as the continuous thread that holds the thread of change.





स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।  
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥२.३१॥

*swadharmamapi chaavekshya  
na vikampitumaharsi  
dharmyaaddhi yuddhaachreyo'nyat  
ksatriyasya na vidyate (2.31)*

*sva-dharmam*: one's own religious principles; *api*: also; *ca*: indeed; *aveksya*: considering; *na*: never; *vikampitum*: to hesitate; *arhasi*: you deserve; *dharmyaat*: from religious principles; *hi*: indeed; *yuddhaat*: than fighting; *sreyah*: better engagements; *anyat*: anything else; *ksatriyasya*: of the ksatriya; *na*: does not; *vidyate*: exist.

You should look at your own duty as a *Kshatriya*. There is nothing higher for a *Kshatriya* than a righteous war. You ought not to hesitate.





यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम्।  
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥२.३२॥

*yadrucchaya chopannam*  
*swargadwaarampaavrutam*  
*sukhinaha kshatriyaaha partha*  
*labhante yuddhameedrusham (2.32)*

*yadrucchaya*: by its own accord; *ca*: also; *upannam*: arrived at; *svarga*: heavenly planet; *dwaaram*: door; *apaavrutam*: wide open; *sukhinah*: very happy; *ksatriyaah*: the members of the royal order; *partha*: O son of Prtha; *labhante*: do achieve; *yuddham*: war; *idrsam*: like this.

O Partha, happy indeed are the *Kshatriyas* who are called to fight in such a battle without seeking; this opens for them the door to heaven.





अथ चैत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि।  
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥२.३३॥

*atha chaitvamimam dharmyam  
sangraamam na karishyasi  
tataha swadharmam keerthim cha  
hitwaa paapamavaapsyasi (2.33)*

*atha*: therefore; *cet*: if; *tvam*: you; *imam*: this; *dharmyam*: religious duty; *sangraamam*: fighting; *na*: do not; *karisyasi*: perform; *tatah*: then; *sva-dharmam*: your religious duty; *kirtim*: reputation; *ca*: also; *hitva*: losing; *paapam*: sinful reaction; *avaapsyasi*: do gain.

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will incur sin, having abandoned your own duty and you will lose your reputation.





अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।  
संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥२.३४॥

*akeerthim chaapi bhootaani  
kathayishyanti te'vyayaam  
sambhaavitasya chaakeerthir  
maranaadatirichyate (2.34)*

*akirtim*: infamy; *ca*: also; *api*: over and above; *bhutaani*: all people; *kathayisyanti*: will speak; *te*: of you; *avyayam*: forever; *sambhaavitasya*: for a respectable man; *ca*: also; *akirtih*: ill fame; *maranaat*: than death; *atiricyate*: becomes more than.

People too will remember your everlasting dishonor and to one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death.





भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।  
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥२.३५॥

*bhayaadranaaduparatam*  
*mamsyante twaam maharathaaha*  
*yeshaam cha twam bahumatho*  
*bhootwa yaasyasi laaghavam (2.35)*

*bhayat*: out of fear; *ranat*: from the battlefield; *uparatam*: ceased; *mamsyante*: will consider; *tvam*: unto you; *maharathah*: the great generals; *yesam*: of those who; *ca*: also; *twam*: you; *bahu-matah*: in great estimation; *bhutva*: will become; *yasyasi*: will go; *laghavam*: decreased in value.

The great generals will think that you have withdrawn from the battle because you are a coward; and you will be looked down upon by those who had thought much of you and your heroism in the past.





अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः।  
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम्॥२.३६॥

*avaachayavaadaamshcha bahoon  
vadishyanti thavaahitaaha  
nindantastava saamarthyam  
thatho dukkhataram nu kim (2.36)*

*avacya*: unkind; *vadan*: fabricated words; *ca*: also; *bahun*: many; *vadisyanti*: will say; *tava*: your; *ahitah*: enemies; *nindantah*: while vilifying; *tava*: your; *samarthyam*: ability; *tatah*: thereafter; *dukkhataram*: more painful; *nu*: of course; *kim*: what is there.

Many unspeakable words would be spoken by your enemies reviling your power. Can there be anything more painful than this?





हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।  
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥२.३७॥

*hatho vaa praapsyayi swargam  
jitwa vaa bhokhsyase maheem  
Tasmaadutthista kaunteya  
yuddhaaya kruthanischayaha (2.37)*

*hatah: being killed; va: either; praapsyasi: you will gain;  
svargam: the heavenly kingdom; jitva: by conquering; va: or;  
bhoksyase: you enjoy; mahim: the world; tasmad: therefore;  
uttistha: get up; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; yuddhaya: to fight;  
krta: determined; niscayah: uncertainty.*

Slain, you will achieve heaven; victorious you will enjoy the earth. Therefore, O son of Kunti, stand up determined to fight.





सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ।  
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥२.३८॥

*sukhadukkhe same kruthwa laabhaalaabhau jayaajayau .  
tatho yuddhaya yujyaswa naivam paapamavaapsyasi (2.38)*

*sukha*: happiness; *duhkhe*: in distress; *same*: in equanimity; *krtva*: doing so; *labha-alabhau*: both in loss and profit; *jaya-ajayau*: both in defeat and victory; *tatah*: thereafter; *yuddhaya*: for the sake of fighting; *yujyasva*: do fight; *na*: never; *evam*: in this way; *paam*: sinful reaction; *avaapsyasi*: you will gain.

Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat – having made them all the same, do battle for the sake of battle; you shall thus not incur sin.





Krishna works on Arjuna at two levels. At one level He talks to Arjuna at the super conscious plane educating him on what the Ultimate Truth is.

He talks to Arjuna about how life does not end with the death of the body; about how the undying and indestructible spirit lives on. Here, Krishna addresses Arjuna's fears about killing his relatives and elders, and teaches him that what he considers to be the end of life for these people is just one step in their journey.

Krishna then descends to the practical level at which Arjuna exists. Krishna explains to Arjuna why from a societal point of view he should not run away from the battlefield, but instead stay on and fight as behooves a warrior. Krishna here addresses Arjuna as the *Kshatriya*, the warrior.

In each society, there are groups of people who are the designated protectors of that society. These are the warriors, the soldiers, who defend their country and countrymen. In the same manner, there are others who are designated as clerics and priests, as teachers and counselors, as traders and businessmen, and as workers and manual laborers.

In most modern societies these are commercial as well as societal divisions. They are commercial classifications to the extent that they are the means to one's livelihood, based on one's acquisition of skills and education with the expectation of pursuing such a career and vocation. They however,

become societal classification as well subsequently, as these careers become the tools of building wealth and status. Even in modern societies, the wealth and name thus acquired are passed on through generations, even if those born subsequently have done nothing to earn the wealth and status, and do not have the capability to maintain them.

In ancient India, the system of education was the *gurukulam* system, in which young children stayed with a Master and learnt both material and spiritual skills. This education started very early, as early as three, when the children were left in the Master's care by their parents and at the very latest by seven. The Master gauged the capability and aptitude of each child and trained the child in an appropriate manner. Vocation of the parent or father was not a major criterion in deciding upon the skills imparted to the child. The child's aptitude was determined by behavior and through such studies as astrology, determined the Master's choice.

The *varna* or caste system practiced by the Hindus from time immemorial had its roots in the *gurukulam* education. The *varna* or vocation for each child was determined by the Master, not based on his birth as birthright, but based on aptitude. Unfortunately, over time, this practice became a birthright. Son of a warrior was assumed to be a warrior, irrespective of his capabilities, aptitude or inclination. So, the four *varna* or castes, *Brahmin*, the priest and teacher, *Kshatriya*, the ruler and warrior, *Vaisya*, the trader and

businessman, and *Sudra*, the worker, became rigid social structures based on birthright.

This corruption of such a scientific practice has led to many social inequalities and injustices. The son of a *Brahmin* has no right to call himself a *Brahmin*, unless he has the aptitude and then the learning to be a teacher and a priest. In our ashrams, we now have many young men and women from different castes and religious groups who are being trained in spiritual and religious rituals, which so far had been considered the prerogative of only the Brahmin caste. We have a *Brahmachari*, disciple of Christian faith who trains these people in *Guru Homa* and *Mantra*, the fire rituals, chants etc. In no way are these young priests inferior to any *Brahmin*.

When Krishna refers to Arjuna as a *Kshatriya*, he is referring to the entire personality of Arjuna, the great warrior, which had been only partly by birth and mostly by training based on his aptitude. Arjuna is the quintessential warrior, the samurai, who knows no fear, and yet is now disturbed by issues of whether he is doing right or wrong by fighting against his kinsmen. The code of *Kshatriya* as with the code of samurai, the professional Japanese warriors of earlier days, is a professional code as well; as it is today, with all soldiers. Once you are in the army, you fight irrespective of what you think about who you are fighting against. Rights and wrongs no longer apply.

Krishna says, 'Fight! You are a *Kshatriya*. By fighting as your duty demands, you earn merits and go to heaven. If you runaway from this war you commit a sin. You will also be termed a coward and people who know you will laugh at you. You will be dishonored and for a *Kshatriya*, dishonor is far worse than death. Do not worry about victory or defeat. If you are defeated and die you will ascend to heaven. If you are victorious, you will enjoy material benefits in this world itself. Therefore, fight as it is your duty as a *Kshatriya*.'

Part of what Krishna says is motivational. Krishna, as the transcendental *Parabrahman*, is talking about the practical and societal consequences of Arjuna walking out of the battlefield. If Arjuna had truly been steeped in *ahimsa*, non-violence, Krishna would have never attempted to persuade Arjuna into violence. Arjuna, however, was trying to avoid fighting not because of any moral and conscientious objection, but from the angle of emotional attachment to his kinsmen and others, arising out his own identification with them.

In these verses, Krishna is trying to bring Arjuna out of his dilemma, his depression, his confusion, his *Vishada* that had obscured his normally clear vision.



एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु।  
बुद्ध्ययुक्तो यया पार्थ कमबन्धं प्रहास्यसि॥२.३९॥

*eshaa te'bhihitaa saankhye buddhiryoge twimaam shrunu.  
budhyaayukto yayaa paartha karmabandham prahaasyasi (2.39)*

*esa: all these; te: unto you; abhithita: described; sankhye: by analytical study; buddhih: intelligence; yoge: work without fruitive result; tu: but; imam: this; smu: just hear; buddhya: by intelligence; yuktah: dovetailed; yaya: by which; partha: O son of Prtha; karmabandham: bondage of reaction; prahasyasi: you can be released from.*

This which has been taught to you concerns the wisdom of Sankhya. Now, listen to the wisdom of Yoga. Having known this O Partha, you shall cast off the bonds of action.





नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते।  
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥२.४०॥

*nehabhikramanaasho'sti pratyavaayo na vidyate.*

*Swalpaṃapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayaat. (2.40)*

*na*: there is not; *iha*: in this world; *abhikrama*: endeavoring; *nasah*: loss; *asti*: there is; *pratyavayah*: diminution; *na*: never; *vidyate*: there is; *su-alpam*: a little; *api*: although; *asya*: of this; *dharmasya*: of this occupation; *trayate*: releases; *mahatah*: of very great; *bhayat*: danger.

There is neither a loss of effort in this nor production of harmful results. Even a little knowledge of this, even a little practice of Yoga, protects one from great fear.





व्यवसायावत्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।  
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥२.४१॥

*vyavasaayaatmikaa buddhirekeha kurunandana.*  
*bahushaakhaa hyanantaascha buddhiyo'vyavasaayinaam (2.41)*

*vyavasaya-atmika*: resolute Krsna consciousness; *buddhih*: intelligence; *eka*: only one; *iha*: in this world; *kuru-nandana*: O beloved child of the Kurus; *bahu-sakhah*: various branches; *hi*: indeed; *anantah*: unlimited; *ca*: also; *buddhayah*: intelligence; *avyavasayinam*: of those who are not in Krsna consciousness.

Here, Kuru-nandana, O Joy of the Kurus, there is but a single-pointed determination; the thoughts of the irresolute are many – branched and endless.





यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः।  
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः॥२.४२॥

*yaamimaam pushpitaam vaacham pravadantyaavipashchitaha.  
vedavaadarataaha paartha naanyadasteeti vaadinaha (2.42)*

The unwise ones, utter flowery speech taking pleasure in the eulogizing words of Vedas, O Partha, saying, 'There is nothing else'.







कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।  
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥२.४३॥

*kaamaatmaanaha swargaparaa janmakarmaphalapradaam.*  
*Kriyaavisheshabahulaam bhogaishvaryagatim prati (2.43)*

*yam imam*: all these; *puspitam*: flowery; *vacam*: words; *pravadanti*: say; *avipascitah*: men with a poor fund of knowledge; *veda-vada-ratah*: supposed followers of the Vedas; *partha*: O son of Partha; *na*: never; *anyat*: anything else; *asti*: there is; *iti*: thus; *vaadinah*: advocates; *kama-atmanah*: desirous of sense gratification; *svarga-parah*: aiming to achieve heavenly planets; *janma-karma-phala-pradam*: resulting in fruitive actions, good birth, etc.; *kriya-visesa*: pompous ceremonies; *bahulam*: various; *bhoga*: sense enjoyment; *aisvarya*: opulence; *gatim*: progress; *prati*: towards.

Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas, which recommend various fruitive activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resultant good birth, power, and so forth. Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this.





भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम्।  
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥२.४४॥

*bhogaishwaryaprasaktaanaam thayaapahritachetasaam.*  
*vyavasaayaatmika buddhihi samaadhau na vidheeyate (2.44)*

*bhoga*: material enjoyment; *aisvarya*: opulence; *prasaktanam*: those who are so attached; *taya*: by such things; *apahrta-cetasam*: bewildered in mind; *vyavasaaya-atmika*: fixed determination; *buddhih*: devotional service of the Lord; *samadhau*: in the controlled mind; *na*: never; *vidhiyate*: does take place.

For, those whose minds are diverted by such teachings and who cling to joy and mere devotion, are neither determined nor resolute and are not fit for steady meditation and Samadhi.





त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।  
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥२.४५॥

*traigunyah*: pertaining to the three modes of material nature;  
*visayah*: on the subject matter; *vedah*: Vedic literature; *nistraigunya*:  
*gunyah*: in a pure state of spiritual existence; *bhava*: be;  
*arjuna*: O Arjuna; *nirdvandvah*: free from the pains of  
opposites; *nitya-sattva-sthah*: ever remaining in *sattva*  
(goodness); *niryoga-ksemah*: free from (the thought of)  
acquisition and preservation; *atma-van*: established in the  
Self.

O Arjuna! Be you above the three attributes that the Vedas deal in; free yourself from the pairs-of-opposites and be always in *Satva* (goodness), free from all thoughts of acquisition or preservation and be established in the Self.





यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।  
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥२.४६॥

*yaavaanartha udapaane sarvataha samplutodake  
taavaansarveshu vedeshu braahmanasya vijaanathaha (2.46)*

*yavan:* all that; *arthah:* is meant; *uda-pane:* in a well of water; *sarvatah:* in all respects; *sampluta-udake:* in a great reservoir of water; *tavan:* similarly; *sarvesu:* in all; *vedesu:* Vedic literature; *brahmanasya:* of the man who knows the Supreme Brahman; *vijanatah:* of one who is in complete knowledge.

To the Brahmana who has known the Self, all the Vedas are of as much use as a reservoir of water in a place which is in flood.



Krishna begins his teaching of *Karma Yoga* to Arjuna in these verses. These verses should be read carefully by those who believe solely in scriptural authority, based on their superficial understanding of the meaning of what has been said.

Krishna says unequivocally here, 'Forget the Veda'.

He says, 'all the knowledge contained in the Veda is as much use as water within a flood, to one who has realized himself. Veda is self limiting; it concerns the three attributes, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; the attributes of calmness, aggressive action and lazy inaction. The time has come now to move beyond these attributes; at least be in the state of *satva*, calmness.'

'Do not quote to Me what the scriptures say', Krishna says. He continues, 'Do not tell me about what you should do and should not do in this life through rituals and practices that will please the deities and ancestors, so that you will benefit materially in this life and spiritually in after life. All this is for people with limited understanding of their own Self, people who have not experienced the Truth. These are the people who still hanker after fulfilling of sensual pleasures and name and fame.'

'Move beyond them to the single pointed determination of Yoga that I shall teach you', Krishna says, 'and be installed in a state where you are no longer concerned about creation,

preservation and destruction; you will be beyond these and reach the state of the *Parabrahman*'.

Only a Master, the Master of the Universe, the *Jagat Guru* can say such things and get away with it. Krishna's authority as He speaks these words casting away the divinely transmitted scriptures, the Veda, to instill truth in the mind of Arjuna, is compelling.

It is the truth as spoken by the Divine who Himself Has all the knowledge contained in the Veda.

Veda, the collection of knowledge as experienced by the great sages, the *rishis*, was conveyed for generations by word of mouth and was referred to as *sruti*, transmitted to the ear. *Vedanta*, *Sankhya*, *Mimamsa* and such other philosophical paths had their origin from the Veda, as learned men over generations contemplated upon these truths and added their own experiences. *Sankhya* philosophy is about the apparent duality - *Purusha*, the static male principle and *Prakriti*, the active female principle. Though *Sankhya* accepts that one cannot exist without the other, the two are deemed separate. Kapila is credited to the author of *Sankhya*. *Vedanta* on the other hand, credited for its brilliant exposition and subsequent development by Sankara, is all about non-duality. *Brahman* or collective consciousness and *Atman* or individual consciousness are one and the same; what keeps them separate is ignorance, *maya*.

All these apparent contradictions arise from the superficial understanding of the Vedic knowledge. All the great scriptures, Veda, Upanishad and *Gita* exist at different levels of understanding; seven levels, to be precise, depending on the energy level that one dwells in. At the highest level, one understands that all that there is, is ONE. There is no experiencer, experienced or experience as separate entities at the highest energy level; ALL is ONE.

Krishna refers to that truth, the truth of the highest energy here in these verses. ‘Do not be carried away by the apparent ritualistic approach of the Veda as propounded by half learned scholars’, the Master says, ‘go beyond; go beyond the Sankhya that extols duality. All these seemingly bring joy but it is transient; that joy is the brief intermission between periods of sorrow; go beyond and seek the firm truth of the ONE, the union, that is yoga’, He says to Arjuna.

‘There is something beyond these superficial understandings’, the *Jagat Guru* says, ‘that will take you beyond the three human attributes of *satva* (calmness), *rajas* (active action) and *tamas* (passive inaction) and into liberation arising out of true understanding’. ‘At that stage’, He says, ‘you will be beyond creation, preservation and destruction, as these would have no meaning in the understanding of the permanence of the Ultimate Energy’.

Krishna finally says, ‘once you understand and realize the

*Brahman*, all the knowledge of the Veda, that you quote so passionately, will be of as much relevance to you as a lake in the midst of a place which is all water'.

Krishna is leading Arjuna step by step as if teaching a baby to walk. One by one the Master demolishes Arjuna's arguments and fears, dispelling his dilemma.

These first baby steps address Arjuna's intellect for that's all Arjuna was using till then. Krishna shows Arjuna how inadequate and meaningless his intellectual knowledge, which is all borrowed with no experiential backing. He now seeks to lead him into experiential knowledge.





कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥२.४७॥

*karmanyevaadhikaarasthe ma phaleshu kadaachana  
maa karmaphalaheturbhooor maa te sango'stwakarmani (2.47)*

*karmani:* prescribed duties; *eva:* certainly; *adhikarah:* right; *te:* of you; *ma:* never; *phalesu:* in the fruits; *kadacana:* at any time; *ma:* never; *karma-phala:* in the result of the work; *hetuh:* cause; *bhuh:* become; *ma:* never; *te:* of you; *sangah:* attachment; *astu:* be there; *akarmani:* in not doing.

Your right is to work only, but never to its fruits. Let not the fruit of action be your motive nor let your attachment be to inaction.





योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥२.४८॥

*yogastaha kuru karmaani sangam tyaktvaa dhananjaya  
siddhyasiddhyoho samo bhootvaa samatvam yoga ucchyathe (2.48)*

*yoga-sthah: steadfast in yoga; kuru: perform; karmani: your duties; sangam: attachment; tyaktva: having abandoned; dhananjaya: O Dhananjaya; siddhi-asiddhyoh: success and failure; samah: the same; bhutva: having become; samatvam: evenness of mind; yogah: yoga; ucyate: is called.*

O Dhananjaya! perform your action abandoning attachment, being steadfast in Yoga, balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is called Yoga.



The entire teaching of the Bhagavad Gita can be summarized in the above two verses. The sheer brilliance of the wisdom of the *Jagat Guru* is reflected in these verses. Whenever I get a chance I refer to these verses to explain as to how one should lead one's life.

Krishna says many, many things in these few words. He says, 'You have the right and responsibility to work. You have no responsibility or right to the results of that work. Do not focus on the result and make it either an object of greed to chase, or fear to stay away from. Do what you have to do, without worrying about whether you will succeed or fail, with a centered mind'.

Nothing more can be said or ever needs to be said about why and how one should perform.

Many people mis-communicate these verses and misunderstand these verses. There are people who stay from work which they fear may end in adverse results. As long as results can be positive either to themselves or others they will carry out what they are assigned sincerely. But, when they think that something bad may happen they will stop doing whatever they are doing.

There are others who feel that doing nothing and disengaging from all action is the best solution since all actions result in reactions, and they accumulate *karma*.

Of course, almost all of us go blindly doing whatever we are told to do when we see money or material benefit dangled at the end of the job as a carrot in front of us.

Krishna says, 'Stop! Who do you think you are? You are here to do My work. You have no right to take the results, which are Mine'. His attitude is similar to that of a land owner who has sharecroppers working on the land. The sharecroppers have no right to anything but their sustenance wages. Their's is not to worry about whether the land will yield well or not well. All that they need to do is do well what they are told to do. The landlord is the owner and ultimate beneficiary.

Awareness of what Krishna says here is the solution to almost all our day-to-day problems. Do what you have to do, without worrying about the results.

Do not do only because you wish to, because, a what you speculate, will be at the end of the action.

Do not stop doing what you need to do, because you are afraid of what you think lies ahead.

Many of you in corporate life are focused on end results. You would like to do only if you think that the action will be effective. You get caught up in the end result even before you start. So, how do you define what is effective? For whom should it be effective?

Ninety percent of the time, effectiveness is interpreted as something that benefits you. Even if it benefits the organization, you do it because your performance will be recognized and you will be rewarded. Have you ever done anything knowing fully well that you will be caught and punished? If you are sensible and law abiding I doubt if you will have. So in a company also you will do such things that will reward you and avoid what will cause problems.

We learn this lesson early in life. Our parents and elders teach us this rule from infancy. 'Do this and we shall reward you; do that and we will punish you'. We are all brought up with the conditioning of what is good for us and what is bad for us; what will be successful or what will be a failure, both success and failure based on what we shall be rewarded or punished for.

Society operates on this principle of greed and fear to prevent us from doing actions that the society does not want us to. Religions do the same. Society threatens you with legal punishment here and now; religion threatens you with punishment in the hereafter, in hell or heaven. What is hell or heaven? Do they exist? No, they do not. Be very clear, they exist only in the minds of priests and preachers so that they can download the images into you and control you. If there was indeed a hell, it will be populated by preachers, because hypocrisy is a bigger sin than many others.

You are not true to yourself, your spirit, your energy, when you say one thing and do another. You do not walk your talk. The word *Acharya* in Sanskrit is the word for a true teacher. It means one who walks with the student, one who walks his talk, one who is true to his word. When I ordain my *Acharya*, teachers of my philosophy and mission, I apply honey on their tongues and tell them that I shall be on their tongues, so they better be careful of what they say, and what they do. 'Walk your talk', I tell them.

When you walk your talk and your talk is true, then you do not have a problem, but if the talk itself is untrue, then your walk, your actions will also be untrue. Ultimately it is all about the truth, your awareness, being in the present moment. If what you preach comes from awareness, and the truth of your own experience, and you act in accordance with that truth and awareness, then there is no differentiation between thought, word and actions; all will be true.

In the Bible, there is the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son:

A man has two sons. He splits his wealth between the two of them. One of them goes away with the money and spends it foolishly. The other stays with the father, takes care of the wealth and the father. Years later the son who went away comes back penniless. The father welcomes him warmly and throws a party to welcome him and kills the 'fatted calf' on

this special occasion. The other son is very annoyed and expresses his displeasure. The father says, 'You are always with me and you can count on my love; this guy, this prodigal son, needs my attention'.

If you look at this parable deeper than the mere words, you will understand that the father is acting on the truth of his experience and the son is acting out of expectations.

The son feels, he has been good, so he needs to be rewarded; the prodigal son has been bad and needs to be punished.

We are all prodigal sons in this world. If the Universal Energy, who we call God, were to treat us based on what we may seem to deserve, then we have no hope. All of us will end in hell, as the preachers promise; they say we are all born sinners. If we are all born sinners, how can repentance and contributing to the coffers of the religious institution change that reality and guide us into heaven instead of hell. The words 'to repent' meant in its original Greek, 'to go back'. When Jesus said 'repent', He meant that we should go back into awareness, the awareness from which we were born, that's all.

What Krishna says here is the law of nature. Nature just is. Nature just acts. Nature does not think about end results, successes and failures. Nature does not look for rewards nor is it concerned about punishments.

People ask me, 'Master, why is nature so cruel? Why are there natural disasters? Why do young children die?' The answer is what Krishna gives: Nature goes about its job without any thought about what the end result is. What happens will happen, it is bound to happen. Nature follows its *dharma*, its path of righteousness. The problem is that we do not understand the *dharma* of nature; we measure natural actions by our yardstick of logic.

You will then ask me, how do we know what to do? How do we know what is the path of righteousness? How do we know what our *dharma* is? Is it something as simple as saying, 'you are a *Kshatriya*, therefore you should fight and kill, and don't worry about who dies, that's not your problem? Or, that you are a *Vaisya*, a businessman, your *dharma* is to make money and therefore not worry about who you cheat, and that is not your problem?'

Krishna, the Jagat Guru is talking about acting in awareness. He says, 'be centered in Yoga and drop all attachment to results; do what you have to do'.

What beautiful wisdom!

Yoga is union, union of man and Divine. It is your realization of your own self, your realization that you are divine. It is the state of awareness, state of truth, state of the present, when all that you do will be in righteous consciousness. When you perform in this awareness, and with



no expectations, you will perform what is right and just.

I teach my disciples that thoughts are unconnected, illogical and unpredictable. I teach them that it is only when people link thoughts together that problems start, suffering happens. We remember a few out of hundreds of events and try to make a link. 90% of what we observe and experience is never recorded by our conscious memory; they just slip into our unconscious. So, what we remember is 10% of what we experience. Within that what stays in our memory is always that which falls outside the pattern. If it is part of a normal pattern we will almost always ignore and forget the event.

Think! When you drive to work, if you see a beggar every day at a street corner, after a while, his presence is no longer noteworthy. It is only if he is absent, you will say to yourself, 'hey that guy is not there today'. If your spouse is always nasty, it is no surprise if he or she is nasty today too; but if that spouse has been specially caring and loving today then that would be a miracle, and noteworthy. The trouble is that our mind picks up these exceptions because that is what it remembers and forms a pattern. It forgets all other evidences and remembers the exceptions. It then expects that exception to happen. When it does not happen you are unhappy; if it does you are happy, till the next time when it does not happen.

So, I tell them not to link thoughts and create a shaft of thoughts. I tell them to un-clutch from their thoughts and to

drop their mind. I teach them how to stay in the present. Some of them misunderstand the reference to 'being un-clutched'. They think that to be un-clutched is to do nothing. They think that to drop the mind is to be passive, inactive, to do nothing. No, not at all! You can be doing nothing and yet occupy your mind fully. That is what they mean by saying that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. When you have nothing to do, what you end up doing is conjuring up fantasies.

Inaction is not what I advise. When your mind drops, when thoughts cease, your energy level is so high that you cannot be inactive; you will act spontaneously out of sheer necessity. Physical and mental idleness are never produced by a no-thought mind. One must not link *idleness* with *calmness*. One with a no-thought mind dwells in peace, calmness and harmony, but is all alert to act spontaneously in a way that would best suit that situation. With a no-thought mind, comes great awareness and energy; idleness or lethargy is far from it. A confused and furiously overworked mind is constantly occupied in chatter and fantasies, which can result in apathy and idleness.

That is why Krishna says that you must act. He says do not get attached to results of your inaction nor get attached to inaction thinking that could be an easy way out of this problem.



योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥२.४८॥

*yogastaha kuru karmaani sangam tyaktvaa dhananjaya  
siddhyasiddhyoho samo bhootvaa samatwam yoga ucchyathe (2.48)*

*yoga-sthah: steadfast in yoga; kuru: perform; karmani: your duties; sangam: attachment; tyaktva: having abandoned; dhananjaya: O Dhananjaya; siddhi-asiddhyoh: success and failure; samah: the same; bhutva: having become; samatvam: evenness of mind; yogah: yoga; ucyate- -is called.*

O Dhananjaya, perform your action abandoning attachment, being centered in Yoga, balanced in success and failure. Such evenness of mind is called Yoga.





दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।  
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥२.४९॥

*doorena hyavaram karma buddhiyogaadghananjaya  
buddhou sharanamanwiccha krupanaaha phalahetavaha (2.49)*

*durena: from a distance; hi: certainly; avaram: abominable;  
karma: activities; buddhi-yogat: based on the Yoga of wisdom;  
ghananjaya: O conqueror of wealth; buddhau: in such wisdom;  
saranam: full surrender; anviccha: desire; krpanah: the misers;  
phala-hetavah: those desiring fruitive action.*

O Dhananjaya, farther than the Yoga of wisdom, is action. Wretched are those whose motive is the fruit; surrender yourself to wisdom.





बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते।  
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥२.५०॥

*buddhiyukto jahaateeha ubhe sukrutadushkrute  
tasmaadhyogaaya yujyaswa yogaha karmasu kaushalam (2.50)*

*buddhi-yuktah*: one who is engaged in wisdom; *jahati*: can get rid of; *iha*: in this life; *ubhe*: in both; *sukrta-duskrte*: in good and bad results; *tasmat*: therefore; *yogaya*: for the sake of yoga; *yujyasva*: be so engaged; *yogah*: in yoga; *karmasu*: in all activities; *kausalam*: art.

Endowed with the wisdom of evenness-of mind, one casts off both good and evil deeds in this life; therefore, devote yourself to Yoga, skill in action is Yoga.





कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः।  
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥२.५१॥

*karmajam buddhiyuktaa hi phalam tyaktvaa maneeshinaha  
janmabandhavinirmuktaaha padam gacchantyanaamayam (2.51)*

*karma-jam*: because of fruitive activities; *buddhi-yuktah*: being done in wisdom; *hi*: certainly; *phalam*: results; *tyaktva*: giving up; *manisinhah*: devotees who are great sages; *janma-bandha*: the bondage of birth and death; *vinirmuktah*: liberated soul; *padam*: position; *gacchanti*: reached; *anamayam*: without miseries.

The wise, having abandoned the fruits of their actions and possessed of knowledge, are freed from the chains of birth and go to the state which is beyond all sorrow.





यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।  
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥२.५२॥

*yadaa te mohakalilam buddhirvyatitarishyati*  
*tadaa gantaasi nirvedam shrotavyasya shrutasya cha (2.52)*

*yada*: when; *te*: your; *moha*: illusory; *kalilam*: dense forest; *buddhih*: with wisdom; *vyatitarisyati*: surpasses; *tada*: at that time; *ganta asi*: you shall go; *nirvedam*: callousness; *srotavyasya*: all that is to be heard; *srutasya*: all that is already heard; *ca*: also.

When your wisdom takes you beyond the mire of delusion, then you shall attain the indifference as to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.





श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।  
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥२.५३॥

*shrutivipratipannaa te yadaa sthaasyati nischalaa  
samaadhaavachalaa buddhistadaa yogamavaapasyasi (2.53)*

*sruti*: scriptures; *vipratipanna*: without being influenced; *yada*: when; *sthasyati*: remains; *nischala*: unmoved; *samadhaui*: in its true state, *achala*: unflinching; *buddhih*: wisdom; *tada*: at that time; *yogam*: self-realization; *avapsyasi*: you will achieve.

When you are not confused by what you have heard, and your wisdom stands steady and unmoving in the Self, then you shall attain Self-realization.





Krishna reiterates and emphasizes what he has said before and ends with a punchline.

He says, ‘Act without attachment, do not worry about success or failure in results. Center yourself in wisdom that takes you beyond action and the desire for fruits of action. Once you are centered in wisdom you will act wisely. Once you give up attachment to results you will be freed from the cycle of birth and death, and will be beyond sorrow’.

He then adds, ‘When you are centered in wisdom you will no longer be deluded by what you have heard and are yet to hear. When you are no longer deluded by what you have heard and are centered in wisdom, you are liberated’.

Krishna’s immediate reference here is to the scriptures, the Veda, which were then not written down and were passed on only through hearing. Arjuna had earlier quoted to Krishna these scriptures to show that if he killed his kinsmen and elders what would result would be serious damage not only to himself, but to his progeny and even to his ancestors. Krishna chides Arjuna and says, ‘Don’t be confused by what you hear, even if it is supposed to be divine knowledge, the sacred scriptures, the Veda. If you are centered in wisdom, you can never be deluded; you will be in awareness’.

Krishna’s words resonate in truth even today, and perhaps are far more relevant. We are bombarded by information from all sides, 24 hours a day, whether we like it or not. When

something is repeated time and again, especially by some one in authority, we tend to believe and accept what is said without reservation. No one even needs to force you to believe; your brain can be washed without any pressure, without coercion. This is what Goebbels, the Nazi Information Chief for Hitler meant when he said people will believe any lie if it is repeated often enough. This is what Mao used very successfully in China. This is what many religious institutions use to instill fear and greed in people to obey their commandments. This is also what all marketing and advertising executives do to make you do what they wish you to do.

We all tend to believe what we see, hear and read; the first response of most of us is to believe rather than doubt. This is especially true when what we see, hear and read has been already installed from childhood into us. If we have been told again and again from childhood as most of us are, that we must listen to elders, read figures of authority, we grow up tending to do just that.

Social, business and religious institutions use this power with devastating effect upon us. All religions will have some supreme book that is believed to be divine in origin, that is in violation and which must be obeyed implicitly. Why? Does our inner experience tell us that whatever such a book says is relevant to us and more importantly do we perceive it to be relevant today?

The Hindu scriptures, the *Sruti*, such as Veda which are supposedly divine in origin, and the *Smriti*, rules and regulations laid down later by Manu and other sages, make no such claims. In fact, Hindu scriptures have at once both the humility and the arrogance to challenge us to transform, change us according to the needs of the day, but stipulate that we first experience what is said. Hindu scriptures are not dead knowledge that is a burden upon us to bear, but living guidelines that lead us into wisdom and liberation.

So, Krishna, says, 'let the Veda say what it wants, hear what ever you have to, but put what you hear, see, and read, to the test of wisdom to take you beyond delusion'. He asks Arjuna to experience what he hears, reads and sees, and then to decide what he must do. Krishna has already said in the *Gita* that He is the Veda, He is knowledge, and yet He asks him to listen to his inner wisdom, not to the knowledge of others. What courage, what authority! Only one who is so sure about the Truth can say, 'do not hear what I say and act, but listen to your inner voice of Truth born out of awareness and experience'. One can write hundreds and thousands of pages, but they will be meaningless when judged against these words of the Master.

Social and corporate institutions are even more salacious in using this technique of imposing their truths on us, without giving us a chance to verify and accept. 'We have said this, this is the law, so you must obey if you wish to be part of us, otherwise get out'. That is why *sanyasin*, monks, get out of

the rule-bound world, seeking the freedom of truth, but unfortunately many get caught in the rules of religion. In society, wise men have been punished over the ages for expressing truths that they experienced which were in violation of beliefs then held by their leaders. Socrates, Copernicus, da Vinci and many others suffered when they refused to accept what they heard. They were revered as visionaries, years after they passed away.

In today's corporate world, people who stand up to what they believe is right when they see their companies doing unethical things are referred to as 'whistle blowers'. Today it is a respected word. Even three decades ago this was a derogatory word, referring to traitors. Why is such a person a traitor? Is it because he/she sees a truth that is a variance to what his institutions, the company, the Government or religion tells him. If in the wisdom of one's experience one realizes a truth different from what one has heard, the individual not only has the right, but also the responsibility to humanity to tell them about that truth. The truth may be joyful or painful, but it must be told.

Krishna is taking Arjuna through the path of enlightenment through simple steps. He says, 'don't be inactive, do what you need to do. Do it with no expectations and no attachment to results. Do it with a centered mind and in wisdom. Do it with the wisdom of your own inner calling, and not because of something you have heard. You will then go beyond all suffering, and be liberated'.

These steps are so simple that every one can practice them; infact every one *should* practice them. Stay in the present moment of your awareness without worrying about what you have heard and experienced in the past or what you expect to hear and experience in future. Stay fully centered in the experience of the present and based on the truth of that experience, act. You can never go wrong. I promise you that.



अर्जुन उवाच :

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।  
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत् ब्रजेत किम् ॥२.५४॥

*Arjuna uvaacha*

*sthitapragnyasya kaa bhaashaa samaadhisthasya keshava  
sthitadeehi kim prabhasheta kimaaseeta vrajeta kim (2.54)*

*arjunah uvaca:* Arjuna said; *sthita-prajnasya:* of one who is situated in the present moment; *ka:* what; *bhasa:* language; *samadhi-sthasya:* of one situated in truth; *kesava:* O Krsna; *sthita-dhih:* one fixed in wisdom; *kim:* what; *prabhaseta:* speak; *kim:* how; *asita:* does remain; *vrajeta:* walks; *kim:* how.

O Kesava, what is the description of him who stays in the present moment and is merged in the awareness of truth and wisdom? How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?





श्री भगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान्।  
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥२.५५॥

*Sri Bhagavan uvaacha*

*prajahaati yadaa kaamaan sarvaan paartha manogataan  
aathmanyevaathmana thushtaha sthita-pragnasthadocchyate (2.55)*

*sri-bhagavan uvaca:* The Lord said; *prajahati:* gives up; *yada:* when; *kaman:* desires for sense gratification; *sarvan:* of all varieties; *partha:* O son of Prtha; *manah-gatan:* of mental concoction; *atmani:* in the pure state of the soul; *eva:* certainly; *atmana:* by the purified mind; *tustah:* satisfied; *sthita-prajnah:* situated in present moment; *tada:* at that time; *ucyate:* is said.

Sri Bhagavan said :

O Partha, when a man casts off completely all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then he is said to be one of steady wisdom.





दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।  
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥२.५६॥

*dukkheshvanudvignamanaaha sukheshu vigataspruhaha  
veetaraagabhayakrodaha Sthitadheemrunirucchate (2.56)*

*duhkhesu:* in sorrow; *anudvigna-manah:* without being agitated in mind; *sukhesu:* in happiness; *vigata-spruhah:* without being too interested; *vita:* free from; *raga:* attachment; *bhaya:* fear; *krodhah:* anger; *sthita-dhih:* one who is steady in wisdom ; *munih:* a sage; *ucyate:* is called.

He whose mind is not disturbed by adversity and who in prosperity does not go after other pleasures; he who is free from attachment, fear or anger, is called a sage-of-steady wisdom.







यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।  
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२.५७॥

*yam sarvatraanabhisnehastattatpraapya shubhashubham  
naabhinandati na dweshti tasya parjanya prathithitaa (2.57)*

*yah*: one who; *sarvatra*: everywhere; *anabhisnehah*: without affection; *tat*: that; *tat*: that; *prapya*: achieving; *subha*: good; *asubham*: evil; *na*: never; *abhinandati*: praise; *na*: never; *dvesti*: envies; *tasya*: his; *parjanya*: perfect knowledge; *pratisthita*: fixed.

His wisdom is fixed on one who is everywhere without attachment, on meeting with anything good or bad and who neither rejoices nor hates.





यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।  
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२.५८॥

*yadaa samharate chaayam koormo'ngaaneeva sarvashaha  
indriyaaneendriyaarthebhyastasya prajnya pratisthita (2.58)*

*yada*: when; *samharate*: winds up; *ca*: also; *ayam*: all these;  
*kurmah*: tortoise; *angani*: limbs; *iva*: like; *sarvasah*: altogether;  
*indriyani*: senses; *indriya-arthebhyah*: from the sense objects;  
*tasya*: his; *prajna*: consciousness; *pratisthita*: fixed up.

As the tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides, when a person withdraws his senses from the sense-objects, then his wisdom becomes steady.





विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः।  
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥२.५९॥

*vishayaa vinivartante niraahaarasya dehinaha  
rasavarjam raso'pyasya param drushtvaa nivartate (2.59)*

*visayah*: objects for sense enjoyment; *vinivartante*: are practiced to be refrained from; *niraharasya*: by negative restrictions; *dehinah*: for the embodied; *rasa-varjam*: giving up the taste; *rasah*: sense of enjoyment; *api*: although there is; *asya*: his; *param*: far superior things; *drstva*: by experiencing; *nivartate*: ceases from.

From the man in this body the objects of the senses turn away, still leaving behind the longing; his longing also leaves him on seeing the Supreme.



Arjuna is now curious and wants to know more. He asks Krishna, 'Fine, you are telling me all this, that's great. You tell me that I must perform without expectations and attachment, and that I must be centered in wisdom. Sure, I too would like to be that way, moving in the path of wisdom. Pray, tell me what kind of a person is this, the one who is always in awareness, and in the present moment? How does he behave, walk and talk? Let me model myself after him'.

There is a branch of behavioral psychology called NLP, or Neuro Linguistic Programming. In NLP the basic tenet is to model our activities based on those of people we wish to emulate. If you talk, move, walk like Gandhi, you too can become like Gandhi, says NLP. There is some truth in this. When you immerse yourself in the mould of another person, imitate him completely; you start thinking like that person, and become somewhat like that person. Arjuna is asking Krishna for the specifications of the person he should emulate so that he too can become what Krishna wants him to be.

Krishna responds, 'This man is free from desires and emotions. He has neither greed nor fear. He is always centered in himself. Pleasures through the senses do not interest him. He has withdrawn his senses from the external world, and has focused them inwards, directed towards that Supreme truth, which is beyond all pleasures, attachments, emotions and sense objects. Once he realizes that truth, even

the longing for that truth leaves him’.

Krishna thus describes the *Yogi*, the realized one, to Arjuna, so that he too may emulate him and realize himself.

Once again Krishna teaches through simple steps. ‘*Nirmohatve nischalatatvam*’, says Sankara, taking a cue from the Master; absence of desires leads to a clear and still mind, steeped in wisdom. Dropping expectations, letting go of attachments, moving away from the regrets of the past and the fantasies of the future, if one brings the mind to the present, the mind stops and desires drop. When there are no desires, there are no emotions that normally arise from the fulfillment or non fulfillment of such desires, such as joy, elation, depression, sadness, anger, disappointment, jealousy and so on.

When the mind is without fear and anger, without expectations of success and failure, the unattached mind seeks that which is unattached; it seeks the Ultimate Truth which is beyond all desires, emotions and attachment. The mind and the senses that the mind directs, move away from the external objects of attraction to within. First the objects drop, then the desire for the objects disappear as truth dawns.

This may sound complicated, but is as simple as counting ‘1, 2, 3’.

This universe is responsible for all of us. We exist not because of us but in spite of us. When we let go, when we listen to the Universe, it gives us all that we need. But the problem is that we don't listen. We do not stop with our needs, but get greedy with our wants. There is no way all our wants can be fulfilled without taking away the needs of other beings in this universe. The law of the jungle operates beautifully without man; animals act based on needs and not on wants; no animal will kill wantonly. It would do so only to appease hunger or when threatened. Once man enters the picture then this equation changes. Man engages in wanton killing, without caring about what he needs. Man has no innate intelligence unlike animals.

Once we choose to live based on our needs, we choose to live on present needs and not futuristic wants. We ascend into the present moment. Desires based on past and future dissolve. We start understanding our role in our relationship with the universe. We realize that we too are the universe, and that we can have all that we need without desire, emotions, fear and greed, and most importantly without suffering.

Krishna aptly provides the example of the tortoise to illustrate how to withdraw one's senses inwards. The tortoise follows its instincts to obey nature; it lives in the present moment. It moves when its sensors report that there is no danger and it withdraws completely when it senses threat. It lays its eggs wading out of the sea on the beach and moves back in when

the hatching is done. Its entire cycle of life is tuned into the wisdom of nature. It is not an active and adventurous living being, but it is celebrated in all ancient cultures for its longevity and steadiness. So Krishna gives the analogy of the tortoise withdrawing itself completely from the external world into its shell to explain how man should withdraw from the dictates of the senses and be centered in his Self.

The human is an obviously different being compared to the rest of the animals. He alone of all living beings has the capability to think and act. He alone has the power to decide whether he follows the wisdom of nature endowed in him as in all other beings or reject it and decide to be 'unintelligent'. An animal, when it indulges in any act, whether of mating, caring, killing or saving its own life, does all and any of these with tremendous focus. When it mates, all it does is to mate; it does not engage in conversation or watch TV out of the corner of its eye. Its lust is all fulfilling. It consumes its attention and therefore energy of that moment. The animal always lives in its present moment. Not so the human. Where his body is, his mind never is.

Corporate people ask me how to make right decisions. It is simple. When you focus intensely on the job at hand and take a decision based on the information of that present moment, your decisions will always be right. The universal energy guides you in your decision when you settle into yourself, focus inwards and withdraw your senses as the

tortoise does. What do you all do instead? Half the time you postpone decisions because you are scared. So things happen without your control and do not favor you. The other half of the time you are led by greed and prejudices based on past experiences and future fantasies and you decide with no relevance to issues of that moment.

Do you even eat properly? When have you last eaten when you can say with your hand on your heart, that you focused only in the food that you ate, instead of chatting, reading, watching someone or something? When have you last done anything whatsoever with 100% focus on what you did?

You may say that we are only human, we wish to enjoy life and we wish to enjoy sensual pleasures. Please do! However, when you enjoy, enjoy fully, fully focused on that object of enjoyment, and with all your senses focused only on that activity.

When you do whatever you do with 100% focus, with all senses focused on what you are doing rather than other irrelevant objects and issues, completely being 'present', you are in awareness. You become God!





यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः।  
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः॥२.६०॥

*yatato hyapi kaunteya purushasya vipashchitaha  
indriyaani pramaatheeni haranti prasabham manaha (2.60)*

*yatatah*: while endeavoring; *hi*: certainly; *api*: in spite of;  
*kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *purushasya*: of the man; *vipashchitah*:  
full of discriminating knowledge; *indriyani*: the senses;  
*pramathini*: stimulated; *haranti*: throws forcefully; *prasabham*: by  
force; *manah*: the mind.

O son of Kunti, the turbulent senses carry away the mind of  
a wise man, though he is striving to be in control.





तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः।  
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२.६१॥

*taani sarvaani samyamya yukta aaseeta matparaha  
vashe hi yasyendriyaani tasya prajnya prathishtithaa (2.61)*

*tani*: those senses; *sarvani*: all; *samyamya*: keeping under control; *yuktah*: being engaged; *asita*: being so situated; *matparah*: in relationship with Me; *vase*: in full subjugation; *hi*: certainly; *yasya*: one whose; *indriyani*: senses; *tasya*: his; *prajna pratisthita*: mind fixed in present moment.

Having restrained them all, he should sit steadfast, intent on Me. Whose senses are under control, his mind steady in the present.





ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।  
सङ्गात् संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥२.६२॥

*dhyaayato vishayaanpumsaha sangasteshoopajaayate  
sangaath sanjaayate kaamaha kaamaatkrodho'bhijaayate (2.62)*

*dhyayatah*: while contemplating; *visayan*: sense objects; *pumsah*: of the person; *sangah*: attachment; *tesu*: in the sense objects; *upajayate*: develops; *sangat*: attachment; *sanjayate*: develops; *kamah*: desire; *kamat*: from desire; *krodhah*: anger; *abhijayate*: becomes manifest

When a man thinks of objects, it gives rise to attachment for them. From attachment, desire arises; from desire, anger is born.





क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।  
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥२.६३॥

*krodhaadbhavati sammohaha sammohaatsmrutivibhramaha  
smruthibhramshaadh buddhinaasho buddhinaashaatpranashyati (2.63)*

*krodhat: from anger; bhavati: takes place; sammohah: perfect  
illusion; sammohat: from illusion; smrti: of memory; vibhramah:  
bewilderment; smrti-bhramsat: after bewilderment of memory;  
buddhi-nasah: loss of intelligence; buddhi-nasat: and from loss  
of intelligence; pranasyati: falls down.*

From anger arises delusion; from delusion, loss of memory;  
from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination, from  
destruction of discrimination, he perishes.





रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।  
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥२.६४॥

*raagadweshaviyuktaistu vishayaanindriyaishcharan  
aatmavashyairvidheyaatma prasaadamadigacchati (2.64)*

*raga*: attachment; *dvesa*: detachment; *vimuktaih*: by one who has been free from such things; *tu*: but; *visayan*: sense objects; *indriyaih*: by the senses; *caran*: acting; *atma-vasyaih*: one who has control over; *vidheya-atma*: one who follows regulated freedom; *prasadam*: the mercy of the Lord; *adhigacchati*: attains.

But the self-controlled man, moving among objects with his senses under control, free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace.





प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।  
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥२.६५॥

*prasaade sarvadukkhaanaam haanirasyopajaayate  
prasannachetaso hyaashu buddhih paryavathistathe (2.65)*

*prasade: achieving; sarva: of all; dukkhanam: material miseries; hanih: destruction; asya: his; upajayate: takes place; prasannachetasah: of the happy-minded; hi: certainly; asu: very soon; buddhih: intelligence; pari: sufficiently; avatisthate: established.*

All pains are destroyed in that peace for the intellect of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady.



Krishna continues to explain to Arjuna how difficult it is to control the senses and what happens when one loses control of the senses.

There was this man who borrowed a car from his friend and drove off. After about an hour he returned and much to his friend's horror, rammed into a tree in front of his house, as he could not stop the car. 'Why didn't you tell me you did not know how to drive a car?' he exclaimed in anger. The friend replied calmly, 'Of course, I know how to drive a car. I just don't know how to stop it.'

This is the case with most of us. We all know very well how to kick off our senses into action by engaging them in gear and accelerate into fantasies, but we have no idea how to slow down and stop the senses. We do not control our senses and the mind. Instead, our mind and senses control us.

Krishna says that our senses are turbulent and however much we try to control them they stay out of control. Some of the greatest sages, the *rishi*, have been known to have succumbed to sensual pleasures. There is the legendary story of Viswamitra, a great sage, who was seduced by the nubile celestial maiden Menaka, in the midst of his intense penance. Do you think the Gods above have no other business than sending young women down to people who meditate? In that case I am willing to bet that all you men here will start meditating from tonight without any compulsion from my side!

Nothing of that sort will happen, and don't start meditation for this reason. It was the suppressed fantasies of Viswamitra's mind that created the celestial nymph. His senses were out of control. Hindu scriptures have referred to *Brahmacharya* as a prerequisite to spiritual evolution, and many misinterpret this to be celibacy. *Brahmacharya* is not celibacy; it is living in reality, without fantasies. There are many out there in the robes of monks, trying to control their minds and trying to be celibate, and most of them fail because they cannot control their senses. Suppression does not work on senses. Suppressed emotions explode when they get the chance. They just wait for the opportunity.

Krishna says that the only way is to focus one's mind on Him, once the senses are under control and the mind is steady. The mind can never be stopped; thoughts can never be stopped; you can only focus your mind on something that transcends sensory pleasures and it will quieten by itself. Once the mind discovers the bliss of this quietness, this solitude, it will never want to stray again. But, remember, if you try to stop your thoughts you will only fail.

A man who was intent on spiritual progress, went to a Master and begged him to teach how to control his mind. The Master tried to explain that the mind cannot be controlled in the manner he was seeking, by stopping his thoughts, but he wouldn't listen. Fed up, the Master gave him a bottle of a liquid and told him to drink three drops three times a day.



The man said, ‘that’s it; it will control my mind?’

The Master said, ‘just one more thing, make sure you don’t think of a monkey when you drink the medicine’.

‘Oh, sure, quite simple!’ said the man as he walked out. At the door he turned and asked, ‘by the way, in case I do think of a monkey, what should I do?’

‘Take a shower,’ said the master, ‘and try again.’

As soon as the man went home, without wasting time he took out the medicine and opened his mouth to drink. Just then he remembered the Master’s warning and remembered the monkey! ‘Oh, my God!’ he said to himself, ‘now I have to take a shower; Ok, what to do!’

You can guess the rest of the story. Each time he opened his bottle of medicine, monkeys invaded his mind and all he did was to keep taking showers.

It got to a point, that as soon as he got out of the shower, monkeys arose in his mind.

He ran to the Master and pleaded, ‘forget the medicine; just get rid of the monkeys, please!’

You can never destroy thoughts or suppress them; you can only witness thoughts and not get involved in them, and gradually the mind will settle. When you settle into the present moment

with no expectations and no attachments, you will find that your mind quiets and your senses slow down.

Krishna says that from attachment springs desire, from desire arises anger, from anger arises delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, from loss of memory develops loss of discrimination, which then leads to one's destruction. The only way to stop this, the Lord says, is to control one's senses, center oneself in the present and surrender to Him, the Universal Energy, achieving everlasting peace.

The road map to your destruction has been so clearly laid down by the greatest Master of them all, not because He wants you to follow it but because in His infinite grace and compassion He is making you aware of what is in store for you if you do not control your senses. You will be destroyed.

Go through each of these stages laid down by the Master and the path is crystal clear. Each one of us develops attachment, liking, hatred and dislike for many things through our experiences. These likes and dislikes stay in our unconscious memory and even without any conscious awareness on our parts, drive us into actions through desires or into inaction through fears. When the desires are fulfilled there is temporary satisfaction; then the desires grow. When the desires do not get fulfilled we are disappointed, we get angry.

We should be angry with our own selves for having had the desires or for not having worked wholeheartedly towards fulfilling the desire, but we actually get angry with other people who we think are responsible for our failures. Rarely do we admit that we are the cause of our failures. We normally say, 'Why do that when there are literally millions out there who can carry that can for us?' So, we create fantasies and delusions about shifting responsibility and gradually erase the memory of our own responsibility for our actions.

The vicious cycle is now almost complete. The moment we fail to take responsibility for our actions, we lose all our powers of intellectual discrimination between right and wrong and resign ourselves to unawareness and unconscious behavior. This is a one way road.

Observe a Hitler, a Mussolini, or any dictator, and you will note that their path to eventual destruction went along this path. Lack of discrimination between right and wrong, which should arise from our conscious awareness and not from learned behavior of moral codes, leads to unspeakable acts of horror and destruction against humanity. The vicious spiral that rapidly leads to such mass and self destruction arises always from desires of power, control, wealth, lust and such other sensory pleasures, which when thwarted lead through anger and delusion to this loss of discrimination.



नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना।  
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥२.६६॥

*naasti buddhirayuktasya na chaayuktasya bhaavana  
na chaabhaavayataha shaantirashaantasya kutaha sukham (2.66)*

*na asti*: there cannot be; *buddhih*: wisdom; *ayuktasya*: of one who is not connected to Self ; *na*: neither; *ca*: and; *ayuktasya*: of one devoid of Self awareness; *bhavana*: in attitude; *na*: neither; *ca*: and; *abhavayatah*: one who is not fixed; *santih*: peace; *asantasya*: of the unpeaceful; *kutah*: where is; *sukham*: happiness.

A person not in self awareness cannot be wise or happy or peaceful. How can there be happiness to the peaceless?





इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।  
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥२.६७॥

*indriyaanaam hi charataam yanmano'nuvidheeyate  
tadasya harati prajnya vayurnaavamivaambhasi (2.67)*

*indriyanam*: of the senses; *hi*: certainly; *caratam*: while herding over; *yat*: that; *manah*: mind; *anuidhiyate*: becomes constantly engaged; *tat*: that; *asya*: his; *harati*: takes away; *prajnam*: awareness of the present moment; *vayuh*: wind; *navam*: a boat; *iva*: like; *ambhasi*: on the water.

He loses his awareness of the present moment when his mind follows the wandering senses just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.



Krishna reveals two very important truths here. One is that you can never be peaceful unless you are aware and conscious; the other is that you cannot be aware if you are led by your senses. Therefore, as long as your senses lead you into what you think are pleasurable journeys you cannot really be happy or peaceful. It is just another trick your mind is playing on you.

There are many who come and ask me, 'Master, I am so happy just fantasizing. I fantasize about you. It is truly blissful. Yet, you say not to do that. You ask me to drop your form. Why?'

Even fantasizing about me, fantasizing about your *ishta devata*, your favorite God, is not going to lead you into happiness. When you lose that form, you will be in depression. Your happiness is not real happiness; it is just a gap between two periods of sorrow. All this happens, when you fantasize about your Master. Imagine then your plight when you fantasize about other material objects and desires which can only lead you more into greed.

Your senses are unreliable. What you hear, what you think you hear, what you see, what you think you see, and so on, all these sense inputs are all unreliable. You only see and hear what you wish to hear and see; only what your mind driven by that personal identity, ego, or *ahankara*, wants you to hear and see. Every single thing that you receive as your inputs through your senses are processed and colored by the

filter of your mind and ego, and you only know what they want you to know.

Your mind is constantly flitting between the future and past in the form of thoughts; that is what thoughts really are, the journey of your mind between past and future, and back again, and again. This journey never stops all through your life unless you make a serious attempt to stop it. Your mind on its own would never want to stay in the present moment, which is the only moment of truth.

Your past is history. Your past is the dumping ground of all your regrets and guilt. There is no greater sin that you can commit than carrying these regrets and guilt. Committing an act labeled by society and religion is less of a sin; carrying the guilt of having committed it is the real sin; that is what carries you into hell, even as you live in this world.

There is no hell in afterlife. There is no Saint Peter or Yama waiting at the pearly gates waiting to consign you to hell. Those are stories woven into religion to control you through fear. You think God has no other job except to chronicle each and every deed and thought you had in your life, mark them good and bad, give you marks and like a school teacher send you to suffer in hell because you had poor marks. He has no time for all that. Hell for you is what you suffer in this life while living. You suffer with guilt, regret and remorse. You *live* in hell, you don't *go* to hell.

Religion makes money out of this too. Priests, of whatever denomination, tell you to come to them to confess your sins, contribute to a nobler cause so that you may not go to hell. It is as if they are issuing tickets specially printed for you, to enter into heaven. So, you happily confess and then go back to do the same thing again; and then come back again and confess. I have seen the panda priests at temples in North India extracting thousands of rupees from intelligent people by telling them that unless they pay for this and that, not only will they not go to heaven, but the souls of their forefathers will also rot in hell. They re-circulate a non-existing cow to each devotee for ten thousand rupees, two hundred dollars.

Or your mind dwells in the future, a future that does not exist. You speculate, you fantasize, you dream, you create stories and arguments building a case for your future. If you are questioned, you would say, 'I need to plan, don't I?'

How much of what you plan is based on present reality? There is nothing wrong at all if you are grounded in reality and plan to progress to that reality. That is what I call chronological planning. Chronological planning is necessary if you live in the material world. I do it too. But, most of the time what you do has nothing to do with reality. You either worry about things that you have no control over and plan how to escape such worries, or desire things not in your reach out of sheer greed. Just think honestly and carefully.



Our senses aid us very ably in these worries and desires. They make us believe that all this is real, and make us react to situations as if they are real. It is the same way that we get up from a nightmare sweating profusely out of fear. Although just a dream, it made us sweat. In the same manner, these projections of our mind, when we think we are fully awake, make us think they are all real.

Krishna says, 'get way from your senses; escape from their control; ground yourself in awareness of the present moment. Only then you can be at peace'.

What is this present moment? What is this awareness? When our mind is stopped from moving back and forth between the past and future, it will by itself land in the present moment. The present moment is what we are doing now. If you are reading this book, don't half read this book, and half listen to music; don't half read this book, and half watch TV; don't half read this book, and half talk with some one. Either focus completely on what you are reading or don't read at all.

When did you really eat last? When I mean eat, I mean eat. When was it the last time that you can remember each morsel that went into your mouth, without reading a book, watching TV or talking to someone, without the food going into your mouth on auto pilot? If we treat food as junk it turns into junk in our stomach. So instead of giving us the energy it should, it makes us want to nap.

Next time you do anything including reading this book, focus completely on what you are doing at that moment. If you brush your teeth, just focus on how the brush moves and how the paste tastes. Stop thinking about the meetings later at your office or getting your children ready for school, or whatever it is that you need to do a few minutes or hours later.

When you settle into the present moment, you are out of the clutches of your senses and mind. You will still hear and see, but none of what you hear or see will divert you from what you are focused on. You will be aware of only what you are doing in that present moment. This is what we call meditation. Meditation is nothing but being focused completely on what you are doing at a particular moment. This is what Buddha calls mindfulness.

This is what Krishna says will lead you into peace. When you are aware, your senses are in your control instead of you being under their control; you become peaceful, you are in bliss.



तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः।  
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२.६८॥

*tasmaadhyasya mahaabaaho nigruheetaani sarvashaha  
indriyaaneendriyaarthebhyastasya prajnya prathishtitaa (2.68)*

*tasmat:* therefore; *yasya:* of one's; *maha-baho:* O mighty-armed one; *nigrhitani:* so curbed down; *sarvasah:* all around; *indriyani:* the senses; *indriya-arthebhyah:* for the sake of sense objects; *tasya:* his; *prajna:* intelligence; *pratishhita:* fixed.

O Mighty-armed, his knowledge is therefore steady whose senses are completely detached from sense objects.





या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी।  
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः॥२.६९॥

*yaa nishaa sarvabhootaanaam tasyaam jaagarti samyamee  
yasyaam jaagrati bhootaani saa nishaa pashyato muneha (2.69)*

*ya*: what; *nisa*: is night; *sarva*: all; *bhutanam*: of living entities; *tasyam*: in that; *jaagarti*: wakeful; *samyami*: the self-controlled; *yasyam*: in which; *jaagrati*: awake; *bhutani*: all beings; *sa*: that is; *nisa*: night; *pasyatah*: for the introspective; *muneh*: sage.

The self-controlled man lies awake in that which is night to all beings. Where all beings are awake, it is the night for the Sage (*muni*) who sees.





आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।  
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥२.७०॥

*apooriyamaanamachalaprathishtam  
samudramaapaha pravishanti yadwat  
tadwatkaamaa yam pravishanti sarve  
sa shaantimaapnoti na kaamakaamee (2.70)*

*apuryamanam*: always filled; *acala-pratistham*: steadily situated; *samudram*: the ocean; *apah*: water; *pravishanti*: enter; *yadvat*: as; *tadvat*: so; *kamah*: desires; *yam*: unto one; *pravishanti*: enter; *sarve*: all; *sah*: that person; *santim*: peace; *apnoti*: achieves; *na*: not; *kamakami*: one who desires to fulfill desires

Just as all waters enter the ocean, he attains peace into whom all desires enter, which when filled from all sides, remains unmoved; not the desirer of desires.





विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः।  
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शांतिमधिगच्छति ॥२.७१॥

*vihaaya kaamaanyaha sarvaan pumaamshcharati nihspruhah  
nirmamo nirhankaaraha sa shaantimadhigacchati (2.71)*

*vihaya*: after giving up; *kaman*: all material desires for sense gratification; *yah*: the person; *sarvan*: all; *puman*: a person; *carati*: lives; *nihspruhah*: desireless; *nirmamah*: without a sense of proprietorship; *nirahankarah*: without false ego; *sah*: all; *santim*: perfect peace; *adhigacchati*: attains.

The man who moves about abandoning all desires, without longing, without the sense of I and mine, attains peace.





एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।  
स्थित्वाऽस्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥२.७२॥

*esha braahmi sthithih paartha nainaam praapya vimuhyati  
sthitvaa'syaamantakaale'pi brahmanirvaanamrucchati (2.72)*

*esa*: this; *brahmi*: spiritual; *sthithih*: situation; *partha*: O son of Prtha; *na*: never; *enam*: this; *praapya*: achieving; *vimuhyati*: bewilders; *sthitva*: being so situated; *asyam*: being so; *antakale*: at the end of life; *api*: also; *brahma-nirvanam*: liberated in Reality of Brahman; *rcchati*: attains.

O Son of Partha, this is the Brahmic state; none is deluded after attaining this. Even at the end of life, one attains oneness with Brahman when established in this state.



In His concluding words in this chapter, Krishna clarifies to Arjuna once again how to reach liberation, how to become one with the *Brahman*, which is one's true and natural state.

We have seen that a person not centered in self-awareness cannot be peaceful or happy or wise. A person who is led by his senses cannot be self-aware and be in the present. A person who is in control of his senses is firmly in control of his mind. He does not let his senses and mind control him. Only such a person is truly awake.

All of you think you are awake; you are not. You live in a dream even if you are awake. Only difference is that you are not asleep in a physical sense. So you pretend that you are awake, that you are intelligent, that you are thinking and that you are taking right decisions.

The only occasion you are truly awake is when you are in the present moment, when you are truly aware of what you are doing at each point in time. A person in such awareness is what Krishna calls a '*muni*', a realized being who lives in the present.

Such a person is always awake, whether physically awake or asleep. Krishna says that such a person is in sleep when others are awake. The realized person, although he may appear to be living and actively participating in the activities of the same world that we live in, in reality is in passive alertness. This means that his senses are not immersed in



worldliness and is centered in his Self. He is dead and asleep to this world because he has moved beyond his senses.

A true man of realization is also awake when others are asleep. Even in his sleep he is aware, in what is termed as the state of *supta chittam*. We all live in four states of our mind. These are the states of being awake, being in dreams, being in deep sleep and being in the state of Self awareness.

When we are awake, we are aware of the 'I' and 'mine' and we are ruled by our mind, senses and thoughts. As long as we are ruled by our senses and thoughts we are not in awareness of the true reality of our nature. We are controlled by our delusion, *maya*, which arises from our being ruled by our identification with the 'I' and 'mine'.

However, a person who is in the present moment is still as the waters of an ocean. Even when desires assail him, they do not disturb him at all. He has abandoned all attachments of 'I' and 'mine'. He is without thoughts and desires; and when thoughts and desires come to him, they merge into him without disturbing him.

You may ask how this is possible.

The '*muni*', one who is still, in silence, is one who is in total control of his senses. When the senses are controlled, when the ego is out of action, all thoughts and desires are just witnessed. The '*muni*' does not get involved in these thoughts

and desires, he does not even try to stop or suppress them as he knows it is impossible; he just lets them be, he just watches them go past, just like the ocean watches impassively as other waters merge into it.

You are all enlightened, because we are all a holographic part of the reality of the Universe, the *Brahman*. All that you lack is the awareness of the truth of your enlightenment. Therefore, as such, there is no path to enlightenment, because you already are. What is needed is the way to create that awareness.

What prevents you from realizing that you are enlightened is your ego. This ego is not necessarily about any arrogance. It is the perception of who you think you are, it is the collection of thoughts, experiences and emotions that go to make up that 'I' and 'mine'. This identity is that of the body and mind, not of your spirit. Therefore, it perishes with your body and transient. This identity with the transient reality of who you think you are and what 'yours' is, is maya, the illusion that creates a barrier between you and your awareness of your enlightened state.

A man who is in control of his senses, his mind and thoughts lives in the present moment, in full awareness of his true nature and is one with the *Brahman*. He is the only one who is truly awake, not the rest of you who think you are awake. You are all still in deep sleep. Such a person who is Self-aware is fully awake even when he is asleep.

People with strong consciousness of 'I' still live out of their blocked *muladhara chakra* or root energy center. They are still at the very beginning of their spiritual evolution. Their main concerns will be about their own survival and the survival of their species; to do with lust, anger and greed. These are the qualities that the identity with 'I' evokes in you.

The person with strong attachment to 'mine', the possessions belonging to the 'I', constantly lives in fear of losing these possessions. Such people live out of their blocked *Swadhistana* or spleen *chakra*, the energy center within that gets locked due to the fear emotion. They live in insecurity of losing possessions, of losing identity, and finally of death.

Energization of this *chakra* and moving the energy up through the *anahata* or heart *chakra* to the *ajna* or third eye *chakra* (the energy center between the eyebrows which is the seat of intelligence), opens up people to the reality of looking at others and the rest of the universe as themselves and finally dropping the ego, one's identification of 'I' and 'mine'. True surrender to the universe and identification with one's true nature occurs, and enlightenment happens. You then do become God!

Krishna completes his description of the person established in *Yoga* whose profile Arjuna has asked for. Krishna concludes saying that such a person is steeped in reality, and is one with the *Brahman*, even if he were to reach that state at the end of his life.

Krishna is in the process of showing Arjuna what Arjuna truly is, and how he can realize that Truth. Control over the senses instead of the senses controlling you, surrender to the universe instead of fighting the universe, dropping one's mind and identity, and staying in the awareness of the present moment are the surest ways to realize the Truth; the Truth that you too are God.

I tell my disciples time and time again, 'I am not here to prove that I am God. I am here to prove to you that you are God'.

This is the timeless message of Krishna. This is the message of the Bhagavad Gita.

Here are a few questions asked by some of you, to which I shall respond.

Q: Respected Master, why did Krishna choose the battlefield to deliver the great knowledge of *Gita*?

A: Because planet Earth is a battlefield. Please be very clear: in the last two thousand years of recorded history, we have fought more than five thousand wars. We are not doing anything else except fighting wars. The gap between one war and another cannot be called peace because it is simply preparation time for the next war! You do only one of two things; either fight a war or prepare for the next one. If in the morning, you go to office after a fight with your spouse, you know by evening that other arguments will be ready! This is the reason planet Earth is a warfield. This is the reason Krishna chose the battlefield to deliver His message.

There are three game situations on the planet Earth – ‘win-win’, ‘win-lose’ and ‘lose-lose’.

‘Win-win’ situation is between the Master and disciple where the Master wins the disciple and the disciple also wins enlightenment. Both achieve something and neither of them loses. The Master does not lose anything as he enjoys the act of giving enlightenment. The disciple too does not lose as he gets enlightenment.

The next one is the 'win-lose' scenario. All our businesses are 'win-lose' situations. When somebody wins, the other person loses.

The third situation is the worst of all - 'lose-lose'. Both the parties lose. The battlefield is a 'lose-lose' situation where even the so-called winning is not winning. Krishna delivers the *Gita* in the battlefield because he gives a solution for the worst situations. Even the worst situations in life are addressed by the *Gita*. The battlefield is indeed the right place to deliver this spiritual message because if something cannot be used in the worst situation, it cannot be taken as the Ultimate message. If it can be used in the worst situation, you can be sure that it can be used anywhere else. It is like a Master key. If it can open the most difficult lock, it can open all other locks. Krishna gives life solutions for the worst situations.

Q: Respected Master, after all Arjuna wanted *ahimsa* or non-violence, but Krishna inspired him to be violent. Why would an enlightened person do that?

A: First understand the word non-violence. The moment you say 'I' and 'mine', you *are* violent. Please understand what kind of beings we are: intellectual or emotional or at the being-level. During our lives do we have stages of each of these three characteristics? How do we know what type of beings we are? The moment you ask this question, be very clear, you are intellectual. Emotional people will never have

this question and people in the being-level will not even have this doubt.

During our lives, we do have stages of each of these characteristics. Before you are married, I may say you are an intellectual. Take the case of young men, especially a young Indian college student; he does not do *namaskar* or bow down before anyone because of his ego and what he considers to be traditional and not worth following. He simply stands and looks while his parents pay their respects. Of course, I do not expect this from any devotee as this physical action is not of great consequence. But I always say to myself, 'Just wait till you get married, then we shall see!' Two years later the same young man, now married, falls flat at my feet! In just one year he has grown so much and is now so obedient and polite!

So, before marriage you are intellectuals and after marriage you grow slowly to reach higher levels.

Krishna knows very well that Arjuna is talking emotionally. Emotions of fear and greed have taken over and Arjuna is scared to see the consequences if he goes ahead with the fight because the opponents are his own relatives, whom he is attached to. Arjuna wants to run away from the battlefield not because he is a believer in *ahimsa*, non-violence, but because of his identity with his kinsmen and elders; because of his identification with these people. He would have had no problem in destroying them had he not known them, had

he not been associated with them. Arjuna wants to run away because of this false identification, which breeds *himsa*, violence.

Krishna would have never persuaded Arjuna to stay on and fight if truthfully Arjuna had proceeded from *ahimsa*. Krishna enlightens Arjuna to the falsehood of his beliefs and destroys his false belief that he is proceeding from *ahimsa* which had risen out of his attachment to his own identity.

Q: About the depression of success, what if you are under forty and have experienced several depressions without success? Is there hope?

A: Please be very clear: whatever you have experienced is not depression, but just failure.

Depression of success happens only to mature people. It is a gift from the Divine and luxury in life. I tell you, depression of success is the ultimate luxury; all cannot afford it. To experience this depression, you need two things - all your material needs must be fulfilled and you need to have intelligence. Only when you have both the external comforts and the intelligence to look beyond, you will experience depression of success.

If you are depressed because of failure, it cannot be called depression but just failure.



Listen to the *Gita* and learn how to work.

Q: If Krishna is the *Jagat Guru*, Lord of the Universe, why was he only with the *pandavas* and *kauravas*, why did he not help the world?

A: Again and again, Krishna happens on the planet Earth but nowadays he simply does not bring his peacock feather! Krishna is the only Master who has assured that He would be here again and again:

*Parithraanaaya saadhoonaam vinaashaaya chachushkruthaam  
Dharmasamsthaarpanaathaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge*

Krishna always fulfills his promises. It is only *you* who needs a little openness to experience Him that is all. Never think that He is not here.

A group of devotees were telling Ramakrishna that if he had been there during the period of Chaitanya he would have received his Divine love. Ramkrishna replies that there were some fools who were sitting before Chaitanya and said that he missed Krishna! It is the same people who are now before Ramakrishna and say that he has missed Chaitanya! These are the people who would tell Ramana Maharishi that they missed Ramakrishna, and today, one of these people sits here to say that we missed Krishna!

Understand that all you need is a little openness and sensitivity. If you can, you may listen to Krishna's flute here

and now! If you miss it, you are missing it. But Krishna comes down again and again to fulfill his promise. With a little more openness and sensitivity, you can experience Him wherever you are.

Q: When you said yesterday that you are repeating (the *Gita*), do you mean you are Krishna? Many proclaim they are God, are you also in the same business?

A: Nice question! I am not here to proclaim that *I* am God; I am here to proclaim that *you* are God. When Krishna says he is God and proclaims or proves his divinity, He creates a situation and prepares you to receive His message and realize that you too are divine. That is why Krishna has to prove and express his divinity.

So understand that I am not here to prove that *I* am God, I am here to show that *you* are God. If you can experience that you are God, it is enough; nothing more is necessary. You do not need to accept or believe I am God; you do not even need to bother about my divinity. Just understand and experience that you are God; nothing more is necessary.

Q: Is it possible to be detached without being indifferent? How do we keep our hearts open along the spiritual path?

A: Please be very clear: only a man with an open heart can be detached. If you are indifferent, you will only be dull not detached. Only a man who can shower himself completely,

can also detach himself completely. Understand that you never shower yourself on anybody because you are afraid that you may not be able to detach. The power to share and detach is one and the same. If you cannot share yourself intensely, you cannot detach yourself. The person who struggles is half of everything; being able to neither attach nor detach. The one who can attach fully, can also detach himself.

Q: Is it normal to speak less and seek silence as *sadhana* or penance progresses?

A: There is a Zen meditation which says, 'When I was not meditating, a tree was a tree and a mountain was a mountain. When I started meditation, they were both not what they were. When I finished meditation and became enlightened, the tree was again a tree and the mountain was a mountain'. Before the *sadhana* you speak a lot. After enlightenment, you may speak a lot but with a totally new awareness. But during *sadhana* people usually tend to become silent.

Q: Master, please be very clear (O! here we are getting instructions first!), are Krishna and Christ the same? Both were born in confined places, Krishna was born in Mathura, Christ in a place called Mathiria, both were shepherds and so on. If so, please explain.

A: A historical controversy! I do not know the historical

part because I am not a historian! I can only say that spiritually they are one and the same. I can only say in terms of spirituality, not historically. As I do not know history, I cannot make a controversial statement. In the conscious level, they are the same. There are stories that the idea of Christ is built around the *bhagavatham*, the famous book of Hindu mythology. We do not know the truth behind these stories. You may have heard of this beautiful book, Da Vinci Code. If any of you have read this book, you will find it is controversial but at the same time, solid. The writer is clear about what he says. We are not able to deny it completely. I read it and honestly am not able to deny the contents. There are so many things he says which make sense.

There are books written and researches done about Christ's time and life after crucifixion, where he was between the age of 7 and 14, etc. I too have read some of them but cannot say anything because most of these findings are based on assumptions and theory.

A couple of interesting things I read in the book –

The theory goes that Christ had his training in a Buddhist monastery in Puri. The sermon of the mount is an exact replication of a *pali sutra* which is repeated every morning in the monastery as a prayer. In this way many research reports keep coming out but the only thing I can say is that at the conscious level, they are both the same.

Q: Please comment on desires. Most Masters recommend sealing of desires. How can this be done?

A: I can comment on desires but do not want to comment on what most Masters recommend. I tell you honestly that sealing of desires cannot be done. Suppression will only lead to perversion and other difficulties. *Transformation* is the only possibility; suppression cannot be done. Whether it is related to the senses, enjoyment or name and fame or anything, the more you suppress, the more you poison your system. All you can do is to transform the desires. If you want this to happen, enter into meditation and let your energies be transformed. Except transformation, there is no other way to escape from desires. Just divert the energy and let it become pure. When you transform, you will have the pure desire without it being directed towards any object.

Desire without object is energy. When your energy is attached to an object, it becomes desire and when the desire is detached from the object it becomes energy. That is why in *vedic* systems, we call desire as *icchha shakthi* or desire energy. As long as there is no object, it leads you to bliss. When there is an object, it leads you to bondage. You can only transform or purify it through meditation, never suppress it which only leads to more problems.

A small story: An 80 year old monk was interviewed by a junior, novice monk. The junior monk asks the old monk, 'Master, how does one control bad thoughts? How long do

the bad thoughts continue to occur in the mind?' The senior monk says, 'I don't know how long they continue to occur but I do know that they come up even to the age of 80!' So please be very clear, suppression leads nowhere. Work for transformation, not for suppression.

Q: How does the *Guru* help the disciple? What is the process?

A: The whole *Gita* is the answer for this question. The whole *Gita* is the process: it starts with the intellectual clarity, then gives the experience, takes him through the whole path and puts him in the same consciousness in which he lives. The whole *Gita* explains the process and if you listen to it, you will be able to understand the whole process. The whole *Gita* is the answer to your question.

Q: The question I have is about the past and the future. This has to do with astrologers and palmists who tell us our past and future. Some of them are correct and some of them are wrong. Does it have validity?

A: All right. See, if you are sitting here (indicates along the time shaft diagram), can you see the past or future clearly? You cannot. If you sit here (indicates closer to centre) you can see a little more clearly, like Indian Doordarshan! From here (indicates still closer to centre), still more clearly like a private channel TV. From here (indicates even more close to

centre), like your own personal computer. From here (indicates the centre), it would be seeing directly. A person with low TPS can predict your past and future properly and clearly. If the person's TPS is high, his predictions are not correct because his mind is constantly moving between past and future. A person who has established himself in the *nithya atman* or Eternal Consciousness can not only predict but also *change* the future.

There is a beautiful *sloka* which says that all the letters so painstakingly written by Brahma on your forehead, can simply be erased by the *Guru's* left leg. The man who is established in the Eternal Consciousness can erase the future.

Q: Master, when you say the past, present and future, does it mean *sanjitha*, *praarabdha* and *aagaamyas karmas*?

A: Yes, I mean *sanjitha*, *praarabdha*, *aagaamyas* and all other karmas. All these are just trademarks. Please be very clear, they are not really separate as you think. Each person invents new words and copywrites it; that is all.

Let us pray to the Ultimate Existence, *Parabrahma Krishna* to give us all the experience of Eternal Bliss, *Nithyananda*. Thank you!



ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

*Om tatsaditi srimat Bhagavad Gitaasupanishadsu  
brahmavidyaayaam yogasaastre  
SriKrishnaarjunasamvaade sankhyayogo naama  
dviteeyoadhyayaha*

Thus ends the second chapter named 'Transcendental Knowledge' of the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.

