

The Bhagavad Gita

A Modern Translation

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Why Study the Gita?

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most ancient of holy scriptures. It is a teaching presented to us by Krishna, one of the greatest of all the Masters, one who became a living embodiment of the Mystery.

Who was Krishna, historically? This much is known: today he is worshiped by Hindus as a god. Indeed, no living entity is more deserving of that title of "god", but we cannot overlook the fact that he was an incarnate entity.

Krishna lived approximately five thousand years ago. He was a king, and his kingdom was in the subcontinent of India. He was born into incredible wealth, and unlike later Masters never rejected this wealth or his title.

Krishna was clearly recognized in his own time as a great Master, even from a very young age. It is clear that at this time, the average person was not yet under the false notion that to be spiritual one has to be old, or poor, or reject the world. Far from rejecting the world, Krishna totally involved himself in it. He embraced music, love, beauty, and even war.

The key to understanding Krishna's way, which is indeed the way of all Masters, is to understand that one must not reject matter, but attachment to matter. One must not reject action, but attachment to action. By renouncing attachment, one embraces the moment, accepts whatever is happening and whatever one must do at any moment, and one can thus be total in one's consciousness. Krishna's greatness as a Master and a man is that he was the fullest embodiment of a human being, he was able to be total in everything he was and did.

Krishna lived in a time of conflict. His closest friend and student, Arjuna, was a prince of the most powerful dynasty of kings in India at that time, the Kurus. He and his brothers were the rightful rulers of that dynasty, but their positions were usurped by their cousins, the sons of King Dhritarashtra. The resulting civil war in India, the Mahabharata ('great war'), was the most devastating war that had ever befallen the earth to that point.

Krishna fought in the final and most devastating battle of that war, the battle of Kuruksetra, where he served as charioteer to his friend Arjuna. It was in this battle that Krishna is said to have recited the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. The Gita was a summary of Krishna's entire teaching, phrased as an argument to convince a reluctant Arjuna that he had to go through with the battle.

What is the relevance of Krishna and the Gita for the modern world? The themes of the Gita address the fundamental causes of human suffering, our delusions, and Krishna's own method of transformation. I have taught in the past that all teachers have a Mystery School, which is less a term for a specific institution and more so a term describing a particular process of transformation advocated by a given teacher for the people of his own time and place. Although this would seem to make the relevance of Krishna's Mystery School very far removed from our own time and place, there are in fact many elements to his teaching that would make his Mystery School particularly relevant to us.

Krishna's India was a very different place from the India of today. It was a land of spectacular wealth, as opposed to poverty. Krishna was teaching to people who, by the standards of societies of that age, were living extremely opulent lifestyles, lives of comfort and material riches. In that sense, Krishna's methods are very appropriate to our own society, and particularly to those of the educated and comfortable western world.

But even more significant is the fact that Krishna's society was being menaced by the forces of materialism. Much like our own culture, Krishna lived in a world where a large portion of the 'establishment' had become consumed with a materialistic philosophy. They had rejected the notion of a deeper dimension to life, and they saw material success as the be all and end all of existence.

This is the most significant connection to our own era. People have become so divorced from the mystical, that they have lost a sense of peace in themselves, and have attempted to substitute it, as they did in Krishna's time, with the pursuit of wealth and comfort.

It was due to this situation that the Mahabharata war had to be fought. Arjuna's enemies, the sons of Dhirtarashtra, were the main advocates of this philosophy and way of living. Thus, whether the full Gita was recited by Krishna at the battle of Kuruksetra, or whether it was simply a collection and summary of Krishna's way, its recitation at the battle is of symbolic significance. The battle was a real event, just as one must really act in one's life to oppose unconsciousness, but it was also a symbolic conflict. It symbolized the battle between consciousness and unconsciousness, between a merely materialistic animal existence, or an essential and conscious way of being and living.

Read the Gita as a message for today. Connect to Krishna's essence, and be transformed.

How to Study the Gita

1. *Was Krishna a divine being?*

Yes.

2. *Are we divine beings?*

Yes.

3. *Are we different from Krishna?*

In the sense that we are under the veil of Maya, illusion, yes. But in the sense of the essential, we are non-different from Krishna-Brahma. Krishna is completely part of the Mystery, and we are as well, in the sense that anything about us that is real is part of the Mystery.

4. *Is Krishna to be worshiped?*

Krishna is to be shown devotion and veneration in his form as a Master; he is to be glorified in his form as the eternal Brahma.

5. How does someone in this day and age benefit from the Bhagavad Gita? How do we use it in our lives?

The Gita itself holds the keys to these questions. The first step is to read the Gita, in its entirety.

After that, the Gita will work for people at different levels depending on where they are in their lives. It would be a very good idea for anyone to read a little of the Gita every day. Many great individuals, from Thoreau to William James, to Aldous Huxley, to Gandhi read the Gita daily. For some, this can be simply as inspiration, or intellectual stimulation; something you can do at the start of your day to put you on the right mental footing for the whole day. For others, reading the Gita is itself an act of devotion, particularly if it is the Gita as written by your own teacher.

But the other important step is to practice what the Gita teaches. There are three essential practices present in the Gita. The first is non-attachment to actions. This is where you focus, meditatively, on staying in the moment, on acting without "lust of result". Do things for their own sake, not because you want a particular result, or do nothing without desiring to necessarily avoid action. The second essential practice is the dedication of all action to the divine. Offer all your actions to the divine, to Brahma, to Krishna, and in that way lose your attachment to their ends. You are only a vessel for the divine. One particular aspect of this is the dedication of food to the divine. Food is always a karmic product; the food you eat is the result of the death of an animal or plant being. By consciously and simply dedicating your food to the divine before you eat, you will be able to free yourself of the Karma that would be brought about by eating it unconsciously. You give consciousness to your act of eating, and in that way purify your action and honor the life that you had to take in order to survive. The last essential is devotional practices. There are many described in the Gita, from intense yogic practices to the chanting of holy names. Regardless of which of Krishna's methods you feel you can follow, the key is to practice meditational methods every day. While at first it is a good idea to try several different methods, when you find one that works for you it is best to stick to it, so that you can explore it in depth. This does not mean you are forbidden to experiment with other techniques after that, just that you should keep doing the one you have chosen consistently.

Note: Of all of the methods advocated by Krishna, the method of mantra chanting is perhaps the most attractive, and one of the simplest to incorporate into your life. The ideal mantras are the OM, or the 'Hare Krishna' mantra ("Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare"). The former mantra is good for slow repetition, and the latter is especially good for rapid repetition matched with motion or ecstatic dancing. However, I will attach a very important warning to the practice of mantras in general: be aware! Mantra practice is beyond useless, it is actually detrimental, if it is not done with extreme care. The key is that you must recite your mantras with total awareness. If you cannot be paying complete attention to your chanting, you will actually be using the mantra as a distraction, meant to help lull you into deeper sleep, rather than wake you up. Be sure that every word you chant is lucid, clear to your ears, well pronounced, and being given your total attention. With that being considered, let yourself open, chant, and become a vessel for the bliss of the divine.

The Gita's Terms Explained

There are certain words in the teachings of Krishna that simply cannot be translated into any equivalent English forms, or if they were translated, the translation would leave much to be desired. It is difficult enough to try to express the inexpressible language of the Mystery in words. But it is harder still to take these words and transfer them easily from one tongue to the next.

Even the particulars of the English language make this task more daunting. Sanskrit is a holy language, with what seems like an intentional design, made to facilitate the transmission of spiritual concepts as much as possible. Not so English. Our language is filled with words that have multiple connotations, like 'love' and 'truth'. These words can mean more than one thing, or sometimes will mean something different to virtually everyone. In addition, our culture's lack of a rich mystical influence means that there are certain mystical concepts that English simply does not have a word for.

Due to this, I have been forced in certain cases to retain the original Sanskrit words and introduce them to the reader. I hope most of these words will be explanatory in the Gita itself, but I will also endeavour to explain them here.

First off, there are obviously the place and proper names. These are all being kept as they are. The battle where the Gita is being recited is called the battle of Kuruksetra. Krishna and Arjuna are hopefully self-explanatory. Sanjaya and King Dhirtarashtra are the two characters recounting this conversation. Technically it is thus Sanjaya who is 'telling the story' of the Gita. It is the King's sons, Arjuna's enemies the Kurus, who Arjuna must kill. There are many other characters named in the first chapter, including Bhishma, Drona, Bhima and others. These are all legendary figures who fought in the Mahabharata.

The more significant Sanskrit terms represent spiritual or philosophical ideas. One of these terms is the word 'Karma', which is a familiar word to many today but the meaning of which is often still unclear. Karma does not refer to some kind of divine punishment or reward system. Many people think that Karma means in essence that if you do something 'good' you will be rewarded by the divine, and if you do something 'evil' you would be punished. In reality, Karma has nothing to do with this. Karma is the consequences of unconsciousness. When you are attached to certain results, you will commit actions that are unconscious of what is truly real in the present. These actions will have consequences, sometimes pleasant and sometimes not. But ultimately, all unconscious or attached behaviour will lead to suffering because inevitably you find that you will either fail in your ambitions, or you will be unable to hold on to what you have, or you will be unsatisfied with what you desired. All things change, and when you are acting out of a resistance to change or the idea that you can control change, a desire for things to be a certain way or become a certain way, you will end up suffering. This is Karma.

Another important set of Sanskrit terms is the 'gunas'. The gunas are best translated as 'three elements of material being'. In Vedic teachings there are three basic states which, in combination, can describe any aspect of human condition. The first is Tamas, heaviness. It is

the state of deep ignorance or animal like behaviour. It is the condition of caring only for survival, the baser instincts.

The second is Rajas, the fiery state. It is passion, being energetic and active. It is lust, being consumed with wants and obsessed with the senses. It is the state of intellectual desires.

The third is Sattvas. It is lightness, or the state of truth. It is peacefulness, relaxation, higher aspirations, compassion and higher thinking.

All people, and things, have a combination of these three elements with them. In people, it could be said that most will have one element more in prominence than others. Attila the Hun may have had more of Tamas, Vincent Van Gogh of Rajas, and Albert Einstein of Sattvas. But they all have a little of each, and you may see that you have days when you act more like Albert Einstein, and other days when you act more like Attila the Hun.

The old Vedic religious systems taught that you should try to achieve the state of Sattvas; but Krishna teaches that all three of these states are different kinds of attachments. One is attachment to gross needs (mostly of the body), another is attachment to lusts of the emotions, and the third to more complex concepts of the mind and heart. It is Krishna's teaching that you should transcend all attachments.

'Yoga' is another term from the Gita. This word is meant to describe techniques and practices, methods to be used to attain awareness. The type of Yogas that Krishna describes are what are known as Dhyana Yoga, the yoga of awareness, and Karma or Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of devotional acts.

The literal meaning of Yoga is also very important. Yoga means 'union'. To achieve the state of Yoga is to achieve a united inner self, and to be united with the existence that is all around you. This force of existence is the 'Brahman', the divine consciousness, the soul of all life. Likewise, 'Nirvana' is a term describing this state of unitedness. It is when you have become awake to your connection to the supreme soul, the Brahman.

The last two terms which should be explained here are 'sannyasin' and 'guru'. The term 'sannyasin' means 'one who renounces', and it refers to an initiate or practitioner of Krishna's Mystery School. A sannyasin renounces his attachments, and is dedicated to awareness and devotion. Typically, a sannyasin will be an initiate of a 'guru', a spiritual Master. This is someone who has obtained this condition of awareness, of Nirvana, and who is now in a condition to assist others in their efforts to reach the same in themselves.

Chapter 1

(Introductory note: The first chapter of the Gita sets the scene of the battle of Kuruksetra. Here King Dhirtarashtra, back in his castle, has made a request of his sage Sanjaya to use his visionary powers to detail the events of the battle. At the Battlefield, Arjuna and his brothers the Pandavas are with Krishna, ready to fight King Dhirtarashtra's sons. The chapter provides details about specific individuals involved in the battle on both sides, and culminates with Arjuna's decision not to fight)

1. King Dhirtarashtra said:

In the place of pilgrimage, the place called Kuruksetra, there has assembled desiring to do battle My army, and the army of the sons of Pandu. What did they do O Sanjaya?

2. Sanjaya said:

After studying the deployment of the soldiers of the Pandavas, King Duryodhana [son of Dhirtarashtra] was approached at that time by his holy teacher, Bhishma. The King addressed him.

3. Look upon the armies of the sons of Pandu, Holy teacher, great spirit. They have been arranged by the son of Drupada [Dhirstadyumna], your own best student..

4. Here in the army are great warriors, mighty bowmen like Bhima and Arjuna, who are equal in prowess to Yuyudhanah, Virata or Drupada, also great fighters.

5. There are also very strong heroes like Dhirstaketu, Cekitana, Kasirajah, Purujit, Kuntibhojah and Saibya. They are legends among our people.

6. Yudhamanyu and mighty Tamaujah, and the very mighty son of Subhadra; as well as the sons of Draupadi are all certainly great charioteers.

7. Take note of those in our forces now, best of the teachers, and tell me which among the captains of my armies are particularly powerful.

8. Your good self, Bhishma, and also Karna and Kirpa have never lost in battle. Ashvatthama, Vikarna and the son of Somadatta are certainly great warriors as well.

9. Others also, many heroes are prepared to risk their lives for my sake. They are equipped with variety of terrible weapons, and all of them are experienced strategists..

10. Our strength is beyond accounting, totally defended by you, Bhishma. While the forces of the Pandavas are only well defended by Bhima.

11. In the key fronts of the battle, also everywhere, all of us must give our respect and support to you, and assure our victory.

12. Thus to bring joy to his army, Bhishma, grandsire of the Kuru dynasty blew his conchshell. It vibrated loudly, like the roar of a lion.

13. In response, the Kurus rang out with conchshells and large drums, small drums and kettledrums, as well as horns. These were suddenly sounded all at once, and that combined sound became deafening.

14. On the opposing side, on a great chariot with white horses were Krishna and Arjuna. In response, they sounded their divine conchshells.

15. Krishna blew the conchshell named Pancajanya, and Arjuna blew the conch named Devadatta. Also, Bhima, famous for feats of strength and a voracious appetite, blew the conch named Pundra.

16. The conch named Anantavijaya was blown by the son of Kunti, King Yudhisthira. Nakula and Sahadeva blew the conchshells named Sughosa and Manipushpaka.

17. Also the King of Kasi and great archer Sikhandi, and the great warriors Drona, Virata and Satyaki, who had never been defeated in combat.

18. Drupada, the son of Draupadi as well, my king, and the son of Subhadra the great-armed. Each and all blew their conchshells separately.

19. That vibration shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra and the sky and the earth were all resounding tumultuously.

20. At that time, positioned as to be looking upon the sons of Dhritarashtra, was he whose flag was marked with Hanuman the monkey-god, Arjuna the son of Pandu. He was preparing to fire his arrows, taking up his bow, when he suddenly spoke these words to Krishna, my king:

21. Arjuna said:

Most accurate one, please keep my chariot in between both of the armies, so that I might look upon all whom are ready to do battle in this place.

22. All those with whom I will have to try to oppose in this terrible battle.

23. Let me see those who will be fighting, those gathered here, wishing to aid the dark minded son of Dhritarashtra.

24. Sanjaya said:

O son of Kings, thus addressed by Arjuna, Krishna placed the great chariot right between both of the armies.

25. In front of Bhishma, Drona, and all the Kings of the land, he said: behold all of them, the gathered Kurus.

26. There Arjuna saw standing his fathers and grandfathers, teachers and uncles, brothers and sons and grandsons. friends too, and in-laws and past allies. All of these were gathered in both sides, both armies.

27. After seeing them all, the different relatives of the son of Kunti, moved by a higher compassion and overwhelmed by grief, Arjuna spoke:

28. He said: after seeing all these, my people, all ready for battle, it makes my limbs shake and my mouth go dry, Krishna.

29. My body trembles and my hair stands on end, my bow slips from my hand, and my skins feels as if its aflame.

30. Also I cannot continue, I cannot just forget what is on my mind. Krishna, I see only disasters.

31. Nor do I see any good in killing my own people in combat. Nor do I desire victory, Krishna, or the joy of ruling a kingdom.

32. What use to us is the kingdom, Krishna? What enjoyment from living either, what happiness is there in doing this for the sake of ruling a kingdom?

33. All of them, those here on the field of battle, would be losing their riches and lives. My teachers, fathers, grandfathers, uncles and great-grandfathers.

34. Uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law; all these relatives I would never wish to kill. I would have to kill them, Krishna.

35. Even if I could exchange their deaths for the Three Worlds, never mind this kingdom of the earth, what joy would there be for me, Krishna, if I must kill the sons of Dhirtarashtra?

36. Certainly I would be in the wrong if I killed all of these opponents. I have no right to slay the sons of Dhirtarashtra, as well as my own friends and relatives. How could I ever be happy after doing such a thing, Krishna?

37. Even if they do not see, overpowered by greed in their hearts, that killing a relative or attacking a friend are wrong acts.

38. Why should we not know that these are wrong acts? Would not the destruction of a dynasty be a criminal act if done by those who can see the evil of it, Krishna?

39. The destruction of a dynasty destroys the way of that society, it disrupts the eternal religion, and all the families are warped by unlawful activities and decadence.

40. When decadence has taken place, Krishna, do not families become unhealthy? Women of the families become polluted and produce unwanted children.

41. These unwanted children create a lawless society, destroy families. And if the family falls apart, then offerings of food and water to the ancestors stop being performed.

42. Such flawed people, the destroyers of society and unwanted children which they create will devastate social laws and family laws for ever.

43. Krishna, I have heard from the priests that men who ruin the family ways will reside forever in hell.

44. I regret our strange choice to commit such terrible acts; we were driven by greed, by my desire to become a king. This has led us to try to kill our relatives.

45. Even if I did not resist, unarmed, as the sons of Dhirtarashtra killed me on the field, it would be a better thing.

46. Sanjaya said:

Thus having spoken, Arjuna sat down again on the chariot, on the battlefield, putting aside his bow and arrows. He was distressed by grief in his heart.

Chapter 2

1. Sanjaya said:

Thus he was overwhelmed with compassion, his eyes full of tears and regret. Krishna spoke to him these words:

2. The Blessed One said:

From where has this dirtiness of regret come upon you, at this very critical hour? This is practiced by those who don't know the true essence. This line of thought doesn't lead to a higher dimension; it will only lead you to disgrace, Arjuna!

3. Do not take to helplessness, you who are the son of Partha. This behaviour does not suit you. It is a petty weakness of sentimentality, give it up! Get up, you who are the punisher of your enemies!

4. Arjuna said:

How can I attack with arrows men like Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of my veneration, o Krishna?

5. They are my superiors, certainly I should not kill such great beings. It would be better to live as a beggar in this very life, than to desire to gain by killing my superiors in society! It would be too difficult to enjoy any such pleasures if they are tainted with blood.

6. Nor do we even know what would be better; we can't know if we shall conquer or they will. But I know that by killing those before me, the sons of Dhritarashtra, I would not wish to live.

7. I am afflicted now by hesitation and weakness. I ask you to help me, my spirit is confused in my heart. Tell me what would be right, I am your disciple. I surrender unto you, tell me what can be known.

8. I do not see how I can be free of that which fills me with grief and clouds my senses. Even if I were to gain a Kingdom in this world as great as the heavenly kingdoms, and power as great as the Gods', it would not free me from this.

9. Sanjaya said:

Saying this to Krishna, Arjuna the punisher of his enemies declared: "Krishna, I shall not fight". Then he fell silent.

10. O my King, descendant of Bharata, Krishna then smiled and spoke to the grieving Arjuna, right in the midst of the two great armies.

11. The Blessed One said:

You are grieving for that which is not worthy of grief. Speaking from wisdom you would say that no life is lost, now or ever. You would not grieve over death.

12. There has never existed a time when I was not, or you were not, or these were not, any of these kings. Nor shall there ever be a time when we will not be.

13. Any who lives a mortal life in a body will experience childhood, youth, and old age. Likewise, they will achieve other forms of life beyond this one. One who is focused will not be blind to this.

14. Son of Queen Kunti, it is only the senses that see the winter and summer of suffering and joy. They come and go, but are in no way permanent. One must accept them all, scion of Bharata.

15. Finest of men, one who isn't disturbed by these things, who is the same in happiness and suffering, he has discovered patience. For one like this, the nectar of liberation is obtainable.

16. There is nothing in this world that lasts forever as it is. The only thing which is unchanging is the eternal. These two forces, the essential and the nonessential, have been studied by the seekers of truth.

17. Know the essential to be indestructible, and to be found throughout your entire body. No person or thing can harm it.

18. Our physical bodies are easily destroyed, but the essence within them is said to be eternal. It is beyond all measure, and indestructible. Therefore, you may fight, scion of Bharata!

19. One who thinks himself the slayer, or one who thinks himself slain, is in delusion. The essential cannot destroy nor be destroyed.

20. Nor is it ever born, nor does it ever die. It has never been created, nor will it ever be created, nor is it being created. It is unborn, eternal, permanent. That which is eternally ancient is not killed, even if its body is being killed

21. If you know this essence to be unborn, unchangeable, indestructible, and always existing, then how can you believe that you can cause harm or death to anything essential, son of Partha?

22. Just as one gives up old worn out clothes, and accepts and wears new clothes, in the same way does the embodied essence give up old or worn bodies, and take on new ones.

23. This essence can never be cut with a blade or burned by fire, nor will water make it wet, nor will wind dry it.

24. This essence cannot be broken, burned, dissolved, or desiccated. It is certainly immortal, omnipresent, immutable, unchangeable, and eternally as it is.

25. It is invisible, and beyond the understanding of the mind. This essence cannot be altered. Thus, if you are aware of this, you should not feel regret.

26. But even if you think that this essence is one that is always being reborn and dying, there is still no reason to grieve.

27. For anyone who is born is sure to die. This is known for certain. Thus there is no reason to grieve for that which was bound to occur.
28. That which in the beginning has no form, gains form in the middle, and then is destroyed and once again becomes formless. All things are such, scion of Bharata, so why grieve?
29. Some will see this essence as awe-inspiring. They will describe it as a Mystery. It is likewise awe-inspiring to one who hears of this Mystery. For to any who hear of it, it will be beyond all comprehension.
30. The essential self is eternal and cannot be killed. It is the Mystery.. It is within all beings, scion of Bharata. Thus you need not grieve for any living things.
31. One's own spiritual nature must also be considered. You should never hesitate, for to your spiritual nature, there is nothing that suits you better than being a warrior. It is your destiny to be a warrior, you have no other choice.
32. When it naturally occurs, conflict such as this can open the doors to higher consciousness. For those who are kings, this is a very fortuitous event.
33. Thus, if you see this as a spiritual duty, to avoid fighting now will go against your nature and lead to the loss of your prestige. You will gain only further disturbance in this way.
34. You will be shamed before all the people, and they will speak ill of you forever as one who not true to his nature.. For a man of insight, such a fate is much worse than death.
35. If you quit the battle out of fear, your fellow warriors who currently honour you will judge you as unworthy of any respect.
36. Your enemies will be able to speak terrible slanders against you. This will be more terrible to you than anything else.
37. If you die here, you will gain a higher state of consciousness. If on the other hand you are victorious, you will have the world. Thus arise, son of Kunti, be secure in determination to fight.
38. Joy and sorrow are equal in gain and loss, as are victory and death. Thus if you approach any of these without attachment, you will never incur distress.
39. I have described all of this to you intellectually, but you must understand this from the perspective of enlightened consciousness, beyond the limits of intellectual thought. If you can enter into enlightened thought, you will be free of the restrictions of karmic consequences.
40. Even in attempting this form of understanding you cannot go wrong. Even if you can reach a limited form of enlightened understanding, it will help to decrease your distress.

41. If you are determined to be conscious, to be enlightened, you will achieve greater unity to reality, my beloved friend. There are various paths by which you can reach this enlightenment, and thus be free from internal division.

42. All of these flowery words have been said before by those who had not actually achieved this enlightenment, by those who claim to be religious. But there is no substitute for the actual experience.

43. Being filled with desires, including the desire for consciousness itself, but also for material comforts, these false religionists engage in elaborate ceremonies in the hope of gaining material goals.

44. Those who are attached to such things are actually deluded. They cannot focus their consciousness on enlightenment, they will never transcend their minds.

45. The old scriptures mostly relate to the states of material being, the gunas. But you should attempt to transcend these gunas altogether, Arjuna. Go beyond duality, in a pure state of existence, free from notions of desire, centred in your soul.

46. That which can be found in a drop of water can also be found in the vast ocean. Likewise, all that can be known in studying religion can be understood in a true way by a man who has become aware of the Brahman, the supreme consciousness.

47. It is certainly right of you to follow your duties in society, but do it without lust of result. You should not perform actions for the sake of some desired result, nor should you seek to avoid action for the sake of some desire.

48. Act according to your true nature, in a balanced state. Give up your attachments to desires of success, or fear of failure, Arjuna. Being balanced, taking all things equally, this is yoga. This is being united.

49. Leave all of your harmful karma far behind, by becoming united to Enlightenment. This is called Buddha-Yoga, conqueror of the world. Try to surrender to this consciousness, do not try to hold on to false desires for that which is unreal.

50. One who is in consciousness can be freed, even in this very life, from concern about all good or bad results. Thus, for the sake of being united, follow this art of Yoga in all you do.

51. Great mystics can give up all karma and its consequences by entering this state of consciousness. They are freed from the restrictions of birth and death, and reach a state that is beyond any suffering.

52. When your consciousness takes you beyond the dark forest of illusion, then you will no longer need to rely on seeking knowledge or on what you already think you know.

53. When your interest in religion is no longer motivated by your desires, you will achieve absolute transcendental enlightenment. Then you have achieved union.

54. Arjuna said: How do you recognize someone who is in this state, Krishna? How does one in this state speak? How does he sit? How does he walk?

55. The Blessed One said:

One such as this is free of any kind of investments, son of Partha, and free of mental notions. Purely centred in his soul, fulfilled. One who obtains this is said to have achieved awareness.

56. One who is surrounded by miseries without himself being distressed, one who is surrounded by happiness without himself being invested, free from desire, fear or anger. He whose awareness is steady, he is called a mystic.

57. One who avoids sentimentality, regardless of the situation, takes good or bad results without pride or envy, he is in a state of awareness.

58. When he can draw inside himself, like the turtle draws its limbs into its shell, separating the senses from the sensed, he is in a state of awareness.

59. Some abstain from the material sources of pleasure for the sake of appearing religious, but will secretly keep lusting for these things. But one who actually gives up the lust for these things, he will experience a vastly greater pleasure.

60. Son of Kunti, even while trying to be a man of consciousness, the senses can become agitated and the mind can throw you off track.

61. Keep all these senses under control, they should all be focused upon me. One who can thus dedicate all his senses to a single focus is in a state of awareness.

62. One who is undisciplined in the senses will develop attachment. Attachment leads to desire. Desire leads to anger.

63. Anger leads to deludedness. Deludedness leads to false perceptions. And one who perceives the unreal cannot be aware. Such a person will fall.

64. One who has become free of desire and repulsion, who does not allow his senses to be wildly led by outer lusts, he has come under the control of his own soul, and has attained freedom of the soul. He has obtained a divine blessing.

65. Achieving this blessing leads to the end of all misery. For one who is in such bliss, enlightenment will soon follow.

66. Enlightenment cannot happen if you are not unified. Nor can bliss. Nor peace. And how can there be joy without peace?

67. If one is being led by the senses, constantly distracted by one's mind, one's awareness is lost. One becomes like a boat on a windswept ocean.

68. Thus, great warrior, one who can make the distinction between the senses and the sensed, he is in awareness.

69. When others are in the dark of the night, such a person is awake and in control. And what others consider being awake, the mystic knows to be nothing but the dark of night.

70. As the oceans are constantly being filled by water flowing into them, so is one constantly being filled with desires. One who is trying to fulfill all his desires will never be at peace.

71. But in giving up desires, living free of lust or a sense of material possessiveness, you lose the ego. You attain peace.

72. Son of Partha, one who is unaware of the real can never gain this spiritual state. But if you can obtain this state, even at the very end of life, you will reach the divine Nirvana.

Chapter 3

1. Arjuna said:

If you think that awareness is better than actions born of desire, Krishna, why are you trying to cause me to commit such horrid acts?

2. Your words are clear yet they confuse me. So please tell me now directly, what must I do that will benefit me?

3. The Blessed One said:

As I have already told you, my faultless friend, there are two paths to follow in this world. There is the Yoga of awareness followed by the spiritual philosophers, and the Yoga of devotional acts followed by the mystics.

4. You cannot become free of Karma by avoiding actions. Nor can you gain success by mere renunciation.

5. For there is not even a single moment in this life when you are free from some kind of action. You are forced to be in constant activity of some kind, merely by virtue of being alive. This is the reality of the gunas.

6. Even if you control all the five senses through mental willpower, you are still constantly engaged in thoughts and desires. Anyone who believes he can truly do nothing is a foolish soul, a false religionist.

7. One who starts to control the senses with the mind, Arjuna, by focusing the senses upon uniting, will reduce attachment and be by far the better.

8. Take whatever action is required. To take action is better than to avoid it. You cannot even maintain your body without taking action.

9. Actions done for spiritual purposes are better than any other form of actions. Son of Kunti, action to this end will serve excellently to free you from attachments.

10. In the ancient times, having performed the spiritual rituals, the god Brahma said "by these rituals you shall be increasingly prosperous, let the spirit bring to you all good things".

11. The divine spirits are pleased by ritual sacrifices. These spirits will reward you in return. By this mutual service, you will obtain the greatest of blessings.

12. The spirits will provide you with all of the necessities of life, being in turn given what they need by your rituals performed in gratitude. But one who receives what is given in life by the spirits, without in turn giving thankful ritual, is certainly a thief.

13. Devotees who eat food that has been purified by the ritual of devotional gratitude are relieved of any guilt associated with that food. But those who eat gluttonously and without gratitude or awareness are committing terrible deeds.

14. Our bodies grow from food. Our food grows from the rain. The rain is thanks to the spirits. We must act to honour them.

15. You should know that all actions come from Brahma, they are a direct manifestation of the divine. So Brahma is everywhere, and will always be present in our rituals.

16. Therefore one who does not follow the way of ritual in this life, one who lives shamefully only for the pursuit of desires, is wasting his life, son of Partha.

17. However, anyone who finds bliss in his soul will enlighten his soul. A man who is satisfied with his own being will not have to perform any outer spiritual actions.

18. Certainly the performance of his duties would have no purpose, but also there is no purpose for him to avoid the performance of his duties. For in all of this world he need not seek any purpose whatsoever.

19. Thus, always without attachment, do whatever duties you will. By doing all work without attachment, a man achieves the highest.

20. By doing such work it is known that King Janaka and other lords achieved their great spiritual powers. And you must also consider that the lesser people will be observing how you act, you must consider them.

21. Whatever a man in a position of respect does, certainly the common people will see it as an example. Whatever he does, all the world will follow.

22. Son of Partha, there is no duty in all the three worlds that I must perform. There is nothing that I want, nothing I could gain. But clearly I too take action.

23. If ever I did not take action, or perform actions carelessly, all men would follow my example in every respect, son of Partha.

24. All of these worlds would be put into ruin if I did not set an example. I would be the cause of undesirable births, and all life would have to be destroyed.

25. The ignorant are greatly attached to taking karmic action. Scion of Bharata, the wise must do the same. In this way, they can slowly lead the common people to detachment.

26. They must strive not to lead the foolish away from awareness; they should not give the foolish cause to avoid working. Instead, the wise must give them some work that will lead them in the right direction.

27. In the material world, the gunas cause all kinds of activities to occur. Deluded by the ego, the soul believes that he is the one who is acting.

28. But the one who knows truth, great warrior, he understands the gunas and karma, and the difference between the senses and that which is sensed. With this perspective he will avoid attachment.

29. These elements of reality (gunas) will delude people, and they become attached to actions and desires in the material world. These people are either lacking in wisdom, or they are lazy. One who is wise should not try to disturb them.

30. Surrender all actions unto me by being conscious, aware of the self. Be without lusting for any result, be without possessiveness, and free from reluctance, fight.

31. Those who follow my instructions regularly are human beings performing divine acts. With devotion and without desire, they all become free from the bondage of karma.

32. However, those who out of jealous desire do not follow my instructions regularly, they are foolish in every way. Know this well, they are all ruined without consciousness.

33. Even an intelligent man, though he may try otherwise, is still controlled by the elements of the material world. All living beings are subject to this, so what good will self-restriction do?

34. Of the senses and the sensed, of what you desire and also what you wish to avoid, you should put all of these under some control. You should never be controlled by them, or else these things will distract you from being conscious.

35. It is better to follow your own discipline, even badly, than it would be to follow someone else's discipline even if you did it perfectly. Even if your own path leads you to death, it is better. For following the path of others is more dangerous than death.

36. Arjuna said:

Then what is it that motivates a man toward false action? Even if they do not wish to, it seems that men are drawn to it by force, scion of Virshni.

37. The Blessed One said:

This is desire and anger, born out of the Raja guna (the element of all-consuming passion) that leads men to great error. Know that in this world, it is the great enemy.

38. Just as fire is concealed within smoke, or a mirror concealed by dust, or as an embryo is concealed in the womb, so does reality become concealed in desires.

39. By this is consciousness hidden from the self. It is the eternal enemy. Also, son of Kunti, one is never fulfilled in the fire of lust.

40. The senses, perceptions, and the mind are called the thrones of desire. Lust deludes all of these, hiding the true awareness of the embodied being.

41. Thus you must begin by disciplining the senses, lord of the Bharatas. You must curb this great symbol of falsehood, which destroys both awareness and knowledge of the self.

42. The senses are said to be superb, but the mind is said to be greater still, and awareness is even greater than the mind. But the center is even greater than awareness.

43. Thus awareness leads to centered consciousness, by focusing and steadying the mind. Great warrior, you will conquer the greatest enemy if you conquer desire.

Chapter 4

1. The Blessed One said:

I taught this Yoga to the Sun, Vivasvan, and he taught Manu, the father of humanity. Manu then taught it to King Ikshvaku.

2. Thus, one after the other received this teaching, understood by Kings. But in time this knowledge of the great Yoga became scattered, defeater of your enemies.

3. This very same ancientmost Yoga I am speaking to you today. You are my devotee, you are my friend also, thus this Mystery is transcendental.

4. Arjuna said:

You were born much later than the Sun, so how am I to understand that in the beginning of time you had taught him?

5. The Blessed One said:

I have had many births, and you as well Arjuna. I know them all, but you do not remember them, defeater of your enemies.

6. Though I was unborn, my undiluted soul existed as the transcendental form of myself within the great Lord. Being in this state, it is my choice when I incarnate my soul into this world.

7. Whenever and wherever true spirituality has become deteriorated, scion of Bharata, and there is a predominance of false religion, I will appear at that time.

8. I will help the true students, and I will cause strife to the wrongdoers. I will remind people of the true way. I will appear age after age.

9. Anyone who realizes the reality of my transcendental birth and actions will never take birth again in this form. Instead he too will connect to me, Arjuna.

10. Free of attachment, fear, and anger, fully connected to me, in me, by awareness purified of many wrongdoings, he will obtain spiritual love with me.

11. All who surrender unto me, them I surely reward. All men follow my path, son of Partha, in every respect.

12. Desiring great power and success in their material actions, men make sacrifices to the spirits. Those who do so are certainly rewarded in their limited material ambitions.

13. The four divisions of human society were created by me, so that any man would do the work best suited to his dominant element. Although you may realize me to be the father of this, you must also realize that I am the eternal, which is free of action.

14. I am never affected by any actions, nor do I have any ambitions. Thus any who realizes me will never become attached to the Karma of actions.

15. Thus, knowing that actions were done by past masters who indeed attained awakening, take action now, as the ancient ones did.

16. Even the intelligent are deluded as to what is action and what is inaction. I will explain action to you, so that in being aware of this you will be free from misfortune.

17. You must understand which action is right and which is wrong. You must understand when not to act, and when to enter action.

18. When you can see non-doing in doing, and doing in non-doing, then you have gained awareness in the world. You will be in unity, even if you take all kinds of actions.

19. One whose efforts are free of lust of result, who gives his actions as sacrifice to the divine, he will be called wise by the awakened ones.

20. Having given up the lust of result, being satisfied without any false security, such a person will be in non-doing, even though he takes many actions.

21. Focusing the mind and the soul, without lust of result, giving up all sense of possession, only working for what is needed to maintain the body and soul, one doing so will never go wrong.

22. Fulfilled by the good things that come of their own accord, beyond duality, free of jealousy, equally steady in success or failure, one doing so may take action and remain free from reaction.

23. One who is detached from the elements, who is free, whose wisdom is in awareness, who acts for the sake of gratitude, his work is entirely unified.

24. Brahma is found in the sacrifice, and Brahma is found in the fire (where the sacrifice is performed). And Brahma is found in the one who makes the sacrifice. Brahma is certainly attainable to any whose actions are united with Brahma.

25. Some worship the spirits through ritual, but mystics worship perfectly through the fire of Brahma, thus making sacrifice of sacrifice.

26. Others practice restraint of the senses, offering their senses, like hearing, to the fire. But others offer the sound that is heard by the senses to the fire.

27. Also, others control the actions of the senses, and the breath. But others practice the focusing of their soul to union; they offer their urge for awareness in the fire of sacrifice.

28. Others sacrifice their possessions, their comforts, in the vows of the eightfold discipline. Others take the strict vow of sacrifice in wisdom, in the advancement of awareness.

29. Others offer the ingoing and outgoing breath, or stopping the movement of the ingoing to the outgoing breath. Others are drawn to the trance of stopping all breath, or giving up food and offering the ingoing breath as sacrifice to the outgoing.

30. All of these methods of sacrifice and what are understood as purification rituals may appear different. But those who gain some success in any of these do come closer to the eternal space of Brahma.

31. For those who follow no practices there is nothing on this world or the other, best of the Kurus.

32. Thus various kinds of practices have been spread by word of mouth from the priests. Learn of all of them, because awareness of one will lead to freedom.

33. But greater than the sacrificing of material possessions is the offering of being aware, punisher of your enemies. Son of Partha, all actions reach their end in totality.

34. Try to understand these things by approaching one who is wise, by humbly asking him, and providing service to him. He can initiate you into awareness, because he is aware and can see what is real.

35. Son of Pandu, you shall gain freedom from ever being deluded again. You will see the great soul (Atman) that is in all things, or in other words that is in me.

36. Even if you are the greatest sinner of all sinners, with the boat of awareness you will be able to go beyond all such sins and completely cross the ocean of suffering.

37. Just as firewood in a blazing fire turns to ashes, Arjuna, in the fire of awareness all material Karma similarly turns to ashes.

38. There is nothing that exists in this world that can be compared in holiness to awareness. He who gains experience in Yoga over time will enjoy the bliss of the soul.

39. A dedicated man will gain awareness. He will be very drawn to it, and focus his senses in it. Having gained awareness in his senses, he very soon gains a deeper spiritual peace.

40. For a fool who rebukes this path, with no dedication, or one who is filled with doubts and cannot trust, it will be very difficult for him to find happiness in this world or the other.

41. One who renounces lust of result through yoga will cut down his doubts with the sword of awareness. When you are centered in your soul your actions will never bind you, o conqueror.

42. Thus cut off your doubts with the weapon of the soul. They are born of ignorance, and cover your heart. Centered in yoga, scion of Bharata, stand and fight!

Chapter 5

1. Arjuna said:

Krishna, first you are giving praise to the renunciation of activities, then you give praise to yoga. Please tell me definitively which one is more beneficial.

2. The Blessed One said:

Renunciation of work or the work of Yoga, both of them lead to the way of openness. But of the two, the work of yoga is better than the renunciation of all work.

3. He should be understood always as the renouncer, who neither rejects nor desires. Free of duality, great warrior, he is always happily liberated from bondage.

4. The ill-informed say that yoga is different from witnessing. When you are involved in one, you are completely enjoying the results of both.

5. Whatever achievement is gained by witnessing, one can also attain through yoga. You can attain unity through either method, if you have eyes to see.

6. But simply renouncing all things without taking up yoga, great warrior, can afflict you with misery. One who practices yoga will be engaged. He can attain Brahma easily that way.

7. A pure soul practicing yoga is centered in his soul, having conquered the senses. He will have compassion to all living beings, and though he acts he will never become attached.

8. One who knows reality will think: 'I am never involved in doing, even though I am seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, eating, defecating, dreaming and breathing'.

9. Let one always consider thusly, although they may be talking, giving, taking, opening and closing, and generally involving the senses in activities.

10. Dedicate all works to Brahma. One who takes actions, but without attachment, is always free of wrongdoing, like a lotus leaf is not touched by the water upon which it rests.

11. Purified of body, mind, awareness and the senses, practitioners of yoga perform all actions while giving up attachment. This purifies the soul.

12. One thus practicing, giving up the lust of result, achieves unswerving peace. One who does not practice this, acting with desired results in mind, will always become attached.

13. Renouncing all activities of the mind, one who is so focused will always be blissful. In the city of nine gates (the body), one must be embodied in such a way that you desire no action nor any result.

14. The master of this city will claim no possession of it, nor cause its people (parts) to take actions. Nor will he be connected to the results of any activities, but only act naturally.

15. Likewise the greater king of all the cities (Brahma) will not accept any saintliness or sin. It is only individual beings who are deluded to believe so, their awareness clouded by ignorance.
16. However, when ignorance is destroyed by awareness, the awareness of a living being becomes like a golden dawn, revealing the highest.
17. One whose consciousness is always thus focused, one whose soul is always thus focused, one whose trust is always thus focused, one whose total comfort is only in this, he achieves unity. By awareness all doubts are swept away.
18. Well armed with true wisdom and gentleness, the learned will see no difference in the priest, the cow, the elephant, the dog, or the outcast.
19. Those whose mind is focused on seeing the unity will certainly conquer birth and death, even in this lifetime. As Brahma is perfectly united, so shall the united be in Brahma.
20. One who is completely aware of Brahma is in Brahma. He will neither rejoice when good things happen nor will he become unhappy when bad things happen.
21. One whose soul is not clouded by nonessential pleasures will enjoy the bliss of the soul. By uniting to Brahma you unite to your soul, and enjoy unlimited bliss.
22. The senses are certainly the source of pleasures, and also of suffering. All of these things shall come and all things shall pass. Son of Kunti, the enlightened never revel in such things.
23. One who is able to tolerate desire and anger born of lusts, in this very body before it dies; he who can accept it all will find happiness in his humanity.
24. One who has inner happiness, focusing inwardly and enjoying the inner world, he is certainly a mystic. Being aware of the reality of Brahma, he obtains enlightenment in Brahma.
25. Those who are inwardly active achieve enlightenment in Brahma. They are free of any wrongdoing. They have destroyed duality, are focused on the soul, and are doing a service to all living things.
26. Those who are free of desire and anger, the saintly ones who have control of consciousness, the ones who have become aware of the soul, they are assured to gain enlightenment in Brahma.
27. Suspend nonessential sensory forces, like sound and eyesight, in the space between the eyes. Keep the incoming and outgoing breath in the nostrils.
28. In this way controlling the senses, awareness, and the mind, the seeker will be destined for liberation. He will discard desires, fear and anger. He will certainly be forever free.
29. The receiver of offerings and sacrifices, the great lord of all the worlds and their rulers, the benefactor of all living beings, one who knows me as this will achieve peace.

Chapter 6

1. The Blessed One said:

He who acts according to what must be done, without being drawn into lust of result, he is a Sannyasin and a mystic. Not so, he who does no work and thus no devotion either.

2. What they call Sannyas (renunciation), you must know as uniting (yoga), son of Pandu. Certainly, no mystic can become anything without giving up the divided desires of the self.

3. For the beginner at yoga, practicing a discipline is said to be the means. For one who has attained in yoga, the cessation of all such activities is said to be the means.

4. When one does not involve himself in the senses or in activities, renouncing all desires, at that time one is said to have reached the height of yoga.

5. One must free the soul from the mind, never allowing the soul to be clouded. The mind can be the great friend of the soul, but the great enemy as well.

6. For the soul that is in control of the mind, the mind is certainly the friend. But for the soul who has failed to be in control of the mind, due to dividedness, the mind is the greatest enemy.

7. One who has triumphed over the mind has obtained peace. He has completely entered the supersoul. He will be the same in heat, cold, happiness, sadness, honour, and dishonour.

8. By awareness and experience, a soul is focused in his senses, centered, and fulfilled. It is said such a mystic is greatly advanced. He will see that pebbles, great stones, and pure gold are all the same.

9. One who is highly advanced will be able to see enlightenment in allies, patrons, enemies, neutral parties, messengers, those who envy him, his relatives, those said to be saintly, and those said to be sinners.

10. A mystic must constantly be meditative, his entire soul in a place of aloneness. Alone, always watching the mind, not drawn toward anything, free of possessiveness.

11. On holy ground, his soul seated firmly. Neither too high nor too low, on sacred grass covered with soft cloth and deerskin.

12. Thus, with the mind focused on a single point, regulating the mind, senses and activities, sitting in a fixed position, one should practice yoga techniques to clear the soul.

13. Keep the head, neck and body straight and unmoving, still. Looking only at the tip of your own nose and not in other directions.

14. The soul will be at peace, free of fear, innocent. Totally overcoming the mind, focusing it on me, the practitioner being situated in me is the ultimate goal.

15. Constantly practicing with the entire soul in this way, the mystic will attain peace, the great Nirvana, the endless sky.

16. One who eats too much is not united, neither is one who fasts too much. Nor one who sleeps too much, or one who stays awake, Arjuna.

17. Practice the work of balanced eating, playing, and working to maintain yourself. The one who is balanced in sleep and wakefulness through yoga will see less and less suffering.

18. When the mind is particularly focused, it certainly becomes centered in the soul. Freed of the desire for all kinds of things, at that time it is said to be united.

19. Just as a lamp does not flicker when there is no wind, so is a mystic whose mind is focused remain constant in the unity of the soul.

20. In that state where mental activities cease, being distinguished from the essential through yoga, a pure soul aware of the soul becomes fulfilled by the soul.

21. The supreme bliss that can be attained by transcendent enlightenment is such that one in it will never again move from it.

22. What is gained by this attainment is nothing more than that state, whereby even the greatest misery will not move you from it.

23. You must know this: all of the suffering of the world can be overcome by the trance of yoga.

24. The practice of yoga must be done firmly, without deviation. You must completely give up all the turmoils of the mind, born of desires. Focusing the mind and all the senses, all the time.

25. Gradually, step by step, one should concentrate the mind by awareness and with determination. When you are centered in the soul, thoughts will no longer trouble you.

26. All kinds of things can disturb the mind, making it flicker from one thing to another with no center. One must release attention from all of these distractions, returning into the centeredness of the soul.

27. The mystic whose mind is in great peace will attain the highest bliss. His passions made peaceful, liberated by Brahma, he is beyond all his past errors.

28. Thus engaged in his eternal soul, the mystic is beyond all impurities. In bliss, constantly connected to Brahma, he obtains the greatest joy.

29. The soul that exists in all beings is also in your soul. One who has united the self by yoga will see everything with the same eyes.

30. Whoever sees me in all things and all things in me is not far from me, nor am I far from him.

31. He who is devoted to me is in the oneness that is in the heart of all beings. He is entirely in that oneness, in spite of himself; the mystic remains in me.

32. He who sees that his soul is everywhere and the same, Arjuna, whether in happiness or misery, such a man is considered a perfect mystic.

33. Arjuna said:

This system you have broadly described, great warrior, seems impossible for me. I know I am too restless and unsteady.

34. Krishna, the mind is an unstable thing, constantly in strong turmoil and uncontrollable. I think that to focus it would be as difficult as trying to catch the wind.

35. The Blessed One said:

Great warrior, there is no doubt that the mind is unstable, and difficult to focus. But through practice, son of Kunti, and detachment, it can be focused.

36. In my opinion, unity is extremely difficult to obtain without disciplining the mind. But a centered soul is a realistic goal that can be achieved, if you know the right means.

37. Arjuna said:

What of one who had the trust, but could not achieve unity due to a troubled mind, and thus fails in mysticism? Krishna, what is the fate of such a person, who has failed to reach the highest?

38. Krishna, mighty warrior, being thus unsuccessful in both material and spiritual ambitions, such a person could belong to neither realm. Lost from the path of the divine, will he not perish like a scattered cloud?

39. This is my doubt, Krishna. I ask you to satisfy my doubts. Other than you, I am sure no one else could do this.

40. The Blessed One said:

Son of Partha, nothing is destroyed in this world or the other. Thus no one is truly lost who had started on this path.

41. One who has done this work but not completed it will reach higher realms, and after dwelling there for many years will again take birth in a wealthy or spiritual household.

42. He might take birth in a family of mystics, who are wise. But this type of birth is very rare.

43. He will be able to regain the level of enlightenment that he had in his previous form, and after that may continue on the way of perfection, son of Kuru.

44. Due to his past work, he will be drawn automatically to this practice. He will be curious about yoga, and will see past the dogmas of ritualistic religion.

45. Working in discipline, such a mystic is cleansed of wrongdoing. After many births, having achieved the great power, he attains the highest.

46. The mystic is greater than the ascetic, and also greater than the wise. He is considered greater than those who succeed in the material world. Thus, Arjuna, simply become a mystic.

47. And of all the mystics, those who are within me, within themselves, in total trust, giving devotional service, they are considered by me to be the finest.

Chapter 7

1. The Blessed One said:

With your mind directed to me, scion of Partha, practicing yoga in awareness of me, try to hear how you can become completely aware, and free of doubt.

2. I shall fully explain to you this awareness and this knowledge, which once known, there will remain nothing further in this world to know.

3. Out of thousands of men, one will struggle for the higher power. And of those thousands struggling, only one will know me in reality.

4. Earth, water, fire, air, the ether, the mind, awareness and the false ego; all of these are my own eightfold energies in division.

5. These are inferior forms. But besides these there is another form. Endeavour to understand this superior form of me. This superior form is life, the living beings, great warrior, who make use of these elements of matter.

6. In this way, know that there are these two forms whose intermingling produced all things. I encompass all creation and destruction in existence.

7. Conqueror, beyond me there is no greater thing. Everything that you see, all that is, is in me; like pearls strung on a thread.

8. Son of Kunti, I am the flavour in water, I am the light of the sun and moon, I am the sound OM that is in all mantras, I am the vibration in the ether, I am the genius in man.

9. I am also the original fragrances of the earth, I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all things. I am the austerity of the ascetics.

10. Mine is the seed of all living beings. Son of Partha, try to understand that which is eternal. I am the awareness of the aware. I am the skill of the skillful.

11. I am the strength of the strong, free of lust or attachment. I am the natural sexuality of all beings, lord of the Bharatas.

12. And all of the elements of beings: sattvas (truth), rajas (passion), and tamas (heaviness), all of them come from me. Do not try to know me in their light, you must instead understand them in my light.

13. There are three gunas (elements of being), and by these is the whole universe in delusion. It cannot see me above these, greater and never-ending.

14. It is very difficult to transcend this maya (illusion) of the gunas, but it is actually my own energy. Thus those who surrender unto me will go beyond this illusion.

15. The foolish, the lowest of men who do not surrender unto me, have had their understanding stolen by this illusion. They have accepted being in darkness.

16. There are four kinds of people who will trust and render service unto me, Arjuna. They are those who are in distress, those who are curious, those who desire material gain, and those who understand the real, greatest of the Bharatas.

17. Of them only those who understand the real, and the devotees, are special. I am very close to those who understand deeply. And they are very close to me.

18. All of these are certainly great, but it is my opinion that one who understands the real has the same soul as me. He is certainly in the state of the united soul, in me, which is certainly the highest goal.

19. After many births and deaths, one who is aware surrenders unto me. Thus everything becomes the divine consciousness, and this supersoul is the most rare of experiences.

20. One who is lacking full awareness will surrender to other spirits, and will follow the corresponding disciplines according to their natures.

21. Whichever and whatever form of spirit a devotee wishes to be devoted to with trust, I will certainly grant him the opportunity.

22. Being inspired by his trust in the devotion to that spirit he is drawn to, he will obtain what he desires from it. This is in fact arranged by me.

23. But these results are only transitory, appropriate to those of limited knowing who go to the spirits. But those who are directly my devotees will reach me.

24. Those who have limited consciousness believe me to be an impersonal force. They do not know me as the great work, the force of life, never-ending and most sublime.

25. Nor do I make myself visible to everyone. Those persons who are foolish, clouded by their connection to illusion, can not understand me as the unborn and never-ending.

26. I am completely informed of the past, present and future, Arjuna. I also know all living beings, but none of them know me.

27. Scion of Bharatta, the duality of desire and hate is born of illusion. All living beings fall into this delusion upon taking birth, conqueror of your enemies.

28. But those persons who have by trust erased all their past wrongdoings, they have become freed from duality, and thus delusion. They will devote themselves to me with great will.

29. All of those who seek to take shelter in me, for escape from the cycles of birth and death, such persons are actually Brahma. They know all that are transcendental acts.

30. Those who know the laws of life, that govern all spirits, know me. Even at the time of death they know me, and their minds unite to me.

Chapter 8

1. Arjuna said:

What is Brahman? What is the self? What is karma, greatest of beings? What is it to be alive? And what are the beings called the spirits?

2. Who is the lord of devotion and how is he here, in this very body, great warrior? And how can you be known at the time of death by those who are not unfocused?

3. The Blessed One said:

The highest infinite is called Brahma, it is the eternal self. It is the source of all life, and its creations are called karma.

4. Its physical form has an ever-changing nature. It is the universe, and all the spirits. I am certainly part of this supersoul, incarnated in this body, great one.

5. At the end of this life, he who leaves his body remembering me will go into my being. Of this achievement there is no doubt.

6. At the end of your life, whatever you are remembering, that will be the state of being you achieve, son of Kunti.

7. Thus, at all times, remember me. Fight for me. Surrender your mind and awareness unto me, and you will attain with no doubt.

8. By the practice of yoga, without distracting the mind, through constantly thinking of it the supreme and divine individuality will be attained.

9. Always focus on the all knowing, the most ancient, the master of all, smaller than an atom, the maintainer of all things, beyond intellectual understanding, whose form is brighter than the sun and overcomes all darkness.

10. At the time of death, without being distracted by the mind, in full devotion, practicing the mystic yoga, focusing all life-energy on the space between the eyebrows, one will achieve the transcendent individuality in the divine.

11. That which the priests call the OM, entered into by the great sages, the hermits; that which is practiced by those who desire innocence, that which they struggle for in their lives, I will explain to you now very simply.

12. Controlling all the doors of the body, securing the mind inside one's heart, fixing the life-energy of your soul on the top of your head, this is how to practice yoga.

13. Thus this one word, OM, becomes Brahma. Anyone who leaves their body while remembering me and vibrating this word will achieve the great goal.

14. Without distracting the mind, anyone who regularly remembers me will very easily reach my state, scion of Partha, by regularly practicing yoga.

15. Achieving me, being reborn, the great souls will return to this plane of the temporary, this place of miseries. They have achieved the great power.

16. They are raised up to the world of Brahma-being. Arjuna, they return to me, they arrive, but will never take birth again.

17. They know that one day of Brahma is like a thousand ages. Those who understand know also that at the end of one thousand ages of night, there comes the day.

18. All living beings are born from the unborn, at the beginning of the day. At the coming of the night, all is once more absorbed into that which is called unborn.

19. This is the sum of all living beings, being born and born again and also inevitably destroyed at the coming of the night, son of Partha, being born once more at the arriving of the dawn.

20. But in that great nature, there is the uncreated behind all that is created. It is eternal. As all that is created is destroyed, that which is uncreated is never destroyed.

21. That which is said to be the uncreated and perfect is known as the ultimate goal. Which, once gained, one never returns from. This is my supreme home.

22. It is the greatest individuality, son of Partha, which can be achieved by absolute devotion. For it is located within this very life that surrounds all that we see.

23. Different kinds of mystics return and do not return at different times, depending on the time that they have left. I shall explain this to you, greatest of the Bharatas.

24. Fire, the light of day, under the waxing moon, during the six months that the sun is in the north; in these times, those who leave the body will go to Brahma, if they know Brahma.

25. In smoke, at night, under the waning moon, during the six months that the sun is in the south; in these conditions the mystic will achieve the light of the moon, and will return.

26. There are certainly these two ways of passing, in light and darkness; such is the opinion written in the scriptures of the world. Going by the one, you will never return, but going by the other you will come back again.

27. Son of Partha, even if he is not aware of these things, the true mystic is never confused. Thus, just be constantly focused on yoga, Arjuna.

28. Studying the scriptures, performing rituals, practicing self-denial, giving charity, and performing other works that show your faith; all of these things are surpassed by the learned yogi, who just naturally achieves the highest resting place.

Chapter 9

1. The Blessed One said:

I am singing this great secret unto you. For you are not jealous. And so this taught knowledge will become true understanding. Knowing which, you will be freed from this limited world of suffering.

2. This is the king of knowledge, the king of secrets, the purest, transcendental. It is understood only by directly experiencing, it is the way. It brings great bliss in its practice, and lasts for all time.

3. Such people as are without trust in this way, mighty fighter, without attaining me they will continue coming back from death to the paths on the wheel of suffering (samsara) the world of illusion.

4. The entire world is filled with me in an impersonal form. Although not all living beings are in me, I am in all of them.

5. Although not all beings can see that they are in me, if you witness you will find the union in my divinity. I am the force that maintains all life, though I am not myself part of life, for I am the source behind it.

6. Just as wherever the wind blows it is part of the great sky, so are all living things part of me. Try to understand this.

7. Son of Kunti, all living things enter my nature at the end of time. And again, at the beginning of time I create them anew.

8. Entering into my nature, I will create again and again all of these things that live. By my will, life automatically springs.

9. I am not bound by any of these actions, conqueror. I am neutral to all of these actions, not attached.

10. Through me, through my attention, all life emanates, both the animate and inanimate. Son of Kunti, it is for this reason that the world exists.

11. Foolish men reject me when I take on a body. They do not know my higher life. I am the great deity of all that is.

12. They are fools in their hopes, fools in their actions, fools in their lack of understanding. They are deluded, demonic and wicked, and the things they seek comfort in are nothing but illusions.

13. But the great souls, scion of Partha, have taken shelter in my divine nature. Without being distracted by their minds, they perform service, being aware that the source of existence is never-ending.

14. They are always singing devotionally of me, working with determination, offering signs of respect (namaste), and always practicing devotional ritual to me.

15. Others, by cultivating awareness, practice rituals to me as the dual, the non-dual, the infinitely diverse, or the single universal form.

16. I am the ritual of the priests. I am the performing of sacrifices. I am the offering. I am the healing herb. I am the mantra. I am the ritual fuel, I am the ritual fire, and I am the ritual itself.

17. I am the father of this universe. I am the mother, the friend, the grandfather. I am what can be known, and what purifies. I am the OM. I am all of the great scriptures.

18. I am the goal, the care-giver, the Lord, the watcher, the home, the safe place, the best friend, creation and destruction, the earth, the place of rest, the undying seed.

19. I give warmth and cold. I give rain, and drought. And I am immortality, death, spirit, and matter, Arjuna.

20. It is my will also that some will know the threefold teaching. Those who drink the soma juice, or purify themselves of wrongdoing by prayerful worship to gain passage to the realm of the god Indra, they enjoy the celestial divine pleasures of the gods.

21. When the vast pleasures of these heavens are exhausted, these holy beings fall back down to the world of mortals. Thus those who follow the threefold teaching to seek the pleasures of heaven will ultimately only gain repeated birth and death.

22. Those who have no such goal, but only focus their mind on me, they are practicing properly. Those who are always focused in this way will be united, protected, and supported by me.

23. Those who are devotees of other gods, who are trusting in their worship, they too worship me though they may not know it, son of Kunti.

24. I am surely the one who enjoys all rituals, I am the Lord. Those who do not know the reality of me will fall down.

25. Those who worship the Gods will go to the Gods, those who worship the ancestors will go to the ancestors. Those who worship ghosts will go to the ghosts. Those who are my devotees will go to me.

26. A leaf, a flower, fruit, or simple water. Anyone who offers these in devotion unto me, I will accept them, so long as they are offered with pure spirit.

27. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer, whatever you give, whatever disciplines you practice, son of Kunti, do so as an offering to me.

28. In this way, you will be free of the karma of being bound to good or bad results. Having your soul firmly focused on the yoga of renunciation (sannyas), you will attain my freedom.

29. I am equal to all living beings. I hate no one, nor do I hold any dearer than others. But those who practice service with devotion unto me are in me, and I am certainly in them.

30. Even if one commits the most abominable acts, but is practicing service unto me without fail, he is certainly to be treated as a saint, because he is certainly determined in his intentions.

31. Very soon he becomes natural in his soul, and gains a lasting peace, son of Kunti. I declare that no devotee of mine will ever perish.

32. Scion of Partha, those who specifically seek shelter in me, whether they are from a low background, or women, or merchants, or untouchables, even they will go to the highest place.

33. How much more certainly will the priests, the righteous, the devotees, the honorable kings! So while you are in this transient world, full of suffering, gain the gift of service unto me.

34. Become my devotee, always thinking of me. Worship me, give motions of respect (namaste) to me. You will come completely to me, your soul will unite with me totally through devotion.

Chapter 10

1. The Blessed One said:

Mighty warrior, just hear me once more, in this great teaching which I will give you for your benefit, because you are my friend.

2. The spirit beings will never know my majesty, the great sages will never know. For I am the source of the everything that makes up the spirit beings and the great sages.

3. Anyone who knows me as uncreated, without beginning, he knows me as the great divinity. He is without delusion. Among all those destined to die, only he will be freed from wrongdoing.

4. Enlightenment, awareness, freedom from doubt, forgiveness, truthfulness, disciplined senses, disciplined mind, joy, suffering, birth and death, fear and courage.

5. Nonviolence, balance, fulfillment, guilt, giving, fame, infamy; all of these different natures of living beings are arranged by me.

6. The seven great sages, and the four originators of humanity, were all born of me. They were created by my mind, as were all of the people of this existence.

7. Anyone who knows this reality as miracles of yoga will be able to practice yoga without fail. Of this there is no doubt.

8. I am the source of all creation. From me come all things. Knowing this, the enlightened become devoted to me with great fervor.

9. Their minds focused on me, their lives dedicated to me, they share this enlightenment with one another. They will constantly talk about me, finding joy in divine bliss.

10. They are always practicing service from their devotion. They are filled with the ecstasy of love. I give to them that unity of enlightenment by which they come unto me.

11. To them I give a particular grace. Any ignorance caused by darkness within their hearts, I can destroy with the bright lamp of awareness.

12. Arjuna said:

The great Brahma, the great force, the pure greatest being. The first individuality, transcendent, the Lord of the Spirits, uncreated and most miraculous.

13. The sages all say these things of you. Even the divine sage Narada, and Asita, Devala, and Vyasa all say this. Now you are yourself explaining this to me.

14. I accept all of these claims which you are making, Krishna. No one can know you in your fullness, Blessed One, not even the divine or demonic spirits.

15. You know, personally, your soul through your soul, greatest one. Creator of everything, Lord of everything, Spirit of spirits, father of the world.

16. Tell me in detail of how you have earned this divine and miraculous soul, the miracle by which you can remain within all dimensions at once.

17. Great Yogi, how shall I know you and think of you always? In which various natures are you to be thought of by me, Blessed One?

18. Describe again to my satisfaction the miraculous uniting of the soul, destroyer of doubt. Although I have been hearing you, I have not yet attained the nectar.

19. The Blessed One said:

Yes, I will speak unto you of the divine miracle of the soul. I will explain the main points, best of the Kurus, for there is no limit to how far I could expand on this.

20. Arjuna, I am the soul. I am within the heart of all living beings. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all life.

21. Of the Gods I am Vishnu. Of all lights I am the glowing Sun. Of all the winds I am the solar wind. Of all the planetary bodies I am the moon.

22. Of all the scriptures (Vedas) I am the Samveda (the first). Of all the divine spirits I am the king of heaven. Of all the senses I am the mind. And of all living beings I am the living force of consciousness.

23. Of all the demigods I am Shiva. And of all the lesser demigods I am the Lord of the Treasures. Of the elementals I am fire, and of all mountains I am Mt. Meru, the holy mountain.

24. Son of Partha, know me to be the prince of the priests, the hierophant. Of all the commanders I am the General. Of all the sources of water, I am the ocean.

25. Of all the great sages I am Bhirgu (the son of god). Of all the vibrations I am the voice in the silence. Of all rituals I am chanting. Of all immobile objects I am the Himalayas.

26. Of all the trees the Banyan, of all the divine sages Narada, of the divine choir Citraratha, of the magicians the wise Kapila.

27. Among horses know me as Uccaihishrava who was made from the tempestuous ocean. Of the noble elephants Airavata, and among human beings the king of kings.

28. Of all weapons I am the thunderbolt. Of cows, I am Kamadhuk. Of the causes for begetting children I am true love. Of serpents I am Vasuki.

29. I am also Ananta of the hydras. Of all mermen I am the demigod Varuna. Of the ancestors I am Aryama. And of all the judges I am Yama, the lord of death (who judges the time of your death).

30. Of the demons I am Prahlada. Of all the conquering forces I am time. And I am the lion of all the animals, and the divine Garuda, of all the birds.
31. Of all the purifying forces I am the wind. Of all warriors I am Rama. Of all fish I am the shark. And of all rivers I am the Ganges.
32. Of all creation I am the beginning, the middle, and the end, Arjuna. Of all forms of knowledge I am the experiential knowledge of the soul. Of all forms of argument I am logic.
33. Of letters I am the letter A. Of compounds I am the dual compound. I am the eternal aeons, I am the fourfold creator.
34. I am the death of all that is, and the source of all that will be. Of the virtues of women I am fame, beauty, fine words, memory, intelligence, firmness, and patience.
35. Of the songs in the Samveda I am the Brihatsama. Of all poems I am the Gayatri. Of the months of the year I am harvest month. Of all the seasons I am spring.
36. Of all forms of vice I am gambling. I am the splendour of everything splendid. I am victory. I am risk. I am the might of the mighty.
37. Of the descendents of Vrishni I am Vasudeva. Of the Pandavas I am Arjuna. Of the wise I am Vyasa. Of the philosophers I am the philosopher Usana.
38. Of all the legal structures I am just punishment. I am the righteousness of those who seek noble goals. Of all the secrets I am silence. I am the awareness of the aware.
39. Whatever there may be of all living things, I am the seed, Arjuna. Without me, there is nothing that can exist, no living being, animate or inanimate.
40. Nor is there any limit to my divine miracles, conqueror of enemies. All of these are only some examples I have spoken out of a vast expanse.
41. Whatever miracles are real, most beautiful and glorious, you must realize that they are only born of a part of my splendour.
42. What could you possibly gain by understanding these things one at a time, Arjuna? I pervade this entire world, while being within one part.

Chapter 11

1. Arjuna said:

Just out of your friendship you have spoken to me these great secrets of the soul. Your words have removed my illusions.

2. I have heard from you in detail about the creation and destruction of all living things, Lotus-eyed one. And I have experienced infinite wonders.

3. Thus what you have spoken is of the real spirit, greatest of divine Masters. Now I wish to see your real divine form, finest of individuals.

4. If you think it is possible for me to see this, my Lord, divine master of yoga, show me your eternal soul.

5. The Blessed One said:

Scion of Partha, just see my forms; hundreds of thousands of combinations and countless colours.

6. Best of the Bharatas, see the twelve sons of Aditi, the eight Vasus, the eleven forms of Rudra, the two Ashvins, the forty-nine Maruts, and many other awe-inspiring forms that you have never seen before.

7. In this one place you can see the entire world completely and immediately. Both the mobile and immobile are here in this body, Arjuna, and everything you could wish to see.

8. But you cannot see me with your own eyes. I will give you divine eyes to see my divine mastery of yoga.

9. Sanjaya said:

Thus, after saying this my King, the greatest divine master of yoga, the praised one, showed unto Arjuna the greatest divine form.

10. Many mouths, many eyes, many awe-inspiring sights, many divine ornaments, and many divine weapons wielded.

11. Divine necklaces (malas), wearing divine dresses, covered in divine perfumes, all awe-inspiring, godly, infinite and present all at once.

12. There were many thousands of suns in the sky all at once, as if their light was the very radiance of the supersoul.

13. Arjuna could see the entire world all in once place, divided into many. This was the God of gods, manifest in that very moment as the universe.

14. Thus Arjuna was overwhelmed with awe, his hair standing on end. He bowed his head in respect, with folded hands toward the divine, and began to speak.

15. Arjuna said:

I can see all the divine in your divine body. And all the living beings gathered. Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva sitting upon a lotus flower, and all the great sages and the divine serpents.

16. I can see many arms, torsos, mouths and eyes. I can see you in every direction, with no beginning, middle or end, divine Master of all. I see you as the all.

17. I can see helms, maces, spheres, and radiance, glowing in every direction. I see you, but it is difficult to bear, like blazing flames everywhere or the light of the sun, beyond measure.

18. You must be realized as the absolute, the greatest foundation of the all. You are the infinite upholder of the way. In my opinion you are the eternal supreme individuality.

19. Without beginning, middle or end. Infinite glories, infinite arms, eyes like the sun and moon. I see you with blazing fire burning from your mouth, giving warmth to all existence.

20. From the reaches of space to this earth and filling all in between, are you alone, in all directions. By the sight of your awe-inspiring and terrifying form, the three worlds themselves tremble, great soul.

21. You are within the entire school of spirits. Some of them are folding their hands from fear, offering supplication. The great sages proclaim peace, the school of magicians sing their incantations unto you with invocations from the ancient rituals.

22. All of the forms of Shiva, the Adityas, the Vasus and the Sadhyas, the Vishvedevas, the Ashvinu, Maruts, and the ancestors, schools of divine choirs (Gandharvas), Yakshas, demons and mages are all looking upon you in awe.

23. The great form of you has many faces and eyes, great warrior. Many arms, waists and legs, many torsos, and many fangs; and upon seeing them all the worlds tremble. As do I.

24. There are many glowing colours reaching to the heavens, open mouths, great glowing eyes. Seeing you I am shaken within my soul. I have lost all balance and my mind is troubled, Vishnu.

25. Seeing your terrible teeth and faces, which are like the fires of death, I have lost all sense of direction. I plead for grace, divine Master, comforter of worlds.

26. All of these sons of Dhirtarashtra, and these warrior kings, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, as well as the generals of our armies, they are all within your jaws, mightiest warrior.

27. They are entering, rushing into your terrible fangs. I see some of them, devoured by you, their heads crushed in your teeth.

28. As the rivers flow into the oceans, so do all these kings of the world flow into your mouths, and burn.

29. As moths are drawn into a blazing fire to their destruction, so are all people drawn with great swiftness into your mouths.

30. You are devouring all the people from all directions with your burning mouths glowing. You are covering all the world with your radiance, your terrible rays scouring all, Vishnu.

31. Please show me grace, lord of the gods, and explain to me your fierce form. I wish to know you as you really are, for I do not understand your purpose.

32. The Blessed One said:

I am Time, the destroyer of worlds. I am that which destroys all who are in the world. And all who are on this battlefield today are doomed to die, except for you.

33. Thus, rise up! Gain fame in conquering your foes. Enjoy the prosperous Kingdom you will gain. For all those here have already been destined to be destroyed by me. You will just be the vessel for this, Arjuna.

34. Drona, and Bhishma, and Jayadratha, and Karna, and all the other great warriors have already been killed by my will. You must destroy them, so be not troubled. Only fight and conquer your enemies.

35. Sanjaya said:

Thus hearing Krishna's words, with folded hands, trembling Arjuna offered respectful motions (namaste) many times over. Then he spoke fearfully to Krishna, his voice wavering.

36. Arjuna said:

Divine Master of the senses, by your glory the world is rightfully yours. It rejoices in union with you, and the demons are running fearfully in all directions. The whole school of mages are motioning respectfully as well (namaste).

37. Why should they not offer respect unto you, great soul? You are the superior Brahma, the divine creator. Infinite, God of the gods, comfort of the world. You are never-ending, and thus beyond the real and unreal.

38. You are the God of gods, the oldest of individuals. You are the great comfort of this existence, you are the knower and the known, and the greater fulfillment. This entire existence is filled by you, infinite form.

39. You control the air, fire, water, the moon. You are the father, the great-grandfather, and I offer you honours upon honours unto you. Let it be so a thousand times over, again and again I offer my respect unto you!

40. Before you and behind you I offer respect. I offer my respect unto you from all directions, because you are all things, limitless strength and limitless force. You envelop all things, thus you are all things.

41. Having assumed you to merely be my friend, Krishna, my dear friend, whatever I may have said was out of foolishness or out of love, without knowing your true greatness.

42. Whenever I may have joked about you or dishonoured you, relaxing and sitting with you while dining together. Or when I was alone or with other friends, ideal one, I ask your forgiveness for all these unthinkable acts.

43. You are the father of all the dimensions, mobile and immobile. You are worthy of worship, the glorious guru. There is none equal to you. How could there possibly be any who is greater in all the three worlds, most powerful lord?

44. Thus I offer up my whole body in respect for you. I beg unto you for mercy, the divine who is worthy of worship. Like a father unto a son, like a friend unto a friend, like a lover unto his beloved, so I ask you to treat me, divine one.

45. I am filled with joy at seeing this which I had never seen before. But my mind is also shaken with fear. So please grace me once more with your divine form, Master of gods, comfort of the world.

46. With your helm, club, and wheel-like weapon (chakra) in your hand, that is how I wish to see you. Thousand armed one, I wish to see you in your four-armed form, representative of all that is.

47. The Blessed One said:

Arjuna, I will gladly show you this great form, through the union of the soul. It completely radiates upon the entire universe, infinitely. It is my most real form, which no one has ever seen prior to you.

48. Never through the priestly rituals, nor by study, nor by charity, nor by any saintly acts, nor strict ascetic acts, has anyone else in this world of matter seen this form before you, greatest warrior of the Kurus.

49. Let it neither trouble nor confuse you to see this horrible form of mine. Free from fear, contented of mind, again simply witness this, my form.

50. Sanjaya said:

Thus, speaking in this way to Arjuna, Krishna once again showed him his true form. This brought much fear to him, so once again the great soul returned to his more beautiful form.

51. Arjuna said:

Looking once more upon your beautiful human form, punisher of enemies, I am now relaxed in my mind, I am once again composed.

52. The Blessed One said:

This form of mine that you have seen is very difficult to bear seeing. Even the divine spirits constantly long to gaze upon it.

53. I have never made it possible, either by the study of scripture, or ascetic acts, or charity, or worship, to see me as you have seen me.

54. But through the direct experience of devotion, Arjuna, I have made it possible to see and be aware . In fact, in this way you can enter the real, great warrior.

55. Doing my work, see me as the great individual. Being devoted to me, free from intellectual attempts at knowing, one who is without enemies among all living beings will come into me, son of Pandu.

Chapter 12

1. Arjuna said:

Then who are the most true in union: those who are always engaged in devotion, properly venerating you, or those who have moved beyond the senses into the impersonal mystery?

2. The Blessed One said:

Those who focus the mind upon me are always practicing veneration to me. They are granted a greater trust by me, they are considered to be most involved in practicing the real.

3. But there are those who are completely engaged in venerating the impersonal, formless mystery that is beyond all the senses, and is also ineffable, omnipresent, unchanging, and immovably fixed in the now.

4. Focusing all of the senses, they are equally open to all things. They achieve me by practicing out of compassion for all living beings.

5. There is much trouble for those who are attached to the impersonal with their minds. Certainly for those who are in a personality, progressing into the impersonal can be achieved, but with much difficulty.

6. But those who renounce all activities to me, who attach to me, without deviating from such yoga, they can meditate upon me.

7. And I will deliver them from the ocean of constant death and rebirth. Very soon, those whose consciousness is focused on me, I will become them, scion of Partha.

8. Fix the mind upon me. Apply your awareness to me. You will live in me thereafter, do not doubt it.

9. If you are not able to focus your consciousness on me steadfastly, then by practicing yoga you will in time develop the will to reach me, great champion.

10. If you are even unable to practice, become dedicated to doing service for me. Even work done for my sake will let you achieve great powers.

11. If you are unable to do this either, then perform the yoga of refuge in me. That is, give up the results of all actions, and become in that way centered in your soul.

12. Awareness is certainly better than formal practice. Meditation is even better than mere awareness. But renunciation of the results of actions is better still. By such renunciation you will gain peace.

13. Be without jealousy toward any living being, friendly and kind, with no ego or sense of possession, equal in happiness or sorrow, forgiving.

14. Such a yogi is always fulfilled. Determined, focused on the soul. With the mind and awareness focused on me, such a devotee of mine is very dear to me.
15. People who are never disturbed, and who do not disturb others, and who are free from happiness, distress, fear and worry, such people are also very dear to me.
16. Anyone who is neutral, pure, mastered, carefree, free of misery, the renouncer of all efforts; such a devotee is very dear to me.
17. One who neither takes pleasure nor grieves, does not complain or desire, and renounces the fortunate or unfortunate; such a devotee is very dear to me.
18. One who is equal toward friends or enemies, and who is also so toward honour and dishonour, in cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is balanced and free from attachment.
19. Who is equal in fame or infamy, silent, fulfilled by any situation, who has no home, who is focused in determination; such a devotee is a true human being. And he is very dear to me.
20. Those who completely involve themselves in this, what is called the nectar of the way, with trust, knowing me as the greater; such devotees are very very dear to me.

Chapter 13

1. Arjuna said:

Life and the one who experiences life; the battlefield, and he who is aware of the battlefield. I want to understand all of this, and I want to understand awareness and the object of awareness, Krishna.

2. The Blessed One said:

Son of Kunti, this body is the battlefield; so is it said by one who knows. Thus, those who know this are called 'aware of the battlefield'.

3. And certainly know me as the one who is aware of the battlefield; of all fields, scion of Bharata. The field and he who is watching the field; to realize the difference is true awareness, in my opinion.

4. I will explain that field, as it is, and what kind of changes it undergoes and how, and what influence it can have, in brief.

5. It is in many ways described by the sages, by the various chants in various ways, by the sayings of the scriptures (Brahma-Sutras), as having very certain causes and effects.

6. The great elements, ego, enlightenment, the impersonal, the eleven sensations, the five sources of sensation.

7. Desire, hatred, happiness, sorrow, the school, the proof of life, determination; all of these are just some parts of the field, and examples of its interactions.

8. Humility, lack of pride, nonviolence, tolerance, simplicity, service toward a saintly teacher, cleanliness, steadiness, focus on the soul.

9. The renouncing of the senses, egolessness, and witnessing the causes of birth, death, age, disease, and sorrow.

10. Being free of attachment, free of associating yourself as a father, husband, homeowner, and so on. And also having obtained constant balance, neither drawn to the desirable nor away from the undesirable.

11. Also by dedicated yoga, and devotion unto me, without pausing, going into the quiet places, being unattached toward people in general.

12. Constant in awareness of the soul, for the sake of awakening the vision of awareness of the real. All of these things I declare to be awareness. All else is ignorance.

13. I will explain the possible subjects of awareness. And when one tastes the infinite nectar of this awareness, one will know my greater form, Brahma. Then one will be beyond all causes and effects.

14. It has hands and legs everywhere. Eyes, heads, and faces, with ears everywhere, filling all that exists in the world.

15. It is the original source of all the elements (gunas) of the senses, although it is itself without senses. Without being attached, it is the maintainer of all life. And without any physical form, it is the controller of all the physical elements as well.

16. Inside and outside of all living beings, mobile and immobile at once. Undefinable due to its multitude of definitions. Far away, and also near at once.

17. Indivisible, though apparently divided into all living beings. The maintainer of all living beings, that must be understood as the devourer as well as the creator of all.

18. It is in all radiant things, and it is also the source of all radiance. It is said to be beyond all darkness. It is awareness, it is the source of awareness, it is the longing in everyone's heart to be aware.

19. Thus the battlefield, and awareness, and the possible subjects of awareness have now been explained in brief by me. Any devotee of mine who understands all of this will attain to my nature.

20. You must know the world of matter and the living beings in it as being eternal. Their transformations through the gunas are the result of the interactions of matter.

21. The interaction of matter is said to be the instrument that creates causes and effects. The interactions of living beings are likewise the instruments of the creation of joy and sorrow.

22. Living beings that exist in matter certainly have experiences of matter. These experiences are caused by the gunas. The guna that a living being identifies most closely to will determine his good and bad experiences in his lives.

23. The overseer who allows all of this, the master and true owner is the great divine master, the supersoul. And indeed it is said that the true experiencer within the body is this greater experiencer.

24. Thus, anyone who knows about the living beings, the material world, and the gunas, whatever his present state, he will never again be forced to take birth.

25. By meditating on the soul, some will see the supersoul in the soul. Others will see it through self-inquiry, yoga, or the works of union.

26. But others still, without any special training, by merely hearing of this from others, will begin to practice. They will also transcend the path of death, for these ones are predisposed to hearing the truth.

27. Whatever comes into existence of any kind, mobile or immobile, know that it is only a great combination of the observer and the subject observed, best of the Bharatas.

28. Anyone who sees that the great divine master is equally present in all living things; that it is in all mortal things but is itself immortal, that one has true vision.

29. Seeing the divine master equally everywhere, one will find no limit to the soul within the soul. Then one will reach the greater goal.

30. Anyone who sees that regardless of which activities are done in the material realm, one's soul remains free of activity, that one has true vision.

31. When one endeavours to see the separate personalities of living beings as being in fact oneness, then one will attain expansion into Brahma.

32. This soul is eternal, transcendent of matter, infinite. Son of Kunti, though it is in the body, it never acts nor can action be taken upon it.

33. It is the astral force (akasha). It is within all things but can never be affected. Likewise, the soul is everywhere in the body but can never be affected.

34. As the sun gives light to the whole world, this subject gives light to the whole body, scion of Bharata.

35. Thus with the vision of awareness one can see the difference between the body and the one who witnesses the body. Those living beings who know this will gain liberation from material bondage, and will approach the greater.

Chapter 14

1. The Blessed One said:

Again I shall speak of the greatest of all understandings, the supreme understanding. Knowing which, all of the great sages of this realm attained power.

2. Taking shelter in this awareness, having attained the same nature as my own, they are not born even in the time of creation, nor are they destroyed in the time of annihilation.

3. The womb of my material existence is Brahma. Into that womb I seed the possibility of all things, which is the source of all living beings, scion of Bharata.

4. Son of Kunti, all species of life, all forms that can exist appear. Brahma is the source of all their births, and I am the seed-giving father of them all.

5. Truth (sattvam), passion (rajah), and ignorance (tamah) are the three elements (gunas) born of matter. They condition all eternal living beings who occupy temporary bodies, great warrior.

6. There is the element of sattvam, purest in this existence, that provides illumination and avoids wrongdoing. It conditions one toward happiness and awareness, sinless one.

7. Know the element rajas to create desire in the soul. It conditions one to feel longing, which binds you to performing actions that produce karma, son of Kunti.

8. But know that the element tamah is born of a lack of understanding of the real. It is the delusion of all living beings, producing madness, laziness, and tiredness, that binds one to an animal existence, scion of Bharata.

9. The element sattva attaches you to pleasure, the element rajas binds you to lust of result, which conceals awareness of the real, scion of Bharata. But the element tamah is said to attach you to animal madness.

10. Sometimes sattvas is in greater proportion than rajas or tamah, scion of Bharata. Other times, rajas is most prominent, or tamah.

11. When the element sattvas is most prominent, all the gates of the body develop illumination and awareness. Thus is it said.

12. When there is an excess of the element rajas, greed and the uncontrollable longing to act out of desires will develop, best of the Bharatas.

13. When tamas is most developed, then darkness, sloth, madness and illusions are certainly manifest, son of Kuru.

14. But when sattvas is most developed at the time of death, the embodied being then attains to the pure dimension of the great scholars.

15. One who dies in the element rajas, he will take birth in the company of those who live in this world of activities. Likewise, one who dies in the element tamah will take birth among the animals.

16. Activities taken in the element sattvas are said to be saintly, and result in purification. But actions done in the element rajas result in sorrow, and actions in the element tamah result in delusion.

17. From sattvas is awareness developed. From rajas is greed developed. And certainly also from tamah is madness and animalistic delusion likewise developed.

18. Those in sattvas will move upward. Those in rajas linger in the middle, and those whose actions are in tamah fall downward to the abominable.

19. When one sees properly that only the gunas are responsible for action, and knows that there is a force greater than all the gunas, he will ascend to my state of being.

20. When one transcends all three gunas that are produced by one's physical existence, he will gain freedom from the miseries of birth, death and old age.

21. Arjuna said:

Which qualities will be present in one who has transcended all three gunas, my Lord? What is the behaviour of one such as this, and how does he succeed in transcending the gunas?

22. The Blessed One said:

Son of Pandu, one who neither hates illumination, attachment or delusion, even in their presence, nor does he desire them in their absence.

23. One who holds no position is never disturbed by the gunas, and thus witnesses their action. Such a one remains steady and does not waver.

24. One who acts equally when suffering and joy are present in him, who is equally disposed to a lump of earth, a lump of stone, and a lump of gold. One who is equally disposed to the desirable and undesirable, and equally steady when his soul is being praised or defamed by others.

25. Equal in honour and dishonour, equal to groups of friends and enemies, renouncing all efforts, he is said to be risen above the gunas.

26. Also, a person who practices service and the yoga of devotion unto me, he will transcend all of the gunas, and become raised to Brahma.

27. I am the foundation of Brahma, of the nectar of immortality, of the infinite and eternal. And of the way of ultimate joy.

Chapter 15

1. The Blessed One said:

It is said that there is an eternal banyan tree with its roots above, and its branches below. The leaves are the scriptures. And anyone who knows this tree is a knower of the scriptures.

2. Its branches extend downwards and upwards. They develop from the gunas. Its twigs are the objects of the senses. The tree's roots extend downward, where they are entangled by action in the world.

3. The form of this tree is not visible in this dimension. Never does it end and never does it begin, and never does it have a foundation. This banyan tree with its strong roots must be cut down with the weapon of detachment. This takes great strength.

4. After cutting it one must be watchful to find that place where, once you go, you will never return. One must surrender to the original individuality, from whom all things have come in the beginning, aeons ago.

5. Without false pride and illusion, having conquered faulty associations, eternally in the meditation of the soul, detached from lust, liberated from the duality of joy and sorrow, those who are like this gain eternal clarity.

6. My great abode is not lit by the sun or the moon, nor by any other energy. Those who go there never come back.

7. The part of me that is in the world as a living being is eternal as well. But it must struggle with the mind, and the rest of the senses, that work in the material.

8. As the body acquires various things, the body loses its inner Mastery. In taking all these things one moves away from Mastery, just as the scents will be carried away from a flower by the air.

9. Hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling, and the mind. These are all the senses which one will experience.

10. Foolish people cannot see that anyone who is in a body will lose their body, eventually. They are too busy existing under the spell of the gunas. But those who have the eyes of awareness can see this.

11. Those who work in yoga can also see this, if they are centered in their soul. But those who have not yet realized the soul will not see this yet, as their consciousness is not yet developed.

12. The sunshine, that by its splendour illuminates the entire world, and the splendour of the moon, and fire; understand that all of this comes from me.

13. Entering the planets and all the living beings, I sustain them by my energy. I nourish the vegetables and all drugs, becoming the juices that make these nourishing.

14. I become the ability to eat in all beings. And the inward and outward breath, which together with the digestion of the four kinds of food keeps the body in balance.

15. I am in the heart of all living beings. From me comes memory, awareness, and forgetfulness. And I am the writer of all the known scriptures, and the knower of their teachings.

16. There are two classes of beings in this world: the restricted and the unrestricted. It is said that all living beings in themselves are restricted, but in the oneness they are unrestricted.

17. But it is said that there is also a third class, the greatest individual, the supersoul. He who is inside the threefold worlds, maintains them, and is himself the infinite Master.

18. I am transcendent to both the restricted and the unrestricted, the greatest. Thus I am praised in the world and in the scriptures as the greatest individual.

19. Anyone who views me as such, without doubt, as the greatest individual, he is the knower of all. He will perform service for me in everything he does, scion of Bharata.

20. This is the most secret of the scriptures disclosed by me, sinless one. Being enlightened by this, one becomes enlightenment, and thus all his doings will be right, scion of Bharata.

Chapter 16

1. The Blessed One said:

Fearlessness, being in truth, the state of being united to awareness, charity, mental focus, ritual, study of scripture, austerity, and simple living.

2. Nonviolence, honesty, lack of anger, renunciation, peace, being non-judgmental, compassion for all living beings, lack of greed, gentleness, humility, and determination.

3. Enthusiasm, forgiveness, endurance, cleanliness, lack of jealousy, and not seeking fame are the qualities of one who is born into divine nature, scion of Bharata.

4. Pride, arrogance and vanity, anger and intolerance, as well as ignorance; these are the qualities of one who is born into dark nature, scion of Partha.

5. Divine qualities assist in attaining liberation. The dark qualities are considered to lead into bondage. Do not worry, scion of Pandu, you are born into divine qualities.

6. There are two kinds of living beings created in this world: the divine and the dark. I have spoken of the divine with great detail, son of Partha. Now hear from me of the dark.

7. People who are of dark qualities do not know the difference between right and wrong action. Nor is there cleanliness, saintliness, or truth in them.

8. They say that this world is untrue, with no purpose, cause, or controller. It has merely come to be, due to no reason besides lust.

9. Accepting this vision, having lost their souls, the unaware revel in activities that bring painful consequences (karma) to them and others. This leads to the harmful destruction of the world.

10. Seeking comfort in unfulfilling lust, absorbed in the vanity of pride and prestige, due to their delusion they cling to impermanent things. They revel in their dedication to the unclean.

11. They seek comfort in countless fears and anxieties until the time of their death. They seek comfort in the pleasures of the senses, believing that these are the greatest.

12. Being bound by these hundreds of hopes, they are always entangled. Lust and anger are always on their mind. They seek out lust for the sake of sense pleasures, they accumulate wealth by unethical means.

13. "Today I have gained this, and I shall gain more as I desire it. This is mine, that is also mine. And my wealth will only increase in the future".

14. "I have killed this enemy, I will kill that enemy and others too. I am the lord, I am the one who experiences, I am the mage, powerful and happy".

15. "I am wealthy and surrounded by noble relations. Who else is like I am? I will sacrifice, give charity, and rejoice". In these ways one is deluded by ignorance.

16. They are confounded by many worries, surrounded by a web of illusions. Attached to the lust of the senses, the unclean slide down into hell.

17. With a slothful soul and stubborn, absorbed in the illusion of wealth and fame, they perform rituals in name only. They sacrifice only for show, without practicing for genuine knowing.

18. Seeking comfort in false ego, strength, pride, lust and anger, they despise and envy myself and other living teachers.

19. Those who are envious of me and miscreant, I cast into the ocean of the world as the lowest of humanity. I put them always into dark and unfortunate wombs.

20. The foolish gain birth after birth in dark wombs. Son of Kunti, without reaching me they sink into a damned place.

21. There are three gates leading into the hell that destroys the soul: lust, anger and greed. Thus, these three must be given up.

22. Son of Kunti, being liberated from these three gates of ignorance, a person cleanses their soul. After this he goes to the greater goal.

23. One who gives up the wise teachings will be stuck in foolish actions born of lust. He will never attain power, never achieve happiness, never reach the greater goal.

24. Thus the teachings reveal to you the way to discriminate between right and wrong action. Being aware of the wisdom declared by the teachings, you should take action in the world.

Chapter 17

1. Arjuna said:

Krishna, those who give up the wise teachings, but practice in their own way with full trust, in what element are they? Sattvas, rajas or tamas?

2. The Blessed One said:

Trust is divided into three kinds among those with bodies, depending on their dominant element, whether they are in the element of sattvas (truth), rajas (passion) or tamas (ignorance). Now hear what I have to say about this.

3. Scion of Bharata, a person's trust will vary according to each person's reality. One who lets themselves trust will certainly become filled with trust.

4. Those who are in the element sattvas will practice toward the divine spirits. Those who are in the element rajas will practice toward the spirits of nature. Those people who are in the element tamas will practice toward the ghosts, empty spirits.

5. Those people who undergo unwise abstinences that are harmful to themselves and others, they are bound by pride and arrogance. They are driven by lusts and attachments.

6. Torturing the natural impulses of the body because of a lack of true consciousness, understand that although I am within their individuality, they have also filled themselves with demons.

7. There are three different kinds of foods that will be appealing to each of the kinds of people; as well as three different kinds of ritual, disciplines, and charities. Now hear of the differences between these.

8. The food that is appealing to one who is in sattvas is positive to one's health, strength and long life. It brings more satisfaction and pleasure. It is juicy, fatty, filling and fulfilling.

9. The food that appeals to one in rajas is bitter, sour, salty, spicy, pungent, dry, and hot. It causes sorrow, misery, and disease.

10. The food that is the favourite of one in tamas is old, tasteless, foul smelling, rotting and left over from the meals of others. It is untouchable.

11. The rituals that are performed according to wise guidance and without lust of result could only be performed by someone who focuses their mind in the element of truth (sattvas).

12. Best of the Bharatas, be informed that ritual performed for the sake of some goal is done in the element of passion (rajas).

13. And ritual performed without wise guidance, for greedy purposes, without the vibrating of mantras, without sharing or service, and without trust is to be considered as being in the element of ignorance (tamas).

14. Practicing service to the divine, to the initiates, to the guru, and to others worthy of service; cleanliness, simplicity, directing all desires to Brahma, and nonviolence are said to be proper bodily disciplines.

15. Words that are not disturbing, truthful, appealing and helpful and which do not contradict the teaching of the Masters; these are said to be discipline of speech.

16. The gifted mind, without deceiving others, seriously focused on the soul, purifying one's being, is said to be practicing discipline of mind.

17. Having committed with greater trust these threefold disciplines, men who have no ulterior motives or lust of result are said to be practicing in the element of sattvas (truth).

18. Practicing worship for the sake of gaining honour or being respected by others, and practicing disciplines in this world out of pride are said to be done in the element rajas (passion). Their results are wavering and temporary.

19. Those who foolishly strive against their own souls, who perform disciplines of self-torture, or who wish to do harm to others, they are said to practice in the element tamas (ignorance).

20. Giving charity to those whom it is worth giving to, with no desire for return, in the right place and time and to the right person, is considered to be charity in the element sattvas.

21. But charity done for some ulterior motive, lusting for a certain result, or given reluctantly, is considered to be charity in the element rajas.

22. Charity done in a wrong place, at a wrong time, toward unworthy recipients, or without respect or proper attention, is said to be charity in the element tamas.

23. Om, the real, symbolizes the threefold Brahma. The priests had used it in the past, in their scriptures and rituals.

24. Thus, Om symbolizes acts of ritual, charity and discipline. The practitioners of the way of Brahma always begin any of these acts with it, in accordance with the teachings.

25. Thus without lust of result, various acts of ritual, charity and discipline can be done by those who sincerely seek liberation.

26. The real beings, the initiates thus bring the real into their sincere acts, and the sound of the real is used, scion of Partha.

27. In ritual, in discipline, in charity the real is vibrated. That work is meant for the real, and so certainly the real is represented.

28. That which is given with no trust, whether in ritual or discipline, is said without the real. Scion of Partha, it has no purpose in this life or the next.

Chapter 18

1. Arjuna said:

Mighty warrior, I want to understand the truth of Sannyas and how it is like and different from renunciation, master of sensing, mighty killer of demons.

2. The Blessed One said:

Renouncing the desire for activities is what the wise know as real Sannyas. The renunciation of all the results of activities is what the experienced call true renunciation.

3. Thus great thinkers will say that some types of work must be renounced as wrongdoing. But ritual, charity, discipline and other works should never be renounced.

4. Hear from me definitely thus regarding renunciation, best of the Bharatas. Tiger among men, I declare that there are three types of renunciation.

5. Acts of ritual, charity, and discipline must be done, they should never be renounced. And ritual, charity and discipline purify even the great beings.

6. But in all of these kinds of activities one should renounce one's attachment to results. Scion of Partha, it is my definite opinion that these acts are best done only as a duty.

7. But the renunciation of natural activities is never correct. To declare that these activities should be given up is to be in the element of ignorance.

8. One who renounces such things out of fear will create misery for himself and problems in his body. Such renunciation is in the element of passion, and will not gain the results of true renunciation.

9. Thus, actions which are natural to you must be performed, Arjuna. Certainly, one should give up attachment to the results of these acts. To me, this is renunciation in the element of truth.

10. A clever and true renunciate, free from doubts, will neither hate unfortunate work nor become attached to fortunate work.

11. It is impossible for anyone in a body to totally renounce all actions. But anyone who renounces the result of actions is said to be a renunciate.

12. There are three kinds of action: action which moves one upwards, action which moves one downwards, and action which has mixed results. These results (karma) will affect one who has not renounced them at the time of death. But they will never affect a true Sannyasin.

13. Mighty warrior, understand from me the five causes listed in the wisdom teachings, said there to lead to power in all actions.

14. They are: the place of action, the performer of action, the different kinds of instruments used for action, and the motivations of the person acting; and the influence of the divine is the fifth.
15. It is these five factors that determine whether a person takes action with his body, words or thoughts; and whether the action is right or wrong.
16. One who believes it is his soul that takes action is being foolish and not enlightened.
17. One whose enlightenment is never blocked by his ego could do anything, even kill without truly killing. He will not become attached.
18. Awareness, the subject of awareness, and the one who is aware are the factors that determine the three types of action. The senses, the action itself, and the performer of the action are the three ingredients that result in karma.
19. Through the gunas, there are thus three kinds of awareness, actions, and performers of action. It is said that they can be in three different elements (gunas). Hear of these now.
20. One who sees that in all living beings there is an absolute oneness, indivisible yet infinitely divided, that one is aware in the wisdom of the real (sattvas).
21. But one who, because of dividedness, is only aware of the various divisions, and sees all living beings as falling into different classifications, that one is aware in the wisdom of passion (rajas).
22. And one who sees only their own attached actions as the be all and end all, with no deeper cause, is without true wisdom and very petty. That one is said to be in the element of ignorance (tamas).
23. All action which is done with centeredness, without association, without desire or reluctance, and by one who has no lust of result, is called action that is real (sattvas).
24. But action performed by one who has lust of result, or ego, or action that is done with great striving, is said to be action that is passionate (rajas).
25. And that action which is born of illusion, self-motivated, without taking responsibility for the consequences, causing destruction or misery to others and which leads to further bondage is said to be action that is ignorant (tamas).
26. Performing action free of association, without ego, justified with drive and enthusiasm, trying equally though powerful or powerless, the performer of such actions is said to be real (sattvas).
27. Doing action with great attachment to desired results, greedy, jealous and unclean, affected by joy and sorrow, the performer of such actions I declare to be passionate (rajas).

28. Doing action that is unnatural, driven by material motives, stubborn, insincere, insulting to others, slothful, depressed, and hesitant, the performer of such actions is said to be ignorant (tamas).

29. Now hear from me in detail about the different levels of centeredness in enlightenment that are determined by the three gunas, great champion.

30. Being wise about action and inaction, what should and should not be done, fear and fearlessness, attachment and liberation, this is enlightenment at the level of sattvas.

31. Being informed by a teaching about what should or should not be done, this is imperfect enlightenment at the level of rajass.

32. Being deluded and not knowing the difference between true and false teaching, and thinking always in the wrong direction, this is enlightenment covered by tamas, scion of Partha.

33. The will that focuses the mind, energy, senses, and actions, by the unwavering practice of yoga, that will is in the element sattvas, scion of Partha.

34. But the will which focuses the way of lust and material effort, Arjuna, because of lust of result, that will is in the element rajass, scion of Partha.

35. And the will by which one never stops fantasizing, fearing, regretting, feeling sorry for one's self, and illusion, that foolish will is said to be in the element tamas, scion of Partha.

36. Best of the Bharatas, now hear from me of the three levels of joy one can enjoy by practice, through which one can also gain the end of misery.

37. That practice which can be compared at first to the taste of poison, but at the end is like the taste of nectar, is said to be joy in the element of the real. It is born out of the grace of the enlightenment of the soul.

38. The joy that is born of the combination of the senses and sensation, which in the beginning is like nectar but later like poison, is said to be joy in the element of passion.

39. And that which is in the beginning and end alike a joy that is due to the clouding of the soul, born of sleep, sloth, and illusion, is said to be in the element of ignorance.

40. There is no being in material existence, on this earth or in the heavens, even among the divine spirits, who is free of the influence of these three gunas.

41. Vanquisher of enemies, the four types of men: godly (brahmanas), noble (ksatriyas), worldly (vaisyas), and unclean (sudras) are classified by their actions, born of their relation to the gunas.

42. Peacefulness, balance, discipline, purity, openness, sincerity, awareness, wisdom, and spirituality are the godly actions of a natural man.

43. Bravery, strength, will, cleverness, fearlessness when challenged, generosity, and a noble nature, are the actions of a noble being.

44. Stewardship of the earth and animals, as well as business, are the actions of a worldly man. And an unclean man should dedicate his soul to acting in service, for this is the natural role of the unclean.

45. For each type of man following his own type of actions will lead him to reach a higher power. Now hear how by acting in practices according to one's nature this power is achieved.

46. A man can achieve this power by serving, by dedicating his own natural actions, to that which is the source of all life, which is within all things.

47. It is better to follow one's own natural path, however imperfectly, then to follow the path of another, however perfectly. By performing actions correct to one's own nature, one will never commit wrongdoing.

48. Son of Kunti, one should never give up the actions that come of one's own nature. Certainly all actions will have their imperfections, just as smoke will cover a fire.

49. With an enlightened perspective to all things, focused on the soul, free of material wishes, through the greatest magickal power, detachment, one attains Sannyas.

50. Achieving this power, one achieves Brahma. Try to understand me when I say this. Son of Kunti, it is essentially that state which is the highest.

51. Enlightened, fully practicing purification, with determination driving the soul, abandoning the senses and sounds, putting aside attachment and hate.

52. Living in a lonely place, eating only what is needed, controlling the speech of the body and mind, constantly united in the highest meditation, seeking comfort only in detachment.

53. Doing these things one will be freed from false ego, strength and pride, lust, anger and greed. One will be peaceful, knowing one owns nothing. Thus one will be ready for the nature of Brahma.

54. Within the nature of Brahma one has a joyful soul. One never regrets nor desires. Equally open to all living beings, one gains my greater devotion.

55. One can know devotion to me in as much as I am true in this body. The part of me that is beyond truth can only be entered through awareness.

56. Although constantly performing actions, through my care and by my grace one can achieve the eternal never ending abode.

57. Consciously renounce (sannyas) all kinds of actions unto me, under my care, seeking comfort in union with enlightenment. Just be in my consciousness at all times.

58. In my consciousness you will be able to overcome all obstacles by my grace. But if, due to your ego, you do not hear, then you will be lost.

59. If you seek comfort in your ego, and thus think 'I shall not fight', know this to be false. Your nature is to strive, with determination.

60. Son of Kunti, your natural self is being conditioned by your karma. You are deluded to believe that you do not wish to follow your nature. But though you are reluctant, you must act.

61. The divine master of all that lives is found in everyone's heart, Arjuna. It is what leads all living beings to seek, behind these bodies of illusion.

62. Scion of Bharata, you must surrender unto him completely. By his grace, you will find great peace and the eternal home.

63. Thus have I shared with you this awareness, the secret of secrets. Consider this, do not take it lightly, and then do what thou wilt.

64. Hear from me again the greatest of secrets, the highest teaching. Because you are very dear to me, I will share it for your sake.

65. Take on the nature of my mind, become my devotee, my priest, offer your respects (namaste) unto me. Then you will come to me. This I promise to you, because you are dear to me.

66. Abandon all religious teachings, surrender unto me alone. I will free you from all wrongdoing, do not be worried.

67. This teaching must not be given to one who is not disciplined, nor to one who is not a devotee, ever. Nor also to one who is not practicing, or to anyone who is jealous of me.

68. Anyone who explains this, the greatest of the secrets, to my devotees, will be performing the greatest devotion unto me and will certainly come to me, with no doubt.

69. There is no one among men who will be dearer to me than he, nor will there be any dearer than he in all existence.

70. Also, whoever studies this sacred conversation of ours is performing a sacred ritual of awareness. In this way I judge that he is showing service to me.

71. Any man who hears this conversation with trust, and without envy, will become free. He will be fortunate in the world, attaining to righteousness.

72. Scion of Partha, have you heard all of this with total concentration of your consciousness? Has your deluded awareness been cleansed, great conqueror?

73. Arjuna said:

My illusion is washed away, my memory is restored by your grace, ideal one! I am free of doubts, and will follow your commands!

74. Sanjaya said:

Thus have I heard the debate between the greatest of spirits, Krishna, and Arjuna, also a great soul. Having heard such an awe-inspiring thing, my hairs stand on end!

75. By the mercy of the spirit, I have heard this greatest secret of yoga, from the master of yoga. Directly from Krishna, who spoke it himself.

76. My king, remember! Remember this awe-inspiring spiritual debate of Krishna and Arjuna. I am enthralled, again and again.

77. And also, remember! Remember the most awesome form of the Lord. My amazement is so great, my king, it enralls me more and more!

78. Where Krishna the master of yoga, and where the scion of Partha, expert of the bow and arrow, are together, there is nobility, victory, strength, and righteousness. This is my feeling.